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Condition of Children Birth to Age Five and Status of Early Childhood Services in California

Synthesis of Recent Research

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Contents

Purpose of Report

The federal Head Start Act requires California to maintain a State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (42 U.S.C. §9837b). The Act identifies numerous responsibilities for the Council, including conducting a periodic statewide needs assessment; identifying opportunities for collaboration; recommending strategies for increasing the overall participation of children in early education and care, including underrepresented and special populations; assessing the capacity of higher education to support the development of early childhood educators; and developing recommendations regarding professional development and career advancement, statewide early learning standards, and the establishment of a unified data system. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allocated $10.8M in startup funds to California to support its work on these recommendations and other related projects. To fulfill its federal obligation—and to seek greater coherence in a system with many different parts—California is developing a comprehensive statewide plan for an integrated early learning system, the "California Comprehensive Early Learning Plan" (CCELP), that includes strategies for coordinating early care and education programs with health services. This report, by the American Institutes for Research (AIR), analyzes existing research on the condition of California's young children and the status of the state's early childhood services, thereby providing a baseline to help inform the state's development of the CCELP.

Background

Interest in the development of a comprehensive early learning plan in California is grounded in three realities: California's school children are falling behind on many educational standards; the roots of the achievement gap start long before children enter kindergarten; and quality early learning programs have been found to reduce the achievement gap.

Achievement Gap

More than half of the third graders in California do not meet state educational standards in English language arts, and almost one child in three does not meet standards in mathematics (CDE, 2011). Although a substantial percentage of all children fall short on these standards, some groups of students fall short by much wider margins. For example, 70 percent of English learners and students whose parents did not graduate from high school do not meet state English/language arts standards in second grade; the proportions for black, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged students are similarly high (Cannon & Karoly, 2007).

Early Roots of Achievement Gap

The achievement gaps do not suddenly materialize as children continue through school (California Early Learning Quality System Advisory Committee, 2010). Rather, disparities in early vocabulary growth between children from low socioeconomic status (SES) and high SES families can manifest themselves in children as early as 16 months of age (Hart & Risley, 1995) (see Exhibit 1). Differences in language, social, and pre-mathematics skills are already apparent when children

enter kindergarten, and the children who start behind tend to stay behind (Cannon & Karoly, 2007). This early achievement gap is a critical issue for educators, as language proficiency and early literacy development are strong indicators for later school success.

Promise of Early Learning Services in Reducing Gap

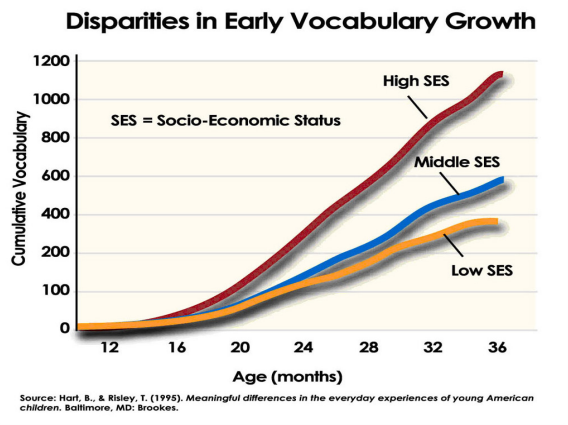
For children at risk of falling behind in school, attending a quality early learning and care program for preschool-age children has been found to help improve their readiness for school and for school success through higher test scores, better attendance, and reduced grade-level retention (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2007). Other lasting benefits include higher rates of high school completion, greater likelihood of attending college, and greater lifetime earnings (Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005; Reynolds & Ou, 2011). By reducing grade retention, use of special education and welfare, and involvement in crime, these quality programs are estimated to save from $4 to $17 for every dollar invested (Karoly & Bigelow, 2005; Reynolds et al., 2007; Schweinhart, 2004).

The benefits of attending a high quality early learning program are not limited to preschool-age children: High quality, center-based care with a substantial parent engagement component has been shown to benefit infants and toddlers, particularly those at high risk because of maternal depression, low birth weight, or low parental income and education (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Honig, 2004; Lally, Mangione, & Honig, 1988). Educare, a high quality program financed by a private-public partnership, offers full-day, full-year services to children from very-low-income families from six weeks old to kindergarten. A recent study of the program, which is scheduled to soon offer centers in 10 locations across the nation (including two in California), showed that the children who entered the program between birth and two years old exceeded the national average on measures of school readiness (Yazejian & Bryan, 2009).

Exhibit 1. Roots of the Achievement Gap

- Roots of the achievement gap start long before children enter kindergarten.
- A major indicator for later school success is language and early literacy development, and disparities in early vocabulary growth between children from low socioeconomic status (SES) and high SES families can manifest themselves in children as early as 16 months of age.
- Differences in language, social, and pre-mathematics skills are apparent when children enter kindergarten, and the children who start school behind tend to stay behind (Cannon & Karoly, 2007).

Disparities in Early Vocabulary Growth, by Socioeconomic Status



Source: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2007). *A Science-Based Framework for Early Childhood Policy: Using Evidence to Improve Outcomes in Learning, Behavior, and Health for Vulnerable Children.*

Organization of Report

We have divided this report into three sections.

Section I provides an overview of conditions for all children birth to age five[1] in California, based on existing publicly available data and analyses, with a special focus on several "subgroups" under federal education law—particularly those whose K–12 performance is below the state average. This section includes population projections through 2020, and highlights the extraordinary diversity of California's population, the large number of children whose home language is not English, the high rate of poverty, and a range of child health and welfare factors that may put children at risk of poor academic performance. To supplement statewide findings on the condition of California's young children, an appendix provides county-by-county profiles on key demographic and risk factors.

Section II provides an overview of key issues, findings, and recommendations from recent research and policy analyses on the status of early childhood services in California for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children. The focus is broad, including access and quality, family engagement, workforce development, dual language learners, developmental screening, services to children with special needs, early childhood mental health/behavioral health, child assessment to support school readiness, effective data practices, status of facilities, food and nutrition, kindergarten transition practices, and systems and governance issues. Overall, the section is based on a review of 81 California-based reports and studies since 2000, and draws on additional studies from other states relevant to finance, governance, and other systems issues.

Section III offers more detailed summaries of specific findings and recommendations from the above 81 California-based reports and studies on the above elements of early learning and care. For each study, we describe the methodology used in the research or policy analysis, and list the authors and, where applicable, the sponsoring agency.

[1] Note that the first section of this report summarizes data from multiple sources for different age groups of children. Wherever possible, we present statistics for children under age five, but in some cases, data are only available for a subset of children under five, or for a larger group of children.

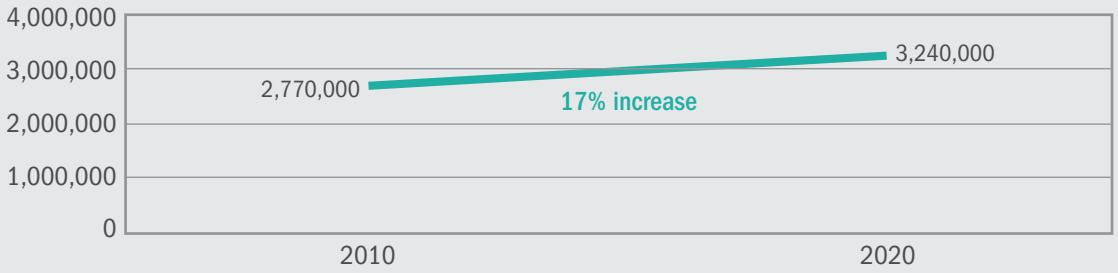
Section I: Overview of Conditions for Children Birth to Age Five in California

In this section, we summarize what is known about the condition of children in California, including the size of the current and projected population, and the number and percentage of children who have various risk factors for poor school performance, including (1) family risk factors, the greatest of which is poverty; (2) community academic risk factors; and (3) health and special needs factors.

Population of Young Children

The first step in developing a comprehensive early learning plan for California is to consider the current size of the population of young children and the projected population growth. In 2010, California was home to approximately 2.77 million children aged birth to five in California (California Department of Finance, 2007). California's population has grown quickly for many decades; however, according to the Public Policy Institute of California, over the past 20 years, California experienced its slowest rates of growth ever recorded, as many families migrated to other states. From 2000 to 2010, California's population grew by 10 percent, which, while low for the state, was still higher than the national average (9.7 percent). According to California's Department of Finance (DoF), the state's population is projected to grow from 39.1 million people in 2010 to 44.1 million in 2020. The number of children under the age of 5, according to DoF, is projected to grow from 2.77 million in 2010 to 3.24 million in 2020, an increase of 17 percent. Even if the rate of growth declines somewhat, California is likely to remain home to more young children than any other state—roughly 13 percent of the children in the United States (State of California, 2011). The sheer number of young children in California underscores the importance of their wellbeing to the future of the state and the nation.

Exhibit 2. Number of Children 0-4, 2010 and 2020 (Projected), California Department of Finance



Nationally, almost 64 percent of mothers with children under six were in the labor force in 2011 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). In California, approximately 34.3 percent of children under six live in families where both parents work (or, in single parent families, where that parent works). This percentage is slightly higher for preschoolers (35.3 percent) and slightly lower for infants and toddlers (33.6 percent) (AIR analysis of American Community Survey data, U.S. Census).

Many of California's children have family or health characteristics that put them at risk of poor school performance; many of the state's children live in communities that present an overall risk

to their academic achievement, and many children face more than one of these family, health, and community risk factors, compounding their educational disadvantage. Below we discuss these three categories of risk factors.

Family Risk Factors

Poverty

The primary family risk factor, often overlapping with community risk and health factors, is living in poverty. Children living in poverty are more likely to have a developmental delay, lack social skills appropriate for the classroom, perform poorly on standardized tests, repeat a grade in school, and drop out of high school (Jensen, 2009; Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997).

The official federal poverty level set by the U.S. Census Bureau is fixed throughout the continental United States; in 2010, this threshold was $22,314 for a family of four. In reality, an adequate living standard requires far more than this income. An Economic Policy Institute (2005) study of family budgets determined that up to three times more families fall below the standards to secure a "safe and decent-yet-modest living standard" as fall below the official poverty line. The level at which families can attain such a standard also varies across states. According to a Census Bureau study (Renwick, 2009), the cost of living is more than four times higher in metropolitan areas of California than it is in Iowa. Even so, one-fifth of all children living below the official poverty level nationwide are in California.

Perhaps in recognition of California's high cost of living, until 2011, children were eligible for the California State Preschool (CSPP) and Title 5 Child Development programs if their family earned less than 75 percent of the State Median Income (SMI). In 2010, this translated to $57,291 annually for a family of four; 1.67 million children under age five were eligible (AIR analysis of American Community Survey data, U.S. Census, 2012), or approximately 62 percent of the age group.[2]

In 2011, given the state's budget constraints, the threshold for CSPP and Title V participation was lowered to 70 percent of the SMI, or $53,472 for a family of four, for which 1.64 million children, or almost 61 percent of those under five in the state, would have qualified.[3]

In 2012 Governor Brown proposed, though the Legislature rejected, further reducing the income eligibility to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or about $44,200 for a family of four.[4] At this threshold, 1.2 million children under five statewide (49 percent) would have qualified in 2010. According to the state's Early Learning Challenge Grant application, there were an estimated 274,442 infants under age one in families at this income level, almost 271,000 toddlers between ages one and 2, and almost 533,000 preschoolers (three- and four-year-olds) (State of California, 2011). Exhibit 3 shows the number of children who would have met the income

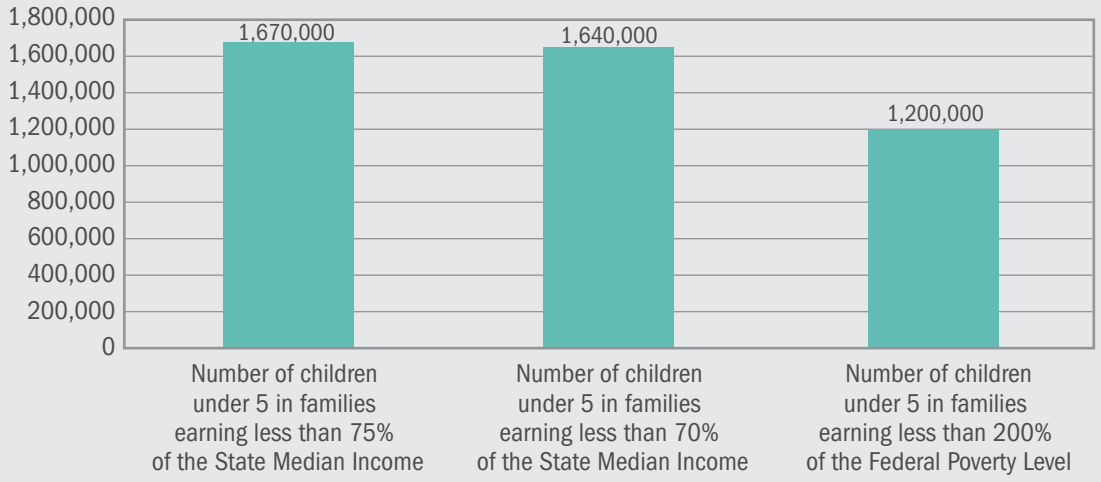
[2] A previous estimate of 53 percent published by the RAND Corporation (http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2012/RAND_OP356.pdf) was based on a parent survey. This slightly higher estimate is based on analysis of Census data for 2010 that were released after RAND's study was published.

[3] The estimate of the percentage qualifying at 70 percent of SMI is based on 2010 Census data.

[4] The estimated dollar value of family income is based on 2010 Census data.

guidelines for CSPP and been eligible for CSPP and Title 5 Child Development programs using the three different criteria for defining poverty.

Exhibit 3. Child Poverty, 2010



It is important to note that poverty is not evenly distributed across the state. Many rural counties have high poverty *rates*, and large populous counties, with lower overall rates of poverty, are home to large *numbers* of poor children. The graphs below show the number of children living in families below 200 percent of the federal poverty line in California's five most populous counties (Exhibit 4), and the percentage of children living in such families in the counties with the highest rates of poverty (Exhibit 5).

Exhibit 4. Number of Children Under 5 Living in Families Earning Under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level in California's Most Populous Counties, 2010

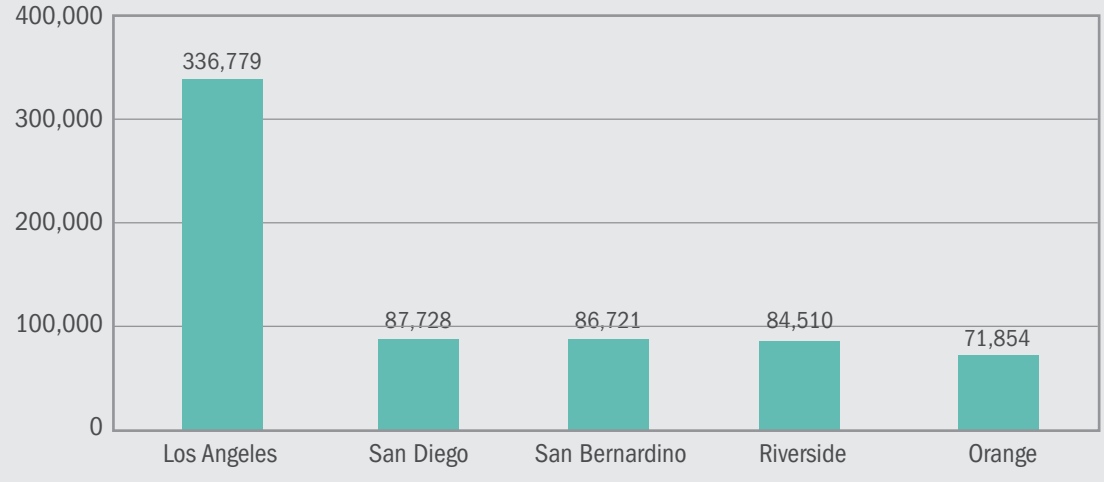
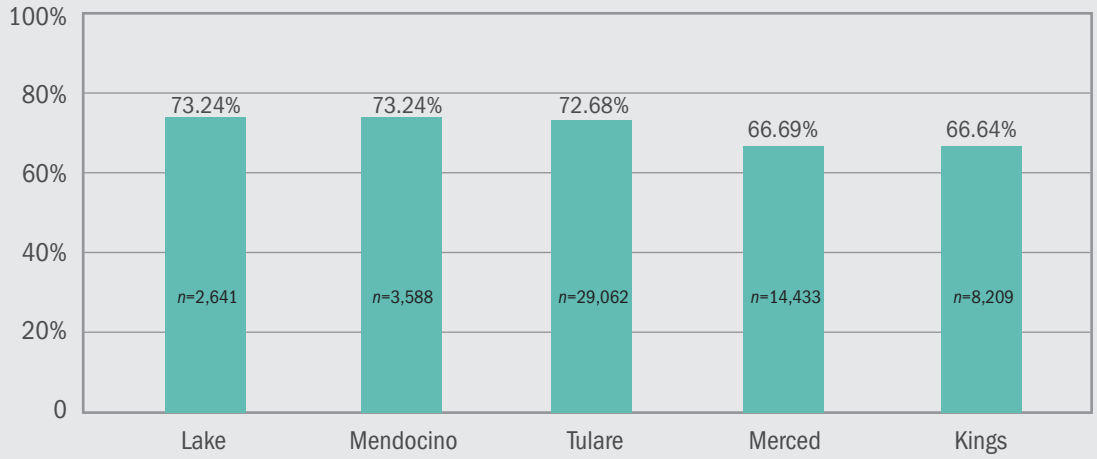


Exhibit 5. Percentage of Children Under 5 Living in Families Earning Under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, Highest Poverty Counties, 2010



Data by county for poverty and other risk factors and for program participation are presented in the accompanying appendix to this report.

Other Family Risk Factors

Parent education levels are also related to children's academic achievement, at least in part because of family norms and variation in parents' abilities to help children with challenging academic work. Statewide, 21 percent of parents of K–12 students have less than a high school education (CDE API Growth Files, 2011), although educational status varies geographically; in two California counties (Kern and Madera), over a third of parents have less than a high school education, which might be driven in part by the large numbers of migrant families in these areas. In comparison, 12.9 percent of adults nationwide had less than a high school education in 2010 (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011).

Exhibit 6. Percentage of Parents in California With Less Than a High School Education, 2011

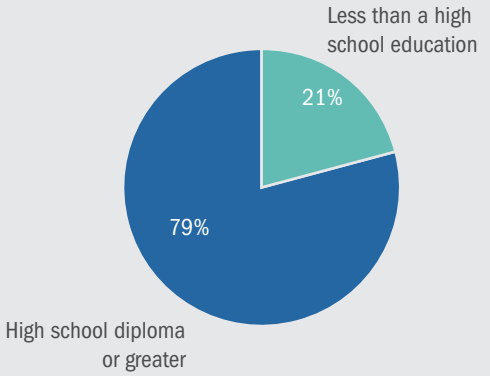
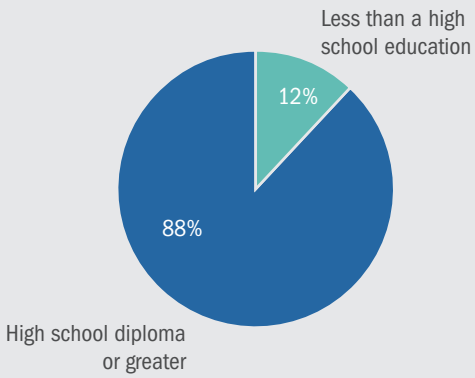
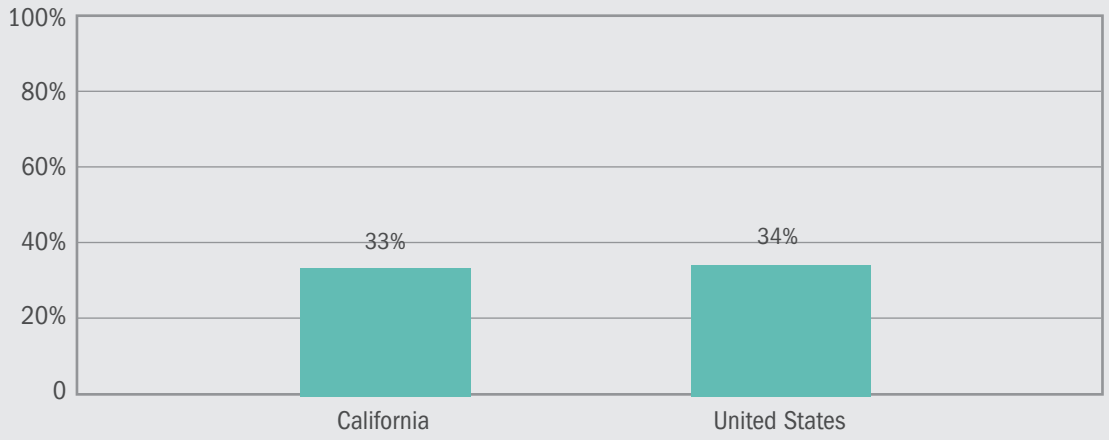


Exhibit 7. Percentage of Adults in the United States With Less Than a High School Education, 2010



Family structure is also related to academic achievement. Children living in homes without a father present may be at risk of poor school achievement. These children are less likely to graduate from high school, to attend college, and to perform well on standardized tests than children from homes with a father present (Sigle-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004; Bain, Boersma, & Chapman, 1983). California is comparable to the nation in this domain: 33 percent of all California children lived in single-parent families in 2010, compared with 34 percent nationwide (Kids Count, n.d.).

Exhibit 8. Percentage of Children Living in Single Parent Families



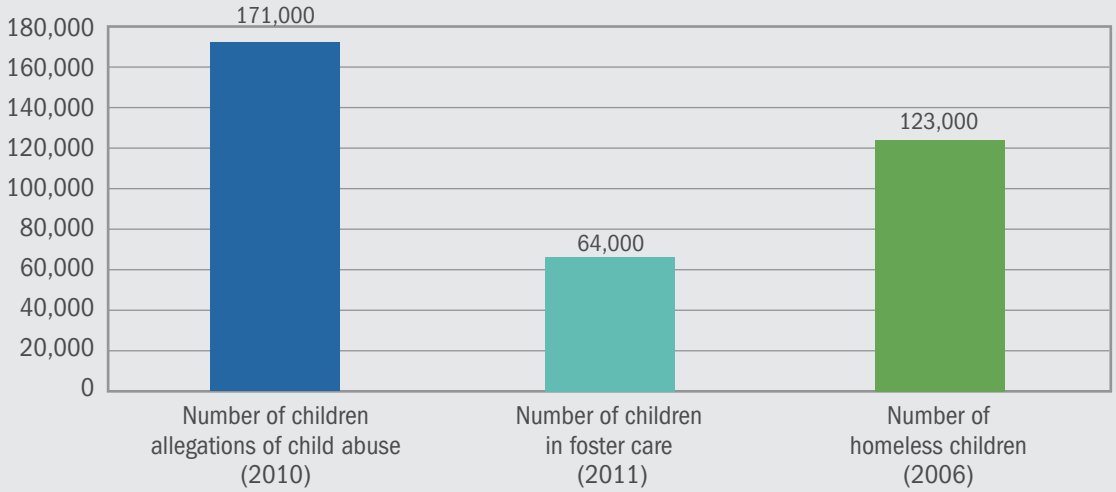
Child abuse can also adversely affect children's development and school performance. Researchers have found a strong relationship between child abuse and neglect and poor academic achievement (Gilbert et al., 2009; Mills, 2004; Veltman & Browne, 2001). For infants and toddlers, early abuse and neglect can impair the development of the brain, negatively affecting not only social and emotional but also cognitive development, especially speech and language development (National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; Wolfe, 1999). In the 2010 calendar year, there was at least one child abuse allegation for more than 171,000 children birth to five statewide —7 percent of all children in this age group in the state.

Many children in foster care also show poor educational outcomes: Large proportions of foster children, according to a study by the Center for Social Services Research at the University of California at Berkeley (2001), perform poorly on academic tests (Sawyer & Dubowitz, 1994; Stein, 1997), fail to graduate from high school while in foster care (Blome, 1997), repeat grades (Benedict, Zuravin, & Stallings, 1996), perform below grade level (English, Kouidou-Giles, & Plocke, 1994; Fanshel & Shinn, 1978; Fox & Arcuri, 1980; Iglehart, 1994), and require special education services (Berrick et al., 1994; English et al., 1994; Goerge, Van Voorhis, Grant, Casey, & Robinson, 1992). As of August 2011, more than 64,000 California children under age five were in foster care (Needell et al., 2012); these children may need early intervention to strengthen their academic readiness.

Children who are homeless often demonstrate significant developmental delays in early childhood, which can contribute to later behavioral and emotional problems and poor performance in school. Children born into homelessness are also more likely to have low birth weights, to be exposed to environmental factors that can endanger their health, and to lack essential immunizations, all of which represent health risk factors, as described below. In 2005–06, more than 292,000 children

in California were homeless, according to data collected by the federal McKinney-Vento program to support homeless students. Nearly 123,000 of these children were under six years old. The number of homeless children increased from 2006 to 2009, but dropped in 2010 (National Center on Family Homelessness, 2010). However, the risk of homelessness in California relative to other states remains high. According to the National Center on Family Homelessness (2010), California ranks poorly (38th out of 50, where 50th is the worst) in comparison with other states in risk of family homelessness: many homeowners are near foreclosure, and 28 percent of households pay more than 50 percent of their income in rent.

Exhibit 9. Other Family Risk Factors, Children 0–5



Finally, migrant children are also at risk of entering kindergarten with poor readiness skills; children who are in migrant families are likely to not have continuity of care in attending quality early childhood programs. 15,550 children from birth to kindergarten entry—almost 1 percent of that population—were classified as migrant in 2010 (State of California, 2011).

Dual Language Learners

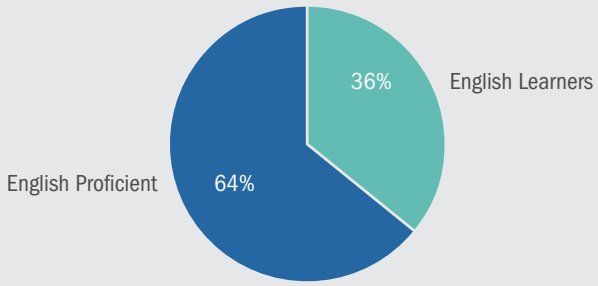
Dual language learners are at risk in some ways, but at an advantage in others. Though being bilingual has clear economic and cognitive advantages (Bialystok & Martin-Rhee, 2004; Fradd & Boswell, 1996), achievement gaps between native English speakers and English learners (ELs) are well documented.[5] This achievement gap is especially important to note in California, where ELs make up a large portion of the population of students. The population of mainly immigrant families that speak a language other than English at home is also more likely than the general population to have low education levels and/or to be living in poverty (National Task Force on Early Childhood Education for Hispanics, 2007)—both significant risk factors for children. Indeed, in 2007, it was estimated that 85 percent of English learners in elementary and secondary schools were also economically disadvantaged (Payán & Nettles, n.d.). Much of the achievement gap can

[5] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 Reading Assessment, retrieved April 13, 2010, from the Main NAEP Data Explorer (http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/naepdata/). (This table was prepared April 2010.)

be explained by these overlapping risk factors. Still, because of these achievement gaps, preschool dual language learners (DLLs, or children still developing their first language skills while also learning English) may be a target group for early education programs that build on their existing home language skills.

California has and will continue to become increasingly ethnically and linguistically diverse. The Census Bureau projects that in 2050 only 53 percent of the United States population will be non-Hispanic white. In California, the minority percentage has already become a majority and is likely to continue to grow (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012), and California educates an estimated one-third of the nation's EL students (ETS, n.d.). California's English learners (ELs) in elementary and secondary schools speak more than 50 different languages, although the vast majority speak Spanish (EdSource, n.d.). In 2009–10, 36 percent of California kindergartners were classified as ELs (State of California, 2011), suggesting that an equal or larger number of preschoolers are dual language learners when they enter early care and education programs. By comparison, in 2005, 10.5 percent of students (K–12) nationwide were English learners (ETS, n.d.). Several California counties have particularly large populations of ELs in kindergarten; both Colusa and Monterey Counties show percentages over 50 percent.

Exhibit 10. Percentage of Kindergarteners in California Classified as English Learners, 2009–10



As with poverty, the numbers and proportions of English learners are not evenly distributed around the state. Many counties with large rural areas and agricultural economies have high proportions of English learners, but more populous counties are still home to larger total numbers of these children. The two graphs below show the number of children identified as English learners in kindergarten in the state's five most populous counties (Exhibit 11), and the percentage of EL kindergartners in the counties with the highest proportions of ELs (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 11. Number of Kindergartners Designated as English Learners in California's Most Populous Counties, 2010

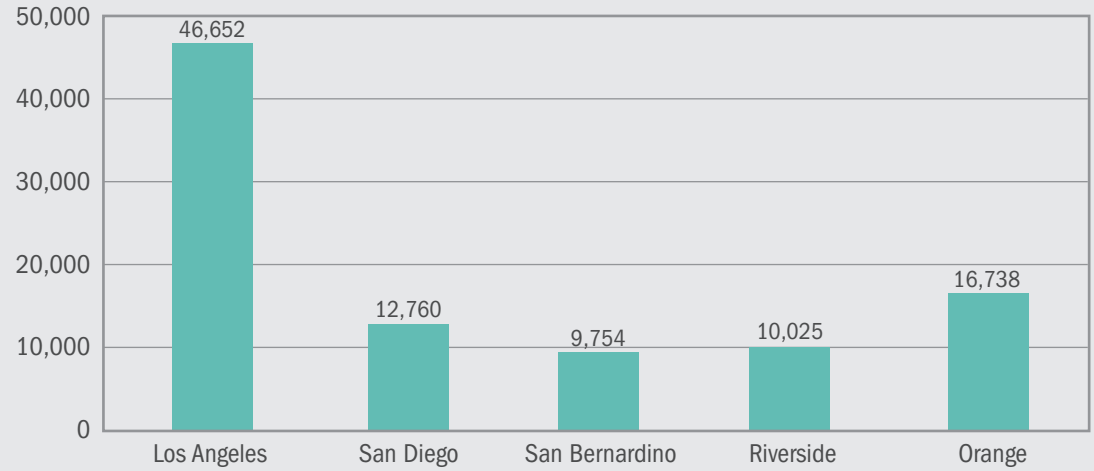
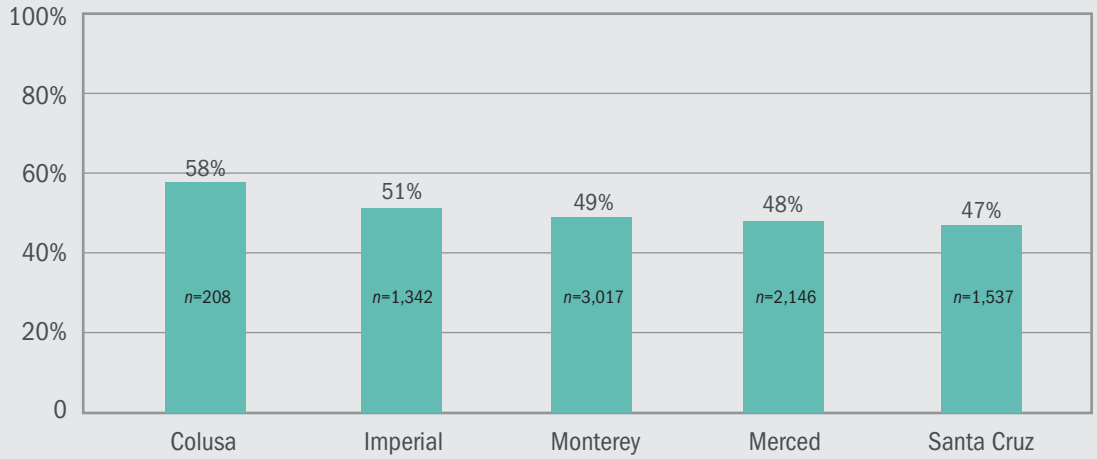


Exhibit 12. Percentage of Kindergartners Designated as English Learners, Highest EL Counties, 2010

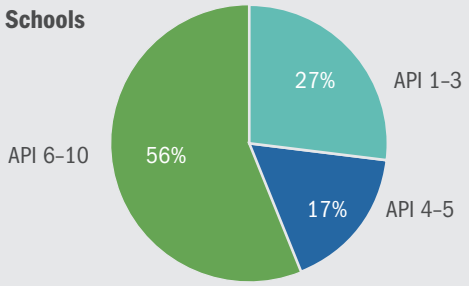


Community Risk Factors

Living in a Low Academic Performance Index Neighborhood

Some policy analyses have recommended targeting early education services based on place-based or community risk factors, such as living in neighborhoods scoring low on the Academic Performance Index (API), as opposed to targeting based strictly on individual family income. Such an approach may minimize the administrative cost of determining eligibility (Karoly, 2009) and be less stigmatizing to the children and families involved (Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006). Focusing early education programs in these areas may help schools improve by ensuring that children are ready for kindergarten, and by engaging families in their children's education early. In 2010, more than 282,000 three- and four-year-olds (27 percent) lived in attendance areas of elementary schools in the bottom three deciles of the Academic Performance Index (API 1–3). An additional 180,000 lived in attendance areas of elementary schools in the fourth or fifth decile (API 4–5).

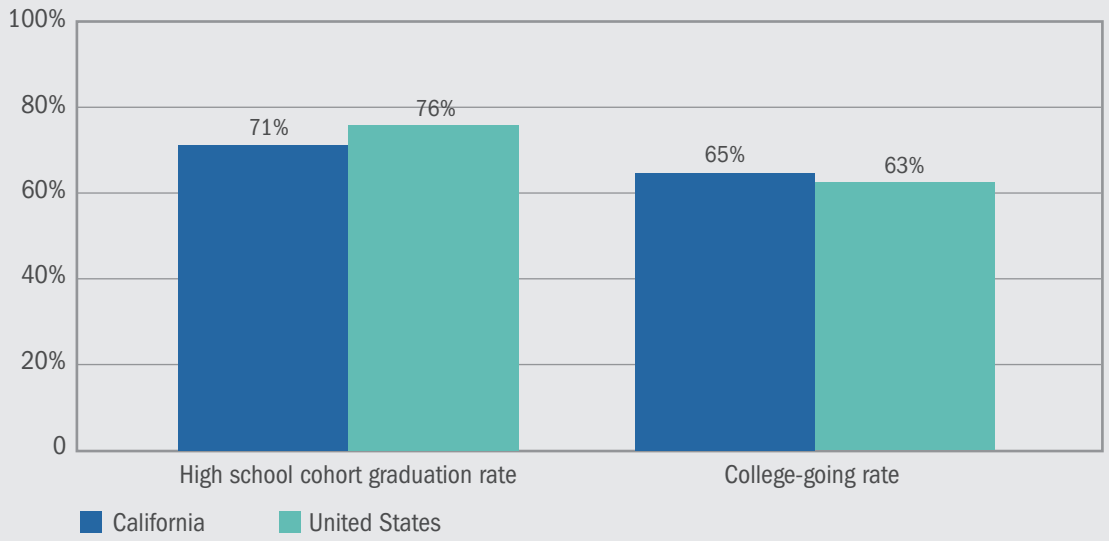
Exhibit 13. Percentage of Children Under 5 in California Living in Attendance Areas of Low API Elementary Schools



High School Dropout Rates and College Entrance

High school dropout rates and college-going rates in children's communities are likely to be strong determinants in setting social and educational expectations for children. Research has found that among neighborhood factors (and controlling for household characteristics), community average education level is a factor most strongly associated with children's standardized test scores (Baker, McGee, Mitchell, & Stiff, 2000). It may therefore be a risk to a child to live in a neighborhood where high school graduation and college-going rates are low. The average proportion of adults who had attended a California community college, California State University, or University of California campus statewide in 2009 was 41 percent, including full-time, part-time, credit, and non-credit students (California Postsecondary Education Commission). More broadly, the college-going rate in California to degree-granting institutions in 2008 was 65.4 percent, compared with 63.3 percent nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). While the college-going rate is slightly higher in California than in the nation as a whole, the high school graduation rate is lower; in 2008–09, the average cohort graduation rate among public school students was 71.1 percent in California, and 75.5 percent nationwide (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011).

Exhibit 14. Educational Attainment, California and Nationwide, 2008



Other Special Populations

Because federal guidance on the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant required a focus on Native American children and because of their higher-than-average poverty rates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010), California's application (State of California, 2011) also identifies children residing on Indian lands as a high-risk population, as these students graduate from high school at lower rates than their peers (Freeman & Fox, 2005). In 2010, 4,273 children in California from birth to kindergarten entry lived on Indian lands (State of California, 2011).

Health and Special Needs Factors

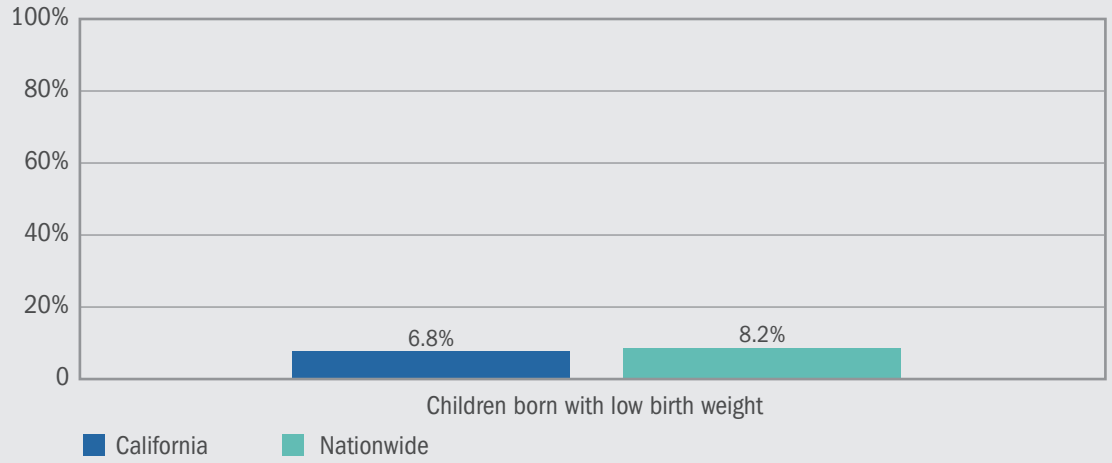
Several health risk factors also put children at risk for delayed cognitive development, placing them at risk for poor school outcomes later in life.

