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Evaluation of Preschool for All Implementation in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

Year 2 Report

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a three-year joint process evaluation, which began in December of 2005, to assess the implementation of Preschool for All (PFA) in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. The goal of PFA in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties is to make high-quality preschool available to all four-year-old children by building upon the current early care and education system of public and private providers. PFA is a voluntary part-day program for four-year-old children provided at no cost to families, regardless of income. PFA funds are used to create new preschool spaces and to upgrade classrooms in existing programs. First 5 San Francisco and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) are serving as the PFA administrating body in their respective counties. The *PFA Process Evaluation* is designed to investigate and document the implementation and the preliminary impacts of PFA on children, families, providers, and the community.

This report reflects the findings from Year 2 (2006-2007) of the evaluation.[1] The Year 2 evaluation approach examined two major areas: 1) PFA implementation issues, from the perspectives of PFA program directors and PFA parents, and 2) PFA classroom quality. Three major research activities were designed and carried out for the Year 2 evaluation:

- **Program Director Implementation Survey.** To address PFA implementation, a survey was distributed to PFA program directors in each county. The tool was designed to gather feedback from PFA directors on the activities, successes, and challenges of PFA implementation.

- **Parent Focus Groups.** To gather information regarding parents' level of satisfaction, attitudes, and knowledge of PFA, AIR hosted parent focus groups at three PFA programs in San Mateo County and three programs in San Francisco County. Focus groups were held in English, Spanish, and Cantonese.

- **Observations of a Random Stratified Sample of PFA Classrooms.** To gather data on program quality, AIR conducted observations on a sample of classrooms operated by center-based PFA programs in both counties. Two tools were used: the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, R., La Paro, K., & Hamre, B., in press) and the literacy subscale of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Expanded (ECERS-E; Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B., 2006).

Survey Findings

The implementation survey for both counties gathered information regarding the successes and challenges of PFA implementation, including the PFA application process, PFA support services, services to children with special needs, impacts of PFA on various program areas, family partnerships, strategies used to help children and families transition to kindergarten, and providers' recommendations for improving the PFA system.

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[1] A full copy of the Year 1 evaluation report can be found at http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cyfs/pfa.html.

San Mateo Survey Findings

Each of the five San Mateo PFA providers completed an implementation survey. Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Mateo providers. The majority of programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on language facilitation among children, teacher-child interactions, literacy instruction, support for the mental health needs of children and families, support of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and communication and teamwork among staff. The majority of PFA programs also anticipate increased quality improvement in the future, expecting to receive higher scores on their next Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) assessment due to the specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments.

In general, the five San Mateo providers characterized the supports provided through PFA as helpful or very helpful. In particular, programs emphasized the benefits of funding for equipment and materials and the independent Gateway to Quality ECERS-R assessments. Survey responses indicated that programs are using the DRDP-R results to develop and discuss Individual Learning Plans for children. A smaller number of programs (two) reported that activities are developed for individual children for parents to use at home.

The majority of programs provided positive feedback on the use of the ASQ – however two of the five programs reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the tool; this may be an area for SMCOE to consider for additional training. Similarly, three of the five programs reported that PFA teachers did not have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs. Moreover, the majority of programs indicated the need for enhanced collaboration between PFA and special education staff. Other challenges identified by programs include recruiting qualified PFA staff and preventing teacher burnout.

In terms of family partnerships, the majority of programs reported that parents are actively involved in most program activities. Three programs acknowledged that there is room to improve in this area, noting that only "some" parents are involved in some activities, or that family involvement is limited. Programs identified key supports that may be beneficial in their efforts to support families, including parent and staff training, and parent resources. PFA providers were also asked to indicate how they are supporting children and families in the transition to kindergarten. Survey responses demonstrate that most programs are implementing a range of strategies, such as joint transition planning with parents, aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards, providing enrollment information to parents, and helping parents understand how they can get involved in the K-12 public school system.

Based on the Year 2 survey responses, the San Mateo County Office of Education might consider the following recommendations:

- Gather more specific feedback regarding why the trainings offered by the Early Childhood Language Development Institute are "very helpful" to some programs and only "somewhat helpful" to others.
- Determine if PFA teachers require additional training to use the ASQ and offer training or technical assistance as needed.

- Determine the training needs among staff to help them effectively meet the needs of children with special needs and offer training and technical assistance as appropriate.
- Share the effective family partnership strategies used by the PFA programs reporting that parents are actively involved in most program activities with the PFA programs reporting less intensive involvement.
- Offer staff and parent training on family partnerships and how parents can support their children's development, as requested by four of the five PFA programs.
- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to support the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.

San Francisco Survey Findings

Thirty-two implementation surveys were completed in San Francisco County, representing 21 of the 24 contracted PFA agencies.[2] Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Francisco providers. Most programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on teacher-child interactions, and science, arts, and literacy instruction. The majority of PFA programs (72%) also anticipate increased levels of quality in the future, expecting that they will receive higher scores on their next ECERS-R or Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) assessment due to specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments. In general, San Francisco providers characterized the supports provided through PFA as helpful or very helpful. Tree Frog Treks, Quality Improvement Grants, mental health consultation, and the Raising a Reader book bag program were among the resources rated as the most helpful.

Survey responses indicated that the majority of programs are sharing DRDP-R results with parents and using the DRDP-R results to develop and discuss Individual Learning Plans for children. As also seen in San Mateo County, a smaller number of programs reported that activities are developed for individual children for parents to use at home.

Programs provided mixed feedback on the use of the ASQ. Over half of responding programs reported they would not use the ASQ if it was not required by PFA, yet almost half of the programs stated that the tool was an effective strategy to partner with families. It is important to note that 44% of responding programs reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the ASQ. In addition, 81% of programs reported that "Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs" is either a "moderate" or a "very big" challenge. Other challenges identified by programs include supporting the professional development of staff and finding time to report on programs' progress toward implementing Quality Improvement Plans. Taking a broad view of survey responses, many of these findings suggest that staff are still feeling burdened by PFA reporting requirements, especially when these are viewed as duplicative of requirements associated with their other funding streams.

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[2] Given the size of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) program, which encompasses 15 sites, the survey was administered at the site level. Twelve SFUSD sites responded to the survey. Eighteen of the 20 non-school district PFA programs completed a survey, as did two PFA family child care providers.

In terms of family partnerships, approximately three-quarters of programs consider "parents as true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development." Parents are actively involved in most program activities according to 38% of responding programs. Seven programs reported that parent involvement is limited and five programs indicated that it is challenging to identify ways to meaningfully involve parents in the program.

PFA providers were also asked to report how they are supporting children and families in the transition to kindergarten. Survey responses suggest that most programs are implementing a range of strategies, such as discussing children's school readiness with parents, providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents, and involving parents in transition planning. However, only a third of PFA programs employ strategies that involve collaboration with public schools (e.g., 38% of programs facilitate kindergarten visits for children, 34% facilitate kindergarten tours for parents, and 13% of programs participate in joint professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers regarding transition issues), although school-district PFA sites reported using a greater variety of kindergarten transition strategies.

Based on the Year 2 survey responses, First 5 San Francisco might consider the following recommendations:

- Solicit feedback from providers to identify ways of making the Learning Circles more helpful and accessible to staff.
- Provide technical assistance to programs to develop activities for individual children for parents to use at home.
- Offer more training opportunities on the ASQ to staff.
- Offer more training opportunities to help teachers effectively serve children with special needs.
- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to facilitate the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.
- Raise awareness among San Francisco parents regarding what PFA means (e.g., high-quality preschool services).
- Collaborate with community and state college instructors regarding the connections between coursework and practice, given that approximately one third of program directors did not agree that the one-unit required courses have changed classroom practices in the areas of language and literacy and serving children with special needs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to programs around family partnerships and finding ways to meaningfully involve parents; consider parent training on how to support their child's learning and development.
- Continue to examine how reporting requirements can be streamlined or coordinated across funding sources.

Classroom Observations

Classroom observations were conducted in a sample of PFA classrooms in San Mateo and San Francisco counties using two tools, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and the literacy subscale of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Expanded. A sample of eight classrooms was selected for each county, per the Year 2 scope of work. First 5 San Francisco

contracted with AIR to conduct observations in an expanded sample for San Francisco county (32 classrooms in total), in order to analyze differences between groups of classrooms based on funding type.

The CLASS is based on developmental theory and research indicating that interactions between children and adults are the primary mechanism for children's learning and development. The CLASS addresses four domains, each consisting of one or more dimensions: 1) *Emotional Support* (Positive Climate, Negative Climate, Teacher Sensitivity, and Regard for Student Perspectives), *Classroom Management* (Behavior Management, Productivity, and Instructional Learning Formats), *Instructional Support* (Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling), and *Student Engagement* (Student Engagement). The CLASS requires the observer to select a score for each of the 11 dimensions, based upon the degree to which behavioral, emotional, and physical markers are present and indicative of the extent to which each dimension characterizes the classroom, rated from 1 (minimally characteristic) to 7 (highly characteristic). Scores of 1 and 2 are considered in the low range of the CLASS rating system. Scores of 3, 4, and 5 fall into the mid range, and scores of 6 and 7 fall into the high range.

In addition to the CLASS, AIR completed the literacy subscale of the ECERS-E during each of the classroom observations. The ECERS-E is an extension of the ECERS – Revised, the tool widely used by early childhood education researchers and programs to measure classroom quality. The ECERS-E is a relatively new tool, published in 2003, and developed by researchers in England as an instrument to measure quality in four areas: 1) literacy, 2) numeracy, 3) science, and 4) diversity in preschool settings. The literacy subscale of the ECERS-E includes 6 items: 1) environmental print, 2) book and literacy areas, 3) adult-child book reading, 4) exploration of sounds in words, 5) emergent writing, and 6) talking and listening activities. The ECERS-E is scored using the same system as the ECERS-R, based on a seven-point scale for each item, from which an average score is derived for each subscale.