Children with special needs such as autism and developmental delays can have intensive learning and behavioral challenges. In 2005–06, 5 percent of children under 18 in California were diagnosed with autism. This figure has been growing; the autism rate in California increased by over 90 percent between 2003–04 and 2007–08 (Lipscomb, 2009). Overall, 80,226 children in California participate in Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in California (State of California, 2011). According to First 5 California,[6] more than 10 percent of children under age five in California have a disability or special need that 'may impact their ability to play and learn" (First 5 California, n.d.).

From the outset of life, for example, babies with low birth weight have a greater chance of developing learning disabilities and chronic health conditions such as asthma that can lead to increased school absences (Kirkegaard, Obel, Hedegaard, & Henriksen, 2006). In 2009, 7 percent of children born in California were born with low birth weight, compared with 8.2 percent in the United States (The National Vital Signs Statistics Systems, n.d.). This proportion does not vary notably by county; all California counties reported 5 percent to 7 percent of all children being born with low birth weight. In addition to actual weight at birth, recent research also highlights differences in children based on whether they are born premature or not, and suggests that there are even differences between children born full-term and those born just a few weeks early; Noble et al. (2012) found that more children born at 37 or 38 weeks did poorly on third-grade math and reading tests than their peers who were born even one or two weeks later. (Of course, babies born prematurely are more likely than full-term babies to be born at a low birth weight.) As with low birth weight, California may be at a relative advantage on this health factor; in 2009, 6.8 percent of births in California were after fewer than 37 weeks of gestation, compared with 8.2 percent nationwide (Kids Count, n.d.).

[6] In 1998 voters passed Proposition 10, adding a 50-cent tax to each pack of cigarettes sold, to create First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission. First 5 California distributes funds to local communities through the state's 58 individual counties, all of which have created their own local First 5 County Commissions, to provide a comprehensive system of education, health services, childcare, and other programs for children birth to five and their families. The amount of funding provided to each First 5 County Commission is based upon the area's birth rate.

Exhibit 15. Low-Birth-Weight Births, California and Nationwide, 2009



Lead poisoning, while less prevalent in California than nationwide, still constitutes another concern. Exposure to lead in children can cause brain damage and impair cognitive development, contribute to anemia and kidney damage, impede physical growth, and, at high levels of exposure, even lead to death (CDC, 1997). Children under the age of six are at greater risk for lead poisoning because their bodies are still developing and they engage in frequent hand-to-mouth and object-to-mouth activity. In addition, low-income children are more likely to live in older housing and are therefore more likely to be exposed to lead paint (CDC, 1997). In 2009, 3.6 percent of the more than 600,000 children aged birth to five screened in California showed blood lead levels between 4.5 and 9 micrograms per deciliter, where cognitive impacts begin to be a risk. An additional 0.5 percent of children showed levels above 9 micrograms per deciliter. However, data from the CDC's National Surveillance Data show that in the same year, the CDC found that 0.22 percent of children in California showed elevated blood lead levels (EBLLs) overall, comparing favorably with 0.64 percent of children nationwide (CDC, n.d.).

Exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke is also harmful for children. Secondhand smoke puts young children at risk for respiratory illnesses, including Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), middle ear infections, impaired lung function, and asthma. Perhaps as a sign that families are beginning to learn the hazards of secondhand smoke, the First 5 California Smokers' Helpline receives thousands of calls per month from mothers seeking help to quit smoking (First 5 California, 2009).

Oral health is important for children's wellbeing; tooth pain can make paying attention in school difficult, and research has shown that children with poor dental health are almost three times as likely to miss school as their peers (Jackson et al., 2011). According to a report from the Maternal Child and Adolescent Health Division of the California Department of Health (2005), minority children and those in poverty are the most likely to suffer from dental problems. In 2009, 34 percent of California's two-to-four-year-olds had never visited a dentist (Child Health Interview Survey [CHIS]).

Overall, 27 percent of children between birth and five have never been to the dentist (CHIS, n.d.b). And by third grade, more than 70 percent of children have a history of tooth decay, with more than 25 percent of these children untreated. It is estimated that students in California miss a total of 874,000 days of school each year due to dental problems (Children Now, 2011).

Obesity is a major and growing concern in California and nationwide (California Endowment, n.d.). In California, 10 percent of children under five were identified as overweight for their age in 2007 (CHIS, n.d.a), and 17.2 percent are now classified as obese (Borland E, Smith, Polhamus, & Grummer-Strawn, 2012).

Children without health insurance are less likely to get the medical care they need (Feld, Matlock, & Sandman, 1998) to identify and treat conditions related to the above risk factors; they are also less likely to be screened for developmental difficulties that might affect school performance (Families USA, n.d.). In 2001, there were nearly 1 million uninsured children under age 19 in California; 355,000 of these children were eligible for the Medi-Cal program (but remained uninsured). However, over the last decade, California has been increasing children's access to health insurance. The number of uninsured children dropped from an estimated 778,000 in 2003 to 683,000 in 2007, a 12 percent decline (California Health Care Foundation, 2009). The percentage of California children birth to age six receiving preventive care under public insurance plans (Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, and Healthy Kids) exceeds national averages, including those for private insurers (California Health Care Foundation, 2009). Still, children with foreign-born parents and parents with limited English proficiency are less likely to be enrolled in Medi-Cal programs for which they are eligible (Kincheloe & Brown, 2005).

Young children's healthy social and emotional development is also critical to school readiness and future well-being (Pitcl & Provance, 2006). No estimates are available of the number of children under five who suffer from mental, emotional, or behavioral (MEB) disorders, because such disorders are difficult to diagnose at an early age. However, the Institute of Medicine suggests that signs of MEB disorders often do manifest themselves at early ages, often through parent and teacher concerns about behavior (The National Academies, 2009). Though no statistics on the number of children at risk of MEB are available for the state of California, Brauner and Stephens (2006) estimate that between 9.5 and 14.2 percent of children nationwide under five experience social, emotional, and behavioral problems that negatively impact their development.

Multiple Risk Factors

National surveys indicate that about one-third of U.S. young children have two or more risk factors for poor health and development, including low maternal education, family poverty, and others. The likelihood of having poorer health and/or poorer developmental outcomes increases with each risk factor; Stevens (2006) found that one risk factor yielded nearly twice the risk as no risk factors, two risk factors more than three times the risk, three risk factors nearly five times the risk, and

four risk factors 14 times the risk for being in poor health or having a developmental delay. Multiple risk factors are also important to consider in educational outcomes; research has found that children exposed to multiple social and family risk factors in early childhood show lower cognitive and language scores (Burchinal, Roberts, Hooper, & Zeisel, 2000).

In California, the various risk factors for poor school performance often overlap; children who live in API 1–3 school neighborhoods also frequently live in poverty and are dual language learners. These children are also more likely than others to be in poor health. Because of this overlap, it is difficult to estimate precisely the total number of children who might most benefit from access to early learning and care programs of sufficient quality to help prepare them for school. Still, given the number of low-income children alone (1.2 million in families below 200 percent of the federal poverty line), it is safe to estimate that there are at least that many children at risk for poor school performance who would benefit from early intervention efforts.

Risks and Opportunities

Many of the risk factors described above are clear risk factors, but others are unclear, or depend upon context. As discussed above, dual language learners are at risk in some ways, but at an advantage in others. Though being bilingual has clear economic and cognitive advantages (Bialystok & Martin-Rhee, 2004; Fradd & Boswell, 1996), achievement gaps between native English speakers and ELs are well documented. These achievement gaps may be partly because lack of English skills limits access to content in elementary school, but they can also be largely explained by correlations with other risk factors such as poverty and low education levels.

Similarly, having a working parent may have both risks and benefits for children. For many years, having a mother in the labor force was considered a risk factor for young children. More recently, the greatest concern is for infants who have mothers in the workforce. Several studies have found that children on average fare better if their mothers do not work full-time in the first year of life (Han, Waldfogel, & Brooks-Gunn, 2001; Ruhm, 2004; Waldfogel, 2006). A more recent study by some of the same researchers, however, found that although early maternal employment has some risks, it also offers some advantages, such as increasing mothers' income and the likelihood that their children attend high quality child care (Brooks-Gunn, Han, & Waldfogel, 2010). When all factors, such as income and quality of parenting and child care, have been taken into account, the net effect of maternal employment in the first year of life has been found to be neutral.

The next section of the report summarizes what recent research shows about access to, and the quality of, programs for children in California, and presents key recommendations for moving forward.

Section II: Recent Findings and Recommendations on Early Learning and Care Services

Based on the conditions of California's children ages birth to 5, what early learning and care services do they need to help promote school readiness and success in school and life? We know that at least one million young children—more than one-third of the age group—are at risk of not entering kindergarten as prepared as they might be. This section of the report provides an overview of the key findings and recommendations from recent research and policy analyses on the status of early childhood services in California for infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children.

How We Selected the Research and Policy Analyses

AIR staff identified 81 research and policy analyses for inclusion in this synthesis. All of the reports selected, with the exception of those addressing finance, governance, and systems issues, focus on California-based early childhood services or contain a major section specifically examining services within the state. In addition, all of the work selected is relatively recent (with the vast majority published since 2000). The research and policy reports employ a wide variety of methodological approaches, including analysis of newly collected data, extant and administrative data, classroom observations, direct child assessments, interviews and surveys, and literature and document review. For the finance, governance, and systems issues, we expand our coverage of reports to include research about these issues in other states, in order to incorporate lessons already learned.

In selecting the work included in this synthesis, we looked for research and policy analyses that spanned a broad range of issues that are integral to the development of an early learning and care system. Some research and reports addressed one topic in depth; others covered multiple issues. While it was not possible in this scope of work to fully address child health issues, such as efforts to promote child health insurance coverage, we do explore the literature on developmental screening, assistance to children with special needs, early childhood mental health services, and food and nutrition programs. The following is a list of the major elements of early learning and care services covered:

- Access to early learning and care
- Program quality assessment
- The extent of family engagement in early childhood programs
- Progress toward development of an early childhood workforce
- Approaches to dual language learners and linguistically isolated children
- Developmental screening
- Assistance to children with special needs
- Early childhood mental health/behavioral health services
- Child assessment to support school readiness
- Effective practices for child data

- Number and quality of facilities
- Attention to food and nutrition
- Kindergarten transition practices
- Finance, governance, and systems issues

Key findings for each of the above areas are outlined below, organized by policy question, followed by the most commonly emerging recommendations made by the authors of the summarized reports. For more detail on the findings and recommendations in each area, and a description of the methodology used in each of these 81 studies reviewed, see Section III.

Access to Early Learning and Care

> *Large numbers of children in California, age birth to five, spend many hours in non-parental care. There is consensus that access to quality early learning and care is uneven, varying by the age of the child and by multiple family characteristics, such as family income, the mother's education level, and the degree of linguistic isolation. Licensed care for infants and toddlers is in particularly short supply, and federal and state funding is consistently lowest for this age group. For all children, researchers agree that programs should be first made available to disadvantaged children—such those with risk factors as outlined in the first section of the report. Though there are two sometimes conflicting motivations for providing publicly subsidized care to preschool-age children—school readiness, and affordable child care for children of working families—quality programs are critical for positive outcomes for all children. Some researchers see linking formal and informal arrangements for this age group to home visiting programs as one strategy to improve access to early learning and care for this age group.*

Key Findings

While we review research on access to early learning and care for all children, the major focus, as required by the ARRA funds supporting this work, is on those "subgroups" under federal law whose K–12 performance is below state average. Key findings regarding access to early learning and care are outlined below, organized by policy question.

1. **What proportion of children age birth to five receive some non-parental early learning and care service; how does the utilization of formal and informal, center-based and home-based arrangements vary by the age of the child; and to what extent do utilization patterns reflect family choice?**

    - At least three quarters of preschool-age children, and just under half of infants and toddlers, are cared for by someone other than their parents on a regular basis (Karoly, 2012a). While attendance at center-based programs is the norm for preschool-age children, it is the exception for infants and toddlers. At most, 4 percent of the state's infants and toddlers attend licensed center-based programs, and another 8 percent are in licensed family child care homes (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).

- If the definition of "early learning and care" is expanded to include informal care by family, friends, and neighbors, as many as 42 percent of two-year-olds are in non-parental care for at least 10 hours a week, along with somewhat smaller proportions of infants and younger toddlers (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, California Health Interview Survey, 2007, as cited in Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).

- Not all early learning and care services for this age group take the form of non-parental care.

  - As many as 40,000 families in California with infants and toddlers receive home visiting services, and home visits linked to formal or informal non-parental care have been shown to be an effective model to promote early learning (Gomby, 2005, as cited in Anthony & Muenchow, AIR, 2010; Love, 2001).

  - About one third of the families with infants born in California receive a period of publicly supported[7] part-paid leave from work to focus on bonding with their newborn child (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). For participating families, the leave policy has extended the length of breastfeeding, and has given families more time to look for appropriate child care arrangements, but many families do not know about the leave benefit (Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011).

- The unmet need for infant and toddler care is evidenced by the fact that the largest number of requests to child care resource and referral agencies is for formal care for children under the age of 2, according to the *2011 Child Care Portfolio* (California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2011). California is the nation's fifth least affordable state for center-based infant care, with the cost representing more than 40 percent of the median income for a single-parent household, based on an analysis by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2011), cited by Children Now (2012).

- Center-based infant care with staff-child ratios and group sizes that facilitate sufficient attention for very young children is expensive to provide, and the high cost deters many families from using this form of care (California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2011; Children Now, 2012). Most of the center-based care for this age group consists of Early Head Start or state-contracted programs that are publicly subsidized (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).

- There are also indications that some families prefer family, friend, and neighbor care, especially for very young children, because the hours of care more easily accommodate parents' work schedules, and because families may feel more comfortable having friends or family members who share their culture and language care for their youngest children (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). For preschool-age children, working parents often combine a part-day, center-based experience with home-based family, friend, or neighbor care for the remainder of the day (Karoly, 2012a).

[7] Publicly supported leave refers to leave supported by taxpayers (payroll taxes), not by private employers.

2. **What are the major purposes of publicly supported early learning and care, and to what extent do families have access to early learning and care services that address these purposes?**

   - There are two sometimes conflicting motivations for providing publicly subsidized care to preschool-age children: to promote healthy child development and school readiness, and to provide affordable child care for children of low-income working families (Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007; CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
   - Most of the infants and toddlers in center-based care are in programs with a developmental focus, but very few are in center-based or licensed care of any type (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).
   - In 2006, 81 percent of preschool-age children in subsidized care were in settings with a child development focus (i.e., Head Start, Title 1, or a state-contracted Title 5 program). Another 9 percent were in programs that, at a minimum, met less stringent Title 22 regulations, and most of the rest were in license-exempt care. However, programs with a developmental focus are not funded sufficiently to serve all eligible children. In 2006, the gap between eligibility and enrollment was approximately 77,000 four-year-olds and 156,000 three-year-olds (Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007).
   - Many of the programs with a developmental focus, particularly those serving preschool-age children, operate on a part-day basis, which does not easily accommodate the work schedules of working parents. Of the parents calling local child care resource and referral agencies to request assistance finding child care, 86 percent requested full-day arrangements, and 70 percent cited their work as the primary reason for their need for child care (California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2011).

3. **How good is the quality of early learning and care, and does access to quality programs vary by ethnicity, income, and other child and family characteristics? What are the major barriers to enhancing the quality?**

   - Based on measures of teacher-child interaction and the instructional quality in the program, only 13 percent of children from low-income families are enrolled in early learning programs of sufficient quality to promote the kind of thinking skills that make the most difference in school readiness and performance (Karoly, 2009). Investing tax dollars in programs that are not of sufficient quality to prepare children for school can be seen as an inefficient use of public funds.
   - California's Title 5 State Preschool Program sets higher standards for program quality than does the state's Title 22 licensing system. However, the program is rated as meeting just 4 of 10 benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research for high quality preschool programs (Barnett et al., 2010; NIEER, 2010; CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010). Current reimbursement rates for publicly funded programs provide little incentive to improve quality. Programs required to meet higher Title 5 standards frequently receive lower reimbursement rates than programs held only to minimum licensing standards (Children Now, 2008: Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007; Lam & Muenchow, 2009b).

- Reimbursement levels based on the market rate are now more than half a decade old, and they do not cover the cost of providing quality care to infants (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).

- First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP)[8] and the new Child Signature Program (CSP) standards are similar to those recommended nationally by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Institute for Early Education Research (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009). PoP programs also serve a high proportion of the children found to benefit most from high quality programs, such as dual language learners, and 10 percent of children in these programs have special needs or disabilities (Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek, 2011).

- First 5 PoP Demonstration Projects finance the program's higher standards by using a tiered reimbursement system that explicitly rewards programs that move beyond the Title 5 requirements for teacher qualifications with a higher rate of reimbursement (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009; Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007; Muenchow & Lam, 2009).

- California has far less stringent requirements for publicly subsidized license-exempt care than many other states, with no requirements for participation in training and no provisions for even an initial site visit to assess the health and safety of the arrangement (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). For example, in New York and Oregon, only providers who complete training receive enhanced rates; in Nevada, exempt programs have an initial site visit within 45 days of registration, followed by periodic visits every six months. Oklahoma does not subsidize exempt care; the state limits the use of public funds to licensed arrangements.

4. **What proportion of the children eligible for publicly subsidized programs is served, how have budget reductions over the last 3–5 years affected access to programs, and could existing resources be used more effectively to reach the children who would most benefit from high quality early care and education?**

   - Based on an analysis of the 2005 National Household Education Survey and the 2007 RAND California Preschool Study, subsidized programs of all types served about one third of eligible three-year-olds, about two thirds of eligible four-year-olds, and just 8 percent of infants and toddlers from income-eligible families (Karoly, 2012a).

   - From 2007 to 2010, enrollment in several early learning and care programs increased:

     - The number of children participating in First 5 Power of Preschool programs nearly doubled, from 14,239 to 24,389.

     - Consolidation of existing State Preschool, Prekindergarten Family Literacy, and General Child Care and Development programs enabled more than 19,000 additional children to be part of the California State Preschool Program (State of California, 2011).

[8] The Power of Preschool (PoP) project, funded by First 5 California, is a demonstration project in nine California counties to increase the number of high quality preschool spaces in California. Many PoP sites are Head Start or California State Preschool programs that have received additional funding from PoP to increase program quality. Other PoP programs are fully funded by First 5.

- The number of children with high needs enrolled in State Preschool in California increased from 87,706 in 2007 to 101,414 in 2010, and the number in Title 1 preschool increased from 23,726 in 2007 to 26,580 in 2009 (State of California, 2011).
- In addition, the Transitional Kindergarten Program, enacted in 2011, is anticipated to ultimately serve 120,000 children.

- At the same time, in response to the budget crisis, access to subsidized care was reduced in other ways:
  - Eligibility for State Preschool and Title 5 programs was reduced from 75 percent to 70 percent of the State Median Income (SMI).
  - The number of children served in programs funded by the Child Care and Development Fund in programs such as the Alternative Payment Program and CalWORKS declined from 131,679 in 2007 to 125,899 in 2010.
  - The number of children birth to five served in programs funded by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C and Part B declined from 83,484 in 2007 to 81,621 in 2010 (State Of California, 2011).
- In June 2012, the Governor made the following line-item reductions to publicly funded early learning and care:
  - $30 million from State Preschool, leading to an approximate reduction of 12,500 slots
  - $20 million from the Alternative Payment Program, resulting in an approximate reduction of 3,400 slots on top of the 14,000-slot reduction made earlier by the Legislature (Child Development Policy Institute, 2012).
- Over the last decade, analysts have identified a number of inefficiencies in the way publicly subsidized programs are administered:
  - Families were placed on the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) without a formal determination of eligibility, making it difficult for agencies in some counties to fully expend their CDE contract funds by the required time (Children Now, 2008).
  - Several organizations have made recommendations for reducing this underearning and improving efficiencies (California Department of Education, 2007; Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007; Kidango, 2007).
  - Mechanisms for allocating funding to providers, whether through contracts or vouchers, made it difficult to spend all of the funding allocated to the program in a given year, further reducing the number of children served.
- Access to and utilization of programs is uneven. Use of center-based early learning and care is lowest amongst children who are most likely to benefit.

- While nearly three quarters of preschool children with mothers with a bachelor's degree attend preschool, only 45 percent of preschool children whose mothers have less than a high school diploma attend (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Karoly, 2009).
- Latino children are much less likely than white children to attend center-based programs in the year prior to kindergarten (38 percent versus 58 percent). Latino children who do attend center-based programs enter one year later than white children, on average (Bridges, Fuller, Rumberger, & Tran, 2004; Lopez & de Cos, 2004). Even when Latino children do attend preschool, they participate for fewer hours (Children Now, 2012; Love, Atkins-Burnet, & Vogel, 2009).
- About half of preschool-age children in California are children of immigrants, and about 20 percent are linguistically isolated. Only 15 percent of linguistically isolated children attend center-based programs (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012).

- While roughly 85 percent of the brain's core structures are formed by age three, only about 6 cents out of every dollar that California invests in education and development services for children from birth to age 18 goes to support infants and toddlers (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012; Children Now, 2012). Recent cuts to child care, Early Start, and early childhood quality improvement efforts have further reduced this funding.

Recommendations

To move forward with increasing access to high quality early learning and care, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **To expand access to quality early learning and care for children birth to age 5:**
   - Include early learning and care in a comprehensive P-to-12 education and reform package with an equitable and adequate financing system (Children Now, 2012; Superintendent's P–16 Council, 2008).
   - Expand Title 1 funding for preschool (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Karoly, 2009; AIR, 2004).
   - Advocate for and establish a "set-aside" or guaranteed minimum percentage for infant-toddler programs in state and federal funds, such as Title 1, RTT-ELC grants, and Child Care and Development Fund (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012). Create a new state revenue source that supports early learning birth to five, and within this stream, set aside at least 30 percent for infants and toddlers.
   - Consider targeting linguistically isolated children, although targeting children from low-income families accomplishes much the same goal (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012).
   - For infants and toddlers, until there is adequate funding to benefit all programs and children, target any expansion to children at high risk, e.g., children meeting Early Head Start eligibility criteria in high poverty communities (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).

- Within existing resources for preschool programs, continue to target four-year-olds and three-year-olds from currently income-eligible families. If additional resources permit extending access to a larger share of the population, consider combining place-based targeting with income targeting so that all children in targeted communities are able to participate, even if they are not otherwise eligible (Karoly, 2009). This approach would reduce the stigma and bureaucracy associated with checking family income. In addition, many children slightly above the income eligibility requirements are still at risk by virtue of living in poor communities with low-performing schools.
- Within existing resources for children birth to age 5, consider centralizing the process for eligibility determination at the county level or lower.
- Modify the contract mechanism for Title 5 programs and alternative payment programs to reduce the extent of unused funds, possibly by shifting from contracts that reimburse child-days to grants with minimum enrollment and /or attendance requirements (Karoly, 2009).
- Support the implementation of the federal home visitation program and coordinate and link with early learning programs, including license-exempt as well as licensed providers (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012; Children Now, 2012; Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). Expand 0–3 home visitation services, giving highest priority to the most vulnerable children (Water Cooler Project, 2012).
- Publicize California's Paid Family Leave program and its relevance for the care of newborn infants.

2. **To address the dual goals of early learning and care programs:**

- Identify strategies that would allow greater efficiency in improving child development, without necessarily detracting from the goal of supporting working parents' newborn or newly adopted children (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010; Appelbaum & Milkman, 2011).
- As models, look to other states—such as New York, Oregon, and Nevada— with more stringent monitoring requirements for publicly funded exempt providers (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).
- Policymakers may need to make choices about system reforms that involve tradeoffs between these two policy goals (Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007).
- Determine eligibility for part-day developmental programs at the time of application, and maintain eligibility even if family circumstances (such as employment) change. Determine eligibility for subsidized full-day programs conditionally, and finalize eligibility when the program begins. Structure the enrollment process to coincide with the program year (Karoly, 2009).
- Recognize that the major barrier to expanding full-day programs is cost, and carefully consider the differential costs of three-hour, six-hour, and nine-hour-a-day programs and of school-calendar versus full-year programs (Lam & Muenchow, 2009).

3. **To improve the quality of early learning and care programs:**

   - Recognize that quality, particularly the recruitment and retention of qualified teachers, costs more (Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005; UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, 2011).
   - Restructure the child care reimbursement system for publicly funded infant-toddler programs so that providers are reimbursed for the true cost of providing quality care. Provide higher reimbursement rates in a tiered system for programs meeting standards at the higher levels of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
   - Increase reimbursement rates for Title 5 programs to be at least equivalent to those for voucher programs, which are held to lower quality standards than Title 5. This will make it more possible for Title 5 programs, one of the state's higher quality programs, to remain in operation (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Karoly, 2009; Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007).
   - Provide financial and non-financial incentives to support continuous quality improvement (CAEL QIS, 2010). Estimate the cost of various incentives as part of a pilot (CAEL QIS, 2010; Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007).
   - Raise quality through a multi-pronged approach that includes quality measurements and monitoring, financial incentives and supports, and accountability through evaluating child outcomes (Karoly, 2009).

Program Quality Assessment

Multiple California-based studies highlight the need to provide more information on the quality of early learning and care programs to families, and to explain why a licensing system focused exclusively on health and safety requirements is not adequate to assess the quality of the early learning environment. Instead, Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) such as the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and measures of teacher-child interactions such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) are recommended to assess program quality. Measuring the quality of teacher-child interactions is particularly critical, as these have been linked to children's gains on receptive and expressive language assessments (Howes, Burchinal, Pianta, Bryant, Early, Clifford, & Barbarin, 2008). There is also substantial agreement on the merits of linking state payment rates for publicly subsidized programs to the quality of the early learning and care program. Reports stress the importance of standardized program environmental assessments conducted by trained assessors external to the programs, and the need for relatively frequent assessments to ensure fairness to providers. At the same time, researchers note that the frequency of the assessments must be balanced with cost considerations. Virtually all studies on the topic recommend piloting a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) before implementing it statewide.

Key Findings

1. **What statewide systems are currently in place to assess the safety and quality of early learning and care services in California? Does the public currently have adequate information about the safety and quality of early learning and care services in California? How might a QRIS improve accountability?**

   - California currently has three early learning and care "systems"—Title 22 licensure, Title 5 state-contracted, and Head Start—as well as a publicly funded "non-system" of unregulated, license-exempt care (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Children Now, 2012).
     - Only two of these "systems"—Title 5 and the federally administered Head Start—have standards designed to promote child development and school readiness (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
       - The Desired Results system requires Title 5 providers to conduct program self-assessments using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) and periodic progress reviews. (Note: Although Desired Results also includes observational assessments of children, in this section we focus only on program quality assessment.)
       - Head Start requires programs to be assessed using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Measuring the quality of teacher-child interactions is particularly critical, as these have been linked to children's gains on receptive and expressive language assessments (Howes, Burchinal, Pianta, Bryant, Early, Clifford, & Barbarin, 2008 as cited in Manship, Fain, & Madsen, 2011).
     - California's Title 22 licensure systems ranks 46th (the lowest) in the nation.
       - Its licensing standards allow considerably larger-than-recommended staff-child ratios, do not require staff to complete any annual training, and do not require any post-secondary degree for lead teachers (National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies [NACCRRA], 2011).
       - Child care centers in the state are routinely inspected once every five years. In a majority of states, visits are conducted, on average, once a year (NACCRRA, 2011).
       - The caseloads of licensing inspectors are three to five times heavier than the nationally recommended caseload of 1:50 (NACCRRA, 2011; Children Now, 2012).
   - Comprehensive, publicly available information about child care providers has been lacking.
     - The state has not made inspection reports readily available to the public (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007; Karoly, 2009).
     - The Title 22 licensing system only measures whether the center or family child care home meets health and safety standards, and, as a result, it cannot be used to evaluate other components of care, such as the quality of the learning environment, the qualifications of the teachers, or staff-to-child ratios (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007).

- The state funds child care resource and referral programs in every county to provide information to parents on the range of services that are available and tips on how to look for quality programs, but there is no objective rating system on which to base the information and referrals (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

- To help parents identify quality settings for infants and toddlers, a QRIS could be an extremely useful consumer protection tool (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).

- Disseminating information about the quality of programs could influence the overall quality of the provider market and could help policymakers target resources where they are needed (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007; Karoly, 2009).

- A QRIS has the potential to truly focus on early learning and care programs for infants and toddlers as well as preschool-age children (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).

- California's 1,729 local educational agencies and more than 50,000 early learning providers span a far wider spectrum of size, infrastructure, and readiness for change than exists in any other state, and a one-size-fits-all approach will not work (State of California, 2011).

- Standards help to promote accountability: Early learning and care programs that already have standards in place through licensure, or that have Title 5 or Head Start standards, currently score highest on quality elements (Karoly, 2012b).

2. **What are the most reliable tools for assessing the quality of teaching and learning in an early childhood program? To ensure accuracy and fairness, how frequently should programs be assessed, and by whom?**

   The Environmental Rating Scales (ERS), first published in 1980, have demonstrated reliability and validity. They are currently used to measure the quality of the First 5 Power of Preschool Programs, and are used in most other states that have QRISs (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011; Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009).

   - The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), now required by the federal government to evaluate the quality of Head Start programs, is an assessment tool with demonstrated reliability and validity that is particularly noted for its capacity to assess the quality of teacher instruction for preschool children (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; AIR, 2007). Measuring the quality of teacher-child interactions is particularly critical, as these have been linked to children's gains on receptive and expressive language assessments (Howes, Burchinal, Pianta, Bryant, Early, Clifford, & Barbarin, 2008 as cited in Manship, Fain, & Madsen, 2011).

   - The Program Assessment Rating Scale (PARS) measures the early educator's responsiveness to children birth to three (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

- Alignment with the State of California's Infant/Toddler and Preschool *Foundations* and *Frameworks* can serve as a proxy for curriculum, child assessment, developmental and health screenings with appropriate referrals, inclusion of children with special needs, and cultural and language competence. The *Foundations* and *Frameworks* contain these (and other) program quality criteria and are aligned with kindergarten and California Common Core standards.

- Attention must be paid to the validity of the ratings, the frequency of the ratings, and the cost of the ratings. In other states with QRISs, the frequency of ratings varies from every other year in Colorado to once every three years in North Carolina (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010, citing Zellman & Perlman, 2008).

- Third-party assessments by trained assessors are important to ensure the validity of the ratings, although self-assessments can be useful to providers in the initial tiers of the system (CAEL QIS, 2010, citing Zellman & Perlman, 2008).

- It may be challenging to generate meaningful ratings where there is variation across classrooms or where different age groups are served (Karoly, 2012b).

- Programs are most likely to need technical assistance in improving relevant ratings on the Environmental Rating Scales, and, if used, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Karoly, 2012b).

3. **What local models for a quality rating system already exist in California, and how are they affecting program quality?**

   - First 5 Power of Preschool programs require external assessments using the Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS-R, FCCERS-R, or ITERS-R). Classroom environmental assessment ratings for Power of Preschool programs range from "good" to "excellent" (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011; Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009; American Institutes for Research, 2007).

   - Some First 5 PoP evaluations have also used the CLASS. While PoP scores on instructional quality show room for improvement, they compare favorably with those reported in other states (AIR, 2007; CAEL QIS, 2010; Karoly, Ghosh-Dastidar, Zellman, Perlman, & Fernyhough, 2008, Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009). PoP CLASS scores were also higher than those of the Oklahoma Universal Preschool Program, which demonstrated gains in school readiness for participating children (Phillips, Gormley, & Lowenstein, 2007).

4. **What is the typical structure of a QRIS, and what features of quality should be measured?**

   - Of the 23 states with a QRIS in 2010, 12 states use the block system, 5 use a point system, and the rest use a combination of these two systems or alternative approaches (CAEL QIS, 2010, citing Tout, 2010). In a block system, all of the quality criteria in that tier must be accomplished to obtain that rating (and the criteria build on those in

previous blocks). A block system promotes more consistency in the meaning of ratings than a point system, which allows providers to meet some but not all of the criteria for a particular tier to obtain that rating.

- Based on syntheses of more than 40 years of research (Jacobson, 2004; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006; and other studies as cited in CAEL QIS, 2010), key features of quality programs that should be measured include:
  - Intensive education (e.g., low child-to-staff ratios, small groups, regular attendance)
  - Teachers interacting responsively with children
  - Family involvement in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner
  - A "curriculum" or plan of activities
  - Adequate numbers of well trained, qualified staff
  - Program directors that understand child development and provide leadership
- A QRIS—as defined by the federal Administration for Children Office for Child Care's National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center—is a systematic approach to assessing, improving, and communicating the level of quality in early- and school-age care and education providers. In general, a QRIS assigns quality ratings to early learning and care providers based on the extent to which the providers meet a set of defined program standards. A QRIS is typically composed of five common elements, which include:
  - Standards
  - Accountability measures
  - Provider support
  - Financial incentives
  - Parent and consumer education efforts (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/resource/wwwroot/index.cfm?do=qrisabout#1)

5. **How would programs rate under the QRIS proposed by the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee?**

- Based on a "virtual" pilot of the proposed five-tier QRIS (Karoly & Zellman, 2012):
  - About 80 percent of centers would reach Tiers 3 to 5 on the quality elements of ratio and group size, and about half would reach Tiers 4 to 5 on staff education levels.
  - Only one in four centers would reach Tiers 4 or 5 based on the ECERS-R, FCCERS-R, ITERS-R, or the CLASS, if the latter is included in the QRIS.

- Overall, fewer than 10 percent of centers would reach Tier 5.
- More publicly funded programs would reach Tier 4 than would a statewide representative sample of all licensed programs. Even among publicly subsidized programs, however, few would reach Tier 5.
- Based on ERS ratings, infant/toddlers programs would rate somewhat lower than those serving preschool-age children, and family child care homes would rate lower than center-based programs.
- However, it is important to note that this pilot was often based on one classroom in a program rather than the whole program.

6. **To ensure accountability to the public and fairness to providers, how should a QRIS be implemented?**

   - Among the 23 states that had implemented QRISs by 2010, many strongly recommended a field test or pilot prior to implementing the system statewide (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010, citing Zellman & Perlman, 2008).
   - Experience in other states also underlines the importance of:
     - Minimizing the use of self-reported data
     - Ideally, integrating licensing into the system
     - Incorporating both self-assessments and independent assessments at different levels of the QRIS
     - Not including the use of "accreditation" (such as by the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] or the National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation [NAFCC]) as a mandatory system component
     - Separate raters and quality improvement support personnel to ensure objectivity
     - Evaluating whether the QRIS meets its intended goals (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010, citing Zellman & Perlman, 2008)

Recommendations

To move forward on program quality assessment, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **To improve information and accountability to the public and policymakers about the quality of early learning and care programs:**

   - Establish a quality rating structure that integrates the current multiple sets of program standards into one coherent, evidence-based system (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

  - To obtain the entry-level rating, a program or provider would need to meet the basic Title 22 licensure standards.
  - To advance to the mid-level rating, a program or provider would need to meet standards similar to the more stringent Title 5 contract standards.
  - To advance to the top level rating, a program or provider would need to meet requirements that incorporate nationally recommended quality standards, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) standards.

- Establish a five-tier block system that assesses five quality elements. A program would need to meet all the standards within each tier before advancing to the next tier (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010). The five quality elements are:
  - Ratios and group size
  - Teaching and learning
  - Family involvement
  - Staff education and training
  - Program leadership
- Increase the routine inspection rate for child care centers and family child care homes and make inspection reports publicly available on the Internet (Karoly, 2009; CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
- Base QRIS ratings on a few simple criteria, such as staff-to-child ratios, group size, and staff qualifications, using data already collected through the licensing process and state monitoring information about participating providers collected through document review and verification, coupled with an audit mechanism (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007).
- Support State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care and advance a statewide Quality Rating System for children ages birth to five (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
- Adopt a locally based approach to the development of a QRIS with regional consortia in 15 counties that have made a commitment to strengthen their local QRIS and mentor other communities who wish to do the same (State of California, 2011). While tier levels and benchmarks will be developed locally, all early learning and development programs participating in the QRIS will have plans in place to support the following targets:
  - 75 percent of children in participating programs are assessed using validated observational assessment tools.
  - 75 percent of lead or master teachers employed in participating programs will develop individual professional growth plans based on teacher effectiveness rating scores.

- 75 percent of participating programs will be assessed using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale, with 90 percent of them showing improvement over the term of the grant funding.

2. **To provide fair and reliable assessments of the quality of teaching and learning:**

   - Pilot a rating process that would employ environmental rating assessments every two to three years and, at higher tiers, would measure teacher-child interactions for preschoolers with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and for infant/toddlers with the Program Assessment Rating Scale (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
   - Use the CLASS in a random sample of classrooms on a periodic basis. This would provide valuable information to supplement the ECERS-R data, particularly given the growing body of research that demonstrates the importance of quality adult-child interactions for children's learning and development (AIR, 2007).
   - Do not require the use of extensive on-site observational assessments. After the QRIS is in place, the Legislature could consider streamlined use of direct observational assessments, along with technical and financial assistance to help providers improve their ratings (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007).
   - Establish five tiers, recognizing that it might take too long to move from one tier to the next in a three-tier system (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

   Note: For discussion of recommendations on benchmarks for other dimensions of quality, such as family engagement, staff education and training, and program leadership, see the sections on family engagement and workforce development below.

3. **To ensure that a QRIS is implemented successfully and fairly:**

   - Conduct a pilot of the QRIS:
     - Implement recommendations from the Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) to pilot a state Quality Rating and Improvement System (Children Now, 2012).
     - Launch an early pilot effort to measure the elements of family engagement and program leadership, and to assess the implications of including them in the QRIS system. Estimate the effects of voluntary implementation and/or targeting participation to publicly subsidized programs (Karoly, 2012b).
     - Pilot test and phase in over five years. Launch a three-year pilot that includes sufficient time for planning and evaluation (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
       - The system will initially be voluntary. After piloting, the QRIS can be required for publicly funded programs, and eventually for all licensed early learning and care programs.
       - Explore options for a combination of state and local oversight, with QRIS reviews done at the county or regional level and the CDE providing oversight and assurance of consistency.

        - Provide voluntary technical assistance to help programs improve, using a client-based, data-based coaching model (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

    - Develop and pilot the QRIS and tiered reimbursement system as part of the state's larger effort to create an Early Learning Quality Improvement System (Karoly, 2009).

    - Use a phased approach to implement the QRIS (Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007):

        1. Begin with posting existing licensing information on the Internet
        2. Distill existing licensing records with a rating or grade
        3. Pilot the system
        4. The Legislature might then consider some additional features, such as streamlined use of observational assessments, along with technical and financial assistance to help providers improve their ratings.

- Build a strong network composed of 16 of the most rigorous communities that have already established a QRIS. This locally based approach to the development of a QRIS is better than a one-size-fits-all approach and will avoid new spending commitments (State of California, 2011).

Family Engagement

> *There is a common theme in California-based studies of early learning and care: Families are the major change agent affecting children's school readiness and achievement. As a result, there is widespread agreement that it is vital to engage families in their children's early learning and care programs and to increase parents' understanding of the elements that contribute to school readiness. Furthermore, many researchers stress the need for special outreach to engage families whose home language is not English through their children's early learning and care settings. Outreach is especially needed when linguistic isolation is combined with other risk factors, such as poverty and low parental education. Finally, many studies underline the barriers to family engagement and suggest that combining home visiting with early learning and care programs, especially for infants and toddlers, may be an effective model.*

Key Findings

1. **Why is family engagement in early learning and care programs important? How does family engagement affect children's school achievement?**

    - Interaction between the child's family and the child's early learning and care setting promotes the best child outcomes, improves school readiness, and contributes to greater family involvement in children's elementary school years (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010, citing Meidel & Reynolds, 1999; Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012).

    - Research has shown that, regardless of family or cultural background, children whose parents are involved in their education have better school attendance, higher test

scores, better social skills, and can adapt better to the school environment (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010, citing Coughlan et al., 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

- Family engagement supports maintenance of home language and culture and promotes high expectations, which in turn contributes to school achievement (Children Now, 2004, citing Nieto, 1992).

2. **How does family participation in early learning programs and home-based early learning activities vary by income, race, and ethnicity?**

   - Parents of Spanish-speaking children reported that their children spent fewer hours attending preschool per week relative to other groups, and reported lower frequency of reading to their children and having fewer books at home (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).

   - A majority of Latino, African-American, and Asian parents interviewed believe it is important for their children to attend a program before the age of 5, but less than 30 percent actually do (New American Media, 2006). Half of Latino parents, a third of African-American parents, and a quarter of Asian parents interviewed said that there were no quality child care centers in their neighborhood or town that they could afford (New American Media, 2006).

   - Latino and African-American parents strongly supported bilingual preschool programs. Asian parents were more divided on the issue (New American Media, 2006).

3. **What are the best practices for family engagement in early learning and care programs, and what are the chief barriers or challenges?**

   - The First 5 Power of Preschool counties have implemented various strategies to engage families, and most report challenges in working with an immigrant population (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009; AIR, 2011).

   - Almost every county requires parents of children in state-subsidized programs to complete the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) parent survey, but, aside from this, there is no uniformity for evaluating parent engagement activities (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

   - Early Head Start programs that utilized both center- and home-based approaches showed better family outcomes (Mathematica, 2001).

   - Lopez (2010, as cited in CAEL QIS, 2010) has identified three essential components to effectively partnering with families: 1) strengthen the family-child bond and acknowledge the primary role of the family in child development, 2) seek to understand cultural differences in childrearing values and practices, and 3) build trust by sharing knowledge between families and teachers about child development.

   - Low-income mothers who have little education benefit from assistance in learning how to read to their children – e.g., not just focusing on the literal meaning of words and pictures, but asking children to predict and evaluate story events (AIR, 2011).

- Power of Preschool (PoP) programs have successfully used several family engagement strategies. For example, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) used a Parent Ambassador program, in which parents go to training on a monthly basis on topics such as child development and community activities. Food is provided to attract parents. LAUP also has a Parent Engagement Specialist on staff to communicate with parents and provide trainings for providers. First 5 San Mateo and the San Mateo County Office of Education have adopted the Virtual Pre-K program, which is a low-cost series of lesson plan supports that link activities in the classroom to what parents can do at home with their children, including activities in the local community (AIR, 2011)

- WestEd's Family Partnership Initiative (FPI) trains staff in state-funded, center-based programs and family child care homes to enhance partnerships between families and staff. The training focuses on strategies to support children's learning, highlight the strengths each member brings to the partnership, and explore ways to nurture the family-staff partnerships (WestEd, n.d.).

4. **How can a QRIS inform families about the quality of services in early learning and care programs?**

   - Studies show that although parents value high quality child care, they often do not identify shortfalls. On key elements such as health, safety, and staff-child interaction, parents rate centers almost twice as highly as trained observers. A system to inform parents about the quality of services would be helpful (CAEL QIS, 2010, citing Helburn, 1995; Barraclough & Smith, 1996; Wolfe & Scrivner, 2004; Cryer, Tietze, & Wessels, 2002).

   - To establish a "brand" for program quality rating scores, some states and localities within California use stars or keys as icons to indicate levels of quality in early learning and care programs (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

   - It is important to have a public information campaign about the QRIS (Zellman and Perlman, 2008 as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

Recommendations

To move forward with family engagement, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **To promote best practices in family engagement:**

   - Require programs to submit plans for how they will partner with families and meet their cultural and linguistic needs, and how they will recruit and retain staff members who reflect the community (Children Now, 2004).

   - Make Title 22 licensing requirements for both family child care providers and centers include the provision of written information and orientation for families at the time of enrollment (CAEL QIS Family Involvement and Stakeholder Engagement and Advocacy Subcommittee Recommendations Paper, 2010).

- Consider funding programs in conjunction with other evidence-based strategies for disadvantaged children, such as home visiting or programs that combine parent education with center-based education (Karoly, 2012a; Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012; Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
- Provide training for teachers on building partnerships with families (CAEL QIS, 2010).
- Support family engagement in developmental and early learning services for infants and toddlers from the earliest points of their entry into the programs (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
- Provide Power of Preschool counties with more rigorous guidelines about how their local evaluations should measure parent engagement practices (UCLA Center for Healthier Families and Communities, 2011).
- Consider more direct training for parents in dialogic and interactive reading skills (AIR, 2011).

2. **To measure the level of family engagement in programs and to inform parents about the quality of family engagement in a program:**

   - Use the Environmental Rating Scale subscale for "Parents and Staff" to measure family involvement as well as the Title 22 licensing requirements related to family engagement as proxies for the family engagement element of the rating scale (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).
   - While the CAEL QIS committee recommended use of the Environmental Rating Scale measure for family involvement, experts in family engagement responded by asking for a more specific measureable menu of best practices for engaging families to be included in the QRIS tiers. The California *Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE, 2011) includes three competency areas that might serve as a springboard: Culture, Diversity, and Equity (pp. 19–26), Family and Community Engagement (pp. 35– 42), and Dual-Language Development (p. 48).
   - Establish a brand for the QRIS that informs and promotes quality early learning and care programs (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
   - Engage state, county, and local agencies that are currently working with families to assist with disseminating information to families, stakeholders, and the community. Develop an outreach campaign supported by corporate and agency sponsors, and engage spokespeople who speak the families' language (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

Early Childhood Workforce Development

Researchers agree that early childhood educators who understand child development and engage in effective interaction with young children are central to the effectiveness of early learning and care programs in improving child outcomes. The early learning and care programs that have been found to achieve dramatic improvements in child outcomes all have highly qualified, well-compensated teachers with strong supervision. Recent studies suggest, however, that degrees alone are not sufficient. Studies indicate that early childhood higher education itself needs reform, with more focus on the desired child outcomes. Researchers recommend that degree-bearing courses include more observation of early educators in the settings where they work with infants, toddlers, and/or preschool-age children, and that there be ample time for feedback on their effectiveness in interacting with young children. Several studies also stress the importance of more systematic data collection and the development of an early childhood workforce registry linked to K–12 workforce data. Without better data, these researchers say, California will not know whether its considerable investment in early childhood workforce development is having its intended effect.

Key Findings

1. **How do teacher education qualifications affect the quality of early learning and care programs, and how do they affect child outcomes? Do degrees—and particularly degrees in child development and/or early childhood education—make a difference?**

   - A substantial body of research indicates that early educators with higher levels of education and specialized training in early childhood education generally provide higher quality classroom environments that have been shown to support child outcomes more than teachers without such backgrounds. National and California-based studies underlining the link between teacher education and program quality include: Barnett, 2004; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzalez, 2010; Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford, & Howes, 2002; Burchinal et al., 2000; Whitebook, 2003, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2003; Early et al., 2006, as cited in Karoly, 2012b; Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol, 2004; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; NICHD ECCRN & Duncan, 2003; and Phillipsen et al., 1997.

   - Teachers with B.A. degrees and specialized training in child development expose children to larger vocabulary and provide richer language and cognitive experiences (Bueno et al., 2010; Ackerman, 2005, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010); have a better sense of how to do lesson plans; and are warmer, more sensitive, and more engaging in their interactions with children (Ackerman, 2005; Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010). This relationship has been found for both center-based and family child care homes.

- Teachers in preschool programs that demonstrate long-term benefits in children's achievement (including the Abecedarian program, Chicago Child-Parent Centers, and others) have all held at least B.A. degrees and have had compensation similar to that of public school teachers (Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Cannon & Karoly, 2007a; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Saki, & Kipnis, 2009).

- However, several large-scale observational studies have recently questioned the strength of the relationship between teacher education level or degree field and classroom quality and child outcomes. Early et al. (2007) and Howes et al. (2008) did not find a consistent, positive, and statistically significant relationship between teacher education or degree field and classroom quality measures and child outcomes. Possible explanations for the inconsistent findings include variations in the quality of the degree programs themselves, in the level of support in the work environment, and in the level of compensation. In addition, the expansion of early education programs in the last decade may have attracted the most effective teachers without post-secondary degrees to early education while the more successful teachers with B.A. degrees moved into the early elementary grades (Karoly, 2012b).

- Overall, conclusions about the relationship between teacher education attainment and child outcomes are limited because current research fails to examine how other contextual factors play a role (Whitebook, 2003).

2. **How much is known about the role of non-degree-related training on teacher effectiveness?**

   - Research on the contribution of training, other than degree programs, to teacher effectiveness is less prevalent, has focused primarily on infant and toddler caregivers, and has shown mixed results.

     - Kreader, Ferguson, and Lawrence (2005, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010) found that in addition to formal education, specialized training in early care and education is also associated with higher quality programs for infants and toddlers.

     - There is some evidence that the Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) has a positive impact on the quality of care (Program for Infant Toddler Care as cited in Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). However, an independent study found that this model of caregiver training combined with on-site coaching did not have a statistically significant effect on overall measures of program quality, staff-child interactions, or children's cognitive, language, or behavior scores (Weinstock et al., 2012).

3. **What are the current educational qualifications and non-degree training experience of the early care and education workforce in California?**

   - Many members of the child care workforce have low educational levels, and teachers in ECE typically work for much lower wages than teachers in grades K-12, and formal pay scales are rare (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009).

- Recent studies suggest that many members of California's early care and education (ECE) workforce do not have the desired skills and knowledge to be effective in their work with young children (Karoly, 2012b).
- Specifically, most early educators lack academic training in child development (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009). According to the 2004 California Early Care and Education Workforce Study (Whitebook, Sakai, Kipnis, Lee, Bellm, Speiglman, Almaraz, Stubbs, & Tran, 2006), while 55 percent of directors in licensed centers reported having a bachelor's degree, only 25 percent of lead teachers and 7 percent of assistant teachers had such qualifications.
- The workforce serving infants and toddlers is less likely to hold college degrees or credits than preschool providers (Whitebook et al., 2006). Infant-toddler providers, especially in home-based settings such as family child care, are more likely to speak English as a second language and to face barriers in attending college to meet professional development requirements
- Early childhood educators in California are not currently required to have any training in mathematics education (Stipek & Schoenfeld, 2012).
- In addition, early educators lack training in teaching dual language learners (WestEd, 2008) and students with special needs (Pew Center on the States, 2010). Based on some local Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) observations, many are also not fully effective in promoting children's higher order thinking skills (AIR, 2009; Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).

4. **What is the status of California's higher education programs in the field of early education?**

- As of 2005, approximately half of California's colleges and universities offered courses to prepare ECE teachers. About three-quarters of these were at the community college level (Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005).
- There is great variation in admission standards for higher education programs for early childhood educators, in expected student outcomes, and in the rigor with which higher education programs assess student learning (Whitebook, Austin, Ryan, Kipnis, Almaraz, & Sakai, 2012).
- California has recently taken a number of steps to build an ECE workforce professional development system (PDS), including (among others) publishing early childhood educator competencies; working to address past concerns regarding alignment and articulation within and across the state's two- and four-year colleges and universities that offer ECE-related courses and degrees; and providing financial incentives through grants and stipends for those who seek additional education and training (Karoly, 2012b).
- According to California's Early Learning Challenge Grant application (State of California, 2011), there have been several recent state actions to strengthen workforce development:
  - In 2006, a core curriculum of eight evidence-based courses was established for ECE preparation at California community colleges. This has been adopted by 102 of the

state's 105 community colleges offering ECE programs. Alignment with the California State University's four-year curriculum has also begun.

- With support from First 5 California and local First 5 commissions, the Child Development Staff Retention Programs—Comparative Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) and CARES Plus—have invested $450 million since 2001 in professional development and support for the early learning workforce. These systems also provide robust data collection on the early learning workforce.
- The *Early Childhood Educator Competencies* were released in 2011, and this represents a major step toward creating a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators in California.
- The CARES Plus database, hosted and funded by First 5 California, provides data on the workforce, including both CARES Plus and AB 212 participants.
- Los Angeles and San Francisco counties are jointly developing a workforce registry pilot that is aligned with common data elements in their local QRIS.

- California promotes teacher training in statewide tools such as the Desired Results Assessment System, the Preschool and infant Toddler *Learning Foundations* and *Curriculum Frameworks*, the Program for Infant Toddler Caregiving, and the California Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Project by strategically funding the California Preschool Instructional Network, WestEd, and other organizations to provide statewide training. It has also promoted teachers' ability to attain higher child development permit levels and degrees through AB 212 Child Development Staff Training and Retention funding, the Child Development Training Consortium, and the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. These efforts need to be integrated further into a coherent statewide system.
- Community colleges and state universities are making a concerted effort to improve articulation and alignment of courses, but as of December 2010, only 19 colleges had programs that were aligned, 20 were finalizing their alignment, and an additional 53 were working toward submitting their alignment. Eleven colleges had not yet agreed to participate (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
- Although there have been important efforts to subsidize the attainment of early learning and care degrees, the rules for access have been inconsistent across counties, and funds to finance tuition assistance have been reduced or eliminated (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
- Though students studying early childhood education are of diverse backgrounds, many faculty members in these programs are not; in 2005, nearly half of the higher education programs had a 100-percent white, non-Hispanic full-time faculty (Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005).

- Several other key elements are not yet in place, including alignment of the state's ECE credentialing system with other components of the Professional Development System, consistent quality of ECE higher education programs, and a workforce registry, and there is only limited training available for working with dual language learners (Karoly, 2012b).

5. **What are the major barriers to increasing the teacher education qualifications for the early care and education workforce in California?**

   - California does not have the data systems to track the ECE workforce in terms of enrollment in education and training programs and, as a result, little is known about how well existing PDS resources are being used. Existing data do not allow accurate counts of the number and mix of individuals who participate in publicly funded workforce investment programs, and even less is known about the benefits of the myriad local informal training opportunities that are available (Karoly, 2012b).

   - Compensation in early childhood education is low (even for teachers who have B.A. degrees), particularly in non-state-contracted centers receiving vouchers, and turnover is high compared to that of better compensated K–12 teachers (Phillips, 2010, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005; Whitebook et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Labor, 2009). Raising the educational qualifications without providing equitable compensation may make it difficult to hire and retain the best teachers (Pew Center for the States, 2010; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009, as cited in CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

   - Most early childhood education students are non-traditional college students, are low-income women of color, and/or may have linguistic and cultural barriers to higher education (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Pew Center on the States, 2010; Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai, 2005).

   - Mentoring can work well as a strategy to address some of these barriers. In a case study of two cohort programs (Whitebook et al., 2012), students in a program supervised by a mentor were much more likely to report that they had received the guidance and supervision they needed than students who had been supervised only by an instructor or faculty member, or by staff at the clinical site.

6. **What factors promote retention of qualified early educators in the workforce, and how successful have programs such as Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) been in promoting retention?**

   - Professional development can increase teachers' job satisfaction. Feedback from staff participating in the Preschool for All (PFA) program in San Mateo County, for example, reflected a strong level of satisfaction with PFA-supported professional development and indicated that PFA's support of workforce development was one of its most significant contributions to the provider community in San Mateo County (AIR, 2009).

   - Participants in the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program indicated that they were most satisfied with the incentive portion of the program and least satisfied with the academic counseling. They were most likely to

strongly agree that their participation in the CARES program increased their desire to stay in the early childhood education field, and they felt their participation in the program provided some contribution to advancing their careers (Harder & Company, 2008).

7. **What are the educational qualifications in the locally based QRIS systems in California, and how successful have the systems been in promoting workforce development? Where there has been success, what have been the keys to effectiveness?**

   - Some locally based QRIS systems have focused on increasing the education levels of their staff.
     - Teachers in First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) programs, for example, have high qualifications (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011). Among PoP master or lead teachers, almost 58 percent have at least a bachelor's degree, and an additional 30 percent have an associate's degree.
     - In the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) Program, 99 percent of the children's teachers had taken six or more classes in early childhood education or child development; 88 percent of lead teachers held at least an associate's degree; and 61 percent had a bachelor's or higher degree (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).
   - Providing networking for agency leaders to discuss best practices may be one of the keys to an effective system. In San Mateo County, all of the PFA classroom contractors and representatives from partner agencies that support the preschool community in the county noted the value of PFA as a forum through which key stakeholders could network, share information, and generate solutions to problems (AIR, 2009).

8. **How does the QRIS design proposed by the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee compare with nationally recommended teacher qualifications for early learning and care programs?**

   - Staff education requirements proposed for lead teachers and program directors at the top tier of the QRIS by the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee are generally well aligned with standards recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1987) and the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER, 2010).

Recommendations

To move forward with efforts to develop the ECE workforce in California, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **To motivate existing and potential early childhood educators to obtain appropriate additional education and training:**

   - Implement a QRIS that advances teacher qualification requirements by tier (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Children Now, 2012).
   - Set higher compensation levels for ECE teachers if ECE teacher educational standards are to be set higher to improve recruitment and retention (Harder and Company, 2008; Whitebook, Sakai, Kipnis, Lee, Bellm, Speiglman, Almaraz, Stubbs, & Tran, 2006; Whitebook, 2003).

2. **To improve the quality of higher education for early learning and care:**

   - Focus degree programs and ongoing training on particular areas where research suggests teachers are not yet strong, such as dual language learners, children with special needs, and adult-child interactions that support children's cognitive and language development (AIR, 2009; Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009; Karoly, 2012b; Whitebook et al., 2006).

   - Require a course in math teaching for an associate's or bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and requiring a focus on math instruction in the context of courses for the Child Development Teacher permit (Stipek & Schoenfeld, 2012).

   - Pay attention to the content and quality of the degree program and the context of the ECE work environment (which can support or hinder effective practice), rather than focusing on attainment of particular degrees or credentials in isolation (Karoly, 2012b).

   - Continue to address gaps in higher education program capacity, course offerings, opportunities for field placements/practicums, and faculty quality and diversity (Karoly, 2012b).

   - By 2012, develop the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies*—which include the *Foundations*—into a common and comprehensive course of study that is reflected in courses for associate's and bachelor's degrees and is delivered statewide. Require credit-bearing courses for degrees.

3. **To ensure that the state makes the most of its investment in workforce development of the ECE workforce:**

   - Implement an ECE workforce registry, inclusive of all members of the workforce, to identify who is in the field, their demographic characteristics, their educational and professional development experiences and credentials, and their employment history (Karoly, 2012b; Whitebook et al., 2012).

     - Ensure that this workforce data system is compatible with K–12 workforce data (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009).

     - Track infant-toddler provider participation in high quality workforce development that is aligned with the ECE *Competencies*, the *Foundations*, and other standards (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).

     - Evaluate the effectiveness of higher education programs in promoting required ECE competencies. Institute a more rigorous program of evaluation for funded programs, including measurement of effects on participant competencies, quality of care provided, retention in the ECE field, and child developmental outcomes, and how those impacts are mediated by the work environment. A workforce registry could be used to track program participants and outcomes (Karoly, 2012b); the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley has begun to do this by recently

introducing the *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*, a system to help policymakers and other stakeholders to track and coordinate professional development for early care and education workforce (Whitebook et al., 2012).

4. **To help students complete the required coursework and to address the challenges faced by many early childhood education students:**

   - Develop a well-defined ECE career pathway and associated credentials that are aligned with the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies*, the postsecondary education and training programs, and the potential or actual QRIS (Karoly, 2012b).
   - Continue the process of alignment and articulation of the ECE curriculum within and across the California Community Colleges and the California State University system (Karoly, 2012b).
   - Ensure broad availability of college courses and professional development opportunities for infant-toddler caregivers, and provide the additional supports for college readiness that are needed by infant-toddler caregivers to help them satisfy course requirements (e.g., foreign transcript review, English-language skill development, scholarships and stipends) (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
   - Establish clear timelines with systemic support for an articulation and transfer process within and among colleges and universities, building on community colleges' efforts to align courses with state university courses to create a pathway toward two- and four-year degrees, but without creating dead ends for the early learning and care workforce (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
     - Implement a statewide common and comprehensive course of study based on the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies*, with a clear timeline (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).
     - Align the ECE workforce professional development system with California's K–12 system, including the new Transitional Kindergarten program established by the 2010 Kindergarten Readiness Act. Consider the reintroduction of a preschool-grade three teaching credential (Karoly, 2012b; Stipek & Schoenfeld, 2012).
     - Ensure that the Competencies adequately prepare infant-toddler professionals, especially on issues important to the birth-to-3 years, such as reflective practice, emergent language, and family engagement (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
   - Address the need for financial supports for practitioners to pursue additional education and professional development, either through the workforce investment programs or the QRIS, if one is implemented (Karoly, 2012b; CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Whitebook et al., 2006).
   - Strengthen efforts to expand higher education offerings to more remote communities without college campuses, to utilize distance learning and web-based training resources, and to engage community agencies in offering credit-bearing training. Make classes

available in the community and after hours (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Karoly, 2012b; State of California, 2011; Whitebook et al., 2006).

- Phase in specialized accreditation for ECE A.A. and B.A. programs (Karoly, 2012b).

5. **To improve knowledge in terms of the relationships between characteristics of higher education programs, professional development, and child outcomes:**

   - Conduct research to refine hypotheses about the relationship of practice and child outcomes with the intensity of professional development activities, the timing and sequencing of training and practice components, and the practitioner's level of formal education, in both home- and center-based settings and with diverse groups of children (Karoly, 2012b; Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009).

   - Additional research is also needed on the efficacy of various approaches to teacher preparation (Whitebook, Austin, Ryan, Kipnis, Almaraz, & Sakai, 2012; Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009).

     - Make more finely developed data elements about faculty background the norm of ECE teacher preparation research.

     - Maintain up-to-date information on both the capacity and content of higher education programs.

     - Require institutions to report changes in their offerings to a central information repository, whether in response to state policies, funding, or other institutional dynamics.

     - Regularly update data about faculty members and maintain in a data system, such as an early childhood workforce registry.

   - Research should identify the characteristics of child care providers who are more likely to stay in the field in order to help policymakers develop strategies and programs to support stabilizing and strengthening the child care workforce (Harder & Company, 2008).

   - Because current educational requirements for early care and education providers in different settings differ (e.g., license-exempt care, compared to Title 5 programs, compared to Head Start), research on ECE teacher effectiveness should include examinations of the influence of factors in the teaching work environment and the role of ECE center directors on teacher practice (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009).

Dual Language Learners

> *Researchers agree that dual language learners (DLLs) are at some educational risk, based on well-documented achievement gaps between English learner and non-English learner students in elementary and secondary school, but this risk is also largely because language-isolated dual language learners in California typically have other risk factors as well, such as poverty and low maternal education. Several studies have found that center-based care for this group of children in the year before kindergarten is especially effective in improving children's early reading skills. But at least a third of language-isolated DLL children do not attend, and those who do tend to participate for fewer hours than children from other backgrounds. Researchers therefore focus on outreach to language-isolated DLLs and their families as part of the solution to the achievement gap.*

Key Findings

1. **How effective are early learning and care programs in helping to prepare dual language learners (DLLs) who have other risk factors, such as poverty and parents with little education, for kindergarten and success in school? Which educational strategies work best?**

   - A California study found that English learners (ELs) were behind their peers on measures of school readiness at kindergarten entry, and that the gaps were still seen through third grade (Cannon & Karoly, 2007). Among EL children, it is the linguistically isolated children—where at least one parent is an immigrant, the primary home language is not English, and parents do not speak English very well or do not speak English at all—who are at greatest risk (Cannon, Jacknowitz & Karoly, 2012). Such children are also likely to have other characteristics that put them at risk of poor performance: three quarters of these children have mothers with less than a high school education, for example, and 41 percent come from families with a household income below the federal poverty level.

   - Researchers have found evidence, with large effect sizes, supporting center-based care participation in the year before kindergarten entry as a means to improve early reading skills for language-isolated children. Similar gains have not been found in early mathematics skills, however (Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly, 2012; Karoly, 2012a).

   - From fall 2007 to spring 2008, 45 percent of the children in the LAUP program who took the battery of child assessments in Spanish in the fall showed sufficient proficiency to be tested in English in the spring; this suggests that progress is being made in preparing children for an English-only public school enrollment (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009). At the same time, however, performance of Spanish-only and primarily Spanish-speaking children on an early writing test was in a range that suggests possible educational risk, as was performance on expressive language.

   - Children who participated in the Family Literacy Initiative in the Los Angeles Unified School District had significantly higher attendance rates and standardized test scores in mathematics and English language arts, but had English language development scores in elementary school that were similar to those of children who did not participate in the program (AIR, 2011).

- The language development pathways of ELs are complex and varied, and there is the potential for cultural and linguistic bias with each different purpose and approach to early childhood assessment (Espinosa & López, 2007).

2. **To what extent are dual language learners participating in early learning and care programs in California?**

   - A third of language-isolated children do not participate in any center-based care in the year before they enter kindergarten (Cannon, Jacknowitiz, & Karoly, 2012).
   - Linguistically isolated infants and toddlers in non-parental care are primarily in license-exempt home-based arrangements, where the caregivers may have little background in English and find it difficult to access any training in child development (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
   - Among Latino and Asian children, preschool child enrollment rates were lower for children in households where someone over the age of 14 did not speak English fluently (35 percent), compared to children in households with older members who spoke English fluently (50 percent) (Lopez & de Cos, 2004).

3. **What are the most promising practices for increasing DLL enrollment and working with DLLs?**

   - In the First 5 Power of Preschool programs, teachers and administrators were provided with courses and trainings to assist them in supporting dual language learners. Counties also reported recruiting PoP sites and staff based on their knowledge and experience with DLLs, using parent volunteers, requiring parent participation, organizing cultural celebrations, and promoting acceptance through diversity in daily routines (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2009).
   - Home languages are critical to second-language development. The English Learners, Language, and Literacy in the Early Years (ELLEY) training program promotes preschool English language instruction that uses children's first-language skills as a foundation for speaking, listening, and reading in their second language (WestEd, 2008).
   - Preschool centers serving isolated DLLs may be missing an opportunity to improve children's mathematics skills (Cannon, Jacknowitiz, & Karoly, 2012; Stipek & Schoenfeld, 2012).

Recommendations

CDE has taken recent action to provide tools and strategies to share best practices for working with DLLs:

- The Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks include English Language Development as a distinct and critical domain, apart from the Language and Literacy domain. The two documents provide the research case and explicit direction in how to support young dual language learners and allow them to grow in their home language and English in preschool settings.

- The Preschool English Learner Guide (CDE, 2007), combined with training DVDs and in-person training by the California Preschool Instructional Network, strive to instill best practices in state-funded child development programs.
- Finally, the California *Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE, 2011) includes several competency areas that are particularly critical to working with young DLLs: Dual Language Development; Culture, Diversity and Equity; and Family and Community Engagement. The Competency Integration Project underway aims to integrate best practices into ECE teacher preparation courses in the state over time.

To move forward in assisting dual language learners, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **To promote enrollment of dual language learners in early learning and care:**
   - State policymakers might consider targeting the subgroup of children with non-English-speaking parents for enrollment in preschool to help improve school-entry reading skills among California's English learners (Karoly, 2012a).
   - Outreach to parents of Spanish-speaking-only and primarily-Spanish-speaking children to encourage better attendance may be part of a solution to the language achievement gap (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).
2. **To increase the effectiveness of early learning and care for dual language learners:**
   - Focus on incorporating research-based strategies to teach dual language learners, which would include incorporating more Spanish-language support (AIR, 2011).
   - Move toward thinking of educating English learners as a systemic issue, something relevant to all teachers instead of just EL specialists. Provide training on dual language learner strategies to all teachers (WestEd, 2008).
   - Expand training opportunities for infant-toddler providers in supporting the needs of dual language learners, including increasing access to evidence-based professional development programs for providers who are themselves English language learners (Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).
   - Instructional and assessment approaches should consider the various language development pathways and diversity within the EL population, and should be able to identify issues specifically related to being an EL versus other factors (National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force & First 5 LA, 2007).
   - In the classroom, give DLL students the opportunity to use oral language for varied purposes, forge connections between material that is already familiar to them and new material to be learned, and provide students with visual clues to help with understanding (WestEd, 2008).

Developmental Screening

> *Developmental screening in early learning and care programs using a validated tool is increasing, but often is not conducted early enough in the program year to refer children to effective intervention and services. Research suggests that best practices for improving the screening rate include building relationships with families.*

Key Findings

1. **How effective are early learning programs in California in implementing developmental screening?**

   - All counties participating in the Power of Preschool program reported that some or all of their providers use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for developmental screening. Some used additional mental health screening tools (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).
     - However, finding time for teachers to complete ASQs and other screening instruments was a challenge for some PoP counties (AIR, 2011).
   - Among the children in the LAUP study (2009) whose teachers reported screening, 34 percent were screened with the Ages and Stages Questionnaires.
     - However, one third of children were in classes where the teachers reported that they did not screen children for health or developmental problems.
   - Special Needs Project (SNP) sites were successful at screening all children at young ages (First 5 California & WestEd, 2010).
     - Methods for successfully screening large numbers of children included building relationships with families, collaborating with partner agencies, home visits, and having well-trained screeners who conducted one-on-one screenings with families.

Recommendations

To move forward in improving developmental screening, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **Steps should be taken to ensure that screening for developmental and health problems is conducted for all children, in all classrooms, early in the program year to determine if children may be eligible for IDEA services (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).**
2. **Standardization of screening tools would facilitate revising assessment results and making consistent decisions across classrooms and groups of children (Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, 2009).**

Assistance to Children with Special Needs

> *Families with children with disabilities often have difficulty finding high quality child care for their children. Enrollment of children with special needs in the First 5 Power of Preschool program varies considerably across counties. Overall, counties participating in the Power of Preschool program reported a strong push for the inclusion and integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms. Outreach to families and teacher training in this area should be improved.*

Key Findings

1. **To what extent are high quality early learning and care programs serving children with special needs or disabilities?**

   - The 10 School Readiness programs that connected with First 5 California Special Needs Project (SNP) sites (through 2005) provided more services and supports for children with special needs than School Readiness programs that do not connect to SNP sites.

2. **To what extent are publicly supported programs encouraging a greater number of children with special needs to participate?**

   - Children with special needs accounted for 5.3 percent of the children enrolled in the First 5 Power of Preschool program, with more than 10 percent of the children in Los Angeles and San Joaquin Counties having special needs. Every participating county reported using strategies to enroll children with special needs (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

   - In the 2009 Power of Preschool Evaluation (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009), most PoP counties did not report specific outreach strategies to reach children with special needs. San Diego, however, conducted outreach meetings and waived residency criteria to encourage a greater number of children with special needs to participate.

3. **To what extent are children with special needs participating in programs that include typically developing children?**

   - Families with children with disabilities often have difficulty finding high quality child care for their children (Neas & Mezey, 2003).

   - Counties participating in the Power of Preschool program reported a strong push for the inclusion and integration of children with special needs into mainstream classrooms (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

   - The 10 Special Needs Project sites reported successfully including children with special needs in regular settings (First 5 California, 2010).

Recommendations

To move forward in improving assistance to children with special needs, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **Outreach to children with special needs should be improved (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff with First 5 California Staff, 2009).**

2. **Teacher preparation should include training on working with children with special needs. Resources for teachers are available on both the Child Care Law Center (www.childcarelaw.org) and First 5 California (www.cccf.ca.gov) websites.**

Early Childhood Mental Health/Behavioral Health Services

> *Social-emotional and behavioral health in young children is an important component of school readiness. Early childhood mental health consultation consists of mental health professionals partnering with early care and education professionals to promote the social and emotional well-being of children. These services, along with training provided through the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), should be expanded in ECE settings throughout the state.*

Key Findings

1. **How is early childhood mental health related to school readiness?**

   - It is well documented in the literature that healthy social and emotional development for infants depends on their relationships with caregivers (see, for example, Pitcl & Provance, 2006).

   - Persistent conduct problems are associated with poor academic performance, delinquency, and substance abuse in later childhood (McCabe & Frede, 2007, as cited in Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009). When preschool teachers fail to handle social-emotional problems well, they perpetuate unregulated behaviors in children (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998, as cited in Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009).

2. **How effective are early learning programs in California in implementing early childhood mental health services?**

   - Though many young children have shown a need for mental health services, intervention for children under five has been rare until recently, because mental health service delivery for these young children has required modifications from traditional practice in terms of family engagement, assessment, diagnosis, treatment models, and location of service delivery (Finello, Hampton, & Paulsen, 2011). One model that is becoming more prevalent is early childhood mental health consultation (Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Services Group, 2009).

- Early childhood mental health consultation consists of mental health professionals partnering with early care and education professionals to promote the social and emotional well-being of children. Services can include general consultation with teachers about child development and classroom environments, child-specific consultation to staff or families, program consultation, or direct mental health services (Pitcl & Provance, 2006; Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009). The results of an evaluation of a 17-month mental health consultation program in seven ECE programs in Alameda County showed significant improvements in teacher ratings of children's social competence and of children's levels of aggression and withdrawn social behavior (Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009).
- Education, practice, and time are required for clinicians and agencies to become proficient with newly introduced mental health practices.
- The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) aims to foster professional development of the ECE workforce in order to enhance its skill in supporting the social emotional development of children under 5. CSEFEL's model has been implemented in several California communities, which have experienced positive changes for supporting children's social-emotional development and children with challenging behaviors.

Recommendations

To continue to improve the availability and quality of early childhood mental health services in California, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **Establish a common, cohesive, effective approach for social-emotional development across the state by using the CSEFEL model, which aligns with California's social-emotional Preschool Learning Foundations (California CSEFEL Project, 2011).**
2. **Increase Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in family child care programs (Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009).**
3. **Professionals providing treatment and interventions should have basic knowledge in key areas such as those outlined in the *California Training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health, Revised* (Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen, 2011).**
4. **Clinical judgment, combined with parent voice, is needed to set priorities, choose, and adapt programs in ECE settings (Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen, 2011).**
5. **The mental health system, policymakers, and funders must commit to creating and sustaining a trained workforce in mental health (Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen, 2011).**
6. **All agencies implementing evidence-based practices for children birth to five should be required to engage in ongoing reflective practice supervision and evaluation efforts (Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen, 2011).**

7. **Continue to fund research on the short- and long-term effectiveness of early childhood mental health services (Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group, 2009; Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen, 2011).**

Child Assessment to Support School Readiness

> *Researchers support the use of child observational assessments to improve program quality, and improve instruction to children, and generally provide information on whether the status of children's readiness is improving. They also support the use of a battery of child assessments by outside trained evaluators on a sample of children to evaluate the effectiveness of a program. But leading researchers question the validity, practicality, and cost of using child observational assessments by teachers for high-stakes purposes, such as serving as a component in a rating scale linked to provider payment levels.*

Key Findings

1. **What are the purposes of child observational assessments in supporting school readiness?**
   - Child assessments can be used to inform ECE practices, improve program quality, determine effectiveness of interventions, or validate QRIS ratings (Karoly, 2012b).
   - However, using child assessments as a QRIS rating component is risky; the methodology is complex, is not sufficiently developed for high-stakes purposes, and is costly to implement for uncertain gain (Karoly, 2012b).
2. **Is California's Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR) an appropriate tool for assessing school readiness? How is it currently being administered?**
   - The DRDP-SR has been developed as an observational assessment for kindergarten entry, and is aligned with the Foundations and the Common Core standards (State of California, 2011).
   - A pilot is in progress to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument (State of California, 2011).
   - Numerous counties have used kindergarten readiness observation assessments effectively (Children Now, 2012).
3. **Is it legitimate and feasible to use the results of child observational assessments to evaluate the effects of a program on developmental outcomes? What alternative approaches are available?**
   - Feedback on the DRDP-R was generally positive from the First 5 Power of Preschool counties, while two counties said that while it was helpful for monitoring progress and informing instruction, it was not appropriate for evaluation purposes (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

- There appears to be inconsistency in the way schools and teachers collect DRDP-R data (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009). In order for First 5 California to draw solid conclusions about the effectiveness of the Power of Preschool program, reporting of DRDP data and any other child-level assessment that may be requested at the individual child level is critical for accurate analysis of data (UCLA Center of Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

Recommendations

CDE is planning to link the DRDP-SR data to the CALPADS system in the 2013–14 school year (California Department of Education Child Development Division, 2012). To move forward on appropriate and effective use of child assessments, the following major recommendations emerged from these reports:

1. **Invest in training and technical assistance to counties on how to report DRDP results on an individual basis while de-identifying data securely. Ensure that this child-level data can be linked to other data at the classroom and teacher level (UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).**
2. **Identify and address children's needs earlier in their lives through ongoing, developmentally appropriate assessments, including the adoption of a statewide kindergarten assessment observation instrument (Children Now, 2011).**
3. **Promote the use of child assessments by ECE caregivers and teachers to improve practice. Provide professional development to support effective use by teachers (Karoly, 2012b).**
4. **Implement a statewide evaluation of specific ECE programs or the broader ECE system, using independent assessors to measure child functioning to evaluate effects of specific ECE program or groups of programs on child development outcomes.**
5. **Proceed with caution if considering a QRIS rating component that is based on estimates of a program's effect on child outcomes (Karoly, 2012b). The methodology is insufficiently developed for high-stakes purposes.**

Effective Practices for Child Data

> *Multiple studies and policy reports recommend the establishment of a statewide data system in which all children in early care settings are assigned a unique identifier to follow them into the K–12 system. The use of a child identifier would allow linking across program data sets, to determine the extent to which children are served in more than one setting, help to measure school readiness, establish more efficient program management and administrative functions, and improve teacher and provider effectiveness, and, ultimately, provide trend data regarding whether enrollment in high quality early learning and care programs is associated with improved child outcomes in elementary school. Currently several counties in California collect comprehensive data on children in early learning and care settings, assigning them a unique child identifier so that outcomes may be tracked over time.*

Key Findings

1. **What role do data practices play in an integrated early learning system? What are the components of an effective early educational data system, and how should early educational data relate to K–12 data?**

   - The CAEL QIS Advisory Committee identified nine key principles for an early learning and care data system (CAEL QIS, 2010):
     - Confidential
     - Useable and practical
     - Accessible and inter-operable
     - Respects current databases and builds on them
     - Transparent
     - Includes and connects child, family, teacher and provider, and program data
     - Provider-friendly
     - Easily adaptable and can grow and change over time
     - Dynamic

2. **What are the chief barriers to such a data system?**

   - Implementation of the K–12 data system (CALPADS and CALTIDES) has been slow, and efforts to integrate preschool data into the system have only just begun (Karoly et al., 2009). The only data available statewide is DRDP Access assessment data on children receiving IDEA Part B services, captured in the California Longitudinal Pupil A Achievement Data System (CALPADS) with a unique identifier for each child (State of California, 2011).
   - However, some California counties already use some form of unique student identifier (ELCG, 2012; UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2011).