San Mateo CLASS Findings

Overall, most of the eight sampled classrooms in San Mateo scored in the mid-to-high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. Eight of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher. The highest average domain score across San Mateo classrooms was 6.2 for *Emotional Support*, which falls in the "high" range on the CLASS continuum, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.8), *Classroom Management* (5.1), and *Instructional Support* (3.8). Dimension scores for San Mateo sampled classrooms for each domain are shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. San Mateo Average Dimension and Domain CLASS Scores

Domains	Dimensions	Overall Average	Average Domain Scores
Emotional Support	Positive Climate	6.06	Emotional Support 6.2
	Negative Climate	1.06	
	Teacher Sensitivity	5.84	
	Regard for Student Perspectives	5.94	
Classroom Management	Behavior Management	5.59	Classroom Management 5.1
	Productivity	5.50	
	Instructional Learning Formats	4.34	
Instructional Support	Concept Development	2.63	Instructional Support 3.8
	Quality of Feedback	3.66	
	Language Modeling	5.00	
Student Engagement	Student Engagement	5.81	Student Engagement 5.8

The descriptions of low, mid, and high-range classrooms for each dimension presented below are excerpted verbatim from the CLASS Preschool Manual (Pianta, La Paro, and Hamre, in press). Given the nature of the CLASS scoring continuum, verbatim descriptors from the CLASS manual were used to ensure the explanations for the San Mateo ratings accurately reflected the intent of the CLASS tool.

Emotional Support. PFA classrooms in San Mateo have strong positive climates in which teachers regard children's perspectives and are sensitive to children's needs. Seven of the eight classrooms received high-range scores (6 or 7) across the dimensions included in the *Emotional Support* domain. Based on the CLASS descriptors, in high-range *Emotional Support* classrooms there are many indications that the teachers enjoy warm, supportive relationships with children. There is frequent joint smiling and laughter, with the teacher consistently demonstrating respect for the children. Children are also clearly positively connected to each other. Teachers are consistently responsive to children, notice when children need extra support or assistance, provide activities and speak at levels consistent with the needs and abilities of children, and are effective in addressing children's questions, concerns, or problems. The typical teacher is flexible in her plans and/or "goes with the flow" of children's ideas and organizes instruction around children's interests. Teachers make an effort to maximize children's abilities to be autonomous within the context of both structured and unstructured lessons and activities. There are many opportunities for children's expression, and children have clear and real responsibilities and roles within the classroom. Teachers actively encourage children to interact with one another, and children have freedom of movement and placement during activities.

Student Engagement. Seven of the eight sampled classrooms in San Mateo received scores that fell in the high range of the CLASS rating system for *Student Engagement*. Based on CLASS descriptors, children in a typical high-level classroom for *Student Engagement* are actively engaged – frequently volunteering information or insights, responding to teacher prompts, and/or actively manipulating materials. In addition, high engagement is sustained throughout different activities and lessons.

Classroom Management. The three dimensions within *Classroom Management* received strong ratings, albeit slightly lower than those for *Emotional Support* and *Student Engagement*. Most classrooms scored in the high range for the dimensions *Behavior Management* and *Productivity*, with only two and three classrooms scoring in the mid-range for these dimensions, respectively. *Behavior Management* focuses on the teacher's ability to use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehaver. In the high-range *Behavior Management* classroom, teachers consistently take a proactive stance to behavior management issues, monitor the classroom and intervene before problems occur, and consistently use effective strategies to redirect minor misbehavior. Rules and behavioral expectations are clearly stated or understood by all members of the classroom community. Behavior management does not take time away from other activities. Teachers use praise that increases the chances that desirable behavior will be repeated and undesirable behavior will be eliminated. In the mid-range *Behavior Management* classroom, there is less consistency in the implementation of these types of effective strategies. For example, sometimes the teachers take steps to prevent misbehavior (e.g., during circle time), but at other periods they are much more reactive (e.g., during free play or center times).

Productivity considers how well the teachers manage instructional time and routines so that children have the opportunity to learn. For example, in the three PFA classrooms that received mid-range *Productivity* ratings, most of the time there are clear activities provided for children, but learning time is not consistently maximized. At times, the teachers structure classroom routines so that learning time is maximized, but at other times, fail to do so. Transitions often take too long or are too frequent. The teachers are mostly prepared for activities, but take some time away from instruction in last-minute preparation. Finally, the teachers generally stay on task in a mid-range productive classroom, but may occasionally, or briefly, allow distractions to interfere with time for learning. For the five PFA classrooms that scored in the high range for *Productivity*, the CLASS descriptors state that there are consistently clear activities for children and time for learning is maximized. The classroom resembles a "well-oiled machine" where everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it. Transitions are quick and efficient and the teachers are fully prepared for activities and lessons. No more time than is necessary is spent on managerial tasks.

In regard to the third dimension within the *Classroom Management* domain, *Instructional Learning Formats*, all eight San Mateo PFA classrooms scored in the mid-range on the CLASS rating scale. Based on the CLASS descriptors, the teachers in a mid-range classroom for *Instructional Learning Formats* sometimes facilitate awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of materials and information but do not consistently do so. As a function of teachers' efforts, children may be engaged and/or volunteering during periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not focused on the activity or lesson. At times the teachers are active facilitators of activities but at other times they merely provide activities and materials for

the children. Finally, the teachers may use a variety of materials and present through a variety of modalities, but their use of them is not consistently effective or interesting to the students.

Instructional Support. Within the domain of *Instructional Support*, San Mateo classrooms all fell within the mid range for *Quality of Feedback*, which assesses the degree to which teachers' feedback to children expands learning and understanding, rather than focuses on "correctness" or a specific answer or "end product." In a mid-range *Quality of Feedback* classroom, teachers sometimes focus on the process of learning but at other times focus much more on correctness when providing feedback to children. There are occasional feedback loops – back and forth exchanges between the teacher and children – but at other times feedback is more perfunctory. Teachers' comments and praise are sometimes specific and other times much more general (e.g., sometimes the teacher appears to individualize her feedback to specific children or contexts of learning, while other times relies on global statements such as "nice work").

In regard to the *Language Modeling* dimension, three of the eight classrooms scored in the high range, with the remaining classrooms falling in the mid range. The primary difference between a mid- and high-range *Language Modeling* classroom is the consistency with which teachers implement language stimulation and facilitation techniques. In the high-range classroom, teachers often converse with students. Although there is a mix of teacher and student talk, there is a clear and intentional effort by the teacher to promote children's language use. The teachers ask many open-ended questions and often repeat or extend children's responses. Teachers consistently map their own actions and the children's actions through language and description. Teachers often use advanced language with children. For example, in a high-range *Language Modeling* classroom, open-ended statements are ones that invite more elaborate responses, such as "Tell me about that," or "Share your story with the group." Often these are questions for which the answer is unknown, such as, "What do you think?" or "How do you know?" In a mid-range *Language Modeling* classroom, the teachers sometimes ask questions that require students to put together language to express an idea or reason, or think deeply about their response. However, the majority of questions are not open-ended enough to encourage the students to use complex language and thinking.

The *Concept Development* dimension received the lowest average score across PFA classrooms. Three of the eight classrooms fell in the low range, and five classrooms in the mid range. In the low-range *Concept Development* classroom, based on CLASS descriptors, activities and discussions focus on getting children to give correct answers, or other forms of rote learning or recitation. For example, the preponderance of teaching is focused on getting children to remember facts and practice basic skills. Teachable moments that could develop children's thinking are missed as the teacher moves through the activity, with the focus on facts and recall and repetition, not the process of learning. For example, in this classroom, while reading a book about farm animals, the teacher only asks questions about what sounds the animals make and the color of animals; she does not ask questions about the similarities and differences of animals that live on farms and animals that may be in the zoo or about similar and different characteristics of animals, such as "How are a cow and a goat alike?". The teachers do not typically use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. The teachers do not use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. The teachers do not typically link

current activities to previous concepts, or concepts are presented independent of children's previous learning. Teachers do not routinely relate concepts to the real world of students' lives.

Five classrooms fell into the mid range of *Concept Development*. In the mid-range classroom for *Concept Development*, activities and discussions sometimes focus on getting children to give the right answer and other times on developing high-order thinking skills and cognition. Teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. For example, when reading a book, the teacher asks children what they think may come next, but does not consistently ask follow-up questions about why children think that or how they made their decisions about what could happen next in the story. Opportunities for analysis and reasoning are either interspersed with more rote learning or these opportunities do not require complex thinking or follow-up. The teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. Teachers sometimes link current activities to previous concepts or activities and at other times present concepts independent of children's previous learning. Teachers make some attempts to relate concepts to the real world of children's lives.

Comparison CLASS Data

Given that the CLASS is a relatively new instrument, there are limited data available against which to compare PFA CLASS scores. However, the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) has conducted two major studies of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs: the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten (which included California) and the State-Wide Early Education Programs Study (SWEEP)[3] that have used the CLASS. Among the families served by the preschool programs in these studies, most (55%) had an annual income less than or equal to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines for their family's size. Families were asked what language(s) were spoken at home; in some cases more than one language was spoken. English was the most frequently reported home language (86%), followed by Spanish (26%). Thirty-five percent of the children were White, 28% Latino, and 22% African American. Among the teachers, 73% had a bachelor's degree or above.

Compared to the NCEDL studies, the profile of San Mateo PFA teachers and families is somewhat different, with more low-income families and a significantly lower proportion of teachers with BA degrees or above. San Mateo comparison data indicate that only 13% of all families served by PFA had incomes that exceeded any state or federal subsidy income guidelines and 87% had annual incomes below $40,000. In most cases more than one language was spoken at home, Spanish being the more frequently reported at 67%, followed by English at 27% and 6% reported speaking a language other than English or Spanish at home. Eighty-five percent of children enrolled were Latino, 4% were African American, 3% Pacific Islander, 2% Asian and 2% White. Among the teachers, 36% reported holding a bachelor's degree or above.

The data in Exhibit 2 include the average CLASS scores from the combined MS and SWEEP studies (n=694), compared to the average scores for San Mateo observations (n=8). Only eight of the 11 CLASS dimensions are listed – the MS and SWEEP studies used an older version of the

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[3] The eleven states included across both studies included: California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

CLASS that did not include the dimensions for *Regard for Student Perspectives*, *Language Modeling*, and *Student Engagement*.

Exhibit 2. MS/SWEEP and SM PFA CLASS Scores
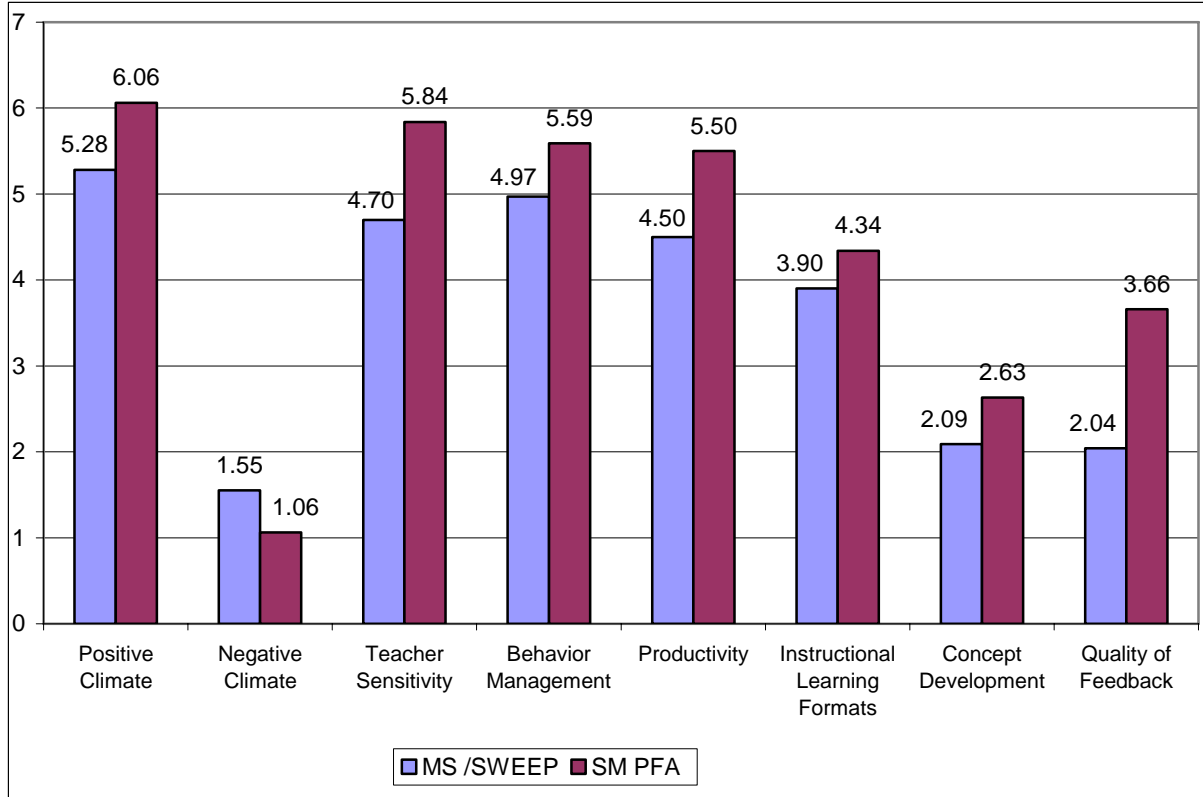
In every dimension listed in Exhibit 2, the San Mateo PFA sampled classrooms received higher ratings compared to the MS/SWEEP data (with the exception of *Negative Climate*, in which San Mateo classrooms received a lower score, indicating higher quality). San Mateo ratings ranged from 0.44 (*Instructional Learning Formats*) to 1.14 (*Teacher Sensitivity*) points higher than the MS/SWEEP data. In regard to the one dimension that received an average score in the low range, *Concept Development*, the San Mateo rating was still higher than the average for the MS/SWEEP studies, 2.63 compared to 2.09.

San Mateo ECERS-E Literacy Subscale Findings

The total average score for the literacy subscale for the sampled San Mateo classrooms was 4.6. Based on the ECERS-E average item scores, the sampled San Mateo PFA classrooms are generally characterized by high-quality book and literacy areas, with a wide variety of books. In addition, children are encouraged to use books. Most classrooms have areas for emergent writing, and staff write down what children say. Children take an active role in group reading and are encouraged to conjecture about and comment on the text. Conversations between children and adults occur and children are mostly permitted to talk amongst themselves. In most of the classrooms (five out of eight) interesting experiences are planned by adults to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, and children are encouraged to ask and answer questions. In half of

the eight sampled classrooms, there are labeled pictures visible to children, children can see some printed words such as labels on shelves or their own names on coat pegs, printed words are prominently displayed, and additional evidence of environmental print and encouragement of children to recognize printed words is present. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – five of the eight classrooms received a score of 3 for this item. In these classrooms rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes. Less attention is paid to the rhyming components of songs and alliteration.

San Francisco CLASS Findings

Overall, most of the 32 sampled PFA classrooms in San Francisco scored in the mid to high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. As shown in Exhibit 3, 7 of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher. The highest average domain score across San Francisco classrooms was 6.0 for *Emotional Support*, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.9), *Classroom Management* (5.2), and *Instructional Support* (3.7).

Exhibit 3. San Francisco Average Dimension and Domain CLASS Scores

Domains	Dimensions	Overall Average	Average Domain Scores
Emotional Support	Positive Climate	6.19	Emotional Support 6.0
	Negative Climate	1.24	
	Teacher Sensitivity	5.48	
	Regard for Student Perspectives	5.64	
Classroom Management	Behavior Management	5.90	Classroom Management 5.2
	Productivity	5.64	
	Instructional Learning Formats	3.90	
Instructional Support	Concept Development	2.88	Instructional Support 3.7
	Quality of Feedback	3.40	
	Language Modeling	4.70	
Student Engagement	Student Engagement	5.95	Student Engagement 5.9

As noted earlier, the descriptions of low, mid, and high-range classrooms for each dimension, presented below, are excerpted verbatim from the CLASS Preschool Manual (Pianta, La Paro, and Hamre, in press). Given the nature of the CLASS scoring continuum, verbatim descriptors from the CLASS manual were used to ensure the explanations for the San Francisco ratings accurately reflected the intent of the CLASS tool.

Emotional Support. In general, the vast majority of PFA classrooms in San Francisco (94% scored in the high range for *Positive Climate*) are characterized by teachers that enjoy warm, supportive relationships with students. There is frequent joint smiling and laugher, genuine praise, and/or physical affection among the teachers and students. Teachers consistently demonstrate respect for the students and students are clearly positively connected to one another.

The majority of classrooms (72% scored in the high range for *Regard for Student Perspectives*) are characterized by teachers who are flexible in their plans and organize their instruction around students' interests. They make an effort to maximize children's abilities to be autonomous, and there are many opportunities for children's talk and expressions. Children have clear and real responsibilities and roles, and the teachers actively encourage children to interact with each other. In the mid-range *Regard for Student Perspectives* classroom, these strategies are not consistently implemented – for example, teachers may follow the children's lead during some periods and be more controlling during others. The teachers sometimes provide support for children's autonomy but at other times fail to do so. For instance, there may be cases in which the teacher conducts whole-group instruction, asking occasionally for children's input and providing roles for one or two children, but most of the lesson is teacher driven and children are simply asked to respond to questions rather than having a more formative role.

In regard to *Teacher Sensitivity*, 44% of the sampled PFA classrooms scored in the mid range and 56% in the high range. The classrooms in the high range typically include teachers who are consistently responsive to students, consistently notice when children need extra support or assistance, provide activities or speak at levels consistent with children's needs and abilities, and are consistently effective in addressing children's questions, concerns, and problems. Children also appear comfortable approaching teachers for support or guidance, sharing ideas, and responding to teacher questions. In the mid-range classroom, typically these strategies are not implemented consistently. For example, a teacher may seem very attuned to students' academic needs, giving them appropriate tasks, supporting their learning, etc., but less aware of their emotional functioning. Or, a teacher may demonstrate the elements of responsiveness, but at times ignore children's bids or fail to elaborate upon them. For example, during a book reading the teacher ignores several comments that children make, such as "I have a dog like that" and "I see a big red balloon", but then during a group discussion following the book reading she is more responsive.

Student Engagement. The *Student Engagement* domain focuses on the degree to which all children in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity presented or facilitated by the teacher. Ninety-one percent of classrooms fell into the high range for this domain, with only 9% scoring in the mid range. Classrooms with a high score on *Student Engagement* are those in which children are actively engaged – frequently volunteering information or insights, responding to teacher prompts, and/or actively manipulating materials. High engagement is sustained throughout different activities and lessons. For example, children are clearly interested in what the teacher is saying or the current activity, as evidenced by their active participation, asking questions, and responding to prompts. While there may be one or two children who are disengaged or a short period of time when engagement is just passive, during the preponderance of time children in the classroom appear interested and involved in the activities that the teacher has planned.

Classroom Management. The *Classroom Management* domain reflects the effectiveness of teachers' behavior management strategies, the extent to which children have opportunities to learn through the preschool session, and what the teachers do to maximize children's engagement and ability to learn. Most of the sampled PFA classrooms fell into the high range for the dimensions of *Behavior Management* and *Productivity*. According to the high-range CLASS descriptors for *Behavior Management*, teachers consistently take a proactive stance to behavior management issues (e.g., teachers appear to be one step ahead of problems in the classroom, anticipating and preventing misbehavior). The teachers monitor the classroom and intervene before problems occur. Teachers consistently use effective strategies to redirect minor misbehavior, and rules are clearly stated or understood by all members of the classroom community. Behavior management does not take away time from other activities and teachers use praise that increases the chances that desirable behavior will be repeated and undesirable behavior is eliminated. There are few, if any, instances of student misbehavior.

In regard to high-range *Productivity*, there are consistently clear activities provided for children and time for learning is maximized. The classroom resembles a "well-oiled machine" where everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it. Transitions are quick and efficient and the teachers are fully prepared for activities and lessons. The teachers do not allow disruptions to compete with time for learning. No more time than is necessary is spent on managerial tasks.