Recommendations

1. **To implement an effective longitudinal data system statewide:**

   - Fund the implementation of a P–16 longitudinal data system, including a unique child identifier (CAEL QIS, 2010; Children Now, 2012; RAND, 2009).
   - Include infants and toddlers in the data system as well (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010; Water Cooler Policy Report, 2012).

- The use of a child identifier would allow linking across program data sets, to determine the extent to which children are served in more than one setting, and, ultimately, whether enrollment in high quality early learning and care programs is associated with improved child outcomes in elementary school (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010). Additionally, such a system could help to measure school readiness, establish more efficient program management and administrative functions, and ultimately improve teacher and provider effectiveness (CAEL QIS, 2010).

- To get an accurate count of which children are being served, enrollment data for all publicly subsidized programs should be collected by zip code of the child's residence, age cohort, and type of program (e.g., licensed, voucher, and exempt care) (Anthony & Muenchow, 2010).

- Leverage existing data systems to eliminate duplicative reporting and collection and improve data quality.

- Consider using a child's birth certificate registration number as a unique identifier, which would facilitate including infants and toddlers as well as preschool children in the data system (CAEL QIS, 2010).

- Develop a system that connects early learning and education with juvenile justice, child welfare, and other data in order to better track and address the educational outcomes and well-being of children throughout their lives (Children Now, 2012).

2. **To pilot an effective data system:**

   - Strategically sample a few hundred children throughout PoP counties and track them longitudinally. San Mateo County Preschool for All has done so in partnership with the Redwood City Unified School District, following participating children through grade three (Mallonee, Sanchez, & London, 2011).

   - Participating Regional Leadership Consortia should use the National Data Quality Campaign guidelines to support uniformity of data fields and terms (as approved in the Early Learning Challenge Grant application).

   - In 2013–14, use RTT-ELC grant funds to provide incentive for Regional Leadership Consortia districts to report their Transitional Kindergarten and kindergarten DRDP results into CALPADS. CALPADS should be fully functional to receive DRDP-SR data on a voluntary basis starting in 2014–15 (as approved in the Early Learning Challenge Grant application).

Facilities

Among the studies conducted, there is agreement that there is a shortage of early learning and care facilities, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Barriers to expansion include lack of public and private financial resources, land use barriers, outdoor space requirements and other restrictions, and provider inexperience with facilities development and financing. Major recommendations include improving facilities financing through inclusion of child care facilities in city/county plans and/or school bond issues, and advocating for child-friendly land-use policies.

Key Findings

1. **Is there a shortage of facilities to house early learning and care programs in California?**

   - California lacks suitable space for preschool programs, whether universal or targeted towards specific child populations—such as children living in poverty, children whose parent(s) did not graduate from high school, and children of color (Advancement Project, 2007).

2. **How safe and inviting are the facilities that exist?**

   - In addition to the quality of teacher-child interactions, the space children learn in is also important; inadequate or poorly designed space can reduce the effectiveness of the program — even when the other factors are very high quality (LISC, 2004).
   - California child care licensing regulations require child care centers to maintain a fire clearance approved by the fire department, clean drinking water, a disaster plan, and an appropriate, safe number of children for the space (California Department of Health and Human Services, 1998).
   - However, children are also likely to be exposed to pesticides, arsenic-treated lumber, lead, and common asthma triggers in some home- and center-based child care settings (Community Environmental Council, 2004).

3. **What are the major barriers to expanding facilities?**

   - Only a few localities in California include child care as an element in their city and county plans. Presently, in communities without such language, early care and education centers do not clearly belong in commercial or residential zones but must be considered as unique situations.
   - A lack of local public and private financial resources and land use barriers (e.g., excessive permit fees and conflicting regulatory requirements) were identified as the greatest concerns amongst child care intermediaries (Low Income Investment Fund I, 2010).
   - In addition, local development standards, procedures, and planning processes prohibit the development of larger child care facilities (The BCC Project, 2007).

- Outdoor play space requirements pose barriers for the development of child care facilities in urban areas (The BCC Project, 2007).
- Child care operators lack the proper services and resources to guide them through all stages of facilities development and financing (Low Income Investment Fund, 2010; Building Child Care Collaborative, 2007).

Recommendations

1. **To improve facilities financing:**
   - Include child care in city/county General Plans (Advancement Project, 2007).
   - Expand facilities development and financing models, such as ABCD Constructing Connections, to interested communities (Low Income Investment Fund, 2010).
   - Increase local facility financing by identifying potential public sources of capital, and engaging local businesses in existing early care and education efforts to help advocate for increased public capital and to promote local fund development efforts (Low Income Investment Fund, 2010).
   - Make preschool facilities part of the next statewide education facilities bond, with the largest bond amount that is feasible (Advancement Project, 2007).
   - Standardize permit processes and fees across jurisdictions so they are clearer and reasonable (Building Child Care Collaborative, 2007).
   - Distribute bond funds as a grant, as is done with funds for school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools. A match should not be required because there are no local funding sources of matching dollars for preschool facilities to which all entities have equal access. Funds should be distributed to local education agencies because they already have the expertise and ability to rapidly construct educational facilities (Advancement Project, 2007).
   - Focus funds where the need is greatest: where more than 80 four-year-olds lack preschool space, and either (1) the API score of the local schools is a 1, 2, or 3, or (2) the local elementary school is in the top 25 percent of the schools in the state that receive free and reduced-price lunches (Advancement Project, 2007).
2. **To remove land use barriers:**
   - Advocate for child care–friendly land use policies and procedures that encourage child care facility development (e.g., reducing permit fees, reducing/eliminating traffic impact fees, increasing the number of areas zoned for child care).
   - Play space requirements should be adjusted to allow exceptions for urban areas (The BCC Project, 2007).
   - Local education agencies should use the land they currently have on their K–5 campuses for early learning centers, especially on campuses that are experiencing declining enrollment (Advancement Project, 2007).

3. **To help providers establish and renovate facilities:**

   - Provide training and technical assistance to ECE operators and providers on all phases of facility development (Low Income Investment Fund, 2010).
   - Provide child care providers with information and training about how to protect children from exposure to health hazards (Community Environmental Council, 2004).

Food and Nutrition

> *Obesity and oral health are both recent concerns among young children. Nutrition programs located in early care and education settings can help to address both of these concerns, as well as provide sufficient food for children in low-income families. Though California has the highest number of children participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, fewer than half of eligible providers participate in this program. The Child Care Nutrition Environment Advisory Group has issued specific recommendations to strengthen this program. Other major recommendations include establishing nutrition and physical activity requirements for child care programs, coordinating messaging to families regarding nutrition and physical activity, and supporting policies to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods.*

Key Findings

1. **To what extent are obesity and dental disease a problem among children birth to five in California?**

   - Obesity
     - As described in Section I, 10 percent of children between birth and five are overweight (CHIS, n.d.a).
     - The Children of LAUP study (2009) found that 20 percent of the children participating in the Los Angeles Universal Preschool program were obese.
     - Children Now gave California a grade of "C-" for its relatively high rate of childhood obesity.
   - Oral Health
     - 54 percent of kindergartners have a history of tooth decay (Dental Health Foundation, 2006).
     - As described in Section I, 27 percent of children between birth and five have never been to the dentist (CHIS, n.d.b).
     - Children Now graded the state of children's oral health in California as a "D."
     - California is in the bottom three states for children's oral health (Children Now, 2011).

2. **How many children participate in the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and what are the major challenges to improving the program?**

   - In the 2009–10 school year, over 430,000 children in California were enrolled in the CACFP located at child care centers and day care homes, with an average daily participation of 199,833 in child care centers and 120,732 in day care homes (CDE, 2011).
   - Although California has the highest number of children participating in the CACFP than any other state (USDA, 2012), less than half of eligible California child care providers actually participate in the program (CDE, 2011).
   - This is unfortunate, because participation in the CACFP can help improve children's diets (Bruening, Gilbride, Passannante, & McClowry, 1999) and meals and snacks from the CACFP are the main source of nutrition for many children in low-income families (Parker, 2000).
   - Challenges to improving the quality of the CACFP include the following:
     - Little change has been made to the CACFP's meal pattern requirements in the last 40 years, although scientific evidence has improved our knowledge on nutrition and physical activity.
     - CACFP physical activity standards for children in child care do not exist.
     - CACFP sites and sponsors indicated that the excessive amounts of work required for compliance and accountability reporting were barriers to participating in the program (CDE, 2010).
     - Participation in the CACFP remains low, especially in family day care homes.
     - In June 2012, Governor Brown vetoed the $10 million in supplemental state funding for the Child Care and Adult Food Program; if these centers and family child care homes do not find another sponsor, as many as 150,000 children could lose access to free and reduced-price meals (Child Development Policy Institute, 2012).

3. **What are the major challenges to improving nutrition and physical activity in child care settings?**

   - The various types of child care settings in California, the different practices and resources used by each setting, and the different rules, regulations, and agencies that govern these settings may make it difficult to improve nutrition and physical activity in child care settings (CDE & CHHS, 2010).
   - Child care providers reported lack of knowledge as a barrier to improved child nutrition in child care centers (Heinig & Nutrition Services Division, California Department of Education, 2010).

- The different standards required of child care providers, depending on whether they participate in the CACFP and/or receive state funding, may be a source of confusion and conflict for some providers.
- Currently, there is no ongoing mechanism to collect and report key nutrition and physical activity outcomes for children in child care.
- A large majority of child care staff receive their training and education at community colleges (Whitebook et al., 2006), but only a small percentage of colleges offer courses related to nutrition and physical activity (UC Davis Center Human Lactation Center, 2007).

Recommendations

The latest volumes of the Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks now include the domains of Physical Development and Health (2011). As with the previous domains, the California Preschool Instructional Network, CPIN, is conducting training around the state in these critical areas. To continue to move forward in integrating healthy practices for young children, recent reports have made the following recommendations:

1. **To improve the consumption of nutritious foods:**
   - Reduce the consumption of sweetened beverages by implementing a state tax (Children Now, 2011, 2012).
   - Develop policies to ensure consumption of five fruits and vegetables each day (Children Now, 2011)
   - Encourage greater participation in CalFresh by reducing burdensome reporting requirements (Children Now, 2012)
   - Encourage dietary counseling by health care providers (Children Now, 2011).
   - Child care providers should strengthen their relationships with various public health programs to improve children's nutrition (Mathematica Policy Research Inc., 2009; Ritchie, James, & Fredericks, 2011).
2. **Change the nutrition and physical activity environments of children in child care (Strategic Assessment of the Child Care Nutrition Environment Advisory Group, CDE & CHHS, 2010) by doing the following:**
   - Strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
     - Establish California nutrition and physical activity standards based on current scientific evidence.
     - Collaborate with the federal government to modify the federal CACFP meal pattern requirements to align with standards developed in the previous recommendation.
     - Streamline the CACFP compliance requirements to increase participation.

- Facilitate collaboration between relevant state agencies to develop a CACFP marketing plan aimed at increasing participation in the program.
- Include evaluations of nutrition and physical activity as part of the CACFP monitoring-visit requirements.
- Require state-funded care child programs to participate in the CACFP.

- Establish nutrition and physical activity requirements for child care programs.
  - All licensed care providers should be required to comply with the nutrition and physical activity standards recommended above—even providers not participating in the CACFP.
  - Evidence-based nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education training should be required for initial child care licensure.
  - Nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education training should also be required for maintaining child care licensure.
  - State and federal agencies should align child care nutrition and physical activity standards.
  - Child care agencies should be required to publicly report key child nutrition and physical activity outcomes.
- Provide consistent messaging to children, families, and providers related to improving nutrition and physical activity in child care environments.
  - Relevant state agencies should collaborate on developing and delivering consistent messaging through social marketing and health education campaigns.
    - ▶ Nutrition foundations should be established for preschool.
    - ▶ Nutrition and physical activity criteria should be included in California's QRIS.
- Expand nutrition and physical activity training in child care programs.
  - Include nutrition and physical activity in child care information in all child care–related curricula.
  - Provide the latest nutrition and physical activity information with continuing child care training programs.
  - Provide the nutrition and physical activity information with caregiver and parent education.
- Focus some activities in early care and education settings around the California Preschool Learning Foundations' Physical Development domain

Kindergarten Transition

One of the primary goals of early education programs is to prepare children for school, but children show varying degrees of readiness based on normal developmental variances and also on family resources. Activities to help children make the transition to kindergarten are critical. Power of Preschool (PoP) demonstration programs have implemented several activities to focus on this transition, including sharing assessment information with kindergarten teachers and aligning curricula. Beginning in 2012–13, California school districts will be implementing a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program, but districts are at different stages of developing content guidelines for this new program. Major recommendations regarding TK include providing more guidance on standards, frameworks, curriculum and instruction, and assessment strategies; and focusing on offering opportunities for early educational experiences and preparing schools to meet children's developmental, social, and educational needs, rather than on children's chronological age.

Key Findings

1. **For California's new Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Program, to what extent have districts developed standards for program content and curriculum? How do these compare with preschool standards and curricula?**

   - Of the nine districts interviewed for the Preschool California Study on Transitional Kindergarten (California Early Learning Advisory Council, 2011), five had developed working content standards for the TK or for a program designed for young five-year-olds.
   - Of the 10 programs interviewed for the Preschool California Study on Transitional Kindergarten (2011):
     - All programs had some focus on mathematics and early literacy and language skills.
     - Many programs used parts of curricula or modified curricula developed for other populations.
     - Five programs had a written parent/family engagement policy.
     - Programs varied in whether they conducted assessments to determine enrollment in the program, show progress, or determine kindergarten readiness.

2. **What educational qualifications are school districts setting for TK teachers, and what are the anticipated classroom staffing patterns?**

   - Of the districts interviewed for the Preschool California Studies on Transitional Kindergarten and programs for five-year-olds (2011):
     - Teachers typically hold a multiple subject credential.
     - Professional development is not standard or specifically focused on TK, so districts piece together their own professional development or use the same professional development used for kindergarten teachers.

- Most classrooms have only one teacher and do not have teacher aides or special training for teacher aides.

- Small schools tended to be more concerned about being able to finance TK in separate classrooms (California County Superintendents of Education Services Association, 2001).

3. **More generally, what practices are in place to facilitate children's transition from preschool to kindergarten? What are the promising practices for promoting a successful transition?**

   - In the 2008 PoP evaluation, children in the PoP program showed that they were prepared for school on the DRDP (First 5 California, 2008). The PoP program utilized the following preschool-to-kindergarten transition activities:

     - Family visits to kindergarten classrooms
     - Meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers
     - Sharing preschool child assessments and/or portfolios with kindergarten teachers
     - Aligning preschool and kindergarten curriculum
     - Transition teams attended parent meetings and/or community forums
     - Group preschool classroom visits

   - Research does not suggest that there is a particular age at which children are more prepared to enter kindergarten, but children with early education experiences may show greater cognitive gains (Social Policy Report, 2002).

   - Children from low-income families who delay kindergarten entry may be at a greater disadvantage, because these children start kindergarten with lower academic skills and are less able to afford an extra year of preschool or high quality child care.

Recommendations

California will implement a Transitional Kindergarten program in all elementary and unified school districts beginning in 2012–13. To continue to move forward in facilitating the transition to kindergarten, recent reports have made the following recommendations:

1. **To work toward the implementation of a successful TK program:**

   - More guidance should be provided to districts on TK standards, frameworks, curriculum and instruction, assessment strategies, and tools and planning (California County Superintendents of Education Services Association, 2001; California Early Learning Advisory Council, 2011).

   - Districts should be provided with support on how to provide high quality TK and kindergarten combination classes (California County Superintendents of Education Services Association, 2001).

2. **To promote smoother transitions from preschool to kindergarten:**

   - California should explore how to use PoP program transition strategies as models to replicate throughout the state (First 5 California, 2008).
   - School entry policies should focus on offering opportunities for early educational experiences and preparing schools to meet children's developmental, social, and educational needs, rather than on children's appropriate age, especially among children from low-income families (Chang & Romero, 2008; Social Policy Report, 2002).
   - School districts should devote time and resources to examining the levels of chronic early absence in their schools in order to identify at-risk children and to provide necessary support (Chang & Romero, 2008).
   - Kindergarten transition activities should include the following (Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff, 2009; First 5 California, 2008):
     - Encouraging preschool and kindergarten teachers to visit each other's classrooms, to attend common workshops and professional development sessions, and to collaborate with each other on continuity in teaching strategies and methods.
     - Holding a kindergarten transition conference at the beginning of the year, and facilitating visits by preschool children to their new school before starting kindergarten.

Finance, Governance, and Other Systems Issues

Researchers and policy analysts consistently point out two major flaws in California's publicly funded early learning and care programs: the level of payments is not linked to the standards of quality to which the programs are held, leading to disincentives for quality improvement; and there are barriers to blending and braiding funds to cover the true cost of quality. Several studies point to the First 5 Power of Preschool program as a model for a tiered reimbursement system that rewards quality improvements, and which has succeeded in improving the quality of early learning and care programs. On a broader level, multiple studies point out that California has three "systems" (Title 22 licensing, Title 5 Child Development programs, and the federal Head Start program) for overseeing early learning and care, and suggest that the establishment of a Quality Rating and Improvement System offers a way to integrate standards into one coherent system without necessarily consolidating all responsibilities in a single agency at the state level.

Key Findings

1. **Beyond the budget crisis, which has reduced funding for programs, what are the additional financial systems issues that make it difficult to improve the quality of early learning and care in California?**

   - California's early learning and development system is a web of state and local programs financed through a combination of federal, state, and local sources. Many programs

have distinct eligibility and reporting requirements that make it difficult to blend and braid funds to cover the true cost of quality (Children Now, 2012; CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010).

- As indicated in the section on Access to Quality Early Learning and Care, the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) for Title 5 State Preschool or General Child Care—for which quality standards are higher than Title 22 licensing requirements—is lower in many counties than the Regional Market Rate (for which only Title 22 standards must be met), and this creates a disincentive for program quality improvement (CAEL QIS, 2010; Children Now, 2012; Karoly, 2009; Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).
- The current state reimbursement rate for state-contracted Title 5 full-day early learning and care is particularly low.
  - Program staff often do not have the necessary experience with the relevant accounting and reporting requirements to braid funds from various funding sources, and the rules and instructions on reporting third-party funding have not always been clear (Miller, 2008).
  - Providers who choose to operate a General Child Care or full-day State Preschool Program are at a financial disadvantage compared to those who administer a part-day State Preschool Program, with a full-day program receiving an hourly rate that is less than half the hourly rate for a program operating part-day (Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).
- Unlike most state- and federally funded early care and education programs, the First 5 California Power of Preschool structure is not restricted to a single annual per child amount. Instead, First 5 commissions reimburse local participating agencies based on the quality of the preschool space, and the rate structure is designed to increase incrementally with teacher qualifications and improvements in program scores on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS). In these eight PoP counties, therefore, the PoP dollars provide the extra amount above the SRR that is necessary to support a quality program (Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).

2. **What are the pros and cons of placing the governance of early learning and care programs in a single agency versus multiple agencies?**

- Multiple agencies in California have responsibilities for various aspects of early learning and care licensing, regulation, finance, and delivery. Governance models in other states include consolidation of various public programs into a single agency, or retaining the existing agency structure but establishing a new high level, multi-agency, coordinating body. There is little research evidence to provide guidance on which governance models work best, and what works in one state may not work in another (Karoly, 2009).
- In Florida, after 10 years of placing early care and education services under the Agency for Workforce Innovation, the Legislature transferred all early care and education services to a self-contained unit within the Department of Education. The transfer of

early care and education services to the Department of Education, with a director appointed by the Governor, has the potential to raise the profile of the programs. However, improvement is not guaranteed without proper procedures in place (State of Florida, Auditor General, 2011).

- An integrated approach to early education management (e.g., one office, department, or agency in charge) indicates that state government leaders have attached a relatively higher value to the policymaking, funding, and regulation of early childhood than when the approach is more fragmented (The BUILD Initiative, 2010).

3. **How has devolution of policy-setting on publicly subsidized child care worked in other states?**

- While the devolution of child care policy to local workforce boards in Texas was designed to increase local autonomy in designing solutions to problems, this autonomy was limited by unchanged regulations at the state and federal level (Lein, Beausoleil, & Tang, 2007). As a result of the complexity of child care policies, many local boards needed considerable technical assistance from the Texas Workforce Commission (Lein, Beausoleil, Trott, Schexnayder, Schroeder, Tang, & Randazzo, 2003).

- Eligibility requirements for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program vary significantly across counties. As a result, families are eligible for services in some counties but not in others (Office of the State Auditor, Colorado, 2008).

- Families that are similarly situated financially pay notably different proportions of their annual income for child care in different parts of New York State, and there are other inequities in determining eligibility for child care subsidies (Empire Justice Center, 2010).

- In Florida, the Office of Early Learning under the Agency for Workforce Innovation did not implement a legislatively required QRIS. Instead, some local school readiness coalitions implemented QRIS systems of their own (Auditor General, State of Florida, 2011).

Recommendations

1. **To improve the financial incentives for quality:**

- Raise the Standard Reimbursement Rate for state-contracted programs meeting Title 5 standards so that they are above the rate for programs of similar duration that are only required to meet Title 22 standards (CAEL QIS Advisory Committee, 2010; Children Now, 2008; Karoly, 2009; Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).

- Explore establishing an hourly as opposed to daily rate to compensate programs for the number of hours of service they actually provide (Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).

- Consider the First 5 Power of Preschool Demonstration Project reimbursement structure as a model for developing a tiered reimbursement system (Muenchow, Lam, & Wang, 2009).

- Provide a rate differential to programs that participate in the QRIS (Empire Justice Center, 2010).

- Carefully evaluate use of measures that were originally developed for low-stakes purposes and that may not be valid in high-stakes contexts (Zellman & Perlman, 2008).
- Support efforts to create a more consistent approach to counting third-party funding (Children Now, 2008).

2. **To improve governance of early learning and care programs:**
   - Coordinate so that children and families experience a system that is not siloed and fragmented (The Build Initiative, 2010).
   - Establish a statewide QRIS system rather than devolving responsibility to local school readiness coalitions (Auditory General, State of Florida, 2011).
   - Establish and regularly convene regional consortia composed of leaders of local existing QRIS systems together for the purpose of strengthening their local systems, developing common goals where feasible, and mentoring other communities to develop QRISs as well (State of California, 2011).
   - Carefully validate Quality Rating and Improvement Systems in the context in which they occur (Zellman & Perlman, 2008).
   - Evaluate options for alternative governance structures, and change the structure if greater efficiency and effectiveness can be obtained (Karoly, 2009).
   - Establish a Children's Cabinet composed of the heads of each agency and department that serve children's well-being and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The cabinet should be charged with promoting and implementing information sharing, collaboration, increased efficiency, and improved service delivery among and within the state's child-serving agencies and organizations (Children Now, 2012).

Summary of Research Findings and Recommendations on Early Learning and Care

There is general consensus in the literature that access to quality early learning and care is uneven, varying by the age of the child and by multiple family characteristics, such as family income, the mother's education level, and the degree of linguistic isolation. Several studies have found that center-based care in the year before kindergarten for dual language learners in particular is especially effective in improving children's early reading skills.

Researchers and policy analysts consistently point out two major flaws in California's publicly funded early learning and care programs: the level of payments is not linked to the standards of quality to which the programs are held, leading to disincentives for quality improvement; and there are barriers to blending and braiding funds to cover the true cost of quality. Recent reports recommend, at minimum, restoring prior levels of funding to early care and education programs in California, with additional investments in quality as new funds become available. A Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) can help the state monitor and encourage improvements in

quality. Multiple studies point out that California has three "systems" (Title 22 licensing, Title 5 Child Development programs, and the federal Head Start program) for overseeing early learning and care, and suggest that the establishment of a Quality Rating and Improvement System offers a way to integrate standards into one coherent system without necessarily consolidating all responsibilities in a single agency at the state level. Several studies point to the First 5 Power of Preschool program as a model for a tiered reimbursement system that rewards quality improvements, Measures of teacher-child interactions such as the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) are recommended to assess program quality, as the quality of these interactions is the basis for children's learning and has been linked to positive child outcomes. Virtually all studies reviewed on the topic recommend piloting a Quality Rating and Improvement System before implementing it statewide.

There is also widespread agreement that it is vital to engage families in their children's early learning and care programs and to increase parents' understanding of the elements that contribute to school readiness. Furthermore, many researchers stress the need for special outreach to engage families whose home language is not English.

Researchers agree that early childhood educators who understand child development and engage in effective interaction with young children are central to the effectiveness of early learning and care programs in improving child outcomes. The early learning and care programs that have been found to achieve dramatic improvements in child outcomes all have highly qualified, well-compensated teachers with strong supervision. Recent studies suggest, however, that degrees alone are not sufficient, and researchers disagree on what degree level is most appropriate. Studies indicate that early childhood higher education itself needs reform, with more focus on the desired child outcomes. Teacher training in the areas of dual language learners and children with special needs should be improved, in particular. Several studies also stress the importance of more systematic data collection and the development of an early childhood workforce registry linked to K–12 workforce data.

Families with children with disabilities often have difficulty finding high quality child care for their children. Outreach to families and teacher training in this area should be improved. Developmental screening in early learning and care programs using a validated tool is increasing, but often is not conducted early enough in the program year to refer children to effective intervention and services. Research suggests that best practices for improving the screening rate include building relationships with families. It is recommended that early childhood mental health services, along with training provided through the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL), be expanded in ECE settings throughout the state.

Among the studies conducted, there is agreement that there is a shortage of early learning and care facilities, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Barriers to expansion include lack of public and private financial resources, land use barriers, outdoor space requirements and other restrictions, and provider inexperience with facilities development and financing. Major recommendations include improving facilities financing through inclusion of child care facilities in city/county plans and/or school bond issues, and advocating for child-friendly land-use policies.

Activities to help children make the transition to kindergarten are critical. Beginning in 2012–13, California school districts will be implementing a Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program, but districts are at different stages of developing content guidelines for this new program. Major recommendations regarding TK include providing more guidance on standards, frameworks, curriculum and instruction, and assessment strategies; and focusing on offering opportunities for early educational experiences and preparing schools to meet children's developmental, social, and educational needs, rather than on children's chronological age. Multiple studies and policy reports recommend the establishment of a statewide data system in which all children in early care settings are assigned a unique identifier that follows them into the K–12 system, so that children's outcomes following early childhood investments can be better understood.

Section III: Research Summary Tables by Topic

Access to Quality Early Learning and Care

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Use of Early Care and Education by California Families (2012) Karoly RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of administrative data and data from 2005 National Household Education Survey and the 2007 RAND California Preschool Study	• This analysis, disseminated in a RAND "Occasional Paper," did not include any recommendations.	• 75 to 80% of preschool age children, and just under half of infants and toddlers, are cared for by someone other than their parents on a regular basis. • Center-based is the modal form for preschool age, and home-based for infants and toddlers. • Families often combine a part-day, center-based preschool program with home-based care for the remainder of the day. • Given funding levels as of 2008–2009, the existing subsidized programs were not able to serve the approximately 53% of children ages 0 to 5 who would have qualified on the basis of family income. • Based on analysis of the 2005 National Household Education Survey and the 2007 RAND California Preschool Study, subsidized programs served 34% of eligible 3-year-olds and 65% of eligible 4-year-olds, and just 8% of the eligible infants and toddlers.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012) Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened more than 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California.	• Reform child care licensing regulations. • Rebuild state investment in early childhood quality initiatives. • Fund Early Start (early intervention) services at a level that ensures access for eligible children ages 0–3. • Restructure the child care reimbursement system for publicly funded infant-toddler programs so that providers are reimbursed for the true cost of providing high quality care. • Provide higher reimbursement rates in a tiered system for programs meeting high quality standards such as Early Head Start standards or higher QRIS level criteria. This could be a short-term priority as the state restructures the reimbursement rates. • Create a new state revenue source that supports early learning from age 0 to 5. Within this new revenue stream, at least 30% of funds should be set aside for infants and toddlers. • Until there is adequate funding to benefit all programs and children, expanded funding should be targeted first to children at high risk, such as those meeting Early Head Start eligibility criteria in high-poverty communities. • Focus on a comprehensive approach to service delivery for infants and toddlers. • Expand 0–3 home visitation services that support school readiness, with priority given to vulnerable children.	• Reimbursement levels based on the market rate are now more than half a decade old, and they do not cover the cost of providing quality care for infants. • California does not perform well in terms of quality regulations and monitoring; the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) ranks California 50th out of 52 states and territories in terms of the quality of regulations and the degree of monitoring for most programs. • There has been a steady decline in California's commitment to quality funding over the past decade. The withdrawal of federal child care quality funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 led to a $16.3 million reduction in investments in child care quality in FY2012. • While roughly 85% of the brain's core structures are formed by age 3, only about six cents of every dollar that California invests in education and development services for children 0–18 goes to support infants and toddlers.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now Study Approach: Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• This report recommended including early learning and care in a comprehensive P-to-12 education and reform package with an equitable and adequate financing system, which could be viewed as a strategy to expand access to early learning and care programs. • Restore funding from cuts to ensure that more children have access to quality programs, and support more flexibility in use of federal child care funds. • Fully support the implementation of the federal home visitation program and coordinate with early learning programs.	• Less than 4% of public investments in education and development are targeted at children from birth to age 4. • $600 million cut from public investments in early learning and care in 2010. • California is the nation's fifth least affordable state for center-based infant care, with the cost representing more than 40% of the median income for a single-parent household, based on an analysis by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. • Latino children are less likely than other racial/ethnic groups to attend preschool. Only 42% of Latino children in California attend preschool, compared with 60% of white, 56% of Asian, and 53% of African-American children, based on Population Reference Bureau analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2001, and 2008, in 2010.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Application (2012) State of California <u>Study Approach:</u> Application citing administrative data from multiple state agencies and reports to federal agencies	• Application proposed 16 Early Learning Challenge Grant Regional Leadership Consortia located in the most populous counties that will initially impact the quality of services for 76,000 young children and ultimately as many as 1.8 million. • The end goal that unites the Consortia is to "ensure that children in California have access to high quality programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten and beyond." • Given the state's fiscal outlook, the application does not suggest increased spending to expand access, and focuses on one-time investments as well as local capacity-building activities involving the Regional Leadership Consortia. • 85% of the $50 million in Challenge Grant funds will go directly to Regional Leadership Consortia	• Number of children participating in First 5 Power of Preschool programs increased from 14,239 in 2007 to 24,389 in 2010–11. • Consolidation of existing State Preschool, Prekindergarten Family Literacy, and General Child Care and Development programs enabled more than 19,000 additional children to be part of the California State Preschool Program and expanded access to full-day services that better meet the needs of working parents. • The number of children with high needs enrolled in state-funded preschool increased steadily by 14% from 87,706 in 2007 to 101,414 in 2010; in Title 1 preschool grew from 23,776 in 2007 to 26,580 in 2009; and in Early Head Start increased by 5,729 due to infusion of ARRA funds. • Passage of the Transitional Kindergarten program anticipated to ultimately serve 120,000 children. At the same time, in response to the state budget crisis: • Eligibility for State Preschool and Title 5 programs was reduced from 75% of State Median Income to 70% of the SMI; • Children served in CCDF-funded programs declined from 131,679 in

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		2007 to 125,899 in 2010; and • The number of children served in programs funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619, declined from 83,484 in 2007 to 81,621 in 2010.
Preschool and School Readiness: Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents (2012) Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly Public Policy Institute of California <u>Study Approach:</u> The results for this study are based on data from the RAND California Preschool Study and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B).	• Efforts should be made to increase the enrollment of low-income and linguistically isolated children in center-based preschool. • Preschool programs should be better targeted to the needs of linguistically isolated children to improve their school readiness.	• Children from disadvantaged backgrounds begin kindergarten academically unprepared. • Linguistically isolated children are also likely to be from low-income families and have mothers with low education levels. • Linguistically isolated children often qualify for publically funded preschool; however, this group utilizes non-parental care arrangements at a lower rate compared with native children (79.5% vs. 84.1%). • Among the relatively small number of linguistically isolated children in California utilizing non-parental care, the majority participate in center-based care (91.1%), a finding that contradicts prior research (Espinosa, 2007; Karoly & Gonzalez, 2011). • Parents of linguistically isolated children were more likely to report a need for nontraditional hours of care and the cost of child care as important factors. • Linguistically isolated children who utilize center-based care show better improvements in early

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		reading skills in kindergarten, compared to children utilizing non-center-based care. • Native children who utilize center care also show similar improvements in early reading skill in kindergarten, suggesting linguistically isolated children may need additional supports in order to narrow the achievement gap.
2011 Child Care Portfolio (2011) California Child Care Resource and Referral Network <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary of child care supply and demand based on information collected by local Child Care Resources and Referral (CCR&R) agencies in California in 2011.	• None given	• The number of infant slots increased 1% from 40,083 in 2008 to 40,337 in 2010 • The number of preschool slots increased 3% from 499,510 to 514,570 during same timeframe • The largest number of requests to CCR&R agencies for child care were for children under age 2 • Licensed child care slots were available for only 25% of children 0–12 with parents in labor force • 187,516 children were on California's Centralized Eligibility List in April-June 2010 For a family at the State Median Income of $59,147 in 2010, care for one infant/toddler in a family child care home and one preschooler in a center would absorb one-fourth of their annual income.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool (PoP) Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff	<u>Recommendations from PoP Counties:</u> • Implicit: Recognize that it is difficult to balance the goals of expanding access while improving quality without more funds. • Half of the 8 counties called for greater recognition that providing high quality programs is costly, and that the PoP program is more costly to deliver than other preschool programs. • 3 of the 8 counties applauded the flexibility granted by First 5 California in deciding on priority areas for investment and allocation of funds.	• 25,246 children were served in First 5 Power of Preschool programs across the 8 counties of San Diego, Yolo, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Clara, Merced, and San Joaquin in FY 2010–11. • PoP programs are serving an ethnically diverse population of children, many of whom are dual language learners. More than 10% have special needs or disabilities. • 5 of the 8 counties have expanded their programs to serve infants and toddlers. • PoP sites include publicly funded programs (Head Start, State Preschool, or General Child Care), private centers, and family child care homes/networks.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Dream Big for Our Youngest Children: Final Report (2010) California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (CAEL QIS) Advisory Committee Study Approach: 2 years of CAEL QIS Advisory Committee and subcommittee meetings; input from early learning and care program staff, child care licensing officials, county superintendents of education, local child care council and child care resource and referral leaders, First 5 California and county commission staff, and nationally known experts on quality rating and improvement systems.	While the legislative charge did not explicitly address access, some of the Council's recommendations indirectly address it: • To help increase utilization of quality programs conduct outreach and communication to families, include messengers who speak the families' language and who are trusted sources of information, and put QRIS information into First 5 "Kit for New Parents." • To provide incentives to increase program quality, provide financial and non-financial incentives to support continuous quality improvement. Estimate the cost of various incentives as part of a pilot. • Correct the current financial disincentives in publicly funded early learning programs, thereby making it more possible for state-contracted Title 5 programs, one of the state's highest quality programs, to remain in operation.	• Access and utilization of programs is uneven. Use of center-based early learning and care is lowest among the children most likely to benefit. 73% of preschool children with mothers with bachelor's degrees attend preschool, but only 45% of those whose mothers have less than a high school diploma (Karoly, 2009). • Current reimbursement rates for publicly funded programs provide little incentive to improve quality. Programs required to meet higher Title 5 standards receive lower rates in 22 counties than do programs held to minimum licensing standards (Karoly, Reardon, & Cho, 2007).
California Infant/Toddler Early Learning and Care Needs Assessment: A Policy Brief (2010) Anthony & Muenchow American Institutes for Research Study Approach: Analysis based on analyses of extant data from CDE, Early Head Start Program Information Reports, Department of Social Services, and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network as well as review of related research.	• Conduct a comprehensive study on the supply and quality of infant/toddler care similar to *Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes* (1995). Include not only center care but also family child care and exempt care. • Implicit: Given the high cost of center-based care, expanding publicly contracted programs held to quality standards is the only way to make such programs accessible to the infants and toddlers with high needs. • Given indications of family preference of home-based care for this age group, take the "early learning" to the settings where the children are. Consider innovative ways to maximize federal funds for home visiting expansion, and to link home visiting programs to family, friend, and neighbor care. • Look to other states with more stringent monitoring requirements for publicly funded exempt providers. At a minimum, require providers, in order to qualify for an	• While attendance at center-based programs is the norm for preschool-age children, it is the exception for infants and toddlers. • At most 12% of the state's 1.7 million infants and toddlers are in licensed center-based or family child care. Most of the center-based care for this age group consists of Early Head Start or state-contracted programs that are publicly subsidized. • If the definition of "early learning and care" is expanded to include informal care by family, friends, and neighbors, then according to the California Health Interview Survey,