The vast majority of classrooms (91%) scored in the mid range for *Instructional Learning Formats.* Based on the CLASS descriptors, the teachers in a mid-range classroom for *Instructional Learning Formats* sometimes facilitate awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of materials and information but do not consistently do so. As a function of teachers' efforts, children may be engaged and/or volunteering during periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not focused on the activity or lesson. At times the teachers are active facilitators of activities but at other times they merely provide activities and materials for the children. Finally, the teachers may use a variety of materials and present through a variety of modalities, but their use of them is not consistently effective or interesting to the students.

Instructional Support. The lowest average domain score across PFA classrooms is *Instructional Support*; however, it is important to note that the average total score for this domain falls into the mid category on the CLASS rating scale. *Instructional Support* reflects the teachers' use of discussions and activities to promote children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition, the degree to which teacher feedback to children is focused on expanding learning, rather than "correctness," and the quality and amount of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques with children. The majority of classrooms received mid-range scores for the dimensions of *Language Modeling*, *Quality of Feedback*, and *Concept Development*.

According to the CLASS descriptors, in mid-range *Language Modeling* classrooms, teachers sometime converse with students. For example, teachers talk with children and appear genuinely interested in children. However, these exchanges do not consistently aid the children's language acquisition. Conversations between teachers and children are sometimes teacher-controlled and

sometimes more child initiated. Teachers ask a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions and sometimes repeat or extend children's responses. The teachers occasionally map their own actions and the children's actions through language and descriptions. Finally, teachers sometimes use advanced language with students. Twenty-five percent of programs scored in the high range for *Language Modeling*. In these classrooms, there is a high quality and amount of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques, such as self and parallel talk, open-ended questions, repetition, expansion/extension, and use of advanced language.

Almost all of the sampled San Francisco classrooms (97%) fell in the mid range for *Quality of Feedback*. In a mid-range *Quality of Feedback* classroom, teachers sometimes focus on the process of learning but at other times focus much more on correctness when providing feedback to children. There are occasional feedback loops (back and forth exchanges between the teacher and children), but at other times feedback is more perfunctory. Teachers' comments and praise are sometimes specific and other times much more general (e.g., sometimes the teacher appears to individualize feedback to specific children or contexts of learning, but at other times relies on global statements such as "nice work").

Seventy-two percent of San Francisco PFA classrooms fell into the mid range of *Concept Development*. In the mid-range classroom for *Concept Development*, activities and discussions sometimes focus on getting children to give the right answer and other times on developing high-order thinking skills and cognition. Teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. For example, when reading a book, the teacher asks children what they think may come next, but she does not consistently ask follow up questions about why children think that or how they made their decisions about what could happen next in the story. Opportunities for analysis and reasoning are either interspersed with more rote learning or these opportunities do not require complex thinking or follow-up. The teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. Teachers sometimes link current activities to previous concepts or activities and at other times present concepts independent of children's previous learning. Teachers make some attempts to relate concepts to the real world of children's lives. Approximately a quarter of programs received a low-range score for *Concept Development*, indicating that typically activities and discussions in these classrooms focus on getting children to give the correct answer or other forms of rote learning or recitation, rather than on developing higher-order thinking skills and cognition.

Comparison Data

As noted in the summary of San Mateo's CLASS scores, the National Center for Early Development and Learning has conducted two major studies of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs: the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten (which included California) and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) Study that used the CLASS as one of their measures. Among the families served by the preschool programs in the studies, most (55%) had an annual income less than or equal to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines for their family's size. Families were asked what language(s) were spoken at home; in some case more than one language was spoken. English was the most frequently reported home language (86%), followed by Spanish (26%). Thirty-five percent of the children were White, 28% Latino, and 22% African American. Among the teachers, 73% had a bachelor's degree or above. In comparison, 75% of

participating PFA children in San Francisco received a state or federal child care subsidy (State Preschool, General Child Care, Alternative Payment, or Head Start), meaning they belong to low-income families earning no more than 75% of the state median income, or in the case of Head Start, 100% of the federal poverty level. The number of low-income children participating in PFA is likely even higher, however, as PFA children in Title I or solely PFA-funded programs are not subject to means testing.

The data in Exhibit 4 include the average CLASS scores from the combined MS and SWEEP studies (n=694), compared to the average scores for San Francisco observations (n=32). Only 8 of the 11 CLASS dimensions are listed – the MS and SWEEP studies used an older version of the CLASS that did not include the dimensions for *Regard for Student Perspectives*, *Language Modeling*, and *Student Engagement*.

Exhibit 4. MS/SWEEP and San Francisco PFA CLASS Scores
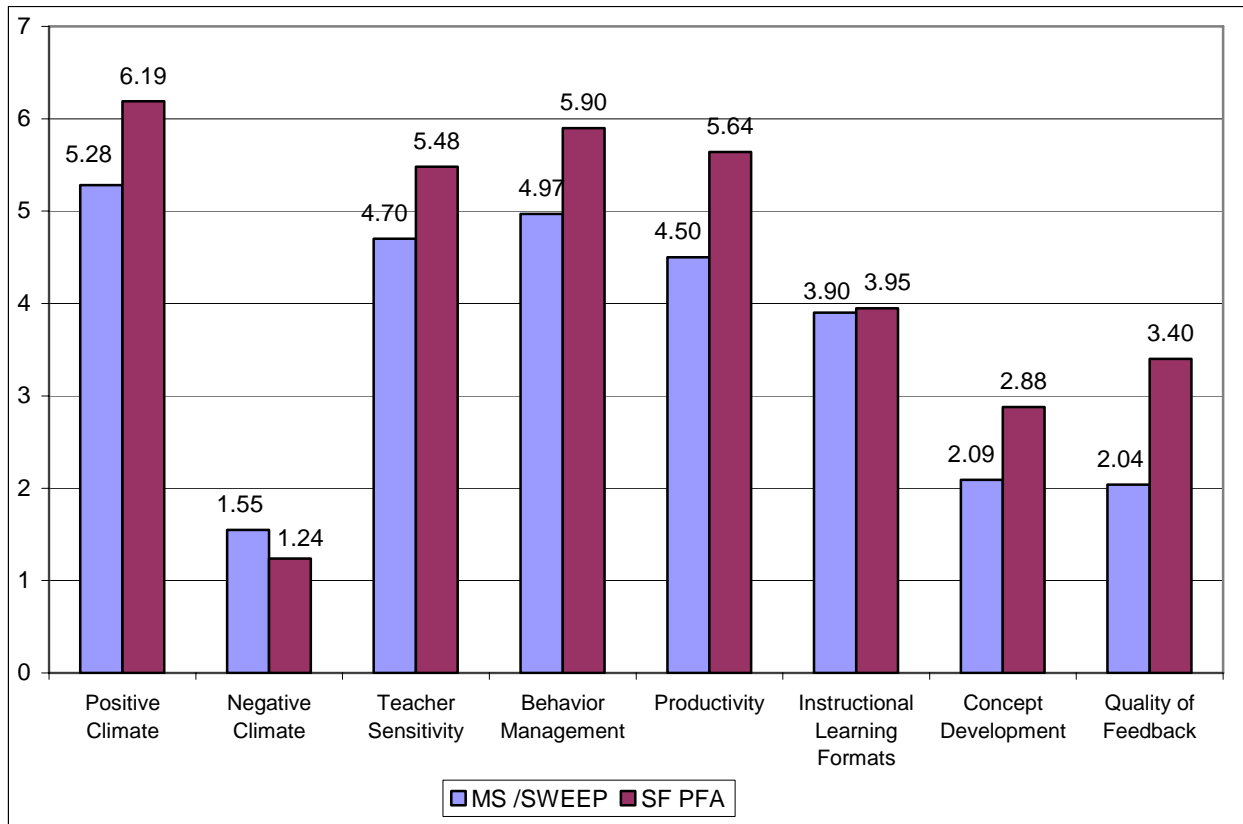
In every dimension listed in Exhibit 4, San Francisco PFA classrooms received higher ratings compared to the MS/SWEEP data (with the exception of *Negative Climate*, in which San Francisco classrooms received a lower score, indicating greater quality). San Francisco ratings ranged from 0.05 points (*Instructional Learning Formats*) to 1.36 points (*Quality of Feedback*) higher than the MS/SWEEP data. In regard to the one dimension that received an average score in the low range, *Concept Development*, San Francisco classrooms were rated at 2.88, compared to 2.09 in the MS/SWEEP studies.

San Francisco ECERS-E Literacy Subscale Findings

The total average score for the literacy subscale for the sampled San Francisco classrooms was 4.44. Based on the ECERS-E average item scores, the sampled classrooms are generally characterized by high-quality book and literacy areas, with a wide variety of books. Children are encouraged to use books. In addition, most classrooms have areas for emergent writing, and staff write down what children say. The extent to which adults read with children varied somewhat across classrooms – about a third of the classrooms received relatively lower scores (2), whereas about a third received high scores (6 or 7). Ninety-one percent of classrooms received a rating of 4 to 7 on the *Talking and Listening* item, with 50% of classrooms showing evidence that interesting experiences are planned by adults to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, children are encouraged to ask questions, adults provide scaffolding for children's conversations, and children are often encouraged to talk in small groups and listen to their peers. In about a third of the sampled classrooms (those that received a rating of 3 for *Environmental Print*) there are labeled pictures visible to children, children can see some printed words such as labels on shelves or their own names on coat pegs, and printed words are prominently displayed. In 50% of classrooms, additional evidence of environmental print and encouragement of children to recognize printed words is also present. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – 78% of the classrooms received a score of 1, 2 or 3 for this item. In these classrooms, the extent to which rhymes are spoken or sung by adults and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes varies. Less attention is paid to the rhyming components of songs and alliteration.

Recommendations and Implications for Practice

CLASS findings. San Mateo and San Francisco PFA classrooms received very similar CLASS scores. In both counties, each of the dimension scores fell into the same category on the CLASS rating scale (low, mid, high). Differences in overall scores between the counties did not vary significantly; on a 7-point scale they ranged from a .01 point difference for *Positive Climate* to .39 for *Instructional Learning Formats*. In both counties, the lowest scoring dimensions were *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback*. This pattern mirrors available national data from the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten (which included California) and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) Study, in which these two CLASS dimensions also received the lowest average scores. While it is difficult to explain precisely why *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback* tend to receive lower scores, it is likely that a combination of factors are involved, including limited attention to these areas in pre-service education programs and professional development opportunities. Moreover, the CLASS holds teachers to a high standard – for example, the strategies embedded within *Concept Development* (e.g., promotion of higher-order thinking skills and cognition, analysis and reasoning, hypothesis testing) are likely the most challenging practices to implement in the classroom, particularly if teachers have not been trained to do so.

Based on the CLASS scores, both San Mateo and San Francisco PFA administrators may wish to review the lowest scoring dimensions (*Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback*) to identify ways to integrate these content areas into existing training and coaching efforts or new professional development opportunities. In addition, the authors of the CLASS at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), University of Virginia, offer several

professional development opportunities. Teachers can access the CLASS website (http://classobservation.com/) to view video clips of teachers demonstrating strategies that are embedded in the CLASS framework. In addition, CASTL offers a web-based program known as MyTeacherPartner (MTP) (http://www.myteachingpartner.net/) where teachers have access to a library of videos in which teachers demonstrate strategies linked to the CLASS, MTP activities for use in the classroom, and online training modules. In addition, MTP offers an intensive four-step individualized consulting process in which: 1) teachers videotape themselves implementing a MTP activity twice a month, 2) a MTP consultant edits the classroom video to draw attention to CLASS dimensions, which is then posted on a secured website for the teacher, with written comments and questions, 3) the teacher reviews the video and responds to the consultant's comments, which are intended to help the teacher reflect on their teaching practices, and 4) the teacher and the MTP consultant participate in a video conference to discuss the process and identify goals and next steps.

Other states are currently using the CLASS in their preschool and professional development efforts. The Wyoming Department of Education is piloting the CLASS with 35 preschool teachers in the state as part of its *Quality Rating System* initiative. The Massachusetts Department of Education is using the CLASS in conjunction with its *Building Careers* project, designed to support teachers in obtaining a college degree. As a part of this project, CASTL trained college faculty on the CLASS for use with their students.

ECERS-E findings. ECERS-E literacy item scores were also similar in San Mateo and San Francisco counties. Across the six items, differences between San Mateo and San Francisco scores (as noted earlier, items are scored on a 7-point scale) ranged from .09 (*Sounds in Words*) to .94 (*Adult Reading with the Children*). The lowest scoring items for San Mateo and San Francisco were *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words*. In regard to *Environmental Print*, some of the indicators refer specifically to the classroom environment (e.g., pictures with printed labels, labels on shelves), which could be addressed by reviewing the nature of the environmental print in the classroom setting and upgrading as needed. Other indicators for this item focus on the extent to which teachers encourage children to recognize letters and printed words, as well as discuss environmental print with children and the relationship between the spoken and printed word. Given the nature of these items, targeted training or coaching to support teachers may be beneficial.

Similarly, professional development regarding the indicators included in *Sounds in Words* (e.g., rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults to children, rhyming components of songs and nursery rhymes are brought to the attention of the children, attention to initial sounds/alliteration, syllabification, and linking sounds to letters) would likely best be addressed through in-person training or coaching, with particular attention to blending and segmenting sounds in words more generally, which are the precursors to being able to apply the decoding skills necessary for reading. While research to date is inconclusive with regard to the particular instructional benefits of rhyming activities with preschool children, blending and segmenting of sounds in words has been associated with early literacy success. These activities can be taught and practiced by teachers to enhance instruction in this area.

A review of curriculum used by PFA sites may help identify areas in which to enhance instruction in this area, such as new books, instruments, or audio CDs aligned with activities to promote the types of indicators included in *Sounds in Words*. In addition, the California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN), a professional development network, has focused on language and literacy in its 2007 training series, including the following topics: oral language development, concepts of print, developing vocabulary through books, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, early writing, and supporting language and literacy for children with disabilities and for English Language Learners.

In regard to interventions that target child outcomes, it is more difficult to identify practices or curricula that have been proven through rigorous research studies to specifically promote the outcomes embedded in the CLASS dimensions of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback,* or the ECERS-E *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* items. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/), established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, is designed to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with an analysis of the scientific evidence of effective education strategies. The Clearinghouse conducts rigorous reviews of the effectiveness of educational interventions, including a focus on early childhood education. In particular, the WWC reviews empirical studies that meet specific criteria (e.g., randomized controlled trials and well-controlled quasi-experimental designs, and other studies that meet rigorous research standards). As of October 2007, the WWC has reviewed research on 16 preschool interventions to determine if they have a proven impact on oral language, print knowledge, phonological awareness, early reading/writing, cognition, and math outcomes for children. The 16 WWC intervention reports were reviewed, with a focus on the child outcomes related to the CLASS dimensions of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback* and the ECERS-E *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* items. The WWC did not detect any discernible effects or affirmative evidence of effects for any of the 16 curricular models for the outcome of cognition. Research on one intervention – dialogic reading – found strong evidence of a positive effect for oral language outcomes and the Literacy Express curriculum found potentially positive effects.

The lack of significant research findings for specific interventions may be due to the limitations of the current research literature. According to Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), in Neurons to Neighborhoods, a "fundamental barrier to comparisons across studies, however, is the considerable variability among intervention programs on a number of important dimensions, such as the age of the children at time of entry, the characteristics of the target population, the nature of the program components, the intensity and duration of service delivery, issues regarding comparison or control conditions, and the nature of the staff and their training. Consequently, it is not possible to be certain that differences in outcomes, when they are found, are due to any one (or a combination) of these factors." However, the researchers do suggest that programs that have been the most effective are those that are targeted at high-risk children, are intensive in nature, and are inclusive of both children and parents.

Research regarding the effectiveness of preschool curricula may soon be available. In 2002, the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences funded a four-year project, Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER). Given the lack of rigorous studies of preschool interventions, IES funded 12 grantees nationwide to implement and evaluate preschool curricula,

using randomized field trials. The study will address the following questions:

- What are the impacts of each intervention on important dimensions of children's development, including cognitive and social-emotional domains?
- How do the curricula change the prevailing classroom environments?
- How do the impacts vary for subgroups of children, classrooms, teachers, or communities? What works for whom?
- What are the patterns of impacts over time, as children progress through preschool and kindergarten?

Findings from the PCER are expected to be released in 2008.

Parent Focus Groups

Three parent focus groups were held in each county, offered in Spanish, English, and Cantonese. Overall, parents were enthusiastic and appreciative of PFA. One parent said the PFA program gave children "the foundation of education, like the roots of a tree." Parents felt comfortable with the level of parent involvement and communication with PFA teaching staff. One of the specific themes that emerged in conversations in both counties was how PFA staff provide parents with knowledge, tools, and strategies to support their children in the home. A parent said, "They [the teachers] tell you about how to help your child with areas of their development. They offer a lot of advice; the teachers give you a lot of suggestions of what to do. My teacher told me about my child needing to learn more about shapes, and how to introduce him to shapes in the home."

Parents in both counties described their PFA programs as warm communities where they felt welcome and accepted. In particular, they commented on the love and respect PFA teachers have shown their children. Parents at one program emphasized the experience and qualifications of the teachers, reporting they were of "a different caliber." The majority of parents felt that their children are prepared to enter kindergarten and identified a range of positive outcomes they have observed among their children since enrolling in PFA. One parent said, "[The preschool teachers] gave us information about applying to kindergarten, and helped us get [my son] into the program. Everything is ready for my child to go." In San Mateo, parents of children with special needs were particularly positive about the special education services provided through PFA.

The only challenge that emerged across both counties was related to communication – in one program in each county, some parents described the difficulties of working with some teachers who only spoke English, although there was a bilingual teacher at each program. In general, conversations with PFA parents suggest the program is a critical factor in supporting children's development and promoting positive parenting strategies in the home. Parents described how enthusiastic their children are about PFA, with one mother emphasizing, "My daughter gets up in the morning and is throwing her clothes on as fast as she can because she wants to go to school. She talks about it afterwards all day." Another parent reported, "This program allows you to be a better parent. You can focus on what you need to do to take care of your family. You can focus on getting your job done, because you know your child is not only safe, but she is also getting the best education."

Conclusion

The findings from the Year 2 study build on those from the Year 1 evaluation, an intensive qualitative study in which over 100 individuals involved with PFA in both counties were interviewed. The Year 1 evaluation indicated that PFA funding has had far-reaching impacts across participating programs that include benefits for children, families, and providers. Tangible outcomes of PFA funding, in the form of upgrades to classroom facilities, new materials and equipment, and instructional supports and enhancements for teachers were also observed. In addition, teachers reported more subtle benefits, such as increased professional pride, better teamwork, and improved morale.

The Year 2 evaluation revealed that PFA classrooms generally are of high quality, with a few specific areas in which providers would benefit from training and technical assistance. Survey responses in both counties indicated areas of additional training needs, such as the ASQ, inclusion of children with special needs, family partnerships, and transition strategies to kindergarten. In both counties, new policy changes and technical assistance efforts for the 2007-2008 program year will address some of the issues that were identified in the Year 2 evaluation.

San Francisco County

In the 2007-2008 program year, First 5 San Francisco is implementing a number of policy changes related to enrollment, technical assistance, and kindergarten transition. Beginning with the 2007-2008 program year, First 5 San Francisco is funding all San Francisco four-year-old children participating at a PFA site, regardless of their zip code. This policy change lifts a requirement from the previous two years, under which only children residing in target zip codes were eligible for PFA, with additional zip codes added each year. Participating PFA programs must still operate within the target zip codes (now covering about 60 percent of the city), but they may enroll and receive a PFA reimbursement for any child who is 4-years-old and a San Francisco resident.