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	enhanced rate, to participate in training and agree to be visited by an inspector. • Publicize California's Paid Family Leave Program.	42 % of 2-year-olds, 38% of 1-year-olds, and 25% of children below age 1 are in some type of informal, non-parental care for at least 10 hours per week. • There is evidence that the high cost of licensed center-based care for infants deters families from using it; however, there are also reasons why some parents prefer informal home-based arrangements for this age group. • California only requires a child abuse check and fingerprinting for informal providers receiving public subsidies—far less stringent requirements than those set by many other states. • As many as 40,000 families in California with infants or toddlers receive home visits as part of a formal program, and home visits linked to formal or informal non-parental care have been shown to be an effective model to promote early learning. • About 1/3 of the families with infants born each year in California receive a period of publicly supported part-paid leave from work to focus on bonding with their newborn or newly adopted children, but many families do not know about the program.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California: Issues, Policy Options, and Recommendations (2009) Karoly RAND Corporation Study Approach: Based on integration of results from 3 earlier studies on gaps in school readiness and achievement in early grades, the use of ECE services and the quality of those experiences, and the system of publicly funded ECE programs.	Preschool-Age Children Short-Term • Modify the process of eligibility determination to ensure that children who can benefit most are served first and that there is stability in enrollment within a program year and across years for those who enroll at age 3. • Consider centralizing the process at the county level or lower. Determine eligibility for part-day developmental programs at time of application, and maintain eligibility even if circumstances change. Determine eligibility for subsidized full-day programs conditionally and finalize at time program begins. Structure the enrollment process to coincide with program year. • Modify the contract mechanism for Title 5 programs and alternative payment programs to reduce the extent of unused funds and other inefficiencies; possibly shifting from contracts that reimburse child-days to grants with minimum enrollment and/or attendance requirements. • Standardize reimbursement structures across subsidized ECE programs, retaining elements in some part of the system such as reimbursement rates that vary by geography. • Make greater use of Title I funds for preschool programs. Longer-Term • As access is extended, continue to target larger share of currently eligible 4-year-olds and 3-year-olds in poverty. • As access is extended to a larger share of the population, implement place-based targeting with income targeting so that all children in targeted communities are able to participate even if they are not otherwise eligible. • Raise preschool quality, especially for program features important to child development, through a multi-pronged approach that includes quality measurements and monitoring, financial incentives and supports, and	• Only 13% of low-income children are enrolled in high quality early learning programs that promote higher-order thinking skills • Less than 40% of low-income 3- and 4-year-old children attend publicly funded early learning programs. • Families are placed on the Centralized Eligibility List without a formal determination of eligibility. This places a burden on providers in terms of screening and time. • Current mechanisms for allocating funding to providers, whether through contracts, grants, or vouchers, make it difficult to spend all of the funding allocated to a program in a given year, thereby further diminishing the number of children served. • In the absence of new state funds to support preschool, allocating Title 1 funds represents a possible funding source. Several counties, with support from county First 5 commissions, have adopted this approach.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	accountability through evaluating child outcomes. • Improve infrastructure in areas such as workforce development and facilities.	
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters and First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• Employ strong outreach using multiple strategies to reach a wide range of populations, particularly EL children and children with special needs, and to ensure that there are no inequities in access to the program.	• First 5 PoP programs reported that on average 45% of children served were dual language learners and that 7% were children with special needs
Closing the Achievement Gap: Report of Superintendent Jack O'Connell's California P-16 Council, (2008) California Department of Education, Sacramento	• High quality prekindergarten should be available to all students, especially underrepresented students.	• Students do not enter kindergarten well prepared. • High quality prekindergarten programs prepare children to succeed in school. • Children underrepresented in prekindergarten most often lack access to quality prekindergarten programs.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Report on the Issue of Returned Child Development Contract Funds in California (2007) Martin Kidango <u>Study Approach:</u> Position paper regarding reasons for the prevalence of returned funds to the state and recommendations	• Title 5 Center reimbursement rates for all age groups should be based on the county market rates, or the standard reimbursement rate, whichever is higher, plus the costs of meeting state quality and fiscal standards. • CDE should provide training through experienced program directors and fiscal managers who understand the Fiscal Green Book to agencies needing assistance. Consider using the School Age Consortium model of approved peer consultants. • School Districts should be required to provide space to programs as a priority and at rate that cover the District's direct costs. Child Development programs should have the same status as Adult School for school facilities. • Programs should be able to meet local program needs by providing part- or full-day services without regard to the name of the funding stream. • Resource and Referral and Alternative payment Programs should provide educational information on the value of preschool for children, particularly for four-year-olds prior to entering kindergarten.	• Reasons for returned funds from child development services contractors to the state are complex, and include the way the Legislature distributes funds and the nature of funding streams, rules imposed by CDE and the Legislature, lack of training or skill on the part of program operators in navigating these rules, and consequences that come from economic and demographic shifts.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Early Care and Education in the Golden State: Publicly Funded Programs Serving California's Preschool Age Children (2007) Karoly, Reardon, & Cho RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of administrative data from Head Start, Title I, the California State Preschool Program, the General Child Care and Development Program, the Migrant Child Care and Development Program, the Alternative Payment Program, CalWORKS, and state and county First 5 commissions.	• Identify strategies that would allow greater efficiency with respect to the goal of improving child development, without necessarily detracting from the goal of supporting working parents. • In other cases, policymakers may need to make choices about system reform that involve tradeoffs between these 2 policy goals.	• California devotes substantial resources to subsidizing the care of preschool-age children, but the dollars are not closely tied to the quality or stability of the care. This can be viewed as inefficiency from the perspective of child development. • There are 2 sometimes conflicting motivations for providing publicly subsidized care to preschool-age children: to promote health, child development, and school readiness, and to provide affordable child care for children of low-income working families. • In 2006, 81% of preschool-age children in subsidized care in California were in settings with a child development focus (i.e., Head Start, Title I, or a state-administered Title 5 program). Another 9% were in programs that at a minimum must meet the less stringent Title 22 regulations, and the remainder was in license-exempt care. • There is an access gap: Programs with a developmental focus are not funded to serve all eligible children. The gap between eligibility and enrollment is approximately 77,000 4-year-olds and 156,000 3-year-olds. • There is also a quality gap: Even the program standards associated with programs with a child development focus do not guarantee the level of

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		quality that is associated with effective preschool programs. • Funding mechanisms provide little incentive for raising quality; the Standard Reimbursement Rate for programs required to meet Title 5 standards is higher than the Regional Market Rate for programs only required to meet Title 22 regulations in 22 of the most populous California counties. • In light of these issues, First 5 Power of Preschool Demonstration projects are using a tiered reimbursement system that explicitly rewards programs that move beyond the Title 5 requirements for teacher qualifications, with a higher rate of reimbursement. • Analysis of fiscal data for the set of subsidized ECE programs serving preschool-age children did not identify any major sources of inefficiencies that could generate substantial savings to redirect toward program services. Several analyses, including our own, show that a range of 5 to 10 percent of contract funds for ECE programs are not spent in a given year. These unspent contract funds are a potential source of dollars that could allow more children to be served, although the gains from more effective resource allocation are likely to be modest.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Report on Unspent Child Care Funding: Executive Summary (2007) California Department of Education <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of earnings data and report on agency experiences in funds distribution	• The state should provide budget authority to: • Hire additional staff to support the fund application process and provision of focused technical assistance to marginal agencies • Reassign contract funds when relinquishment and termination situations arise mid-year • Establish a process to adjust contracts mid-year without penalty • Initiate, improve, and update CDE systems for tracking, monitoring, and accepting reports and funding applications online • Apply the cost of living adjustment (COLA) on an ongoing, regular basis to increase the reimbursement rate for program contracts • Change the definition of migrant agricultural worker eligibility to accommodate those workers who continue to work in the agricultural settings, but do not move their families • Reinstate the 2 percent cap on center-based reserve to allow unspent funds to be redirected to agencies that can use additional funding.	• The majority of the unspent funds problem is based on a relatively few number of agencies that experience difficulty and time delays while developing facilities to house children's services. • Many agencies "underearn" by a small margin. • Program costs have increased while the rate of reimbursement has not kept pace. • CDE contractors are not able to respond with flexibility and speed to emerging community needs. • The ability to fully expend all allocated funds within the authorized time limits is hampered by the current request for application and budget change processes. • An external factor that impacts CDE's ability to disburse funds is the lack of timely response from agencies.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool for California's Children: Promising Benefits, Unequal Access (2004) Bridges, Fuller, Rumberger, & Tran Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) <u>Study Approach:</u> The findings from this study are based on a representative sample of 2,314 children entering kindergarten drawn from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Sample (ECLS-K) data set.	• Access to high quality center-based care programs should be expanded to all children, but especially low-income, Latino, and African American children in order to narrow the achievement gap.	• 62% of all children in California participate in a center-based program the year before entering preschool. • However, these participation rates vary by race/ethnicity: African American (59%), white (58%), Asian American (47%), and Latino (38%), and by socioeconomic status: upper-middle class (80%) and low income (49%). • There is also variation in the average number of hours children spend at center-based programs: Black (20), white (14), Asian American (14), and Latino (7). • Latino children tend to enter center-based programs one year later than white children. • Low-income, Latino, and African American children show lower proficiency levels before entering kindergarten. • Children who participate in center-based programs show greater achievement gains compared to children who do not attend center-based programs. • Gains are larger for Latino children and children in low-income families, especially if the child enters the center before age 4.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool and Child Care Enrollment in California (2004) Lopez & de Cos California Research Bureau <u>Study Approach:</u> Data from the 2000 Census Public Use Microdata Sample for 59,424 3-to-5 year olds not yet enrolled in kindergarten were utilized for this study.	• Efforts are needed to increase Latino children's enrollment in preschool/child care programs.	• Although Latino children composed 46% of all children ages 3 to 5 not yet in kindergarten in California, they only composed 36% of children enrolled in a preschool/child care program (public and private)—but they did compose a larger proportion of enrollment of public preschool/child care programs at 51%. • 37% of Latino children were enrolled in a preschool/child care program, compared with 58% of white children, 50% of Asian American children, and 56% of African American children. • Differences of the age of the child, or the composition of the child's household, do not explain racial/ethnic group differences on enrollment rates. • Family income may explain some of the differences in enrollment rates, with children from higher income families more likely to be enrolled in preschool/child care. • However, Latino enrollment remained low across all income levels, while rates remained high for African American children across all income levels.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
New Lives for Poor Families? Mothers and Young Children Move through Welfare Reform (2002) Fuller, Kagan, & Loeb Stanford Center for Education Policy Analysis <u>Study Approach:</u> The project team followed a sample of 948 mothers and preschool-age children for 2–4 years after the women entered new welfare programs in California, Connecticut, and Florida. Mothers were interviewed, children were assessed, and homes and child care settings were visited.	• None related to child care are provided.	• Many children moved into new child care centers and preschools. Lower-performing children who entered center-based programs displayed significantly stronger gains in cognitive skills and school readiness, moving about 3 months ahead of the children who remained in home-based settings. This positive relationship was stronger for children who attended higher-quality centers.

Quality Assessment of Early Learning and Care Programs

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012) Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened over 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California.	• Support the State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care and advance a statewide Quality Rating System for children ages 0–5. • Fund home visiting services in addition to early care and education programs. • Advance a Quality Rating and Improvement System for early learning and care serving children ages 0–5.	• A QRIS system has the potential to truly focus on early learning and care programs for infants and toddlers as well as preschool-age children.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
How Would Programs Rate Under California's Proposed Quality Rating and Improvement System? Evidence From Statewide and County Data on Early Care and Education Programs (2012) Karoly & Zellman RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Virtual "pilot" consisting of data from an earlier RAND study of 200 centers across the state serving preschool-age children and a set of centers and family child care homes participating in San Francisco County's Gateway to Quality Initiative.	<u>Overall implications and recommendations:</u> • The study findings point to the value of standards: programs currently score highest on those quality elements where standards are already in place through licensure or program standards. • Programs are most likely to need technical assistance in improving relevant ERS ratings (ECERS-R, FCCERS-R, ITERS-R, and CLASS, if included). • It may be challenging to generate meaningful ratings where there is variation across classrooms, or where different age groups are served. • There is value in using existing surveys or data sets to estimate the range of ratings in advance of pursuing more costly pilots. • It would be useful to launch an early pilot effort to measure the elements of family engagement and program leadership, and to assess the implications of including them in the QRIS system. • The study recommends estimating the effects of voluntary implementation and/or targeting participation to publicly subsidized programs	• About 80% of centers would reach Tier 3 to 5 on the quality elements of ratio and group size. • About half would reach Tier 4 or 5 for staff education levels. • Only one in 4 would reach Tier 4 or 5 based on ECERS-R, FCCERS-R, ITERS-R, or the CLASS, if the latter is included in the QRIS. • Overall, fewer than 10% would reach Tier 5. • More publicly funded programs, such as State Preschool Title 5, or Head Start, would reach Tier 4 than would a statewide representative sample of all licensed programs. But even among publicly subsidized programs, few would reach Tier 5. • Based on ERS ratings, infant/toddler programs would rate somewhat lower than those serving preschool-age children, and family child care would score lower than center-based programs. • The study did not rate programs on the quality elements of program leadership or family engagement.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Application (2012) State of California <u>Study Approach:</u> Application citing administrative data from multiple state agencies and reports to federal agencies	• The application proposes a locally based approach to the development of a QRIS and avoids new spending commitments. The application, more than making recommendations, amounts to a set of state commitments, as summarized below. • California's successful ($50 million) Early Learning Challenge Grant application commits the state to building a strong network composed of 16 of the most rigorous communities that have already established a QRIS; together these participating communities in 15 counties stand to improve the lives of nearly 1.8 million children. • The network will provide a research-based Quality Continuum Framework that helps local QRISs: 1) assess child development and school readiness; 2) improve teacher effectiveness; and 3) improve the quality and safety of learning environments. • The regional Consortia have made a commitment to strengthen their local QRIS and mentor other communities that wish to do the same. Specifically, all early learning and development programs participating in the QRIS will have plans in place to support the following targets: • 75% of children in participating programs are assessed using validated observational assessment tools; • 75% of lead or master teachers employed in participating programs will develop individual professional growth plans based on teacher effectiveness rating scores, with 50% of QRIS program teachers showing improved teacher effectiveness over the term of this grant funding; • 75% of participating programs will be assessed using the appropriate Environment Rating Scale, with 90% of them showing improvement over the term of this	• A one-size-fits-all QRIS would not be the way for California to build a high quality system. California's 1,729 local educational agencies and more than 50,000 early learning providers span a far wider spectrum of size, infrastructure, and readiness for change than exists in any other state. • Defining rigid quality tiers at the state level will not work for California, and nor will it work to rate and reward early childhood programs on standardized metrics established in Sacramento. What makes sense in San Francisco is unlikely to work in rural communities. • Another primary rationale for California's locally based approach is the state's dire fiscal situation. The priority is to set the state on a new path to economic stability for future generations.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	grant funding. Consortia will: • Implement a QRIS that incorporates evidence-based common elements and tools in the Quality Continuum Framework; • Utilize a rating system for their local QRIS that implements a set of common assessment tools included in the Framework; • Establish benchmarks and tiers of quality in the local QRIS, and use those to set goals; and • Develop an Action Plan that includes program participation baseline and target data, alignment and incorporation of the common elements and tools in the Framework (in addition to any local elements or tools), locally set benchmarks and tiers, a quality improvement process, key personnel, resources, and a timeline. In addition, the plan will explain how RTT-ELC funds will support capacity-building activities, and how existing resources will be redirected in support of the goals.	

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
We Can Do Better: NACCRA's Ranking of the State Child Care Regulations and Oversight (2011) National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) <u>Study Approach:</u> State child care administrators provided written documents about their state child care licensing regulations. Based on these documents, states were scored and ranked on the following: child care oversight, child care center regulations, and an overall rank combing the above two factors.	• Require every child care center and family child care home caring for one unrelated child or more for pay to be licensed. • Increase frequency of inspections of child care centers. • Require center directors to have a bachelor's degree or higher in early childhood education or a related field. • Increase the education requirements for lead teachers to a CDA credential or an associate degree in early childhood education. • Establish the requirement for 24 hours of annual training for all staff members. • Require programs to address all six of the developmental domains in offering activities. • Require a check of the sex offender registry. • Require parent involvement and daily/frequent communication with parents. • Make both inspection and complaint reports available online. • Reduce the caseload for licensing inspectors.	• California's Title 22 licensing system ranks 46th least stringent in the nation. • Each inspector has an average caseload of 169 settings, far more than the nationally recommended ratio of 1:50. • The center requirements do not require staff to complete any annual training, and do not require a post-secondary degree for lead teachers. • The child care workforce is comprised of many individuals with a relatively low level of education; thus, training is critical to promote an environment where children learn.
California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• Implement recommendations from the Early Learning Advisory Council to pilot a state Quality Rating and Improvement System. • Evaluate the current structure of the Community Care Licensing Division. • Expand the existing state licensing website so that parents and providers have access to licensing information online. • Streamline the process for obtaining licenses, including the possibility of allowing local agencies to conduct licensing reviews and site visits to support the state system.	• Child care centers in the state are routinely inspected once every five years, unlike those in a majority of states, where visits are conducted on average once a year. • One likely cause of the infrequent inspections is that the ratio of centers to licensing staff is 229:1.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California Study Approach: Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• Provide training and technical assistance to encourage blending/braiding of funding streams to support the higher cost of the PoP level of quality • Provide opportunities for PoP counties and programs to share knowledge and engage in improvement work	• First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) preschool and infant/toddler classrooms are of high quality: Classroom environmental assessment ratings for preschool classrooms averaged 5.5 out of a possible score of 7; infant/toddler programs scored an average of 5.3 out of 7.
Dream Big for Our Youngest Children: *Final Report (2010)* California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QRIS) Advisory Committee Study Approach: 2 years of CAEL QIS Advisory Committee and subcommittee meetings; input from early learning and care program staff, child care licensing officials, county superintendents of education, local child care council and child care resource and referral leaders, First 5 California and county commission staff, and nationally known experts on quality rating and improvement systems.	Purpose of Quality Rating and Improvement System • Establish a quality rating structure that integrates the current multiple sets of standards into one coherent, evidence-based system. Develop a system for standardized assessments to rate the early learning and care settings and make the ratings available to families in a clear, easy-to-understand format. Proposed Design of Quality Rating Structure Establish a 5-tier block system that assesses 5 quality elements: • Ratios and group size • Teaching and learning • Family involvement • Staff education and training • Program leadership Within each tier, a program must meet all the standards before it can advance to a higher tier. • Under the QRIS, a program or provider would have to meet the basic licensing standards to obtain the	• The state has three early learning and care "systems"—Title 22 licensure, Title 5 state-contracted, and Head Start, as well as a publicly funded "non-system" of license-exempt care. Only 2 of these "systems" (Title 5 and Head Start) have standards that are designed to promote child development and school readiness. • California's Title 22 licensing system ranks 46th (lowest) in the nation, and its licensing standards are lenient in several important areas, allowing considerably larger-than-recommended staff-child ratios, not requiring staff to complete any annual training, and not requiring any post-secondary degree for lead teachers (NACCRRA, 2009). The standards are designed to protect health and safety, but not to promote children's readiness for school. • Title 5 standards for state-contracted child development programs come much closer to meeting nationally recommended standards.

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	entry-level rating. • To advance to the mid-level rating, a program or provider would meet standards similar to the more stringent Title 5 state-contract standards for early childhood programs. • At the top level, a program or provider would meet requirements that incorporate nationally recommended quality standards, such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children standards. Inform families and public policy through: • Standardized assessments to measure the quality of teaching and learning. • Higher ratings for programs and providers that actively engage and partner with families. • Higher ratings for well-qualified educators and directors trained in early childhood education, including ongoing professional development. • Higher ratings for education plans, sufficient staffing, and small group size. <u>Ratios and Group Size Requirements Proposed for QRIS:</u> • For Tiers 1 and 2, establish essentially the same requirements as for Title 22. • For Tiers 3 and 4, establish essentially the same requirements as for Title 5, except allowing a ratio of 10:1, assuming there is a group size of 20. • For Tier 5, require the same as for Tiers 3 and 4, except that the ratio for infants in centers is 3:1 and group size is 9. • For family child care homes, use current Title 22 licensing criteria for ratio and group size. <u>Teaching and Learning Rating Requirements Proposed for</u>	• Publicly supported license-exempt care is not subject to any monitoring or even initial inspection in California. • Studies show parents value high quality child care, but often do not spot shortfalls (Barraclough & Smith, 1996; Wolfe & Scrivner, 2004; Cryer, Tietze, & Wessels, 2002). Families rated centers nearly twice as high as did trained assessors on such key elements as health, safety, and staff-child interaction (Helburn, 1995). These findings highlight a need for easily accessible, objective ratings about the safety, health, and quality of early learning taking place in these settings, where children spend up to 11 hours per day. • Since 2000, 23 states have implemented QRIS systems, and, as of 2010, 20 more were in some stage of planning them (Tout et al, 2010). • Of the 23 states with QRIS systems in 2010, 12 use the block system, 5 use a point system, and the remainder use a combination or alternative approaches. • In a block system, all the quality criteria in each tier need to be accomplished to obtain that rating, and the criteria included build on those in previous blocks. Unlike a point system, where providers may meet some but not all criteria for a particular tier, a block system structure promotes more consistency in the meaning of the ratings and makes it easier for families

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	QRIS: To rate programs or providers, use standardized assessment tools to help families identify quality programs, guide programs in making improvements, and give policymakers a basis for designing technical assistance and other quality program initiatives. • For Tier 1, require facilitated self-assessment with Environment Rating Scales (ECERS-R, ITERS-R, or FCCERS-R). • For Tier 2, require facilitated peer assessment with Environment Rating Scales (ERS). • For Tier 3, require independent assessment with Environment Rating Scales with an overall score of 4.0; and self-assessment with the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), pre-K version, or the Program Assessment Rating Scale (PARS) (infant/toddler) to measure teacher-child interactions in alternate rating periods. • For Tier 4, require subscales; set same rating requirements as for Tier 3, except require overall ERS scale of 5.0 and independent assessment with CLASS or PARS. • For Tier 5, set same rating requirements as for Tiers 3 and 4, except require overall ERS score of 6.0 and independent assessment with CLASS or PARS. Base part of the QRIS rating for Teaching and Learning on alignment with Early Learning *Foundations* and *Frameworks*: • For Tier 1, program must have a copy of and receive orientation on the above and have an education plan with a philosophy statement. • For Tier 2, must explore integrating the *Foundations* and *Frameworks*, and have an education plan with a developmentally, culturally, linguistically appropriate (DCLA) curriculum.	to understand and compare ratings. Based on syntheses of more than 40 years of research (Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006; Jacobson, 2004; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Jorde-Bloom, 1988), key features of high quality programs include: • Intensive education (e.g., small classes, low ratios, regular attendance) • Teachers interacting responsively with children • Family involvement in a culturally and linguistically responsive manner • A "curriculum" or plan of activities • Adequate numbers of well-trained, qualified staff • Program directors who understand child development and provide leadership The state funds child care resource and referral programs in every county to provide information to parents on the range of services available and tips on how to look for quality programs, but there is no objective rating system on which to base the information and referrals. • Providing sufficient individual attention to young children is a key quality indicator, and a relatively high ratio of adults to children may be especially important for infants and toddlers (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). • The number of children in a group is often considered to be as important as staff-child ratios to the overall quality of

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	• For Tiers 3 and 4, must develop competency in integrating *Foundations* and *Frameworks*, have an education plan with all domains linked to DCLA child assessments, and professional development plan for Foundations and Frameworks. • For Tier 5, same requirements as for Tiers 3 and 4, except must include all domains of learning in an integrated fashion in lesson plans linked to DCLA child assessment <u>Family Involvement Requirements Proposed for QRIS:</u> See section on Family and Community Engagement below. <u>Staff Education and Training Requirements and Program Leadership Requirements Proposed for QRIS:</u> See section on Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework below. <u>Proposed Pilot Testing of QRIS:</u> • Pilot test and phase in over 5 or more years. • Launch a 3-year pilot that includes sufficient time for planning and evaluation. • The system will initially be voluntary; after piloting, the QRIS can then be required for publicly funded programs, and eventually for all licensed early learning and care programs. • Pilot test a rating process involving the ERS every 2 to 3 years, and at higher tiers, measure teacher-child interactions for preschoolers with the CLASS and for infants/toddlers with the PARS. • Explore options for combination of local and state oversight, with QRIS reviews done at the county or regional level and the CDE providing oversight and assurance of consistency.	the program. • The ERS, first published in 1980, have demonstrated reliability and validity, and they are used in most other states that have QRISs. • The CLASS is an assessment tool with demonstrated reliability and validity that is particularly noted for its capacity to assess the quality of teacher instruction for preschool children. It is now being required by the federal government to evaluate the quality of Head Start programs. • The Program Assessment Rating Scale (PARS) measures the early educator's responsiveness to children ages birth to three. • Alignment with the *Foundations* and *Frameworks* serves as a proxy for curriculum, child assessment, developmental and health screenings with appropriate referrals, inclusion of children with special needs, and cultural and language competence. The *Foundations* and *Frameworks* contain these (and other) program quality criteria and are aligned with kindergarten standards. • Among the 23 states that have already implemented QRIS systems by 2010, many strongly recommended a field test or pilot prior to implementing the system statewide. • Based on a study of QRIS systems in 5 pioneer states, Zellman and Perlman (2008) recommended conducting pilot

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	Proposed Systems to Support Quality Improvement: • Voluntary technical assistance to help programs improve, using a client-driven, data-based coaching model, and build on California's early learning resources, including the *Foundations,* the *Frameworks*, and the child assessment tools that provide research-based, effective practices that link to kindergarten and elementary education. • See also recommendations below for Supporting Early Childhood Workforce Development, Family and Community Engagement, Effective Data Systems to track progress, and Finance, Governance, and Systems Issues below.	work and, if possible, revising the system before it is adopted statewide. • Pilot projects provide an opportunity to explore the efficacy of various methods for recruiting early learning and care providers to volunteer to participate in the rating process, investigating phase-in timelines, and studying the length of time programs stay on or move up tiers given the standards for each tier.
Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California: Issues, Policy Options, and Recommendations (2009) Karoly RAND Corporation Study Approach: Based on integration of results from 3 earlier studies on gaps in school readiness and achievement in early grades, the use of ECE services and the quality of those experiences, and the system of publicly funded ECE programs	• Increase the routine inspection rate for child care centers and family child care homes and make inspection reports publicly available on the Internet. • Develop and pilot a QRIS and tiered reimbursement system, as part of state's larger effort to create an Early Learning Quality Improvement System. • Use a multi-pronged strategy—with an emphasis on measurement and monitoring, financial incentives and supports, and accountability—to promote higher quality preschool experiences in subsidized programs.	• Minimal regulation of some subsidized providers and weak standards on key program elements for more highly regulated programs do little to promote high quality services in publicly funded programs. • By statute, California requires routine inspections every 5 years, but with funding fluctuations in recent years, the inspection rate has ranged from 10 to 30 percent. • In addition, California does not make inspection reports readily available to the public. • Current reimbursement system provides no financial incentive to improve quality. • QRSs/QRISs have several advantages: Can include a broad set of program structure measures; multiple rankings provide room for and recognition of improvements, and summary ranking measures are easy for parents and the

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		public to understand. • At the same time, attention must be paid to the validity of the ratings, the frequency of the ratings, and the cost of the ratings. • Experience with QRISs in other states underlines the importance of piloting before implementing statewide, minimizing use of self-reported data (though self-assessment with ERS can be useful at some levels of the system), and integrating licensing into the system. The use of accreditation as a quality component has proved to be problematic, and it is also important to evaluate whether the QRIS meets its intended goals (Zellman & Perlman, 2008).
We Can Do Better: NACCRA's Ranking of the State Child Care Regulations and Oversight (2009) National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies <u>Study Approach:</u> State child care administrators provided written documents about their state child care licensing regulations. Based on these documents, states were scored and ranked on the following: child care oversight, child care center regulations, and an overall rank combing the above two factors.	• Inspect child care centers more often than once every 5 years. • Require annual training (preferably 24 hours of center staff each year instead of none). • Require centers to offer language, social, emotional, and cognitive development activities as part of their daily program. • Require providers to put babies to bed on their backs (to prevent SIDS) unless directed otherwise by a medical authority. • Require centers to involve parents in their child's program and to communicate with them about the care of their child or children.	• California's Title 22 licensing system ranked 40th least stringent in the nation in 2010, and 47th in 2011. • Each inspector has an average caseload of 169 settings, far more than the nationally recommended ratio of 1:50. • The center requirements allow considerably larger-than-recommended staff-child ratios, do not require staff to complete any annual training, and do not require a post-secondary degree for lead teachers.

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Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2009) Fitzgerald, Sormano, Ramirez, Mathur, Benitez, Reynolds, Provance, Cowles, Livingston, & Hayes Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	Based on the meta-analysis of PoP demonstration programs, researchers developed 11 recommended criteria for a high quality preschool program. Of these, the following pertain specifically to program quality: • Well-trained, well-paid (by local standards) teachers, and teachers who receive coaching and professional development • Attention to structural quality and ratios and class sizes as specific by National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and First 5 California • Emphasize process quality and high levels of interaction to develop social and emotional skills	• The average global ECERS-R scores ranged from 5.0 to 6.1 across all 9 PoP counties – i.e., "good" to "excellent." • PoP counties met or exceeded most of the quality benchmarks established by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER).
The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• A 2-pronged approach in which teacher qualifications are enhanced and, where possible, class size reductions could result in improved quality. • LAUP coaches might enhance program quality by focusing on aspects of what the CLASS refers to as Instructional Support.	• The overall quality of the LAUP programs, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), compared favorably with the quality levels reported in other studies of preschool programs, but was generally still less than ideal for supporting children's school readiness. • Instructional support was the weakest of the 3 CLASS domains, especially in the area of Concept Development and Quality of Feedback by teachers. • LAUP programs located in schools scored higher than non-school-based classrooms on both Emotional Support and Instructional Support on the CLASS.

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Evaluation of Preschool for All in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties (2009) American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Results from Year 3 are based on a teacher survey and a random sample of classroom observation using CLASS and the Language Interaction Snapshot. Results from Year 4 are based on interviews with a random sample of 29 Preschool for All providers.	• Use the CLASS in conjunction with the ECERS-R to assess program quality. • The use of the CLASS in a random sample of classrooms on a periodic basis would provide valuable information to supplement the ECERS-R data, particularly given the growing body of research demonstrating the importance of quality adult-child interactions for children's learning and development.	• Despite the fact that providers expressed anxiety regarding the ECERS-R process, the external assessment process (coupled with funding for classroom enhancements) resulted in a major improvement in quality among preschool settings in San Mateo County. • Observations of PFA classrooms using the CLASS indicate that PFA programs in San Mateo County typically offered warm and emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions, and teachers implemented effective behavior and instructional management strategies. • However, some PFA teachers appeared to be less effective in promoting children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition and providing feedback to expand learning and understanding.

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Issues and Options: Developing Safety and Quality Ratings for Child Care (2007) Nackman & Eiler-White Legislative Analyst's Office <u>Study Approach:</u> LAO considered pros and cons of 3 different options to providing quality ratings of child care programs.	The LAO identified 4 options for improving information and assessing the quality of child care: • Option 1: Post licensing on the Internet (Ongoing Cost = $0.4 million) • Option 2: Create ratings that consolidate and communicate licensing information, rate facilities based on compliance, and post rating information on Internet (one-time cost of $2.0–11.5 million and ongoing cost of $0.4 million). • Option 3 Basic: Expand Option 2 to include quality criteria, develop ratings for licensing elements that are associated with quality (e.g., ratios, group size, staff qualifications), and post on Internet (one-time cost of $2.0–11.5 million, and ongoing cost of $2.5–12 million) • Option 3 Plus: Expand the Option 3 Basic ratings to include additional quality criteria, including direct observational assessments; develop new rating scale to incorporate additional quality criteria; rate facilities according to their performance on the criteria; and post ratings on Internet (one-time cost of $2.5–12 million and ongoing cost of $13 million). The LAO concluded that "Option 3 Basic strikes the right balance between cost and the relative value of the information that is provided to the public." • Option 3 Basic would base ratings on a few simple criteria such as staff-to-child ratios, group size and staff qualifications, building on data already collected through the licensing process, with the state monitoring information about participating providers through document review and verification coupled with an audit mechanism. • Option 3 Basic would not require the use of extensive on-site observational assessments. The LAO further recommended that the Legislature use a	• Comprehensive, publicly available information about child care providers is lacking. • Public communication of information about licensed care is important for parents, providers, and policymakers. • Because the license only measures whether or not a provider meets the licensing standards, it cannot be used to evaluate other components of care, such as the quality of the learning environment, the qualifications of the teachers, and staff-to-child ratios. • Disseminating this information could influence the overall quality of the provider market as well as help policymakers target resources where they are needed and reward providers who excel in providing high quality programs. • Local models for QRIS already exist. Tiered standards for staff qualifications, staff-to-child ratios, and group size were determined by the initial QRS efforts in Los Angeles and San Francisco. • Tiered reimbursement would create added incentives for providers to achieve and maintain quality programs. It would also help to rationalize the current child care reimbursement system, which in some cases pays higher reimbursement rates for a lower quality of care. However, if providers' ratings are linked with financial incentives, the state will face an added layer of responsibility for ensuring that the ratings are consistently fair and

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	phased approach if it chose to implement this type of child care information system, beginning with posting existing licensing information on the Internet, then distilling existing licensing records with a rating or grade, and then piloting the system. Once Option 3 Basic was in place, the Legislature could consider some additional features, such as streamlined use of direct observational assessments along with technical and financial assistance to help providers improve their ratings.	reliable.
Child Care in Poor Communities: Early Learning Effects of Type, Quality, and Stability (2004) Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol Published in *Child Development* <u>Study Approach:</u> Data collected from maternal interviews, child assessments, and observations of center care and home-based care settings for 451 families residing in San Francisco or San Jose, California, or Tampa, Florida	• The strong positive effects stemming from center care (relative to kith and kin arrangements), as well as form quality and stability, suggest that as government invests more resources in child care, greater attention should be paid to the quality of care and ensuring center-based options for more families.	• The study found a strong, significant, and positive effect of participation in center-based programs on almost all cognitive outcomes, relative to children who remained with individual kith or kin providers. • The center effects remained positive and significant after controlling for mother's education, children's baseline cognitive outcomes, site effects, age of the children, and mother's cognitive proficiency. • Effects of child care type on social development were less consistent, but children participating in family child care homes exhibited more behavioral problems than those in other types of care. • Child care quality, as measured by the ECERS, also affected children's cognitive and language development.

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The Relation of Preschool Child-Care Quality to Children's Cognitive and Social Developmental Trajectories through Second Grade (2001) Peisner-Feinberg, Burchinal, Clifford, Culkin, Howes, Kagan, & Yazejian Published in *Child Development* <u>Study Approach:</u> Child care quality data and language, cognitive, and socio-emotional functioning assessment data were collected from 733 children from pre-school to second grade in 4 U.S. regions, including Los Angeles County. The results from this study involved controlling for family selection factors related to child-care quality and development.	• Policies should promote better quality child care	• High quality child care positively affects children's cognitive and social skills through the second grade, according to a major national study by researchers at four universities. • Children who attended quality preschool programs scored better on math, language, and social skills development through the early elementary years than children in poor-quality programs.
The Cost, Quality and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers: Technical Report (1995) Helburn Department of Economics, Center for Research in Economic and Social Policy, University of Colorado at Denver <u>Study Approach:</u> Classroom assessments using the ECERS and ITERS in 401 centers in 4 states—California, Colorado, Connecticut and North Carolina—serving infants, toddlers, and/or preschool age children in 1993.	• There is a need for greater monitoring of centers and for trained, objective observers to assess the quality of programs. • There is a need for better tools to allow parents to identify good quality child care and pay for high quality child care.	• Only about half of the infant classrooms met the "good" benchmark, and nearly half of infant and toddler programs provided poor quality care. • Parents ranked centers nearly twice as high as did trained assessors.

Family and Community Engagement

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool and School Readiness: Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents (2012) Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Using data from the RAND California Preschool Study and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Birth Cohort (ECLS-B), this study examines the early care and education experiences of four-year old children of immigrant parents who do not speak English well.	• Policymakers should consider funding preschool in conjunction with other evidence-based early intervention strategies for disadvantaged children, such as home visiting or programs that combine parent education with preschool education.	• Preschool is not a panacea for closing school readiness and achievement gaps.
California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012) Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened more than 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and	• Maintain child care and case management services for the infants and toddlers of teen parents. • Support family engagement from the earliest points of entry into developmental and early learning services.	• Most children 0–3 are not in licensed care.

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the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California.		
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports.	• In order for First 5 California to obtain evaluation reports with more consistency and uniformity, it is important to provide the participating counties with more rigorous guidelines as to what should be included in the evaluation and how evaluations should be conducted. Written guidance and establishing a common set of tools would enable comparability of data.	• Almost every PoP county requires parents to complete the DRDP parent survey. However, aside from the survey, there is no uniformity for evaluating parent engagement activities.
Power of Preschool (PoP) Table of Best Practices from Counties (2011) American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> This study interviewed First 5 Executive Directors and/or designated staff most closely associated with the administration of the program to understand what was working well for them in each of several areas.	• None given	• Counties reported varying levels of focus on family engagement. Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) reported hiring a Parent Engagement Specialist and having success with their Parent Ambassador program, where parents come to a training once per month, and food is served. Trainings cover topics such as child development and community activities. First 5 San Mateo and the San Mateo County Office of Education have adopted the Virtual Pre-K program, which is a series of lesson plan supports linking activities in the classroom to what parents can do at home and in the community.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative: Final Report (2011) Quick, Manship, Parrish, Madsen, Lyman-Munt, Ernandes, Rojas, Helsel, Howes, & Jung American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of parent surveys over time, child assessments, and teacher and program director surveys.	• Programs should consider more direct training for parents to understand the types of questions and discussions they can have while reading to their children that challenge children to think beyond the literal meaning of words and pictures—such as asking children to predict and evaluate story events. • Programs should add an additional focus to parenting classes on effective parenting practices as children get older, including information about elementary, middle, and high school systems and adolescent behavior management, so that parents have the information they need to continue to support their children's learning and development after they leave the program.	• Parents did not demonstrate strong skills in interactive reading during the book-reading sub-study in Year 5. • Parents remained committed to the importance of education for themselves and their children. They also reported increases in a number of desirable outcomes, including better English skills, having knowledge of where to go in the community for assistance, having an understanding of the school system and its requirements for their children, being involved in their children's schools and classrooms, and continuing parenting practices to support their children's learning, such as reading to their children and using the library. Despite these successes, parents identified some remaining challenges, including finding employment, supporting the academic achievement of their children, helping children with their homework, and managing the behavior of older children.

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Dream Big for Our Youngest Children: Final Report (2010) California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QRIS) Advisory Committee <u>Study Approach:</u> 2 years of CAEL QIS Advisory Committee and subcommittee meetings; input from early learning and care program staff, child care licensing officials, county superintendents of education, local child care council and child care resource and referral leaders, First 5 California and county commission staff, and nationally known experts on quality rating and improvement systems.	<u>Family and Community Engagement Requirements Proposed for QRIS:</u> Use the ERS measure for family involvement and the Title 22 licensing requirements related to family engagement as proxies for the family engagement element of the rating scale. • For Tier 1, communicate with parents (measured by facilitated ERS self-assessment; if subscale item is less than 3, an improvement plan is developed; compliance with Title 22 center requirements, or comparable Title 22 FCCH requirements). • For Tier 2, educate parents and receive information (measured by facilitated ERS peer-assessment; if subscale item is less than 3, an improvement plan is developed. Topics offered in support of subscale, provisions for parents, and indicators for family information may include how children learn at home and in early learning and care; developmental levels and brain development; physical activities and nutrition). • For Tier 3, involve parents (measured by independent ERS assessment; when subscale item is less than 4, a quality improvement plan will be developed). Provider has a written transition plan that is activated when a child moves into another child care setting or into kindergarten. • For Tier 4, engage parents (same measure as for Tier 3 except if subscale item less than 5, a quality improvement plan will be developed). • For Tier 5 partner and advocate with parents. Same measures as for Title 4 except that if subscale item is less than 6, a quality improvement plan will be developed. Advisory Committee's Engagement Subcommittee's draft plan recommends: • Establish a brand for the QRIS that informs and promotes quality early learning and care programs.	• It is the interaction between the child's family and early learning and care setting, whether a center or family child care home, that promotes the best developmental and child outcomes. • The Chicago Child-Parent Centers found that family engagement is not only an essential component of a high quality early learning program, but also a key factor associated with more positive student outcomes and greater family involvement in the elementary school years (Miedel & Reynolds, 1999). • Research has demonstrated that, regardless of family income or cultural background, children whose parents are involved in their education are more likely to achieve higher grades and test scores, have more consistent school attendance, demonstrate better social skills and self-esteem, show improved behavior, and adapt well to the school environment (Coghlan et al., 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). • To establish a brand for the QRIS, some states use keys or stars. • Most teachers enter the early childhood profession because they enjoy being with children. They do not necessarily have an interest in children's families, nor are they always prepared to work with them. The professional culture in child

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	• Ask state, county, and local agencies and organizations currently working with families to assist with disseminating information to families, stakeholders, and the community. Include/train spokespeople who speak the families' language and are trusted sources of information. • Seek corporate and agency sponsors and secure expert assistance to develop branding, templates, and a public outreach campaign. • Teachers need training and technical assistance to ensure that whatever activities are implemented, they are done with the intent of building partnerships with families.	development has promoted this mindset, emphasizing the child and paying less attention to family and community roles. • Lopez (2010) identifies three essential components to effectively partnering with families: strengthening the family-child bond and acknowledging the primacy of the family in child development by engaging parents in making choices about their children, addressing diversity and understanding cultural and socio-economic variations in childrearing practices and values, and building trust with families by sharing knowledge about child rearing and other topics.
California Infant/Toddler Early Learning and Care Needs Assessment: A Policy Brief (2010) Anthony & Muenchow American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of extant data from CDE, Early Head Start Program Information Reports, Department of Social Services, and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network as well as review of related research.	• To help parents identify quality settings for infants and toddlers, a QRS could be an extremely useful consumer protection tool, with the family as the purchaser of services and the ultimate" consumer" defined as the infant.	• Compared to trained assessors, parents rate centers nearly twice as high on the ECERS/ITERS assessment items for Health, Safety, and Staff-Child Interactions compared to trained assessors (Helburn, 1995)

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The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• Strengthen strategies to encourage parents of Spanish-speaking children to increase the length of time the children attend the program. • Work with parents to increase their program involvement participation in home activities.	• Findings by family risk factors and home language indicate that children with more than 3 risk factors (such as having a mother who has not completed high school, is not married, or does not read to the child at least 3 days a week) and those who live in homes where only Spanish is spoken have a greater need for the instructional support preschool can provide. • Parents of Spanish-speaking children compared to other language groups reported lower frequency of reading to their children and having fewer children's books in the home. • Parents of Spanish-speaking children reported their children spent fewer hours attending preschool per week relative to the other groups. For example, 22% of parents in the Spanish-only group reported their child attended the LAUP program 12 or fewer hours per week, as compared to 7% of the English- and 8% of the other-language groups.

Family Engagement

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• There is a need for greater parent engagement, and, implicitly, more evaluation of what strategies work with which populations.	• The First 5 PoP counties have implemented various outreach and involvement strategies to more effectively engage families. • Most report challenges with working with a large immigrant population. • Every county reported an increase in parenting skills and knowledge as well as parent behaviors relating to home educational activities, but these findings were largely based on parent self-reports and surveys.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Great Expectations: Multilingual Poll of Latino, Asian, and African Parents Reveals High Educational Aspirations for Their Children and Strong Support for Early Education (2006) New American Media <u>Study Approach:</u> 602 Latino, African American, and Asian parents in California were interviewed about educational issues.	• None given	• Two-thirds of African American parents responding to the poll indicated that their child under the age of five attends a preschool program, compared to less than half of Asian parents and just a quarter of Latino parents indicating that their child is in such a program. • The majority of parents interviewed believed that their children need to attend an educational program before the age of 5 to prepare them for kindergarten; however, less than 30 percent of the parents enrolled their children in such a program. • Half of Latino parents, a third of African American parents, and a quarter of Asian parents say there are no quality child care centers in their neighborhood or town that they can afford. • Latino and African American parents strongly supported pre-school bilingual programs, while Asian parents were more divided on this issue.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Importance of Family Engagement: English Language Learners, Immigrant Children, and Preschool for All: Issue Brief (2004) Naughton Children Now <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary and analysis of existing research	• As part of their application for funding, programs should submit written plans that describe how they will partner with families and meet their cultural and linguistic needs. • Programs should aim for ongoing communication with families in appropriate languages and should use bilingual staff or interpreter services if needed. • Programs should aim to recruit and retain staff members who reflect the community. • Programs should provide ongoing multilingual technical assistance.	• Family engagement is associated with greater child, family and program benefits. • Using a variety of family engagement strategies helps programs successfully involve more families in meaningful ways. • Family engagement may support maintenance of home language, maintenance of culture, and high expectations, which in turn contribute to school achievement (Nieto, 1992)
The New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections (2002) Henderson & Mapp Southwest Educational Development Laboratory <u>Study Approach:</u> A review of 51 studies, all but two of which were published between 1995 and 2002	• Programs should engage families to have positive effects on student academic achievement and other outcomes. • Build strong relationships with parents and community organizations.	• Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Building Their Futures: How Early Head Start Programs Are Enhancing the Lives of Infants and Toddlers in Low-Income Families (2001) Love, Kisker, Ross, Schochet, Brooks-Gunn, Boller, et al. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and Center for Children and Families at Teachers College, Columbia University <u>Study Approach:</u> 17 Early Head Start programs consisting of 3,000 children throughout the U.S. (including California) were purposefully selected and randomly assigned into a treatment group. Results from this evaluation are based on parent interviews, child assessments, and videotaped parent-child interactions.	• More infant-toddler studies are needed that replicate the Early Head Start program.	As part of the Early Head Start program, parents are encouraged to develop close and supportive relationships with their infants/toddlers and to become healthier and economically self-sufficient. Parents who participated in the Early Head Start program showed the following: • More supportive environments for their children • More knowledge about their child's development • Less parental stress and family conflict • Greater enrollment in education or job training programs • Early Head Start programs that had fully implemented key components of the program earlier facilitated participation and had a larger positive impact on child and parent outcomes • Home-based programs, which provided more direct and intensive contact with the provider, were related to greater impact on parent outcomes.

Workforce Development: Knowledge and Competency Framework and Supporting Early Childhood Workforce Development

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012) Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened more than 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California. This report outlines the group's recommendations.	• Ensure broad availability of college courses and professional development opportunities for infant-toddler caregivers—especially training to help providers meet higher quality standards. • Ensure caregivers have training on identification of and early intervention for children at risk and with special needs. • Expand training opportunities for infant-toddler providers in supporting the needs of dual-language learners, including increasing access to evidence-based professional development programs for infant-toddler providers who are themselves English learners.	• Those in the workforce serving infants and toddlers are less likely to hold college degrees or credits than preschool providers. Infant-toddler providers, especially in home-based settings, are more likely to speak English as a second language and to face barriers in attending college.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
A Golden Opportunity: Advancing the Professional Development System for California's Early Care and Education Workforce (2012) Karoly RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis drawing on administrative reports, other publicly available data, and research evidence regarding effective professional development systems, including examples from other states.	• Pay attention to the content and quality of the degree program and the context of the ECE environment that can support hinder effective practice, not just attainment of particular degrees or credentials in isolation. • Ongoing research is needed to refine hypotheses about the relationship of practice and child outcomes with the intensity of professional development activities, the timing and sequencing of training and practice components, and the practitioner's level of formal education. • Ongoing research is also needed re: effective approaches to professional development with providers in home-based settings, as well as those providers serving infants and toddlers and culturally and linguistically diverse groups of children. <u>ECE Workforce:</u> • Implement an ECE workforce registry, inclusive of all members of the workforce, to identify who is in the field, their demographic characteristics, their educational and professional development experiences and credentials, and their employment history; support linking registry to a database of ECE programs to identify the context in which people are working. • Develop a well-defined ECE career pathway (career ladder) and associated credentials aligned with the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies,* the postsecondary education and training programs, and potential or actual QRIS (including the potential reintroduction of a preschoool-to-grade-3 teaching credential) Drawing on proven models, address need for financial supports for practitioners to pursue additional education and professional development either through the workforce investment programs or the QRIS if one is implemented.	• Numerous observational studies show that specific dimensions of care quality and child developmental outcomes are positively linked with teachers who have more education and training as well as specialized preparation in early childhood education (Howes, Whitebook, and Phillips, 1992; Howes, 1997; Phillipsen et al., 1997; Burchinal et al., 2002; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Early Child Care Research Network, 2002; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Burchinal et al., 2000; NICHD ECCRN and Duncan, 2003; and Early et al., 2006). • This relationship has been found for both center-based and family child care homes. • Proven early childhood programs that have demonstrated shorter- and longer-term benefits for participating children—e.g., Abecedarian program, Chicago Child-Parent Center program, High Scope Perry Preschool, and Oklahoma universal preschool—all employ lead teachers with a bachelor's degree or higher and specialized training (Cannon & Karoly, 2007a). • More recently, several large-scale observational studies have questioned the strength of the relationship between teacher education level or degree field and

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	<u>Education and Training Providers:</u> • Continue the process of alignment and articulation of the ECE curriculum within and across the CCCs and the CSU system, as well as alignment with the Early Childhood Educator Competencies and career ladder; evaluate the effectiveness of higher education programs in promoting required ECE competencies. • Continue to address gaps in higher education program capacity, course offerings, opportunities for practicums, and faculty quality and diversity. • Phase in specialized accreditation for ECE AA and BA programs. • Implement approaches to better serve the diverse needs of the current and potential ECE workforce seeking to advance their professional development; draw on proven models, including the use of cohort models, dedicated counseling, and technology-mediated professional development. <u>Workforce Investment Dollars:</u> • Collect the required information through the workforce registry to track the workforce investment program participants and their outcomes (e.g., retention) • Institute a more rigorous program of evaluation for funded programs, including measurement of effects on participant competencies, quality of care provided, retention in the ECE field, and child developmental outcomes, and how those impacts are mediated by the work environment. • Streamline and align the set of programs in light of evidence of program effectiveness and other system changes (e.g., ECE competencies, career ladder and credentialing, potential QRIS). <u>Other:</u>	classroom quality and child outcomes. Early, Maxwell, Burchinal, et al. (2007) and Howes, Burchinal et al. (2008) did not find a consistent, positive and statistically significant relationship between teacher education or degree field and classroom quality measures and child outcomes. • Possible explanations for the inconsistent findings include variations in the quality of the degree programs themselves, in the level of support in the work environment, and in the level of compensation. The very rapid expansion of early education programs in the last decade may have attracted the most effective teachers without post-secondary degrees whereas the more successful teachers with B.A. degrees moved into the early elementary grades. • Research on the contribution of training, apart from degree programs, to teacher effectiveness is less prevalent. Several recent randomized trials have been conducted on relationship-based professional development, including mentoring, coaching, consultation, technical assistance, and apprenticeships. Given that these studies have often been conducted with well-educated teachers in center-based settings, the results are not generalizable to other early

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	As the system improves, attention should be paid to aligning the ECE workforce professional development system with California's K-12 system, including the new Transitional Kindergarten program established by the 2010 Kindergarten Readiness Act.	learning and care settings. • Recent studies suggest that many members of California's early care and education (ECE) workforce do not have the desired skills and knowledge to be effective in their work with young children. California has taken a number of steps to build an ECE workforce professional development system (PDS): • Publishing early childhood educator competencies • Working to address past concerns regarding alignment and articulation within and across the state's 2- and 4-year colleges and universities that offer ECE-related courses and degrees • Employing approaches to promote further education and training for diverse members of the ECE workforce • Employing approaches to promote further education and training the diverse members of the ECE workforce • Providing financial incentives through grants and stipends for those who seek additional education and training But key elements are not yet in place, and many concerns remain: • Need to align the state's ECE credentialing system with other

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		components of the PDS • Need to address the quality of ECE higher education programs • Need to more systematically evaluate the workforce investment activities that receive approximately $70 million in federal, state, and local funding annually • Lack of key infrastructure component that many other states have: a workforce registry. • Weaknesses in the ability of center-based classroom teachers to provide instructional support for the age-appropriate language development and reasoning skills linked to later success in school • Limited training in working with dual language learners Data gaps mean that little is known about how well existing PDS resources are being used. • California does not have the data systems to track the ECE workforce in terms of enrollment in education and training programs • Existing data do not allow accurate counts of number and mix of individuals who participate in publicly funded workforce investment programs, and even less is known about the benefits of the myriad local informal training opportunities available

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Early Math in California (2012) Stipek & Schoenfeld <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary of recommendations emerging from a meeting on early math instruction sponsored by the Heising-Simons Foundation	• Improve pre-service training by requiring a course in math teaching for an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education, and requiring a focus on math instruction in the context of courses for the Child Development Teacher permit. Develop model course syllabi, lesson plans, and videos to facilitate the implementation of course content focused on the teaching of mathematics to young children. • Explore the creation and implementation of an age 3–8 teaching credential.	• There is no requirement for early childhood educators to receive training in the teaching of mathematics.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
By Default or By Design? Variations in Higher Education Programs for Early Care and Education Teachers and Their Implications for Research Methodology, Policy, and Practice (2012) Whitebook, Austin, Ryan, Kipnis, Almaraz, and Sakai Center for the Study of Child Care Employment <u>Study Approach:</u> Case study of 2 B.A. completion cohort programs in 4-year public (C.S.U.) campuses designed for students employed in settings for children primarily birth to age 5. Methods included phone interviews with higher education program representatives; document review (course descriptions, objectives, and select syllabi); and student surveys.	• Make more finely developed data elements about faculty background the norm for ECE teacher preparation research (e.g., ask individual faculty members questions such as, "How recently have you worked directly with young children?" and "What, if any, direct work experience do you have with infants and toddlers and/or with preschoolers?") • Regularly update data about faculty members and maintain in a data system such as an early childhood workforce registry. • Maintain up-to-date information on both the capacity and content of higher education programs. • Require institutions to report changes in their offerings, whether in response to state policies, funding, or other institutional dynamics. • Measure the efficacy of various approaches to teacher preparation.	• There is great variation in admission standards for higher education programs for early childhood educators, expected student outcomes, and rigor with which higher education programs assess student learning. • Research about higher education for ECE has typically focused only on the topics included in the course of study, not the depth of coverage. • Research has typically asked whether or not a given program requires students to complete a clinical experience, without distinguishing the type of experience, such as "practicum," "fieldwork," or "student teaching." • Research also often does not address the ratio of fulltime to adjunct faculty, the availability of student supports, and the stability of program resources. • Research conducted without such nuanced information has led to blanket condemnations of higher education for the early childhood profession, without differentiating among the types of early childhood-related programs that are more or less successful in preparing ECE teachers. • Only when distinctions can be clearly drawn among varying approaches to the preparation of ECE teachers will researchers become able to delineate best

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		practices and to determine the contribution of higher education to teacher effectiveness. • In this case study of 2 cohort programs, students in the program supervised by a mentor were much more likely to report that they had received the guidance and supervision they needed than students who had been supervised only by an instructor/faculty member or by staff at the clinical site.
Evaluation of Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC): An On-Site Training of Caregivers: Final Report (2012) Weinstock, Bos, Tseng, Rosenthal, Ortiz, Dowsett, et al. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences (IES) <u>Study Approach:</u> An experimental study was conducted to evaluate the impact of the on-site caregiver training component of the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC). The study sample consisted of 251 child care programs and 936 children located in Southern California and Arizona. The PITC training is research- based; includes practices that facilitate healthy development and sensitivity to children's home communities, cultures, and languages; provides program policy recommendations; and addresses	• More research on the PITC and other training interventions is needed for fuller examination of both implementation and impacts.	• Information is lacking on the effectiveness of training strategies for child care providers. • The PITC was not found to have a statistically significant effect on a composite measure of children's cognitive/language scores, measured approximately 6 months (on average) after it ended. • The PITC did not have a statistically significant effect on children's composite behavior scores, measured at 6 months after it ended. Sensitivity analyses, conducted with two alternative approaches to missing data treatment, had results consistent with these findings. • The PITC did not have a statistically significant effect on global program quality, as measured by trained observers administering the ITERS-R and the FCCERS-R.

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program operation and environmental arrangements.		• The PITC did not have a statistically significant effect on staff-child interactions, a composite measure incorporating interactions items from the environment rating scales and from the PITC-PARS. Results of sensitivity analyses were consistent with these findings. • However, the intervention was not fully implemented or was not implemented with full participation in many child care programs; thus additional research is recommended.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Application (2012) State of California Study Approach: Application citing administrative data from multiple state agencies and reports to federal agencies	Proposed Activities (which were approved by the federal government grant award): • Early Learning core curricula at California Community Colleges will be expanded to include aligned coursework on infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and program administration. • Web-based training resources for early learning educators will be created to facilitate wider distribution. • Train-the-trainer instruction will be provided to center Director Mentors on the Program Administration Scale and to Family Child Care Mentors on the Business Administration Scale. • Learning community (cohort) support will be provided to ECE professionals. • Integrate Early Childhood Educator Competencies into higher education coursework.	The following describes the estimated qualifications of California's ECE workforce: • 26% of estimated 4,000 Program Directors have the Child Development Program Director credential • 44% of estimated 8,000 Site Supervisors have the Child Development Site Supervisor Credential • 3% of estimated 30,000 Master Teachers have the Child Development Master Teacher credential • 5% of estimated 75,000 teachers have the Child Development credential • 16% of estimated 40,000 Associate Teachers have the Child Development Associate Teacher credential • 23% of estimated 19,000 Assistant Teachers have the Child Development Assistant Teacher credential. The following describes the status of activities to strengthen workforce development: • In 2006, a core curriculum of 8 evidence-based courses was established for ECE preparation at California community colleges. It has been adopted by 102 of the state's 105 community colleges offering ECE programs; alignment

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		with the California State University 4-year curriculum has also begun. • The Child Development Staff Retention Programs, CARES, and CARES Plus have invested $450 million since 2001 in professional development and support for the early learning workforce; these systems also provide for robust data collection on the early learning workforce. • The *Early Childhood Educator Competencies* were released in 2011 and represent a major step toward creating a well-designed, coordinated plan to prepare early childhood educators in California. • The CARES Plus database, hosted and funded by First 5 California, provide data on the workforce, including both CARES Plus and AB 212 participants. • Los Angeles and San Francisco Counties are jointly developing a workforce Registry pilot, aligned with common data elements in their local QRIS.
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u>	• Provide ongoing training and technical assistance to programs and teachers around best reaching practices, and around administering and understanding results from various classroom, program, and child level assessments.	• The PoP teacher salaries are based on the attainment of child development teacher permits, experience, completion of applicable college credit coursework, and/or attainment of an advanced degree, and are categorized into the following: "Entry", "Advancing," or "First 5 Quality," with First 5 Quality

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Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff		signifying the highest achievement level. • Among PoP Master Teachers" o Almost 58% have at least a bachelor's degree o Over 30% have an associate's degree o 43% are at the "Advancing" level o Over 50% are at the "First 5 Quality" level, with a minimum of 24 college credits in Early Childhood Education o The percentage of Master Teachers at the "First 5 Quality" level increased from 45% to X50%from 2008–09 to 2010–11 . • Among PoP Assistant Teachers o Over 31% have earned an associate's degree o More than 16% hold a bachelor's degree o Over 36% are at the "Advancing" level o Almost 45% are at the "First 5 Quality" level

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Dream Big for Our Youngest Children: *Final Report (2010)* California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QRIS) Advisory Committee <u>Study Approach:</u> The workforce section of the CAEL QIS report synthesizes findings and recommendations from more than 25 separate workforce studies, as well as dozens of presentations from expert consultants over a 2-year period. The CAEL QIS Workforce and Professional Development and Incentives Subcommittee was chaired by Dave Gordon, Superintendent of the Sacramento County Office of Education.	California needs to build on innovative projects and commit to statewide access to an articulated pathway through higher education based on early educator competencies, equitable compensation and environments, and research- and data-driven professional development practices that link effective teaching and learning relationships to child outcomes. • Set up a support system for an already experienced workforce coming from very diverse educational backgrounds, with classes available in the community and after hours. • Establish clear timelines with systemic support for an articulation and transfer process within and among colleges and universities, system-wide and college-cohort data, and policies and funding that support student success to improve degree completion. • Build on the efforts of community colleges to align courses and link them with state university courses to create a pathway toward 2- and 4-year degrees, without creating dead ends for the early learning and care workforce. • By 2012, develop the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies*—which include the *Foundations*—into a common and comprehensive course of study that is reflected in courses for associate's and bachelor's degrees and delivered statewide. Require credit-bearing courses for degrees. • Using the statewide common and comprehensive course of study based on the *Early Childhood Educator Competencies:* o By 2013, all California community colleges that offer early learning and care programs incorporate the "core 8" classes and additional courses to reflect the designated lower division Competencies into their degree programs. o By 2014, all California State University, University of California, and private higher education institutions	• Most early educators lack sufficient professional development and academic training in child development (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009). • Early childhood educators are diverse in ethnicity, much like the population they serve. • Many early educators cannot attend college during normal business hours because they already work full-time. • In an efficient system, courses would count for multiple purposes, such as toward certification and satisfying staff education requirements related to Title 5 or Title 22 licensing standards. • Half of the community colleges and public universities in a survey conducted by Whitebook et al. in 2005 reported problems with transfer of credits and articulation of courses. • Community colleges and state universities are making a concerted effort to improve articulation and alignment of courses, but as of December 2010, only 19 colleges had programs that were aligned, 20 more were finalizing their alignment, and an additional 53 are working toward submitting their alignment. Eleven colleges had not yet agreed to participate. • California invests in many pre-

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	that offer early childhood education programs align these courses to a common and comprehensive course of study across the 2- and 4-year degree system. By 2015, a clear and accessible system of demonstrating the Early Childhood Educator Competencies equivalency for courses will be developed and publicized, including clear criteria and deliverables. This system includes courses taken from out-of-state, foreign, and non-regionally accredited institutions, as well as competences developed through professional practice. <u>Staff Education and Training Requirements for lead teacher proposed for QRIS:</u> • For Tier 1, Center, 12 units of ECE; for FCCH, 15 hours of health and safety. For Title 22 teacher, 6 months experience; 21 hours of professional development annually. • For Tier 2, Center, 24 unites of ECE (core8); for FCCH, 12 units of ECE (core 8); one year of experience and 21 hours of professional development annually. • For Tier 3, 24 units of ECE (core 8) and 16 units of General Education (same as Title 5 and current Child Development Teacher permit); 2 years of experience, and 21 hours of professional development annually. • For Tier 4, associate's degree in ECE or 60 degree-applicable units, including 24 units of ECE or associate's degree in any field plus 24 units of ECE (similar to Master Teacher in Title 5 programs or new October 2011 Head Start requirements). Also, 2 years of experience and 21 hours of professional development annually. • For Tier 5, bachelor's degree in ECE (or closely related field) with 48+ units of ECE OR master's degree in ECE; 2 years of experience, and 21 hours of professional development annually. <u>Program Leadership Requirements proposed for QRIS:</u>	service and in-service professional development activities, such as "cohort" bachelor's degree completion programs, the Program for Infant/Toddler Care, the California Preschool Instructional Network, the Child Development Training Consortium, the California Early Childhood Mentor Program, and the Child Care Initiative Project. However, the projects need to be integrated into a coherent statewide system. • Although there have been important efforts to subsidize the attainment of early learning and care degrees, the rules for access have been inconsistent across counties, and funds to finance tuition assistance have been reduced or eliminated. • Early educators in preschool settings typically earn about half of what kindergarten teachers earn (U.S. Department of Labor, 2009), and turnover is high, hovering around 30 percent per year (Phillips, 2010). • Compensation is low even for teachers who have bachelor's degrees, especially in non-state-contracted centers receiving vouchers, and turnover is high compared to that of better compensated K-12 teachers (Whitebook et al., 2006). • Raising the educational qualifications without providing

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	• For Tier 1, 12 units core ECE (early childhood education, child development, family/consumer studies, or related field), 3 units administration, 4 years experience. Introduction to PAS or BAS. • For Tier 2, 24 units core ECE, 16 units General Education, 3 units administration, 1 year management or supervisory experience. Self-study with PAS or BAS. • For Tier 3, associate's degree with 24 units core ECE, 6 units administration, 2 units supervision, 2 years management or supervisory experience. Continuous improvement through a PAS or BAS action plan. • For Tier 4, bachelor's degree with 24 units core ECE, 15 units management, 3 years management or supervisory experience. Continuous improvement through a PAS or BAS action plan. • For Tier 5, master's degree with 30 units core ECE including specialized courses, 21 units management, or Administrative Credential. Continuous improvement through a PAS or BAS action plan. California needs to build on innovative projects and commit to statewide access to an articulated pathway through higher education based on early educator competencies, equitable compensation and environments, and research- and data-driven professional development practices. Financial and non-financial incentives are needed as part of a system to motivate child development center teachers, assistant teachers, directors, and other staff members to seek professional development to improve outcomes for children, and expand skills.	equitable compensation may make it difficult to hire and retain the best teachers (Pianta et al., 2009). • A substantial body of research indicates that early educators with higher levels of education and specialized training in early childhood education are generally more effective than those without such backgrounds (Barnett, 2004; Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzalez, 2010; Burchinal, Cryer, Clifford & Howes 2002; Whitebook, 2003). • Teachers in preschool programs demonstrating long-term benefits in children's achievements have all held at least bachelor's degrees and had compensation similar to that of public school teachers (Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis, 2009; Campbell, Ramey, Pungello, Sparling, & Miller-Johnson, 2002; Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). • Specialized training in early care and education is also associated with higher quality programs for infants and toddlers (Kreader, Ferguson, & Lawrence, 2005). • Research has shown that teachers with bachelor's degrees and specialized training in child development expose children to larger vocabulary and provide richer language and cognitive experiences

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		(Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzalez, 2010; Ackerman, 2005); have a better sense of how to do lesson plans; and are warmer, more sensitive, and more engaging in their interactions with children (Ackerman, 2005; Zigler, Gilliam & Jones, 2006). • At the same time, several recent studies question the link between caregiver education and program quality and child outcomes (Early et al., 2007; Pianta et al., 2005). • Higher education needs to include more observation of teachers in the classroom, and more feedback on their effectiveness in interacting with young children (Pianta, Barnett, Burchinal, & Thornburg, 2009). • Raising the educational qualifications without providing equitable compensation may make it difficult to hire and retain the best teachers (Pianta et al., 2009).

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
A Matter of Degrees: Preparing Teachers for the Pre-K Classroom (2010) Bueno, Darling-Hammond, & Gonzalez The PEW Center on the States: Education Reform Series <u>Study Approach:</u> This study reviews the research on pre-K teacher preparation, children's learning, and program quality. It explores the potential costs and benefits of professionalizing the pre-K workforce, the likely challenges associated with broad increases in preparation standards for early childhood educators, and the strategies some states and localities have used to address those challenges.	• States should require early childhood education teachers to possess a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early education. • Investments in the higher education infrastructure are needed to allow for comprehensive and high quality pre-K training programs. • States should establish policies and systems to accommodate and support the challenges faced by many early childhood education students. • More should be done to ensure early childhood education teachers are trained to communicate and interact effectively with the diverse population of children in their classrooms.	• Training or certification in early childhood education is the minimum educational requirement for state-funded pre-K lead teachers in California. • Studies show that students of early childhood teachers with both a bachelor's degree and specialized training in early education demonstrate the best gains in social, emotional, early literacy, and math and language skills. • Requirements for more rigorous levels of early childhood education preparation could support higher compensation and easier recruitment of well-qualified staff, which could reduce staff turnover and improve program equality. • Higher education suffers from shortages in course offerings and degree-granting, early childhood development programs. • Most early childhood education students are non-traditional college students, are low-income women of color, and/or may have linguistic and cultural barriers. • The early education workforce lacks sufficient training in and experience with teaching English language learners and students with special needs.

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The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• The relatively well-educated LAUP teacher workforce provides a solid foundation on which to make many of the improvements suggested in this report. • LAUP coaches might enhance program quality by focusing on what the CLASS refers to as Instructional Support. • Teachers need to learn better strategies to promote expressive language/vocabulary.	• 99% of the children's teachers had taken 6 or more classes in early childhood education or child development; 88 % of lead teachers held at least an associate's degree; and 61% had a bachelor's or higher degree. • About half of LAUP children had teachers who reported speaking both English and Spanish at home.

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Evaluation of Preschool for All in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties (2009) American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Results from Year 3 are based on a teacher survey and a random sample of classroom observation using CLASS and the Language Interaction Snapshot. Results from Year 4 are based in interviews with a random sample of 29 Preschool for All providers.	• Invest in professional development and technical assistance for preschool staff. • Focus training and technical assistance to promote quality adult-child interactions. • Provide a structured forum for preschool providers and partner agencies.	• Feedback from staff reflected a strong level of satisfaction with PFA-supported professional development and the services provided by the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) Technical Assistance Coordinator. Program directors indicated that PFA's support of workforce development was one of its most significant contributions to the provider community in San Mateo County. • Observations using the CLASS indicated that PFA programs typically offered warm and emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions, but some teachers appeared to be less effective in promoting children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition and providing feedback to expand learning and understanding. • All of the PFA classroom contractors and representatives from partner agencies that support the preschool community in the county noted the value of PFA as a forum through which key stakeholders could network, share information, and generate solutions to problems.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preparing Teachers of Young Children: The State of Current Knowledge and a Blueprint for the Future, Parts I and II (2009) Whitebook, Gomby, Bellm, Sakai, & Kipnis Center for the Study of Child Care Employment <u>Study Approach:</u> Examines the early care and education and K-12 research literature in depth to assess the current state of knowledge about the effective preparation of excellent teachers, and charts a research and policy agenda for the future.	• The ECE and K-12 workforces should not be viewed as two different worlds, but should share common terminology and research agendas, • A national ECE workforce data system that is compatible with K-12 workforce data should be developed. • Research on ECE teacher effectiveness should include examinations of the influence of factors in the teaching work environment and the role of ECE center directors on teacher practice. • Federal leadership should increase investment in higher education ECE degree programs and ongoing professional development. • There is a need for research on which professional development approaches best influence teacher practice and student learning. • There is a need for research on how ECE teacher preparation program content and delivery influence teacher effectiveness.	• The ECE workforce lacks many of the minimum educational and background requirements and accountability and reporting required of the K-12 workforce , resulting in lower quality and quantity ECE workforce data. • Factors such as adult-child ratios, compensation, unionization, teacher retention, and turnover in administrative leadership can impact teacher practice and effectiveness. • The ECE workforce has limited opportunities to obtain a higher education degree and high quality professional development. • Teachers in ECE typically work for much lower wages than teachers in grades K-12, and formal pay scales are rare.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
CARES Statewide Retention Study Final Report (2008) Harder & Company for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> 987 current and former participants in the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Program, which awards matching funds to California county commissions that offer incentives to Early Care and Education staff who stay in the field and obtain further training and education, were surveyed to determine whether the program has affected agency or field retention.	• Policymakers should identify the characteristics of child care providers that make them more likely to stay in the field in order to develop strategies and programs to support stabilizing and strengthening of the child care workforce. • Wage increases and benefits for the child care workforce are needed to increase retention.	• CARES Program participant respondents indicated that they were most satisfied with the incentive portion of the program and least satisfied with the academic counseling. • Respondents were most likely to strongly agree that their participation in the CARES program increased their desire to stay in the early childhood education field. • Respondents felt their participation in the CARES program provided some contribution to advancing their careers, such as earning their first child development permit and moving up the child development matrix. • Respondents reported that incentives or stipends encouraged them to stay in the child care field and at their child care agency more than support services, such as advising.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Early Care and Education Workforce Study: Licensed Child Care Centers (2006) *California Early Care and Education Workforce Study: Licensed Family Child Care Providers (2006)* Whitebook, Sakai, Kipnis, Lee, Bellm, Almaraz, & Tran Center for the Study of Child Care Employment <u>Study Approach:</u> A statewide random sample of directors in 1,800 licensed centers were interviewed.	• Disparities in ECE workforce educational attainment should be addressed by expanding and strengthening efforts to expand higher education offerings to more remote communities without college campuses, to utilize distance learning, and to engage community agencies in offering credit-bearing training. • In order to maintain and expand a diverse ECE workforce and improve the workforce's competencies across all ECE workforce positions, investments should be made to ensure people from diverse cultural, educational, and financial backgrounds have access to professional development opportunities. • Recruitment strategies for college graduates to ECE teaching positions should be improved—including improved compensation. • More advanced training and coursework should be offered related to dual language learning and children with special needs • Options to improve licensed settings using public dollars as a way to close the achievement gap between low- and high-income families should be explored.	• The study estimated that in 2004 the state had an estimated 7,000 directors, 45,000 teachers, and 23,000 assistant teachers in licensed-center-based programs, and another 37,000 licensed family child care home providers plus the 16,000 to 21,000 assistants they employ. • Of these 130,000 individuals, educational qualifications varied greatly" while 55 percent of directors in licensed centers reported having a bachelor's degree, only 25 percent of lead teachers and 7 percent of assistant teachers had such backgrounds. B.A. degrees were much less prevalent among centers serving infants than among those serving preschool children, and among family child care providers.
Child Care in Poor Communities: Early Learning Effects of Type, Quality, and Stability (2004) Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol Published in *Child Development* <u>Study Approach:</u> Data collected from maternal interviews, child assessments, and observations of center care and home-based care settings for 451 families residing in San Francisco or San Jose, California, or Tampa, Florida.	• No specific recommendations offered relative to workforce development, but study concludes that as government invests more resources in child care, greater attention should be paid to the quality of care.	• The provider's education level was consistently and strongly related to higher scores of children on a composite of school readiness assessments. • The effect appeared to stem from the character of social interaction between the caregiver and the child in both center and home-based arrangements.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments –A Review of the Literature (2003) Whitebook Center for the Study of Child Care Employment <u>Study Approach:</u> Literature review focusing on 8 large scale child care quality studies.	• More research is needed about effective alternative pathways to teacher preparation, particularly to ensure linguistic and cultural diversity in preschool programs. • Public will and resources should be focused on ensuring that preschool programs can live up to the quality expectations placed on them. In addition to setting preschool teacher standards at the BA level, we must also make educational opportunities available to current and prospective teachers, clarify the optimal characteristics of preschool teacher training, and compensate teachers sufficiently to retain them in the field.	• The evidence to date suggests that optimal teacher behavior in center-based settings, and the skill and knowledge upon which it rests, are best achieved through a four-year college degree, which includes some specialized content in early childhood education or child development. • But while the research points to the importance of the bachelor's degree, and the vast majority of studies find that more education and training is better than less, we do not yet understand precisely what we gain from the BA over the AA degree.
Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory (2012) Memo from Center for the Study of Child Care Employment	• None given	• The *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*, administered by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley, can help policymakers and other stakeholders develop a more coordinated and comprehensive professional development system for the ECE workforce. It allows users to create baseline descriptions of higher education course offerings for ECE practitioners, identify gaps and opportunities in these offerings, assess variation in programs, and track changes in the capacity of higher education programs over time.