First 5 San Francisco is launching a technical assistance system for early care and education programs that will also benefit PFA programs. Two technical assistance providers will provide peer mentoring, one specifically dedicated to supporting family child care providers and the other focusing on center-based teachers and directors. Three technical assistance providers will provide coaching to early childhood education (ECE) sites, with an emphasis on four content areas: inclusion of children with special needs, business development and fiscal supports, language and early literacy, and health and safety issues. In addition, Gateway to Quality will continue to provide environmental assessments for ECE sites, and will expand its services to provide coaching before and after the ECERS/FDCRS visits. Finally, the technical assistance system will include a clearinghouse that will provide early childhood educators with information on professional development opportunities and other resources.

In 2007-2008, First 5 San Francisco also is focusing on transition from preschool to kindergarten. The agency is helping to connect PFA directors, as well as staff from family resource centers, to training on kindergarten enrollment procedures, in order to support parents through San Francisco's unique school enrollment process. The school district implements an open enrollment process which means there are no designated neighborhood schools. As part of

the application process parents list their preferred schools and the district uses a modified lottery to determine placement. First 5 San Francisco is also collaborating with the school district and other organizations to plan events across the city for parents to get to know local schools and learn about the enrollment process. The goal is to have all PFA parents meet the first-round application deadline, to maximize the chances that children will be placed in their preferred schools. In addition, First 5 San Francisco is planning and implementing a series of pilot programs to test various transition strategies, including joint staff development opportunities for PFA preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers who plan to meet several times a year.

For 2008-2009, the fourth year of PFA implementation, First 5 San Francisco has accelerated PFA rollout. Rather than just expanding to Year 4 zip codes, the Commission elected to proceed with full implementation a year earlier than planned to enable all four-year-olds and all preschool programs in the county to participate in PFA. Therefore, First 5 San Francisco is reaching out to prospective centers and family child care homes in both Year 4 and Year 5 zip codes, providing them with information about participating in PFA and assisting them in the application process.

San Mateo County

In San Mateo County, SMCOE has initiated and is in the process of planning a number of professional development opportunities for PFA and non-PFA programs in the 2007-2008 program year. In response to providers' requests, SMCOE has subcontracted with the San Mateo Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, the 4Cs, to provide additional training on the ASQ/ASQ:SE, as well as a workshop series on the inclusion of children with special needs. Furthermore, in August of 2007, the SMCOE hosted a workshop for publicly funded classroom contractors on the fiscal issues connected to "blended funding" models.

In addition to these trainings, the SMCOE is planning a major professional development series, with funding from AB212, for the 2007-2008 program year. The training will be available to all early childhood teachers and administrators in San Mateo County. The training will be presented by state and national researchers and experts in program quality (advanced ECERS-R training), early literacy, math, and social emotional development, with an emphasis on practical application for classrooms. Each training topic will be provided in a two-day conference format, followed by two 2-hour study sessions to allow teachers to network, share, and reflect on classroom practices. The study sessions will be lead by local consultants who will facilitate discussions to align the conference content to the California Department of Education (CDE) Early Learning Foundations, kindergarten standards and the Desired Results Developmental Profile. The regional study sessions will be held in four different locations throughout the county to accommodate smaller groups. In addition, SMCOE is also offering a Director/Administrator training strand which includes leadership development, facilitation and coaching skills.

Teachers, directors/site supervisors and classroom staff working in CDE contracted child development programs (Title 5) will be eligible to receive stipends through AB212 for their participation in the SMCOE professional development series. Agencies or school districts holding direct contracts with the CDE or subcontracts with the SMCOE can also receive a release time award to cover the cost of substitutes to enable participating staff to use work hours for meeting, planning and reflection time. Conference participants also can apply for one college unit from the San Mateo County Community College District for attending both the conference

and study sessions (i.e., a total of two full day trainings and two 2-hour study sessions for one college unit).

The SMCOE is funded by First 5 SMC to provide 780 preschool spaces in 2007-2008 program year. All classrooms will receive the same interventions and supports to ensure quality as in prior years. Data collection, reporting and analysis functions will be greatly enhanced with the completion of a custom database developed by WestEd Interactive for SMCOE. Longer-term, the SMCOE is focusing attention on how the agency can collaborate across the various preschool and child development programs it manages, which include PFA, State Preschool, and Pre-kindergarten and Family Literacy (PKFL). SMCOE's goal is to eventually offer similar resources across funded programs, to make the programs more alike than different, in terms of quality of programming and supports for staff.

Year 3 Process Evaluation

The evaluation team will continue to solicit feedback from PFA participants and partners, and will monitor implementation, expansion, and quality improvement activities and their impacts on staff and families. The third year of the process evaluation will focus on reviewing administrative data collected from PFA sites, including family and child service data, staff qualifications and compensation, professional development activities, and other evaluation activities to be determined. In addition, AIR will help SMCOE and First 5 San Francisco identify design options for a rigorous longitudinal evaluation that focuses on PFA program outcomes for children and families.

Chapter 1. Introduction

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a three-year joint process evaluation, which began in December of 2005, to assess the implementation of Preschool for All (PFA) in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. First 5 San Francisco and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) are serving as the PFA administrating body in their respective counties. The process evaluation is designed to investigate and document the implementation and the preliminary impacts of PFA on children, families, providers, and the community.

This report reflects the findings from Year 2 (2006-2007) of the evaluation.[4] The Year 2 evaluation approach examined two major areas: 1) PFA implementation issues, from the perspectives of PFA program directors and PFA parents, and 2) PFA classroom quality. Detailed information on the Year 2 evaluation approach and data sources is included in this chapter.

Overview of PFA in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties

The goal of PFA in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties is to make high-quality preschool available to all four-year-old children by building upon the current early care and education system of public and private providers. PFA is a voluntary part-day program for four-year-old children provided at no cost to families, regardless of income. PFA funds are used to create new preschool spaces and to upgrade classrooms in existing programs.

PFA funds are meant to enhance program quality and must supplement (not supplant) costs already covered by other public funds. In San Francisco, PFA includes a 3.5 hour program for 175 days or a 2.5 hour program for 245 days. In San Mateo, PFA must classrooms must offer at least 3 hours of preschool experience for 175 days (minimum of 525 hours) or at least 2.14 hours for 245 days (maximum of 612 hours) per year. In both counties, allowable expenditures are those ordinary and necessary expenses directly benefiting or resulting from the PFA program operations, including, but not limited to:

- Parent fee offset;
- Compensation for staff in PFA classrooms (including salary and benefits);
- Substitute pay;
- Staff training/professional development related to the PFA program (including tuition and expenses for college courses);
- Equipment, supplies and other materials for the PFA program, including some facility upgrades to meet some Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) or Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS) requirements;
- Field trips; and
- Enrichment activities (e.g., music, dance, science, computer education).

An overview of the PFA program in each county is provided in Exhibit 1.1.

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[4] A full copy of the Year 1 evaluation report can be found at http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cyfs/pfa.html.

Exhibit 1.1. San Mateo and San Francisco PFA Programs

	San Mateo	San Francisco
Lead Agency	San Mateo County Office of Education	First 5 San Francisco
Funding Base	Primarily First 5 (State/local), with San Mateo County and David and Lucile Packard Foundation funds.	Local county tax funds (Prop H); First 5 California.
Program Quality	The point of entry-level score on the Environment Rating Scale for providers is now a rating of "4," which is obtained by averaging all 43 indicators of the ECERS or averaging all 40 indicators of the FDCRS. Within a period of 24 months, providers must receive an overall score of "5," which is obtained by averaging all 43 indicators of the ECERS or averaging all 40 indicators of the FDCRS. At entry-level and throughout their participation, providers must receive, at a minimum, an average of "3" on each of the seven sub-scales for the applicable environment rating scale.	The point of entry-level score on the Environment Rating Scale for providers is now a rating of "4.5," which is obtained by averaging all 43 indicators of the ECERS or averaging all 40 indicators of the FDCRS.
Teacher Qualifications	Lead teachers must have a BA or BS with Master Teacher Permit (Option 1) initially in all "new" classrooms, and by 2010 in "upgraded" classrooms.	Lead teachers must have a Child Development Teacher Permit or be eligible and have an application pending, with the goal of BA by 2010.
Target Programs	Primarily focused on existing programs, though some new spaces to be created.	Primarily focused on existing programs, though some new spaces to be created.
Type of Demonstration Sites	Licensed, publicly funded (federal Head Start, state Title V State Preschool, and General Child Care) and private centers and large family child care homes committed to achieving NAEYC or NAFCC accreditation within 2-3 years.	Licensed, publicly funded (federal Head Start, state Title V State Preschool, and General Child Care) and private centers and family child care homes.
Reimbursement Rate (see Exhibits 8.1–8.4 for detailed information on reimbursement rates).	Maximum reimbursement: $5,375 per child per year (for "full quality" unsubsidized programs); free to families.	Maximum reimbursement: $5,025/per child per year (for unsubsidized programs with a BA/24 ECE unit lead teacher); free to families.
Launch Date for Services	March/April 2005	September 2005
Age Cut-Off for Enrollment in Preschool	Priority enrollment for children who are 4-year-olds by December 2. Head Start and State Preschool programs may serve a mix of 3- and 4-year olds; exceptions for older children with special needs.	4-year-olds by December 2, exceptions for older children with special needs.
Existing School Readiness Assessment at Kindergarten Entry	Kindergarten Observation Form used in 2001 – 2003 and again in 2005 on samples of children throughout San Mateo County at kindergarten entry. An over-sample of children from PFA demonstration sites was done in 2005.	Brigance used at kindergarten entry in San Francisco Unified School District. Kindergarten Observation Form will be used in the fall of 2007 on a random sample of children throughout San Francisco at kindergarten entry.

San Mateo PFA

PFA in San Mateo is supported by funding from First 5 San Mateo, First 5 California, the Packard Foundation, and the San Mateo County Human Services Agency. The initial three-year budget was for $7.7 million (excluding in-kind support). A one-year budget of $3.7 million was approved for FY2007-08. The San Mateo County Office of Education is the administrator of PFA and the agency works in partnership with First 5 San Mateo to implement the program. During the first 3-year period of the project, First 5 San Mateo funded a half-time position to coordinate PFA, manage other funding streams that support PFA, and work with SMCOE staff.[5] In addition, staff from First 5 San Mateo County's evaluation department participate in the PFA evaluation meetings with SMCOE, First 5 San Francisco, and the AIR team.