Dual Language Learners

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool and School Readiness, Experiences of Children with Non-English-Speaking Parents (2012) Cannon, Jacknowitz, & Karoly RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Focuses on the early care and education experiences and kindergarten readiness skills of four-year-old children in both California and the United States as a whole.	• State policymakers might consider targeting for enrollment in preschool the subgroup of children with non-English-speaking parents to help improve school-entry reading skills among California's English learners.	• Found evidence, with large effect sizes, supporting center-based care participation in the year before kindergarten entry as a means to improve early reading skills for isolated children. • Preschool centers serving isolated children may be missing an opportunity to improve mathematics skills, which are also key predictors of later achievement. • Despite high enrollment, a third of isolated children are not participating in any center-based care in the year before they enter kindergarten.
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff	• None given	• Teachers and administrators were provided with courses and trainings to help them support dual Language learners. • At the program level, counties reported the use of parent volunteers to support EL students, required parent participation, cultural celebrations, and the promotion of acceptance through diversity in daily routines and activities as ways to support dual language learners. • Counties also reported recruiting PoP sites and staff based on their knowledge and experience with dual language learners.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative: Final Report (2011) Quick, Manship, Parrish, Madsen, Lyman-Munt, Ernandes, Rojas, Helsel, Howes, & Jung American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative included analysis of parent surveys over time, child assessments, and teacher and program director surveys.	• ECE classrooms should focus on incorporating research-based strategies to teach dual language learners, which would include incorporating more Spanish language support.	• English is being used frequently in many ECE classrooms with primarily Spanish-speaking children.
Children's Elementary School Outcomes after Participating in Family Literacy Programs: Research Brief (2011) Parrish, Quick, & Manship American Institutes for Research for the First 5 Family Literacy Initiative Evaluation <u>Study Approach:</u> Students in the Los Angeles Unified School District who participated in the Family Literacy Initiative were compared on English language development, school achievement, and attendance to students who participated in a less intensive school readiness program.	• Policy makers and program developers should invest in comprehensive parent-and-child program models that promote language and literacy development.	• Children who participated in the Family Literacy Initiative had significantly higher attendance rates and standardized test scores in math and English language arts, but similar English language development scores in elementary school compared to children who did not participate in the program.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Los Angeles Universal Preschool Programs, Children Served, and Children's Progress in the Preschool Year: Final Report of the First 5 LA Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, Vogel, Aikens, Xue, Mabutas, Carlson, Martin, Paxton, Caspe, Sprachman, & Sonnenfeld Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• LAUP teachers and other staff may need to find ways to strengthen their teaching strategies for Spanish-speaking children, increasing the length of time the children attend, and working with parents to increase their program involvement and participation in home activities with their children. • Outreach to parents of Spanish-only and primarily Spanish-speaking children to encourage better attendance may be part of a solution to the language achievement gap.	• From fall to spring, children nearly doubled their score on a letter-naming task; Spanish-speaking children scored somewhat lower but made the greatest gains during their year in the program. • Overall, 45% of the children who took the assessments in Spanish in the fall showed sufficient proficiency to be tested in English in the spring. This in itself suggests progress in preparing children for an English-only public school enrollment. • At the same time, performance of Spanish-only and primarily Spanish-speaking children on the early writing test was in a range that might suggest possible educational risk, as was the performance on expressive language. • Parents of Spanish-only and primarily Spanish-speaking children reported (compared with other language groups) much lower average numbers of hours per week in preschool.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
R&D Alert: Issue Focus: English Learners (2008) WestEd <u>Study Approach:</u> Description of WestEd professional development program and summary of research	• Move towards thinking of educating English learners as a systemic issue—something relevant to all teachers, not just EL specialists. Provide training to all teachers. • In the classroom, give DLL students the opportunity to use oral language for varied purposes, forge connections between material that is already familiar to them and new material to be learned, and provide students with visual cues to clarify vocabulary and concepts. • Support teachers to be consciously aware of which language they are supporting, to what degree, and through which strategies.	• The English Learners, Language, and Literacy in the Early Years (ELLLEY) professional development program promotes preschool English language instruction that uses children's first-language skills as a foundation for speaking, listening, and reading in their second language. • Home languages are critical to second-language development. • Many of the preschool teachers and assistant teachers participating in ELLLEY training have never had formal instruction in language development, let alone in second-language development.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners across Different Levels of Accountability (2007) Espinosa & Lopez National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force and First 5 LA <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary and analysis of existing research	• Assessors need to understand the process and stages of acquiring a second language so they can accurately interpret the language proficiency of an emergent bilingual child. • The child's early language experiences, with particular attention to home language learning opportunities, must be considered when assessing oral language proficiency. • The child must be assessed in the home language as well as English. • Parents and other family members must be included in the assessment process. • It is recommended that all children who speak a language other than English in the home receive an Individualized Language Plan (ILP). • Assessment information should be frequently collected and reviewed by all teaching staff to monitor changes in language and overall development. • Classroom assessment activities should be frequent, include multiple procedures, and reflect the goals of the program's curriculum. Recommendations regarding assessment for referral and identification of special needs: • Great caution must be used when administering standardized tests to young ELs. • An assessment team must be used that includes at least one other person who speaks the child's home language and is familiar with the child's culture. • All procedures and results should be reviewed for cultural bias and accuracy by a person from that cultural group, and if possible by a bilingual educator. • The selection of specific assessments for EL children should be based on a careful review of the respective manuals describing their technical aspects.	• EL children's linguistic and cultural differences, and differences in learning needs and abilities, must be considered throughout all phases of a comprehensive and integrated EL assessment system. • Because assessment frequently drives instruction, the more complete and accurate the assessments, the better the instruction will be. • The more comprehensive and valid a program's accountability and evaluation efforts are, the more effective the program will be in improving the lives of the EL children served.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Time to Revamp and Expand: Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs in California's Institutions of Higher Education (2005) Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, & Sakai Center for the Study of Child Care Employment <u>Study Approach:</u> Interviews with early childhood department chairs, program directors, or coordinators at 98.5% of all early childhood higher education programs (certificate through PhD) in the state.	• Expand lower-division programs in early childhood studies, and increase opportunities for supervised practicum experiences. • Develop more upper-division and graduate programs in early childhood studies and teacher preparation. • Hire more full-time early childhood faculty members. • Develop targeted programs to attract and retain a more culturally and linguistically diverse faculty. • Secure more upper-division faculty with experience working with young children. • Update and revamp the courses of study based on new knowledge and competencies that teachers need. • Create opportunities for early childhood faculty to update and renew their knowledge and skills based on emerging research and changes in the field. • Serve a diverse and rising early childhood student population to preserve and strengthen the diversity of the workforce. • Create new incentives to encourage students to pursue degrees in early childhood/child development and to remain in the field. • Create a blueprint for a well-articulated higher education system, with greater ease of transfer between community college, upper division, and graduate programs. • Develop a comprehensive set of ECE teacher skills and competencies based on the latest research. • Design a relevant early childhood teacher certification system. • Promote improved teacher compensation in ECE in order to attract students. • Create incentives and guidelines for institutions of higher education across the state to increase their program	• Approximately half of the state's colleges and universities have programs preparing teachers to work with children under 5. Approximately three-quarters of these are at community colleges. • The state's higher education system is still mostly geared to entry-level work in ECE. Most students in the field are working towards a Child Development Permit. • California's population of early childhood education college students are very diverse in terms of ethnicity and language. Many speak a language other than English and approximately 1 in 5 face significant challenges in completing coursework in English. Only about one-fourth of programs offer language support for students learning English as a second language. • Most of California's early childhood students are working full-time. • The faculty in early childhood teacher preparation programs are much less diverse than their students; nearly half of the programs have a 100% white, non-Hispanic full-time faculty. • Most faculty members have earned a master's degree or higher, but community colleges are more likely to have faculty with degrees in early childhood specifically and direct experience working with young children. • About two-thirds of faculty members are part-time. On average, these programs employ fewer full-time faculty members

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	offerings in early childhood studies. • Build public awareness of the knowledge and skills required to work effectively with young children, why advanced education is appropriate, and why compensation must be raised. • Coordinate efforts at all ECE teacher preparation programs to track current students and career pathways once they leave. • Support further research on best practices for producing effective early care and education teachers, including high quality practicum experiences, and on best practices for preparing teachers to work with young children who are dual language learners.	than other programs at their institutions. • Most of California's ECE teacher prep programs do not offer courses in dual language learning and bilingualism. • Some challenges faced by students include lack of financial aid, competing family responsibilities, lack of academic preparation or skill, a shortage of practicum opportunities, and rising demand for courses and supports in non-English languages. • Many programs have difficulty attracting and retaining a diverse faculty. • Many programs cannot serve all students who want to enroll, have difficulty transferring credits, and experience a lack of institutional support for the program. • The persistence of low wages in the ECE field remains the greatest challenge for the ECE community.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Importance of Family Engagement: English Language Learners, Immigrant Children, and Preschool for All: Issue Brief (2004) Naughton Children Now <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary and analysis of existing research	Preschool programs in California that serve ELs and their families should contain the following: • Written plans describing how they will partner with families and meet their cultural and linguistic needs. • Ongoing communication with families in the appropriate language. • Culturally competent staff who reflect the cultures and language of the children in the program. • Staff professional development on how to meet the needs of EL children and their families. • Adjustments to serving children with special needs based on cultural and community beliefs. • Partnerships with community members and parenting networks already involved in ELs' lives. • Extra funding for programs working with families of ELs. Partnerships with families to support children's development and learning. • A parent advisory group representative of the children in the program.	• There is significant cultural, language and economical variation among EL families. • Some Latin and Asian cultures view teachers as experts and feel they should be respectful of the educational program. • Mexican American families tend to view school readiness as children reaching the legal age for school. • Cultural and linguistic differences may be barriers to family involvement. • Families respond more positively to a program staff that reflects their cultural and linguistic background.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Preschool and Child Care Enrollment in California (2004) Lopez & de Cos California Research Bureau <u>Study Approach:</u> Data from the 2000 Census Public Use Microdata Sample for 3 to 5 year olds and children not yet enrolled in kindergarten were analyzed for this study.	• None given	• 31% of Latino and Asian children ages 3 to 5 were in households with members over the age of 14 that do not speak English fluently. • Among Latino and Asian children, preschool and child care enrollment rates were lower for children ages 3 to 5 in households where someone over the age of 14 does not speak English fluently (35%) compared to children in households with older members who speak English fluently (50%). • The percentage of children enrolled in preschool or child care increases only slightly if the members of the household over 14 speak English fluently (from 32% to 39%), but remains at 50% for Asian children.

Developmental Screening of Children

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff	• None given	• All counties reported that some or all of their providers use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire for developmental screening. • Every county reported strategies to enroll children with special needs, and there is a strong push for the inclusion and integration of special needs children into mainstream classrooms.
Power of Preschool (PoP) Table of Best Practices from Counties (2011) American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Interviewed First 5 Executive Directors and/or designated staff most closely associated with the administration of the program to understand what was working well for them in each of several areas.	• None given	• Most counties reported using the ASQ or the PEDS for developmental screening. In at least one county, finding time for teachers to complete the screenings was reported to be a challenge.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• Steps should be taken to ensure that screening for developmental and health problems is conducted for all children in all classrooms early in the program year. Some of the children in the lowest quartile may be eligible for IDEA services, and screening is the first step toward identifying and accessing services for children. • Standardization of screening tools would facilitate revising their results and making consistent decisions across classrooms and groups of children.	• One-third of the children were in classes where the teachers reported that they did not screen children for health or developmental problems. • Among the children whose teachers reported screening, 34% were screened with the Ages and Stages Questionnaires. • Across LAUP classrooms, a variety of screening tools were in use.
Evaluation of Preschool for All in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties (2009) American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Results from Year 3 are based on a teacher survey and a random sample of classroom observation using CLASS and the Language Interaction Snapshot. Results from Year 4 are based in interviews with a random sample of 29 Preschool for All providers.	• Focus attention and professional development regarding identifying, referring, and serving children with special needs—both at the program level and at the systems level (e.g., closer coordination with agencies that provide special education services).	• The use of the ASQ and ASQ-SE in San Mateo County PFA classrooms provided staff with a structured mechanism to partner with families and identify children who were in need of further assessment. A formal follow-up strategy is critical.

Assistance to Children with Special Needs

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Special Needs Project (SNP) Final Evaluation Report (2010) Fitzgerald, Sormano, Ramirez, Mathur, Benitez, Reynolds, Provance, Cowles, Livingston, & Hayes First 5 California, WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention, and Institute for Social Research at California State University, Sacramento <u>Study Approach:</u> This evaluation included analyses of quantitative data, surveys of School Readiness Program staff and participating families, and interviews with Special Needs Projects staff.	• None given	• SNP sites were successful at screening all children populations at young ages. • Methods for successfully screening large numbers of children included building relationships with families, collaborating with partner agencies, home visits, and having well trained screeners who conducted one-on-one screenings with families. • School Readiness programs that connected with SNP sites provided more services and supports for children with special needs than School Readiness programs that do not connect to SNP sites. • SNP sites did not report successfully including children in regular settings.
Power of Preschool Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• Improve outreach to children with special needs.	• Most PoP counties have not reported specific outreach strategies to reach children with special needs. San Diego conducted outreach meetings and waived residency criteria to encourage a greater number of children with special needs to participate.

Early Childhood Mental Health/Behavioral Health Services

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Mental Health consultation and Early Care and Education (2009) Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health Systems Group <u>Study Approach:</u> Position paper on mental health consultation to child care	• Increase capacity to implement Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation in family child care programs. • Continue research into the effectiveness of mental health consultation to child care centers. • Increase funding for mental health consultation services. • Collaborate statewide with agencies to develop consistent standards of practice. • Collaborate with universities to conduct local longitudinal research on the benefits of early childhood mental health consultation.	• Early childhood mental health consultation consists of mental health professionals partnering with early care and education professionals to promote the social and emotional well-being of children. Services can include general consultation with teachers about child development and classroom set-up, child-specific consultation to staff or families, program consultation, or direct mental health services such as play therapy. • One in every 133 prekindergarten children enrolled in State Preschool in California is expelled due to behavioral problems (Gilliam, 2005). • Persistent conduct problems are associated with poor academic performance, delinquency, and substance abuse in later childhood (McCabe & Frede, 2007). • When preschool teachers fail to handle social-emotional problems well, they perpetuate unregulated behaviors in their young pupils (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 1998). • Early childhood teachers are struggling with growing numbers of children who need specific support to develop self-regulation at the

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		same time that they feel themselves under pressure to meet national standards in purely academic areas (Yoshikawa & Knitzer, 1997). • The results of an evaluation of a 17-month mental health consultation program in 7 ECE programs in Alameda County showed significant improvements in teacher ratings of children's social competence and of children's aggression and withdrawn social behavior.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Challenges in the Implementation of Evidence-Based Mental Health Practices for Birth-to-Five Year Olds and Their Families (2011) Finello, Hampton, & Poulsen California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health <u>Study Approach:</u> Report from a day-long "Think Tank" meeting of Project ABC, an early childhood system of care funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, in Long Beach, California, on February 2, 2011.	• Professionals providing treatment and interventions should have basic knowledge in key areas such as those outlined in the *California Training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health, Revised*. • Successful implementation of early childhood mental health services should include targeted parent involvement, practitioner selection, training, coaching, performance evaluation, program evaluation, administrative supports, resource allocation, and policy. • Clinical judgment, combined with a parent voice, is needed to set priorities, choose and adapt the evidence-based program, and identify ancillary services and supports. • The mental health system, policymakers, and funders must commit to creating and sustaining a trained workforce in mental health. • Early childhood mental health professionals should be involved in implementation of new collaborations and systems made available through the Affordable Care Act. • All agencies implementing evidence-based practices for children birth to five should be required to provide ongoing reflective practice supervision and should be evaluated in terms of efficacy. • Funders should encourage and provide funding to study the changes that organizations make to adapt infant-family and early childhood evidence-based practices to local needs. • There must be more funding for longitudinal research to continue to evaluate evidence-based practices in early childhood mental health. More efforts should be made to evaluate promising practices for children under age three.	• Acknowledgement of the need for mental health services for children under age five is relatively recent. • Mental health problems can occur in early infancy, and these problems demand community infant-family and early childhood mental health services and supports (New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003). • Education, practice, and time are required for clinicians and agencies to become proficient and at ease with any new practice. • The incorporation of research must not be in lieu of clinical expertise and consumer values and choices (institute of Medicine, 2001; American Psychological Association, 2005). California has developed infant-family mental health training guidelines and an endorsement process that ensure that the underlying expertise needed to give context to any particular evidence-based program. • Clinicians need to have baseline skills and it is not realistic to attempt to teach multiple evidence-based practices at a pre-service level (Bauser, 2007).

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California CSEFEL Project Fact Sheet (2011) Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) Study Approach: Fact sheet	• Continue to support the work of the California Collaborative (the state's CSEFEL project) and its potential collaboration with CSEFEL to train professionals in the CSEFEL model, work with implementation sites, and assist in strengthening inter-agency collaboration. • Establish a common vision for social-emotional development across all state-wide training efforts by using the CSEFEL model to create a cohesive and effective approach to addressing the needs of young children with challenging behaviors and special needs that aligns with California's social-emotional Foundations.	• CSEFEL aims to foster professional development of the early care and education workforce in order to enhance knowledge and skills, support the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices in social and emotional development, and increase the size of the workforce skilled in supporting the social emotional development of children under 5. • CSEFEL's Pyramid Model has been implemented in a few California communities; these communities have experienced positive changes in being able to support children's social-emotional development and children with challenging behaviors.
Social and Emotional Well-Being: The Foundation for School Readiness (2006) Pitcl & Provance WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Study Approach: Research summary and description of early childhood mental health practices as they are evolving in California.	• Early mental health delivery systems must provide time for intensive and rigorous staff training and ongoing reflective supervision for those who work with infants and their parents. • Services should focus on the promotion of mental health through prevention and early intervention. • Strengths-based services promote and affirm assets in the child, in the family, and in the early care and education program. • It is critical to recruit mental health staff members who speak the home language of the families in the program. Appropriate mental health services acknowledge and address the diversity among children, teachers, families, and mental health providers.	• Recent research has confirmed that the optimal development of an infant's social and emotional health hinges on the responses of (and relationships with) their caregivers. • The period of life from birth to 3 is a sensitive period of development for the formation of character and personality. The greatest period of brain development occurs from the last trimester of pregnancy throughout the first 18 months of life.

Child Assessment to Support School Readiness

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale

Moving to Outcomes: Approaches to Incorporating Child Assessments into State Early Childhood Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (2012)
 	
Zellman & Karoly
RAND Corporation
 	
<u>Study Approach:</u>
A review of the literature and current state practices regarding child assessments, organizes current and potential approaches into five categories
	• Different approaches (e.g., "QRIS-Required Caregiver/Teacher Assessments to Improve Practice") are recommended based on whether or not a QRIS exists and whether the QRIS is still being piloted or is implemented at scale.
	• Promote the use of child assessments by ECE caregivers and teachers to improve practice either as part of a QRIS or through other mechanisms. This does require professional development supports to ensure that assessments are used effectively by teachers.
	• Implement a QRIS validation study, with independent measurement of child outcomes, to determine if higher QRIS ratings are associated with better child developmental outcomes. Implement this approach when piloting a QRIS and periodically once the QRIS is implemented at scale (especially following major QRIS revisions).
	• Implement a statewide evaluation of specific ECE programs or the broader ECE system, using independent assessors to measure child functioning to evaluate causal effects of specific ECE programs or groups of programs on child developmental outcomes at the state level. Implement this approach regardless of whether a QRIS exists.
	• Proceed with caution if considering a QRIS rating component that is based on estimates of a program's effect on child developmental outcomes. Methodology is complex and not sufficiently developed for high-stakes use; it is costly to implement for uncertain gain. Feasibility and value for cost could be tested on a pilot basis.
		• Five strategies identified that vary in how they incorporate child assessments into state QI efforts and in several cases into a QRIS.
		• The five strategies approach child assessments with different objectives:
		  ○ Two use child assessments to inform and shape classroom practices and to support program improvements.
		  ○ The remaining three approaches use child assessments to measure the effects of participating in a given classroom, program, or ECE system on child functioning.
		  ○ Each approach may be implemented on its own or in combination with one or more other approaches.
		• QRIS designers have several feasible and complementary approaches available for getting to the outcome of interest: child cognitive, social, emotional, and physical functioning.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Application (2011) State of California <u>Study Approach:</u> Application citing administrative data from multiple state agencies and reports to federal agencies	Proposed Activities (now approved): • The state will expand the school readiness assessment tool, the DRDP-SR, to include additional developmental domains. • Early adopters within the Regional Leadership Consortia will be trained and will demonstrate the use of the DRDP-SR as early adopters in 2013–14. • CALPADS will be adapted to enable LEAs to voluntarily submit school readiness data directly into the system. • LEAs in the Regional Leadership Consortia will mentor other LEAs on the use of the DRDP-SR, which will be made available on a statewide voluntary basis in 2014–15, along with the means for collecting data from all programs.	• The *Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness* (DRDP-SR) has been developed as an observational assessment for kindergarten entry, and is directly aligned with the *Foundations*, as well as the state's kindergarten standards and common core standards. • The DRDP-SR includes 4 of the 5 domains essential to school readiness—language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development), approaches toward learning, and social and emotional development. Physical well-being and motor development are not included but are under consideration. • A pilot is in progress to determine the validity and reliability of the instrument, including validity for dual language learners and children with disabilities. • CDE will train early adopters within the Regional Leadership Consortia to use the DRDP-SR during the 2012–13 school year. • Also, DRDP Access assessment data on children receiving IDEA Part B services is captured in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), with a unique identifier for each child.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now Study Approach: Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• Identify and address children's needs earlier in their lives through ongoing, developmentally appropriate assessments in early learning settings and kindergarten, including the adoption of a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment observation instrument.	• Numerous local counties have used kindergarten readiness observation assessments effectively. • Readiness data gathered through assessments that look at multiple domains can help parents and teachers of preschool children, and also facilitate the transition to kindergarten.
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California Study Approach: Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff	• Invest in training and technical assistance to counties on how to report DRDP results on an individual basis while de-identifying data securely. • Ensure that this child-level data can be linked to other data at the classroom and teacher level.	• Feedback on the DRDP was generally positive from the PoP counties. 2 other counties said that while the DRDP was helpful for monitoring progress and informing improvement, it was not helpful for evaluation purposes. • While counties reported aggregate DRDP results for PoP enrollees, counties used various calculations of the data at an aggregate level. • In order for First 5 California to draw solid conclusions about the effectiveness of the program, reporting of DRDP data and any other child-level assessment that may be requested of counties at the individual child level is critical for accurate analysis of data.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• All children need to be screened early in the year using a standardized screening process; ongoing observation of children's progress by teachers would help to tailor the instruction to the needs of the children. • Implicit: while the study recommended health and developmental screening by teachers, it did not recommend administering the battery of extensive assessments used by the independent team of researchers, as this would require outside trained observers and would be expensive to administer to more than a sample of program participants. • Implicit: Measuring performance of DLL is tricky.	• Based on a battery of assessment measures administered by an independent team of evaluators, children's performance was average or above average in early literacy, social-emotional development, and approaches to learning, but lower in expressive language/vocabulary. • From fall to spring, children nearly doubled their score on a letter-naming task; Spanish-speaking children scored somewhat lower but made the greatest gains during their year in the program. • Children's performance was lower on expressive language/vocabulary. It is important to consider the high proportion of DLL children in the sample, 45% of whom increased enough in their English language skills to be assessed in English. However, the words they learned may have been for concepts or objects they already knew in their first language, as opposed to words for entirely new concepts or objects.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• Improve DRDP-R* reporting. Future evaluations might focus on the appropriate use of the DRDP-R as well as customized training on its proper use in the PoP context. *The DRDP-2010 has now replaced the DRDP-R. • Careful interpretation of the DRDP-R data is essential.	• There appears to inconsistency in the way schools and teachers collect DRDP-R data. • Teachers repeatedly mention the need for more time to complete the DRDP-R. • Several counties experienced challenges administering the DRDP-R, and some questioned whether its use was appropriate.
Assessment Considerations for Young English Language Learners across Different Levels of Accountability (2007) Espinosa. & López National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force and First 5 LA <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary and analysis of existing research	• Assessment approaches for the EL population should be responsive to the within-group culture, language and literacy development, social, and economic variability among this group.	• There is substantial variability across the factors that predict differences in children's language development within the EL population.

Effective Data Practices

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant Application (2012) State of California Study Approach: Application citing administrative data from multiple state agencies and reports to federal agencies.	Proposed Activities (now approved): • Participating Consortia have committed to using the National Data Quality Campaign guidelines to support uniformity of data fields and terms. • For 2013–14, RTT-ELC grant funds will be used to incentivize Regional Leadership Consortia districts to report their Transitional Kindergarten and kindergarten DRDP-results into CALPADS. CALPADS will be fully functional to receive DRDP-SR data on a voluntary basis starting 2014–15.	• According to the Early Learning Challenge Grant application, of the 16 counties participating in the Regional Leadership Consortia, 10 utilize the Unique Child Identifier, 11 utilize the Unique Early Childhood Educator Identifier, 11 utilize the Unique Program Site Identifier, 11 utilize the Child and Family Demographic information, 12 utilize the Early Childhood Educator Demographic information, 12 utilize the Data on Program Structure and Quality, and 9 utilize the Child-Level Program Participation and Attendance. • DRDP Access assessment data on children receiving IDEA Part B services is captured in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), with a unique identifier for each child.
California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now Study Approach: Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• Include statewide early childhood data that tracks school readiness indicators from birth to kindergarten entry, connects to California's K-12 data system, and enables the evaluation of quality improvement and workforce development efforts. • Establish a comprehensive, longitudinal data system that connects early learning and development through higher education, health, juvenile justice, child welfare, and other data in order to better track and address the educational outcomes and well-being of children throughout their lives.	• Several counties have collected kindergarten readiness data so that parents, teachers, and administrators can better address the needs of children as they enter school and move through the early grades.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012) Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened over 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California. This report outlines the group's recommendations.	• Create a unique identifier that can allow data tracking of children from birth and across systems. • Track infant-toddler provider participation in high quality workforce development.	• Data systems are critical for planning high quality services.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of local First 5 PoP reports for 2009–10, annual data submitted by counties for 2010–11, and interviews with First 5 staff.	• Track children's outcomes into their entry in kindergarten and beyond into third grade, using third grade test results. • Encourage assignment of individual child-level district identification. • In order to reduce data burden, it is suggested that strategic sampling of a few hundred children throughout PoP counties that could be tracked longitudinally would be sufficient.	• In the evaluation, there was notable variation in the levels of specificity and overall content of the county reports. Due to data reporting inconsistencies across counties, accurate interpretation of the DRDP 2010 results for FY 2010–11 was difficult. • Some counties reported that commissions value assessment data, stating that commissions rely on the data and use it to "inform the planning of programs that are going to be better for the children" or to "align and better integrate county services." • In order for First 5 California to draw solid conclusions about the effectiveness and impact of their Child Signature Program on children, reporting of DRDP data and any other child-level assessments that may be requested of counties at the individual child level is critical to analysis of accurate data.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Dream Big for Our Youngest Children: Final Report (2010) California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (QRIS) Advisory Committee <u>Study Approach:</u> 2 years of CAEL QIS Advisory Committee and subcommittee meetings; input from early learning and care program staff, child care licensing officials, county superintendents of education, local child care council and child care resource and referral leaders, First 5 California and county commission staff, and nationally known experts on quality rating and improvement systems	Place major focus on leveraging existing data systems to eliminate duplicative reporting and collection and improve data quality to: • Measure school readiness. • Establish more efficient program management and administrative functions. • Improve teacher and provider effectiveness. Begin by developing a unique child identifier and assessing current data collection processes serving young children. The Advisory Committee approved a method that would use the birth certificate's registration number to provide a unique student identifier for children in early learning and care programs. This low technology solution would also enable providers to go back to the common source to identify a child. Almost all children have birth certificates with a unique number, including children born outside of the U.S., so very few children would need an alternate number.	The Advisory Committee identified 9 key principles for an early learning and care data system: • Confidential; • Useable and practical; • Accessible and inter-operable; • Respects current databases and builds on them; • Transparent; • Includes and connects child, family, teacher and provider, and program data; • Provider-friendly; • Easily adaptable and can grow and change over time; and Dynamic.
California Infant/Toddler Early Learning and Care Needs Assessment: A Policy Brief (2010) Muenchow & Anthony American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis based on analyses of extant data from CDE, Early Head Start Program Information Reports, Department of Social Services, and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, as well as review of related research	• For a more comprehensive needs assessment on infant and toddler care in California, a unique child identifier is needed. First, the use of a child identifier would allow linking across program data sets, to determine the extent to which children are served in more than one setting, and, ultimately, whether enrollment in high quality early learning and care programs is associated with improved child outcomes in elementary school. • To get an accurate count of which children are being served, enrollment data for all publicly subsidized programs should be collected by zip code of the child's residence, age cohort, and type of program (e.g., licensed, voucher, and exempt care).	• To estimate the number of infants and toddlers in California and the number enrolled in ECE programs, AIR compiled data from CDE, the National Head Start Association, the Department of Social Services, and the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network. • Data gaps and the lack of a central repository of information limit the current assessment of the supply and demand of infant/toddler care.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports	• See report recommendations on DRDP-R under Child Assessment to Support School Readiness above.	• See report findings on DRDP-R under Child Assessment to Support School Readiness above.
Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California: Issues, Policy Options, and Recommendations (2009) Karoly RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Based on integration of results from 3 earlier studies on gaps school readiness and achievement in early grades, the use of ECE services and the quality of those experiences, and the system of publicly funded ECE programs	• Fund the implementation of a P-16 longitudinal data system envisioned under SB 1298.	• California lags behind other states in development and implementation of education data systems that link student- and teacher-level data over time and support informed decision-making (Hansen, 2007). • Implementation of the K-12 data system (CALPADS and CALTIDES) has been slow, and efforts to integrate preschool data into the system have only just begun.

Facilities

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Child Care Facilities Development: A Report on California's Readiness (2010) Low Income Investment Fund <u>Study Approach:</u> Survey of statewide child care Intermediaries to identify local issues related to facility development and financing	1. Expand facilities development and financing model availability, such as ABCD Constructing Connections, to interested communities. 2. Increase local facilities financing: • Identify potential public sources of capital (e.g. Community Development Block Grant, US Department of Agriculture Rural Housing Service, First 5, redevelopment funds) and advocate making child care an eligible use or priority. • Engage local businesses in existing early care and education efforts to help advocate for increased public capital and to promote local fund development efforts. • Engage local Community Reinvestment Act officers around funding and resource possibilities for child care facility development. 3. Remove land use barriers: • Learn the process/steps it takes to develop a child care facility in a particular jurisdiction. • Conduct a child care land use assessment to see what the entitlement process and fee structure is for each jurisdiction in the county. • Identify some child care centers that recently received or were denied a conditional use permit. Interview them to identify challenges, successes, and lessons. • Advocate for child care–friendly land use policies and procedures that encourage child care facility development (e.g., reducing permit fees, reducing/eliminating traffic impact fees, increasing the number of areas zoned for child care). 4. Technical assistance services: • Seek training on facility development and financing to	• Child care intermediaries are unaware if facilities development is addressed in Preschool for All (PFA) or School Readiness Initiatives (SRI). 67% responded that their county's PFA/SRI did not specifically address facilities or they were unsure whether the initiative included a plan to address facilities. • Lack of local public and private financial resources and land use barriers (e.g., excessive permit fees and conflicting regulatory requirements) were identified as the greatest concerns among child care intermediates. • Most of the services and resources child care intermediaries provide to ECE operators for facilities development and financing are in the early planning phase of development only, and not in the later, more difficult and costly phases of development. • The Southern region (58%) showed a greater awareness of agencies that provide local technical assistance services in the three specific areas (accessing funding for facilities, business development, and identifying a development team) identified by the other regions as most lacking. The strong presence of Constructing Connections in the Southern region

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	enhance existing services to ECE operators. • Identify and engage existing public/private community partners that have expertise and resources in a particular area (e.g., business planning, market analysis, financial analysis, real estate development, etc.), and coordinate efforts to assist operators through all phases of facility development. • Develop partnerships with local Small Business Development Centers and other business/economic development agencies to assist operators in developing a business plan and budget, marketing plan, and access to private capital.	may also account for this finding. • Child care intermediaries requested additional training and support to address facility and financing barriers, specifically for facility development and financing to better support ECE operators.
Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) Letter to the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee Regarding Facilities Recommendations (2010) Edward Condon Managing Director, National Child Development Programs, Low Income Investment Fund <u>Study Approach:</u> Letter to the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee	• The QRIS should ensure that child care programs at all tier levels have sources of public and private capital, and technical support to access and utilize capital and for facilities related issues. • The following enhancements should be made to the Title 22 regulations: ○ Conduct licensing inspections at least once a year ○ Align inspection criteria with facilities standards in QRIS ○ Include observation and notation of conditions that to not comply with Title 22 building code standards in licensing inspections ○ Licensing staff should provide child care programs with referrals to technical assistance and financial resources ○ Ensure sufficient levels of licensing staff • The following should be included in the QRIS: ○ Established protocols and adequate ERS training to ensure trainers are able to identify facilities issues and physical design elements ○ The creation and piloting of a facilities tool/checklist based an existing validated tools and Low Income	• A complete QRIS includes supports for the maintenance, improvement, and expansion of facilities. • Title 22 regulations do not explicitly include many facilities issues. • Budget cuts have reduced licensing staff and inspections. • High quality child care facilities can have a positive impact on children's development and parent and child care staff satisfaction. • The Community Care Licensing standards do not adequately address child care facility issues. • Some states have successfully included facility standards as part of their QRIS.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	Investment Fund's field experience. ○ Administrative policies for maintaining quality learning facilities ○ Size and quality child care program space that support the programs' early learning goals ○ The use of healthy, sustainable materials and products promoting positive outcomes for children and cost savings for programs ○ Include program administrative scales in the QRIS and support for improving scale scores to ensure sustainable facility practices. • California should modify their current CAEL QIS plan to increase facilities goals in the upper tiers (tiers 3–5), while providing child care facilities with sufficient resources to meet the high standards. • California should consider the following facilities assessment tools when modifying their CAEL QIS plan for a QRIS: ○ The Program Administration Scale (PAS) Facilities Management plan, which includes a checklist, safety procedures and maintenance contracts. ○ Massachusetts' facilities assessment tool. ○ The "Go Green Rating Scale for Early Childhood Settings." • The Local Initiatives Support Corporation's (LISC) "Child Care Facilities Design checklist," which includes the following benchmarks: ○ Offer a warm, homelike environment (e.g.. wood floors, functioning kitchen, parent lounge resembling living room); ○ Support teacher effectiveness (child size sinks, counters, adult work surfaces, sinks, phones, and seating and meeting space); ○ Create enough space (go beyond minimum	

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	Community Care Licensing standards); ○ Welcome families; build community; and think beyond the classroom (office, kitchen, playground, storage).	
Strategies for Increasing Child Care Facilities Development and Financing in California (2007) The Building Child Care (BCC) Collaborative Project <u>Study Approach:</u> 72 child care intermediaries, sampled from the Bay Area, and the Central, Northern, and Southern regions in California were surveyed	• Child care provider fees and codes should be standardized so that they are reasonable. • Child care should be included in city/county General Plans. • Play space requirements should be adjusted to allow exceptions for urban areas. • The business skills of child care providers should be increased. • Private investment in child care facilities should be incentivized and existing public investment in child care facilities should be enhanced so more providers can access capital. • The child care reimbursement rate should be adjusted to reflect the true cost of high quality child care. • Long term publicly funded child care contracts should be created to help attract and secure private funding.	• Local development standards, procedures, and planning processes prohibit the development of larger child care facilities. • Outdoor play space requirements pose barriers for the development of child care facilities in urban areas. • Many child care providers are reluctant to take on debt. • Child care operators need more training in business and finance. • Child care operators face challenges using debt financing to support the sustainability and expansion of quality child care.

Facilities

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Policy Recommendations on Facilities for Preschool and Early Education (2007) Munger, English, Dow, & Brownson Advancement Project <u>Study Approach:</u> Discussion of issues arising at the *Getting From Facts to Policy* Education Policy Convening in Sacramento, 2007	• Preschool facilities should be made part of the next statewide education facilities bond, with the largest bond amount that is feasible. • The funds should be provided as a grant, as occurs for K-12 facilities, and should include school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools. A match should not be required because there are no local funding sources of matching dollars for preschool facilities to which all entities have equal access. Funds should be distributed to local education agencies because they already have the expertise and ability to rapidly construct educational facilities. • Local education agencies should use the land they currently have on their K-5 campuses and early learning centers, especially on campuses that are experiencing declining enrollment. • Focus funds where the need is greatest: where more than 80 4-year-olds lack preschool space, and either (1) the API score of the local schools is a 1, 2, or 3, or (2) the local elementary school is in the highest 25% of the state's schools in number of students qualified for free and reduced-price lunches. • Preschool facilities should be open at least from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. to encourage working parents to send their children to preschool and so that wrap-around child care services can be provided at the site. • Respect local differences with regard to how preschool dovetails with child care, so long as the children are safe and receive at least a half-day high quality preschool component that gives them a fair chance at school.	• California lacks suitable space for about one in five four-year-olds, including both universal preschool space and preschool targeted just towards children likely to attend low achieving schools and/or children living in poverty. • The lack of preschool space is more common for children living in poverty, children whose parent(s) did not graduate from high school, and children of color.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Building Early Childhood Facilities: What States Can Do to Create Supply and Promote Quality (2007) Carl Sussman & Amy Gillman National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and LISC <u>Study Approach:</u> Exploration of common facility issues in early care and education, and outline of strategies for policymakers to address early care and education facility needs.	• Facilities development policies need to address issues related to financial barriers, design and real estate development, and the policy and regulatory environment. • Capital subsidies must be available in order for child care programs to substantially renovate or construct a state-of-the art facility. • If providers use debt to raise capital, it must be affordable to preschool programs with limited means. • Technical capacity needs to be developed—organizational, real estate development, and architectural to build early education facilities. • Facility standards that address program quality, in addition to health and safety, need to be in place. • A reliable system and supportive policy and regulatory environment are needed to enable the early education field to meet its physical capital needs.	• The quality of child care facilities can impact program quality, child development, family engagement, and staff satisfaction. • Child care program income is typically meager, especially when compared with the full cost of delivering quality early education services. • The cost of constructing facilities designed specifically for young children is relatively high when compared with standard commercial space. • Few centers have the experience or personnel to handle the complexities of real estate development tasks.
Measuring Environmental Hazards in the Childcare Industry: Pesticides, Lead and Indoor Air Quality: Survey Brief (2004) Boise, Smith, & Carey Community Environmental Council <u>Study Approach:</u> Child care providers in 457 licensed home-based childcare programs and 291 licensed center-based programs in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties were surveyed	• Information and training about how to protect children from exposure to health hazards should be delivered to meet the needs of childcare providers.	• Children are likely exposed to pesticides, arsenic-treated lumber, lead, and common asthma triggers in child care settings. • Less than 3% of child care providers have received formal training in pesticide, lead, or indoor air quality management. • 80% of providers are interested in more information about managing exposure to health hazards. • No comprehensive program in California exists to address exposure to health hazards in child care settings, and no single entity is charged with the responsibility.

Facilities

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Child Care Facilities: Quality by Design (2004) Proscio, Sussman, & Gillman Local Initiatives Support Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> Research summary and position paper	• In designing child care facilities, create a warm, home-like environment. • Design child care centers to support and ease the work of caregivers. Certain features—such as bathrooms adjacent to the classroom, accessible cubbies, and child-sized sinks, counters, and other furnishings and fixtures—increase children's autonomy and competence. At the same time, adult staff need classroom work surfaces, storage, sinks, phones, and seating for their use, as well as areas where they can comfortably meet, relax, or work away from the children. • Allow at least 45 square feet of space per child, after cubbies and other furniture have been taken into account. • Create space for information for parents, and for parents to spend time with their children. • Build community by including windows between classrooms and building common spaces. • Early childhood education requires more than classrooms. A well-functioning program needs administrative offices, a kitchen, a welcoming and secure reception area, a spacious playground, and plenty of storage.	• Researchers observing adult-child interaction during children's free play activities found, to their surprise, that a change in the center's spatial arrangements led, by itself, to a seven-fold increase in the percentage of time children spent interacting with adults—a key indicator of program quality.

Food and Nutrition

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• Prioritize the factors contributing to childhood obesity in order to allow policy-makers to direct their focus. • Support a state tax on sweetened beverages. • Change the CalFresh reporting schedule from quarterly to semi-annual. • Adopt policies to require that at least 50% of physical education class is spent engaged in moderate to vigorous physical activity. • Adopt the health curriculum framework in public schools. • Provide incentives for redevelopment projects to incorporate health concerns into planning by conducting health impact assessments and involving affected residents.	• California's current policies to combat childhood obesity are too fragmented and lack clear prioritization. • A tax on sweetened beverages will reduce consumption and create revenue to benefit children. • Only 50% of eligible families participate in the CalFresh program because of the burdensome reporting requirements. • California does not have a state mandate for counties to incorporate health aspects in al redevelopment projects. • California received a "D" grade in children's oral health. • California received a "C-" grade in childhood obesity.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale

Childhood Obesity and Dental Disease: Common Causes, Common Solutions (2011)
 	
Children Now
 	
<u>Study Approach:</u>
Policy brief summarizes the current childhood obesity and dental issues and offers recommendations to improve conditions for both issues
	• Better coordinate and improve existing and new strategies that address both childhood obesity and dental disease.
	• Leverage federal grant and policy opportunities to improve childhood obesity and oral health.
	• Policies should include the following strategies to reduce childhood obesity:
	  ○ Increase physical activity to at least one hour each day
	  ○ Limit screen time to less than two hours a day
	  ○ Increase body mass index testing
	• Policies should include the following strategies to reduce childhood dental disease:
	  ○ Establish a dental home by the time a child is a year old
	  ○ Provide topical fluoride and fluoridated water
	  ○ Provide regular oral health screenings and hygiene instruction
	• Policies should include the following overlapping strategies to reduce both childhood dental disease and obesity:
	  ○ Ensure consumption of 5 fruits and vegetables per day
	  ○ Encourage and support breast feeding
	  ○ Encourage dietary counseling by appropriate health care providers
	  ○ Reduce consumption of sweetened beverages
	• K-12 programs should connect with child care programs to target unhealthy behaviors early.
	• Include prevention, education, and community-based wellness efforts.
		• Being at risk for either obesity or dental disease also puts children at risk for the other.
		• California is in the bottom three states for children's oral health status.
		• Poor oral health is associated with obesity among children.
		• The following factors put children at greater risk for both dental disease and obesity:
		  ○ Lack of breastfeeding
		  ○ Lack of access to healthy foods
		  ○ Sugar-sweetened beverages
		  ○ Living in poverty

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Keeping Children Healthy in California's Child Care Environments: Recommendations to Improve Nutrition and Increase Physical Activity (2010) California Department of Education and California Health and Human Services Agency <u>Study Approach:</u> This report summarizes the findings and recommendations discussed during the Strategic Assessment of the Child Care Nutrition Environment advisory group meetings	• Strengthen the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). • Establish California nutrition and physical activity standards based on current scientific evidence. • Collaborate with the federal government to modify the federal CACFP meal pattern requirements to align with standards developed in the previous recommendation. • Streamline the CACFP compliance requirements to increase participation. • Facilitate collaboration between relevant state agencies to develop a CACFP marketing plan aimed at increasing participation in the program. • Include evaluations of nutrition and physical activity as part of the CACGP monitoring-visit requirements. • Require state-funded care child programs to participate in the CACFP. • Establish nutrition and physical activity requirements for child care programs. • All licensed care providers should be required to comply with the nutrition and physical activity standards recommended above—even providers not participating in the CACFP. • Evidence-based nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education training should be required for initial child care licensure. • Nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education training should also be required for maintaining child care licensure. • State and federal agencies should align child care nutrition and physical activity standards. • Child care agencies should be required to publicly report key child nutrition and physical activity outcomes. • Provide consistent messaging to children, families, and	• The various types of child care settings in California and the different practices and resources used by each setting and the different rules, regulations, and agencies that govern these settings may make it difficult to improve nutrition and physical activity in child care settings. • Less than half of eligible California child care providers participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. • Participation in the CACFP can help improve children's diets (Bruening, Gilbride, Passannante, & McClowry 1999). • Meals from the CACFP are the main source of nutrition for many children in low-income families (Parker, 2000). • The CACFP has made few updates to their meal pattern in the last 40 years. • The CACFP's accountability and compliance requirements have increased throughout the years, requiring more work of providers and sponsors of the program.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
	providers related to improving nutrition and physical activity in child care environments. • Relevant state agencies should collaborate on developing and delivering consistent messaging through social marketing and health education campaigns. • Nutrition and physical activity foundations should be established for preschool. • Nutrition and physical activity criteria should be included in California's QRIS. • Expand nutrition and physical activity training in child care programs. • Include nutrition and physical activity in child care information in all child care related curricula. • Provide the latest nutrition and physical activity information with continuing child care training programs. • Provide the nutrition and physical activity information with caregiver and parent education.	
The Children of LAUP: Executive Summary of the First 5 Universal Preschool Child Outcomes Study (2009) Love, Atkins-Burnett, & Vogel, Mathematica Policy Research Inc. <u>Study Approach:</u> Descriptive study of 97 programs serving 1,555 4-year-old children, a representative sample of LAUP programs. Study included class observations using the CLASS, analysis of STAR ratings, and direct child assessments.	• The finding that 20 percent of the children were obese suggests a need for programmatic interventions (perhaps involving parents) aimed at improving children's diets and increasing opportunities for physical exercise. • It may be helpful to build or strengthen relationships with existing nutrition and public health programs such as WIC and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to identify ways to reduce the obesity rate among children in LAUP programs.	• 20 percent of the children were obese.

Kindergarten Transition

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report (2011) Franke, Espinosa, & Hanzlicek UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities for First 5 California <u>Study Approach:</u> Annual data, evaluation results, relevant reports, and interviews with at least one key staff member from each of the 58 counties in California were used in this evaluation.	• None given	• On average, PoP programs scored "good" to excellent" in most ECERS-R and ITERS-R program quality areas. • PoP programs scored the lowest in the "Personal Care Routines" and "Parent and Staff" ECERS-R and ITERS-R program quality areas. • The 5 PoP counties serving infants and toddlers scored an average on 5.3 out of 7 on the ITERS-R, demonstrating that these programs are high quality.
Transitional Kindergarten: Findings from the Field (2011) California Early Learning Advisory Council <u>Study Approach:</u> District and county leaders from 9 of the 12 districts currently implementing a Transitional Kindergarten program were surveyed.	• Provide more guidance to districts on TK standards, frameworks, curriculum and instruction, assessment strategies, and tools and planning.	• 5 of the 9 districts interviewed have developed working content standards for TK or for a program designed for young 5-year-olds. • 3 of the 9 districts interviewed have well-developed content guidelines for TK or for young 5-year-olds. • TK teachers typically hold a multiple-subject credential. • Professional development is not standard or specifically focused on TK, so local agencies piece together their own professional development. • Most TK classrooms do not have teacher aides or special training for teacher aides.

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Summary of Preschool California Research: Programs Serving Young Five Year Olds in California (2011) Preschool California <u>Study Approach:</u> Teachers and schools and district administrators were interviewed and site visits were conducted at 10 programs currently serving young 5-year-olds.	• None given	• 8 programs reported enrolling more boys than girls. • Most classrooms in the program have only one teacher with a multiple-subject credential. • Some programs use the same professional development used for kindergarten teachers. • All programs have some focus on math and early literacy and language skills. • Many programs use parts of curricula or modified curricula developed for other populations. • 5 programs have a written parent/family engagement policy. • Programs varied in whether they conducted assessments to determine enrollment in the program, show progress, or determine kindergarten readiness. • 9 programs relied on Average Daily Attendance to pay for operating costs. • Most programs reported that their costs were comparable to the cost of kindergarten, with some additional start-up costs.

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Transitional Kindergarten: School District Survey (2011) Joyce Wright California County Superintendents of Education Services Association, Curriculum and Instruction Steering Committee <u>Study Approach:</u> 325 school districts located in 46 counties that offer kindergarten programs were surveyed.	• District should clarify in the names of their programs whether these programs meet the TK requirements as indicated in SB 1381 or just contain some of the elements. • Districts should be provided with support on how to provide high quality TK and kindergarten combination classes. • Districts should be provided with knowledge about how California Preschool Foundations and Common Core Standards can help with instruction and curricula issues.	• 8% of districts had already begun to pilot a TK program, 20.1% of districts planned to pilot a TK program in the 2011–12 school year, 41.5% planned to phase in a TK program in 2012–13 (as required in SB 1381), and 29.9% of districts had not decided whether they would begin to phase-in a TK program. • Districts rated the following 4 supports and/or information about SB 1381 and TK as most important: TK classroom models (83%), guidelines for appropriate curricula (80%), potential program models (76%), and sample funding examples (75%). • Small schools tended to be more concerned about being able to finance TK in separate classrooms.

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Evaluation of Stretch to Kindergarten Program (2011) Manship, Fain, & Madsen American Institutes for Research for the Heising-Simons Foundation <u>Study Approach:</u> Program evaluation including CLASS observations, a pre/post parent survey, and a comparison of elementary school outcomes of STK participants to their peers	• Consider collaborations between kindergarten transition programs and school districts for joint professional development for teachers around CLASS principles. • Kindergarten transition program activities should focus on both early literacy and math skills, aligning as much as possible to the content taught and tested in kindergarten classrooms in the local district.	• Recent studies have found a relationship between program quality, as measured by the CLASS—and in particular Instructional Support—and children's gains on receptive and expressive language assessments (Howes, Burchinal, Pianta, Bryant, Early, Clifford, & Barbarin, 2008). • CLASS results indicate that Stretch to Kindergarten (STK) classrooms offer warm and emotionally supportive teacher-child interactions. Additionally, STK teachers consistently implement effective behavior and instructional management strategies to maximize learning opportunities for children, although CLASS scores indicate room for growth in this area for teachers. • Analyses of elementary school outcomes suggest that the Stretch to Kindergarten program may help to give children a head start on the academic skills taught in kindergarten. Stretch to Kindergarten participants performed better than their demographically similar peers on several English language proficiency tests and district language arts assessments. However, no relationship was detected between STK participation and math scores in first grade, when math skills are first tested.

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Power of Preschool Evaluation Report (2009) Prayaga, Sormano, Hobart, Neville-Morgan, Smith, Balakshin, Padilla, Bupara, & Syphax Evaluation Matters with First 5 California Staff <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of county self-reported data as well as information in annual PoP local evaluation and statewide reports.	• There is a need for more focus on kindergarten transition activities. • Specific transition activities could include encouraging preschool and kindergarten teachers to visit each other's classrooms, to attend common workshops and professional development sessions, and to collaborate with each other on continuity in teaching strategies and methods. Other suggestions include holding a kindergarten transition conference at the beginning of the year, and facilitating visits by preschool children to their new school before starting kindergarten.	• The PoP counties have implemented various outreach and involvement strategies to more effectively engage families. • Every county reported an increase in parenting skills and knowledge as well as parent behaviors relating to home educational activities. • Many PoP sites and parents identified kindergarten transition as an area that needed further attention. Very few preschool teachers attended meetings with kindergarten teachers. • Many PoP sites and parents identified kindergarten transition as an area that needed further attention. Very few preschool teachers attended meetings with kindergarten teachers.

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Power of Preschool Demonstration Program: Progress Report, Fiscal Years 2005–06 through 2007–08 (2008) First 5 California Study Approach: Analysis of multi-dimensional progress assessment data provided to First 5 California from 9 PoP counties.	• California should explore how to use these transition strategies as models to replicate throughout the state.	Transition to preschool activities included: • Child and family visit preschool classroom • Parent/family-teacher-child meetings • Home visits • Preschool open houses • Program information (e.g., brochures) Preschool to kindergarten transition activities included: • Family visits to kindergarten classrooms • Meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers • Sharing preschool child assessments and/or portfolios with kindergarten teachers • Aligning of preschool and kindergarten curriculum • Transition teams attended parent meetings and/or community forums • Group preschool classroom visits Results from the Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised data showed that PoP children were prepared to be successful in school.

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Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in Early Grades (2008) Chang & Romero National Center For Children in Poverty <u>Study Approach:</u> The findings from this report are based on data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K), a literature review, data from 9 school districts, and interview and email exchanges with practitioners and researchers in the chronic early absence field.	• School districts should devote time and resources to examining the levels of chronic early absence in their schools. • School districts should collect qualitative and quantitative information to help them understand the factors related to chronic early absence. • Schools should build partnerships with community agencies and families to develop appropriate responses to chronic early absence. • Children should receive high quality early care and education experience to help them prepare for the transition into school. • Make education programs high quality and responsive to the needs of diverse families.	• The U.S. does not provide schools with a system to monitor and report on levels of chronic early absence. • 11% of kindergarteners, 9% of first graders, and 6% of third graders are chronically absent. • Rates of chronic early absence vary widely across schools in the same district and across districts. • Chronic early absence in kindergarten is correlated with lower academic performance in first grade among all children, especially for Latino first graders. • Chronic early absence is correlated with the lowest 5th grade academic achievement for children living in poverty. • Strong school-family relationships can reduce chronic absence for all types of families • Rates of chronic early absence are higher among children living in poverty and non-white children, except Asian children. • Rates of chronic early absence are higher among children who spend the year before kindergarten in a center-based program or non-relative care compared to children cared for by family members. • Low levels of chronic absence are related to family and child economic and social challenges; however, high levels are associated

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		with systematic school or community issues.
At What Age Should Children Enter Kindergarten? See What the Research Shows (2002) Stipek Social Policy Report <u>Study Approach:</u> Studies published after 1980 that utilized the following 4 methodologies were summarized: • Comparing outcomes form children who have delayed entry by a year with children who entered school when they were eligible. • Comparing children in the same grade who have different birth dates; and • Comparing children who are the same age but in different grades, as well as children who are a year apart in ages but in the same grade.	• Policy should not increase the age for kindergarten entry, but should reduce the age. • School entry policy should focus on preparing schools to meet children's developmental, social, and educational needs rather than on children's' appropriate age. • There should b e a focus on providing young low-income children with opportunities for early educational experiences.	• The current emphasis on school accountability based on students' test scores and the assumption that older children are more academically competent may influence legislation and polices to raise the age of kindergarten entry. • Conclusions cannot be made about children who enter kindergarten after a delay because these children do not represent a random sample. • Older children perform better than younger children in the same grade during the first few years of school; however these differences become smaller or disappear over time. • Evidence does not suggest that there is a particular age at which children are more prepared to enter kindergarten, but children with early education experiences may show greater cognitive gains. • Low-income children who delay kindergarten entry may be at a greater disadvantage because these children start kindergarten with lower academic skills and are less able to afford an extra year of preschool or high quality child care.

Finance, Governance, and Other Systems Issues

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
<u>California Reports:</u> *California Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Recommendations (2012)* Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup <u>Study Approach:</u> The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened over 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed, and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California. This report outlines the group's recommendations.	Create new opportunities to fund 0–3 supports and services by: • Restructuring early childhood funding to provide efficient funding for children 0–3 within 0–5 resources • Developing new funding streams • Expanding current opportunities for 0–3 funding • Prioritizing funding towards high-impact investments and high-needs populations • Supporting connections and better integration between systems that provide services to children age 0–3 and their families • Engaging in comprehensive early childhood system planning for the State of California • Developing a comprehensive 0–5 data system for the State of California • Preserving the California Early Learning Advisory Council	• Young children and their families need access to services that support their various needs, including physical and behavioral health services in addition to high quality and affordable early care and education. California has made strides in comprehensive early childhood system development in the past decade, led by First 5 organizations. Increased efforts have also fostered cross-sector collaboration between the early care and education, health, early childhood mental health, and early intervention systems. • The new infusion of federal funds for evidence-based home visitation models provides one opportunity to create horizontal system connections.

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California Report Card 2011–12: Setting the Agenda for Children (2012) Children Now Study Approach: Analysis of administrative data and extensive literature review	• Adopt a comprehensive P-to-12 education revenue and reform package that establishes an equitable and adequate finance system, ensures transparency, enables greater local decision-making flexibility, and strengthens human capital and accountability. • Better coordinate and streamline the state's delivery of children's services; establish a children's cabinet. • Allow more flexibility in the use of federal dollars, which are the major source of funds for early learning and care programs.	• California's early learning and development system is a web of state and local programs financed through a combination of federal, state, and local funding sources. • Many programs have distinct eligibility and reporting requirements, making it difficult to blend and braid available funds to cover the true cost of quality programs. • Three state agencies oversee approximately 26 early learning programs, with CDE as the primary state agency responsible for program administration, and California's Department of Social Services and Department of Developmental Services also playing a role.

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Economic Impacts of Early Care and Education in California (2011) MacGillvary & Lucia Center for Labor Research and Education University of California, Berkeley Study Approach: This report incorporates analysis of extant administrative data, a literature review, and economic modeling.	• To continue economic benefits to the state, support an infrastructure of reliable, affordable child care, even during periods of recession; a child care shortage can impede economic recovery.	• The early care and education industry benefits the California economy by facilitating parents' ability to participate in the paid workforce. • The ECE industry also creates jobs; it brings in gross receipts of at least $5.6 billion annually and supports nearly 200,000 jobs. • Every dollar spent on the ECE industry produces two dollars in economic output for the California economy. • The benefits of high quality ECE programs have been estimated to be between $2.69 and $7.16 for every dollar invested.
Strategies for Advancing Preschool Adequacy and Efficiency in California (2009) Karoly RAND Corporation Study Approach: Examination of data regarding the size of achievement shortfalls overall in the early elementary grades, gaps in school performance between groups, rates of access to high quality early learning programs among California's children, the structure of publicly-funded early care and education programs, and how ECE funds are being spent.	• Modify the contract mechanism for Title 5 and Alternative Payment programs to reduce the extent of unused funds and other inefficiencies. • Implement a common reimbursement structure within a system with mixed delivery and diverse funding streams. • Evaluate options for alternative governance structures in terms of the agencies that regulate and administer ECE programs, and change the structure if greater efficiency and effectiveness can be obtained. • Make greater use of the option to allocate Title I funds for preschool programs.	• In the short term, California can allocate existing resources more efficiently and provide infrastructure supports for raising quality in the future. • In the longer term, new resources should be used to expand access to, and raise the quality of, preschool programs for those who can benefit most.

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Financing a Full-Day, Full-Year Preschool Program in California: Strategies and Recommendations (2009) Lam, Muenchow American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> AIR estimated the cost of full-day preschool using several different methodologies and sets of assumptions.	• Develop common criteria for a reimbursement structure across publicly funded full-day programs serving preschool-age children that take into account the cost of the quality components required. Raise the Standard Reimbursement Rate for full-day programs meeting Title 5 standards above that for programs of similar duration that are only required to meet Title 22 licensing standards. • Explore establishing a common hourly rate for programs meeting similar quality standards. Too often, when rates are set for early childhood programs, the cost of quality components is not taken into account. In addition, the rate-setting process rarely takes into consideration the per-child cost per hour. As a result, there can be wide disparities in the hourly reimbursement rates for two programs—General Child Care and State Preschool—that are by law held to the same Title 5 standards. Even within the same General Child Care Program, providers receive the same payment for a 6.5-hour program as they do for a 10.5-hour program. Setting rates on the cost per hour would seem to meet a higher standard of fairness. • Build on recent legislation (AB 2759) to address disincentives to offering full-day programs. This legislation offers an important opportunity to address some of the current barriers and disincentives to offering full-day programs. Policies allowing providers to earn more from serving two groups of children for 3 hours per day as opposed to one group for 6 hours merit re-examination. In addition, it now seems possible to allow programs to combine a portion of the General Child Care funding with the State Preschool Funding to create a better-financed full day, full-year program. • Consider a contracted preschool program operating six hours a day with additional hours financed by parent fees or vouchers. The study's cost models suggest that a six-hour, school-calendar-length day may be a model worth consideration as an alternative to a part-day	• When four-year-olds in a low-income school district were randomly assigned to programs of different durations, the children in 8-hour, 45-week classes made greater gains in vocabulary and math skills than did their peers assigned to a 2.5-to-3 hour, 41-week program. Moreover, as the study authors explain (Robin, Frede, & Barnett, 2006), many of the children would not have been able to participate in the preschool program at all had the schedule not accommodated the family's work hours. • Because Power of Preschool (PoP) programs in California have the highest quality standards, one way to estimate the amount of funding needed to finance a high quality full-day program is to extend the PoP hourly reimbursement rates (averaged across the nine counties) over a longer program day (e.g., 6 or 9 hours versus 3 hours) and full year as opposed to school calendar year.* Across the nine counties with PoP demonstration programs, the maximum reimbursable amount per child enrolled in a part-day high quality preschool space ranges from $4,610 to $6,410 for 175 days, with an average yearly rate of $5,356.* To extend a part-day program to a full-day program, the maximum reimbursable amount for a 6-hour and a 9-hour program would need to be increased to

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	program, especially for a program targeted at disadvantaged children. A program of this duration, while still not fully accommodating the work schedules of many families, would likely better help prepare disadvantaged children for school. In addition, it would leave fewer wrap-around hours for families to cover with their own fees or other publicly subsidized programs. • Consider the First 5 Power of Preschool Demonstration Project reimbursement structure as a model for developing reimbursement policies for other state-funded early childhood programs and for the development of tiered reimbursement structures generally.	$10,710 and $16,065, respectively, for a 175-day program, and $15,300 and $22,950 for a full-year, or 250-day program (2009 dollars). • Providers who choose to operate a General Child Care or full-day State Preschool program are at a financial disadvantage compared to those who administer a part-day State Preschool program. California's Standard Reimbursement Rate currently specifies an amount of $21.22 per day (or $7.07/hour) for a part-day State Preschool program, or $3,714 per year based on a 175-day/school year program. Providers who choose to offer two half-day preschool sessions may receive a total of up to $42.44 a day (or $10,610 per year) for two children, each served part-day. On the other hand, the maximum daily Standard Reimbursement Rate for full-day State Preschool and General Child Care and Development Programs is only $34.38 per child per day, or $8,595 per year. This translates into $8,595 per year or $5.29 per hour for a program that operates 6.5 hours a day, and $3.27 per hour for a program that operates 10.5 hours per day. • In seven out of nine counties participating in the PoP Demonstration Program, full-day providers reimbursed through the

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		SRR receive a lower level of funding per child than providers reimbursed through the RMR. However, centers participating in the Alternative Payment program receiving the RMR are only required to meet Title 22 regulations, which are less stringent than the Title 5 regulations required of the General Child Care centers under contract with CDE. Still, RMR rates, while significantly higher in most cases than the SRR rates, are still not sufficient to provide a full-day, full-year high quality program, such as one meeting PoP standards for every hour of the day. * For a more detailed discussion on the PoP county reimbursement rates, readers can refer AIR's policy brief, *First 5 Power of Preschool: Lessons from an Experiment in Tiered Reimbursement.*
First 5 Power of Preschool: Lessons from an Experiment in Tiered Reimbursement (2009) Lam & Muenchow American Institutes for Research <u>Study Approach:</u> Analysis of the PoP reimbursement structure in the nine counties participating in the PoP demonstration program	• Develop a common reimbursement structure across programs serving preschool children, and explore establishing a common hourly rate for programs meeting similar quality standards. Raise the Standard Reimbursement Rate for programs meeting Title 5 standards above that for programs of similar duration that are only required to meet Title 22 licensing standards. • Allow for regional variations in the reimbursement rate based on geographical differences in the cost of teacher compensation, teacher recruitment/retention, and the cost of living. • Consider a factor in the reimbursement structure for family involvement and other comprehensive services.	• Unlike most state-funded and federally funded early care and education programs, the First 5 California reimbursement structure is not restricted to a single annual per child amount (First 5 California, 2008). Instead, First 5 California reimburses local participating commissions based on the quality of the preschool spaces; the rate structure is designed to increase incrementally with teacher qualifications and improvements in program scores on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating

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	• Provide tools to help programs rise from entry level to a higher level. • Anticipate and provide for increases in teacher experience and the maturation of the preschool program. • Anticipate and provide for increases in teacher experience and the maturation of the preschool program.	Scale (ECERS). The reimbursement rate also takes into account whether the space receives other private or public subsidies, such as from Head Start or the State Preschool Program (First 5 California, 2008). • All nine California PoP counties (Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Ventura, and Yolo) have implemented a system of tiered reimbursement rates that ties funding amounts to quality levels and new or improved spaces. • These reimbursement rates vary by county. The variation in rates appears to relate most strongly to teacher compensation—both the level of elementary teacher compensation in the county and the extent to which the county program is attempting to reach parity with elementary teacher compensation. There also appears to be a relationship (though less than might be expected) between the PoP reimbursement rates and regional variations in cost of living. Underlying differences in the prior expenditures for publicly funded programs, such as Head Start, may also explain variations in the reimbursement rates, especially for improved or enhanced spaces. Finally, differences in approaches to implementing a tiered reimbursement system (such as

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		staffing pattern choices) may also influence PoP reimbursement rates. • In every county, the State Reimbursement Rate for State Preschool programs meeting Title 5 requirements is lower (by from one-third to nearly one-half) than the Regional Market Rate for programs only required to meet Title 22 regulations. However, PoP reimbursement ceilings (ranging from $4,610-$6,470) are substantially higher than the Standard Reimbursement Rates for State Preschool ($3,714-$4,326). Tier 1 PoP reimbursement rates are similar to other estimates of the cost of high quality preschool by AIR and RAND. • California currently has a complex and often confusing set of early care and education reimbursement mechanisms, and providers often have to integrate and coordinate funding streams to provide high quality programs.

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Increasing Access to Preschool: Recommendations for Reducing Barriers to Providing Full-Day, Full-Year Programs (2008) Miller Children Now <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary of research and recommendations	• Increase the daily Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR) for all early care and education programs, part-day and full-day, with particular focus on raising the rate for full-day, full-year care. • Monitor and support administrative and legislative efforts to consolidate and streamline existing CDE early care and education programs. • Increase comprehensive training and technical assistance services for accounting and program staff in early care and education agencies. • Support efforts by the CDE and the California Child Development Administrator's Association (CCDAA) to create a more consistent approach to unrestricted and restricted third-party funding. • Improve the capacity of the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) to support early care and education programs and ensure that it is not a barrier to implementation of full-day, full-year services. • Conduct a legislative interim hearing to identify remaining regulatory and legislative barriers to braiding and blending funding and increasing access to full-day, full-year opportunities.	• The current state reimbursement rate for early care and education is prohibitively low; most agencies cannot afford to improve the quality of their programs or expand to full-day or full-year. • Providers often administer a number of different public and private contracts, braiding and blending funding sources. The administrative work associated with taking on additional contracts in order to provide more full-day services may discourage providers from doing so. • Some accounting staff working for early care providers do not fully comprehend the distinct programmatic intent and fiscal complexity of each separate early care and education funding stream in California, nor have experience with the accounting and reporting requirements. • CDE has at times appeared to treat third-party restricted income (such as First 5 monies or private grants) as revenue to pay for CDE-contracted expenses. In these cases, third-party funds have essentially supplanted CDE dollars rather than expanding or enhancing program services as they were intended, with the end result that an agency's total reimbursement from the state was lowered. This practice has discouraged some providers from seeking outside

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		funding or coordinating CDE funds with other funding streams that may be considered third-party restricted income.
Other State or National Reports/Studies: *Mending the Patchwork: A Report Examining County-by-County Inequities in Child Care Subsidy Administration in New York State (2010)* Akhtar & Antos Empire Justice Center Study Approach: The Empire Justice Center reviewed the 2007–09 Consolidated Services Plans and the 2008–09 Annual Plan Updates from each of New York's 58 social service districts for information about program administration beyond the state regulations.	• Implement a co-pay structure that is based on a family's ability to pay, without geographic distinctions. • Pay child care providers for when a child is absent and for program closures for holidays and weather emergencies when providers charge private pay parents for these days. s. • Programs that participate in the QRIS system should receive a rate differential. • Systems should recognize and accommodate parents who need care during non-traditional hours, including overnight, and who are enrolled in post-secondary education rather than working. • Eligibility structures should not penalize parents who have working older children. • If systems remain local, each local district should provide all applicants and recipients for child care services with a one-page handout summarizing its eligibility rules. • Provide child care subsidies for parents looking for work.	• Families similarly situated financially in different parts of New York state pay notably different proportions of their annual income for child care. • More counties now provide care subsidies to parents who work nights. • Different counties had different policies regarding counting the income of older children (18, 19, and 20 year olds) in determining child care subsidies, resulting in inequities across counties. • Despite a statewide unemployment rate of 8.9%, 18 of New York's social service districts did not authorize child care for parents looking for work.

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Early Learning Programs and Related Delivery Systems (2011) State of Florida, Auditor General Study Approach: An audit of the state of Florida's early learning programs.	• The transfer of early care and education services to the Department of Education, with a director appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature, has "the potential" to raise the profile of the program. However, improvement is not guaranteed without proper procedures in place. • The Auditor General in Florida (the nation's fourth largest state, with 67 counties) recommends a statewide QRIS system rather than devolving responsibility to local coalitions.	• After 10 years of being under the Agency for Workforce Innovation, a welfare and training agency, the Legislature transferred all early care and education services to a self-contained unit in the Department of Education (in 2011). • According to the Auditor General, the Office of Early Learning under the Agency for Workforce Innovation had not implemented a statewide QRIS; instead, some local coalitions implemented QRIS systems of their own.
Investments in Early Childhood in Michigan: A Summary of Programs and Funding Trends Report (2011) Voices for Michigan's Children Study Approach: Analysis of publicly available data on trends in state spending on, and enrollment in, children's programs in Michigan, with policy recommendations.	• Reform the early childhood education system to move away from an array of disconnected programs to an early childhood system that is accountable, easy to access, and of high quality.	• Because Michigan has over 80 different federally and state-funded early childhood programs, many of which have experienced reductions in recent years, and that are based on different and sometimes confusing eligibility standards, many children slip through the cracks. • In May of 2009, the State Board of Education adopted new eligibility and prioritization guidelines for Michigan's Great Start School Readiness Program (GSRP). Now, at least three-quarters of the children enrolled the GSRP must be from families with incomes below 300 percent of poverty. Children who are extremely low income, below 200 percent of poverty, qualify if they are not eligible for Head Start. Children in families with incomes between 200 and 300 percent of

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		poverty must have risk factors in addition to income to qualify for the program. Risk factors include diagnosed disabilities or developmental delays, severe or challenging behaviors, a primary home language other than English, parents with low education levels, a history of abuse or neglect, homelessness, or having been born to a single or teen parent.
A Look at Governance Structures for Early Childhood in Six States (2010) The BUILD Initiative <u>Study Approach:</u> Review of governance structures for early care and education in six states	• No recommendations provided.	• Of the six states profiled, four early childhood entities are public agencies, one is a quasi-governmental agency, and one is a public-private partnership. • Three states focus their early learning agency on children 0–5, one focuses on children 0–6, another focuses on prenatal through grade 3, and the sixth focuses on children 0–14. • In four states, legislation was the catalyst for the formation of the early learning agencies; in another, it was administrative action by the governor; and in a final state, it was a ballot initiative.

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Early Childhood System Governance: Lessons from State Experiences (2010) Coffman, J., Glazer, K., Hibbard, S., & Wiggins, K. The BUILD Initiative <u>Study Approach:</u> Summary of state approaches to early childhood program governance	• Early childhood programs should be governed in a coordinated way—collaboration so that what happens in one part of the system is known by and has meaning for another (at the policy and practice level). Coordinate so that children and families experience a system that is not siloed and fragmented, but instead is comprehensive and cooperative. • Align early childhood systems so that what the system does for infants and toddlers aligns with what it does for preschool-aged children, which aligns with kindergarten and elementary school. This alignment must happen at different levels, including policy, professional development, data collection, standards development, and assessment. Governance structure can play a significant role in ensuring alignment. • Address policy conflicts that eliminate barriers and enhance the quality and duration of early learning and development services and supports to children at risk and their families. • Ensure that the system is efficient, making the best use of its resources, and reducing duplication and identifying ways to cut costs while minimizing negative impacts to the system and its participants. • Establish two-way accountability, where the governance structure is accountable to the early childhood system and to those who are affected by its decisions, and the system and its performance are accountable to the governance structure. In doing so, pay close attention to issues of equity, quality, and communication of results.	• An integrated approach to early education management (e.g., one office, department, or agency in charge) indicates a relatively higher value given by the state government leaders to policymaking, funding, and regulation of early childhood than when the approach is more fragmented and the responsibility for young children is governmentally diffuse.

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Child Care Quality Rating and Improvement Systems in Five Pioneer States: Implementation Issues and Lessons Learned (2008) Zellman & Perlman RAND Corporation <u>Study Approach:</u> In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in each of five states implementing a QRIS system, focused on identifying major implementation issues and lessons learned.	• Obtain adequate funding in advance and decide how it will be spent. • Garner maximum political support for a QRIS. • Conduct pilot work and make revisions to the system before it is adopted statewide. • Limit changes to the system after it is implemented. • Minimize self-reported data. • Integrate licensing into the system. One way to do this is to assign all licensed providers the lowest QRIS rating unless they volunteer for a rating and are rated higher. • Use ERSs flexibly by incorporating both self-assessments and independent assessments at different levels of the QRS. • Do not include accreditation as a mandatory system component. • The rating system should have multiple levels. • Create a robust QI process. • Separate raters and other QI personnel. • Public awareness campaigns are important, but should start after the system is in place; these campaigns need to be ongoing. • Support research on systems and system components. • There is a need to carefully validate QRS systems in the settings in which they occur.	• Many of the QRSs in place are based on measures originally developed for low-stakes purposes and may not be valid in high-stakes contexts. • In pioneer programs, little evidence is yet available on correlation between ratings and process quality variables or child outcomes.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Report of the State Auditor: Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, Department of Human Services: Performance Audit (2008) State of Colorado, Office of the State Auditor <u>Study Approach:</u> Audit of the Child Care Assistance Program	• Standardize child care assistance program eligibility requirements by setting statewide or regional income eligibility limits.	• Eligibility requirements for the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program vary significantly across counties, resulting in families being eligible for services in some counties but not others.

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
The Process of Devolution: Perceptions form Local Boards; A Product of the Study of Child Care Devolution in Texas (2007) Lein, Beausoleil, & Tang Center for Social Work Research and the Ray Marshall Center, University of Texas at Austin <u>Study Approach:</u> An analysis of the relationships between subsidized child care management policies, and the supply, usage, and quality of subsidized child care for low-income families based on (a) interviews with local staff working at each of the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) and (b) more detailed studies of three cases which draw on the perspectives of multiple local actors.	• No recommendations noted.	• While the devolution of social policy to local workforce boards was designed to increase local autonomy in designing solutions to problems, this autonomy can be limited by unchanged regulations at the state and federal level. • Some local boards had difficulty responding both to local child care needs on one hand and state and federal requirements on the other. • Local areas with fewer resources and higher proportions of children in poverty may face considerable difficulty in meeting federal and state requirements while providing adequate care for children in need. • Local entities also wrestled with balancing the two different motives for subsidized child care: allowing parents to work, and supporting school readiness for children. • The Texas devolution of child care policy occurred in the context of the transfer of child care policy from a human resources agency to one oriented towards workplace issues; over the period of this study, state government requirements regarding local quality initiatives changed, and this impacted local boards.
Preliminary Findings from Interviews with Child Care Program Managers: A Product of the Study of Devolution of Subsidized Child Care in Texas (2003) Lein, Beausoleil, Trott, Schexnayder,	• No recommendations noted.	• Program managers described how a series of reorganizations at Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) have made their working relationships with the state agency somewhat

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
Schroeder, Tang, & Randazzo Center for Social Work Research and Ray Marshall Center, University of Texas at Austin Study Approach: In order to document the transition processes and the variations in both process and policy outcomes among local workforce development boards, the research team engaged in semi-structured qualitative telephone interviews with the child care management staff for each board. The report includes the preliminary findings of the first round of 28 interviews conducted during 2001–2002, the first year of the project.		harder to maintain and have, on occasion, undermined the quality of the support the boards receive. • TWC requirements aim to ensure wide representation on local boards, including a balance by gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as the representation of various organizations. Interviewees confirmed the boards' compliance with these state directives, but some commented on the difficulty in finding voluntary members with the required characteristics. • Interviewees tended not to use the term "devolution." Rather, they explained that the state maintains substantial control over child care policies, and only some responsibilities are transferred to the local boards. • Because of the complexity of the child care system, many local boards needed considerable technical assistance from TWC in the conduct of their operations. • Most local board staff described the transition from state to local control as gradual and progressive, with a steep learning curve. Respondents mentioned some factors that facilitated the transition: board staff expertise, intense work on the part of the board and its staff, and the structure of the transition were key elements. Transition problems included: the complexity of the

Report	Recommendations	Key Findings/Rationale
		system (including confusion over the roles of the various actors, boards, and TWC), lack of information and preparation on the side of the board, TWC's own internal reorganizations, and some resistance on the part of the boards to take ownership of the child care program (because other programs were requiring competing attention, time, and effort). • Voluntary boards and their staff experienced increased pressure from the community as they managed the new aspects of the program, often receiving contradictory feedback from different stakeholders. • Many boards took initiative in the area of quality improvement. 27 boards worked on training/mentoring for child care providers, and 22 worked on funds and equipment for child care facilities. • Views on fluctuations in funding vary among the interviewees, which suggest that funding changes are affecting the boards differently; some boards received large funding increases while others received limited increases. Respondents reported that difficult choices had to be made between the amount of direct care and its quality.

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