First 5 San Mateo County was the leader in initiating planning for PFA in the county. In 2003, they engaged in a multi-year Universal Preschool Feasibility Study with funding from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation. This study lead to the development of a PFA Design Group, convened and facilitated by First 5 San Mateo County, which developed the vision, mission, and goals of PFA. First 5 San Mateo eventually released an Invitation to Negotiate for PFA Implementation, which was awarded to SMCOE (with eight partner agencies). Since the contract was executed, First 5 San Mateo has played a critical role in the implementation of PFA and has led the discussions related to the expansion of the program in the county. Staff from First 5 San Mateo and SMCOE characterized the collaborative nature of their relationship as a key strength of their county's experience with PFA. Staff from the agencies work together to discuss and address implementation issues and larger policy decisions. The current PFA governance structure in San Mateo for PFA is shown in Exhibit 1.2.

Exhibit 1.2. San Mateo PFA Governance Structure

Governance Groups	Description
Funding Agency	First 5 San Mateo
Administrative Agency	San Mateo County Office of Education
PFA Oversight Committee	Three First 5 Commissioners meet monthly with the County Superintendent of Schools, SMCOE and First 5 San Mateo staff to review progress and implementation of PFA and recommend funding and policy decisions to the First 5 San Mateo Commission. This Committee was eliminated for FY2007-08.
Partner Group	All PFA contractors (classrooms and non-classroom) meet on a quarterly basis with First 5 San Mateo and SMCOE
Community Forums	First 5 San Mateo and SMCOE have convened several community meetings to gather input on PFA and discuss critical infrastructure issues such as workforce, facilities and family support.

The three-year goal of PFA in San Mateo County is to serve approximately 800 children per year in two geographic areas selected based on several factors, including the number of schools with low API scores and First 5 School Readiness program sites, and the presence of large and diverse child populations. The stated five-year goal of the demonstration project is to serve 1,850 or 70%

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[5] Future plans for a PFA-related position at First 5 San Mateo County are unknown at this point.

of four-year-olds in target communities. The approved budget for 2007-08 will allow for funding for up to 780 spaces. The long-term goal is to make preschool available to all children in San Mateo County.

In 2006-2007, SMCOE contracted with five center-based preschool programs (one school district, and four non-profit agencies, all of which have contracts for other state or federally subsidized child development programs) to provide PFA. A total of 803 children were served in the 2006-2007 PFA program year. PFA provided 772 total preschool slots, in 24 classrooms at 13 different sites. Six hundred thirty-four of the 772 slots were "upgraded" (pre-existing State-funded, General Center or Head Start slots) and 138 were "new" slots (newly created classrooms or slots, including full-day with the option of fee-based wraparound care in some locations).

As part of a comprehensive scope of work, the PFA system in San Mateo also includes a network of partner agencies that are contracted to the SMCOE to deliver resources and supports to providers, such as technical assistance, training, outreach and enrollment support, career counseling, early literacy supports, evaluation, assessments and monitoring.

San Francisco PFA

In March 2004, San Francisco voters passed Proposition H, a Charter Amendment, which declared: "It shall be the policy of the City and County of San Francisco to provide all four-year-old children who are City residents the opportunity to attend preschool, and it shall be the goal of the people in adopting this measure to do so no later than September 1, 2009."[6] Approved by 71% of the electorate, the measure reserves $3.3 million for Year 1 (2005-2006) with funding increasing annually until appropriations reach $20 million annually between 2009-2010 and 2014-2015, from the City General Fund's Public Education Enrichment Fund. Proposition H designated First 5 San Francisco as the body responsible for planning and implementation of the PFA initiative. First 5 San Francisco formed a Planning Advisory Committee to develop a plan for the design of PFA and its implementation. Based on an assessment of preschool need and capacity, four zip codes were selected in San Francisco to begin PFA implementation in 2005-2006. Additional neighborhoods will be added each year until PFA is universal in 2009. The PFA governance structure in San Francisco is shown in Exhibit 1.3.

Exhibit 1.3. San Francisco PFA Governance Structure

Governance Groups	Description
Administrative Agency	First 5 San Francisco
PFA Advisory Committee	An advisory group comprised of representatives from agencies involved in the planning and implementation of PFA who meet to provide feedback to First 5 San Francisco staff.

In 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco contracted with 24 agencies to administer PFA, serving a total of 1,070 children in 89 classrooms at 51 different sites. Overall, San Francisco's PFA delivery system includes family child care providers, private tuition-based programs, and programs supported with public funds.

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[6] San Francisco City Charter SEC. 16.123-2. Public Education Enrichment Fund.

The PFA system in San Francisco also includes a network of partner agencies that deliver resources and supports to providers, such as technical assistance, training, outreach and enrollment support, and monitoring.

PFA Funding Criteria

PFA programs must adhere to specific criteria in order to receive funds.[7] The following list provides an overview of the major funding criteria; county-specific details regarding PFA staff qualifications, compensation, ECERS-R or FDCRS scores, and other program components can be found throughout this report.[8] In general, PFA programs must:

- Be in compliance with California Community Care Licensing regulations,
- Meet PFA teacher qualifications,
- Meet a minimum score on the ECERS-R or FDCRS, as evaluated by San Francisco State University – Gateway to Quality,
- Implement a curriculum that meets PFA criteria,
- Offer a family involvement and support program that meets PFA criteria,
- Meet group size requirements and staff-child ratios,
- Administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which is a parent/teacher-completed child-monitoring tool that screens for developmental delays or disorders,
- Use the Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R), from the California Department of Education, twice per year to assess children's progress, and
- Comply with other reporting requirements, including collecting and submitting data on PFA children and families.

Process Evaluation Approach

AIR's conceptual framework for the design of the process evaluation is a "research to practice continuous feedback loop," in which emerging findings are shared first with First 5 San Francisco, SMCOE and First 5 San Mateo, and then disseminated to PFA sites and other key stakeholders to help continuously improve aspects of PFA implementation and program quality. Specifically, the three-year project is addressing ten major research questions:

1. How accessible is PFA to children and families (especially those that are low income) and providers?
2. What PFA services are children and families using?
3. What is the frequency, intensity, and duration of services? Who is being served?
4. How does PFA implementation vary across sites? What are the strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement for PFA implementation?
5. Are existing systems (e.g., public schools, community-based organizations, and other community institutions/agencies) and funding leveraged and enhanced?

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[7] The complete list of funding criteria can be found at http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cyfs/pfa.html and http://www.first5sf.org/pfa.htm

[8] San Francisco and San Mateo PFA criteria differ somewhat, primarily in terms of the per child reimbursement rate.

6. What are the relationships among and the roles of PFA partners? How effective are these relationships in managing PFA?
7. Is program quality improved among PFA providers?
8. How is the PFA early childhood workforce changing (e.g., education, salary, diversity)?
9. Are parents satisfied with PFA?
10. Are children in PFA ready for kindergarten?

Overview of the Year 1 Qualitative Study

In Year 1 of the three-year evaluation, AIR conducted a qualitative study to document the implementation of PFA in each county in its first full program year (2005-2006), identify factors that facilitated implementation and challenges faced by PFA program administrators, providers, and partner agencies, and make recommendations to enhance the current PFA system as the initiative is expanded. AIR worked with an advisory group of PFA staff from SMCOE, First 5 San Mateo, and First 5 San Francisco to design the qualitative study, including the development of the data collection tools. All of the 2005-2006 San Mateo PFA contractors (three programs with multiple sites) were included in the Year 1 study. A sample of the 2005-2006 PFA providers in San Francisco (8 of the 13 agencies) participated (the sample was selected in collaboration with First 5 San Francisco to reflect the mixed delivery system in that county, including private and publicly subsidized center-based programs, as well as family child care providers). Qualitative information was gathered from three respondent groups:

- PFA providers (program directors, management-level staff, and teaching staff),
- Representatives from PFA partner agencies, and
- Directors of "non-PFA" preschool programs (potentially eligible programs that did not participate in PFA during the 2005-2006 program year).

In total, AIR staff gathered feedback from 140 individuals through 89 interviews and focus groups between April and July of 2006. The Year 1 report provides an overview of the first full year (2005-2006) of PFA implementation in each county, including providers' experiences in applying to PFA, the various ways PFA funding was used by programs, the types of support services offered by PFA partner agencies, and how specific program criteria for PFA – such as staff qualifications, compensation, reporting, and others – were met. Recommendations from PFA providers and partners for improving implementation were also presented. Finally, findings from interviews with a sample of non-PFA providers offered insights regarding potential obstacles to participation in PFA.

Year 2 Evaluation Approach

AIR, First 5 San Francisco, First 5 San Mateo, and the San Mateo County Office of Education collaborated to identify the primary areas of focus for the Year 2 evaluation approach, which included a continued investigation of PFA implementation issues based on the perspectives of PFA program directors and other staff, and, for the first time in the process evaluation, input from PFA parents. In addition, measurements of PFA classroom quality were conducted to augment the ECERS-R data. Three major research activities were designed and carried out:

- **Program Director Implementation Survey.** To address PFA implementation, a survey was distributed to PFA program directors in each county. In San Mateo, a survey was submitted by each of the PFA programs (five in total). In San Francisco, 32 surveys were submitted (2 surveys from family child care providers, 12 surveys from San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) PFA sites, and 18 surveys from "non-SFUSD" sites). Survey development was informed by the findings from the Year 1 qualitative study. The tool was designed to gather feedback from PFA directors on the activities, successes, and challenges of PFA implementation.

- **Parent Focus Groups.** To gather information regarding parents' level of satisfaction, attitudes, and knowledge of PFA, AIR hosted parent focus groups at three PFA programs in San Mateo County and three programs in San Francisco County. Focus groups were held in English, Spanish, and Cantonese.

- **Observations of a Random Stratified Sample of PFA Classrooms.** To gather data on program quality, AIR conducted observations on a sample of classrooms operated by center-based PFA programs in both counties. Two tools were used: the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, R., La Paro, K., & Hamre, B., in press) and the literacy subscale of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Expanded (ECERS-E; Sylva, K., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B., 2003). The CLASS is based on developmental theory and research suggesting that interactions between children and adults are the primary mechanism for children's learning and development. The CLASS addresses the following constructs: emotional support (e.g., positive climate, teacher sensitivity), classroom organization (e.g., behavior management, instructional learning formats), instructional support (e.g., language modeling, quality of feedback), and children's engagement in the classroom. The ECERS-E, an extension of the ECERS-Revised Edition, consists of four subscales (literacy, numeracy, science, and diversity), of which the literacy subscale was selected for this component of the evaluation. More information on these classroom observation tools is provided in Chapter 3.

First 5 San Mateo County also contracted with AIR to conduct a sub-study of the early childhood mental health consultation services provided to PFA sites by Parents Place of the Jewish Family and Children's Services. AIR conducted phone interviews with five PFA parents to understand their experiences with Parents Place. A summary of these interviews is included in Appendix C.

This report consists of 4 chapters: 1) an analysis of the implementation survey responses, by county, 2) findings from the classroom observations in each county, 3) a summary of the parent focus group discussions, and 4) a conclusion and recommendations for consideration. Appendix A presents the survey responses for San Francisco Unified School District PFA sites, Appendix B presents the survey responses for all non-school district San Francisco PFA programs, and Appendix C presents the findings from the San Mateo Parents Place sub-study.

Chapter 2. PFA Implementation Survey Findings

To gather information regarding PFA implementation, a survey was administered to all PFA programs in each county. Designed in collaboration with First 5 San Francisco, the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) and First 5 San Mateo, the survey was based on the findings from the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, conducted in the first year of the three-year *PFA Process Evaluation*, as well as other topics which emerged in the program year 2006-2007. The majority of survey items were identical for San Mateo and San Francisco, with slight adjustments to a subset of items to align with the unique characteristics of the PFA system in each county. Program directors were instructed to collaborate with other staff, if needed, in order to complete the survey. To the extent possible, the Year 2 survey findings are compared to the qualitative findings from the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, in which focus groups and interviews were held with PFA staff.

The implementation survey for both counties gathered information regarding the successes and challenges of PFA implementation, including the PFA application process, PFA support services, services to children with special needs, impacts of PFA on various program areas, family partnerships, strategies used to help children and families transition to kindergarten, and providers' recommendations for improving the PFA system.

San Mateo County

In 2006-2007, SMCOE contracted with five agencies to provide PFA services – three continuing PFA providers and two providers new to the PFA system. A 100% response rate was achieved in San Mateo County, with all five PFA program directors responding to the survey. In one San Mateo program, the educational specialist and the PFA teachers jointly completed the survey; their individual responses were averaged to obtain one set of survey responses for this program. Because there were five surveys in total for San Mateo County, responses are shown by counts, rather than percentages.

San Francisco County

In 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco contracted with 24 agencies to provide PFA: 20 community-based (non-school district) center-based providers, three family child care providers, and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). Eighteen of the 20 community-based PFA programs responded to the survey, as did two of the family child care providers. Given the size of the San Francisco Unified School District PFA program, which encompasses 15 sites, the survey was administered at the site level. Twelve of the SFUSD sites responded to the survey. In total, 32 surveys, representing 21 of the 24 PFA contracted agencies, were submitted and analyzed for this report.[9] In this chapter, survey findings are reported across all San Francisco respondents. The appendix includes survey results for the SFUSD only and for all non-SFUSD programs. Where responses varied significantly between the 12 SFUSD sites and the rest of the San Francisco PFA

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[9] The term "program" is used throughout this report to refer to each set of survey responses. While each SFUSD site is not considered a separate "program," the term is used to reflect that the SFUSD site surveys were analyzed at the same level as non-school district programs.

programs, it is noted. Two of the 12 SFUSD sites submitted multiple surveys (e.g., the principal and the lead teacher submitted surveys individually, rather than collaborating on one set of survey responses). In these two cases, the individual surveys were averaged, to arrive at one set of survey responses per site.

San Mateo Survey Findings

The following section includes the survey results for San Mateo County. Survey findings focus on becoming a PFA provider, the ECERS-R observation process, PFA support services, technical assistance needs among providers, the Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, serving children with special needs, impact of PFA on various aspects of program implementation, family partnerships, transition to kindergarten, challenges to program implementation, and recommendations to improve the PFA system.

Becoming a PFA Provider in San Mateo County

Preschool programs must comply with a set of criteria in each county to be eligible for PFA funds. These include demonstrating specific scores on the ECERS-R or FDCRS, documented by Gateway to Quality of San Francisco State University, the organization contracted to administer the ECERS-R or FDCRS for San Mateo and San Francisco PFA sites. In the 2006 program year, San Mateo developed its first standardized application, used by all five PFA applicants.[10] In the 2005-2006 program year, San Mateo had not yet developed a standardized application to be used by the three PFA contractors, although each program had to demonstrate compliance with the PFA criteria to receive funding. In the first year of the *PFA Process Evaluation*, the three existing San Mateo PFA providers were asked about the ease of the application system – all three providers characterized their interactions with SMCOE as positive throughout the application period.

The Year 2 implementation survey also asked providers to comment on the application (or re-application for continuing providers) for PFA funding. Four of the five programs responded to this question – two programs "agreed" and one program "strongly agreed" that the PFA application process was easy to understand. One program disagreed with this statement and noted that greater clarity from SMCOE regarding the required components of the application at the beginning of the process would be helpful.

ECERS-R Observation Process

Programs were asked to comment on the ECERS-R observation process. As shown in Exhibit 2.1, all of the responding programs either agreed or strongly agreed that prior to the assessment, Gateway to Quality staff were responsive to them. All four of the programs who responded to the question indicated that they had a good understanding of what the assessment process entailed, before it was conducted.

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[10] Three applicants were continuing providers from the previous year and two programs were new to PFA.

Exhibit 2.1. Perceptions of the ECERS-R Observation Process among San Mateo PFA Providers

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
Before the ECERS-R assessment, Gateway to Quality staff were responsive (e.g., returned phone calls in a timely manner, answered specific questions) to me or my delegated staff.	4	-	-	3	1
Before the ECERS-R assessment, I had a good understanding of what the assessment process entailed.	4	-	-	2	2

San Mateo PFA Support Services

A variety of training and technical assistance resources are available to PFA contractors in San Mateo County. These include the PFA Technical Assistance Coordinator, Early Childhood Language Development Institute training, the Raising a Reader® book bag program, and mental health consultation/support. PFA also provides paid professional development days for staff to participate in training. A summary of the major support services offered to San Mateo PFA sites is listed in Exhibit 2.2 – it is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the resources, support, and partnerships that providers benefit from through PFA.

The five San Mateo PFA programs indicated the extent to which the supports in Exhibit 2.2 are helpful, on a scale from 1 to 4, with a 1 being "not helpful" and a 4 being "very helpful." All of the supports listed in Exhibit 2.2 received high ratings, with most programs using ratings of "3" (helpful) or "4" (very helpful).

Exhibit 2.2. Helpfulness of San Mateo PFA Support Services

How helpful were the following PFA supports?	Description of Services	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
Support from the SMCOE PFA Technical Assistance Coordinator	Works with PFA sites to help them meet or exceed the PFA quality standards by providing training, technical assistance, and access to resources.	5	1	-	2	2	-
Support from other SMCOE PFA staff	Provides support to PFA sites and potential applicants as needed.	5	-	-	3	2	-
Paid staff development days	Enables staff to participate in PFA trainings and tasks.	5			2	2	1
Early Childhood Language Development Institute (ECLDI) training	Offers training for providers and parents to support children in maintaining their home language and culture while learning English.	5	-	2	1	2	-
Funding for equipment and materials	Provides funds to upgrade classroom settings.	5	-	-	-	5	-
Gateway to Quality ECERS assessments	Conducts independent assessments of PFA sites.	5	-	-	1	4	-
Child screening and assessment activities	Includes the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to screen children for special needs.	5	-	-	3	2	-
Raising a Reader book bag program	Supplies PFA sites with lending libraries for families, a book bag for each PFA child at year end and early literacy training to PFA classrooms and staff.	5	-	-	2	2	1
Jewish Children and Families Services/Parents Place mental health consultation and support	Provides mental health counseling at PFA sites for children, families and staff.	5	-	-	1	2	2

Based on survey responses, the most helpful support services identified by the 2006-2007 San Mateo PFA providers were funding for equipment and materials (all five programs rated this resource as "very helpful"), followed by Gateway to Quality ECERS-R assessments (four of the five programs rated this resource as "very helpful"). These findings align with those identified in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, in which focus groups and interviews with program staff indicated that the funding for classroom improvements enabled staff to greatly enhance environments for children. On the Year 2 implementation survey, one program wrote that the funding "helps provide the best environment and a more interesting learning [experience]."

In terms of the external ECERS-R review by Gateway to Quality, three programs reported that this assessment process was an important component of their quality improvement efforts, with one program reporting that it provided a "baseline to strategically plan from" and helped "with the improvements necessary to keep the program on a high standard." This finding also aligns with the information gathered in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, in which a large majority of the programs across both counties commented on the difference between conducting the ECERS-R internally (e.g., through a self-assessment process) and having an external assessment done by a trained and objective ECERS-R assessor. Despite a certain amount of stress and anxiety involved

with preparing for the observation, it was ultimately a positive experience for many staff, who expressed appreciation for the independent assessment of the quality of their program environments.

Four out of the five San Mateo PFA programs indicated that the Training and Technical Assistance (TA) Coordinator was "helpful" or "very helpful," and one program rated this support as "not helpful." The TA Coordinator works with PFA sites to help them meet or exceed the PFA quality standards by providing training, technical assistance, and access to resources. In some cases, programs provided a rationale for their ratings. Three programs offered positive feedback on the survey regarding the TA Coordinator, stating that she has provided "excellent suggestions" and that she "helps with classroom improvement and a better understanding of what is wanted from PFA." According to one program, the TA Coordinator is "very open and willing to help." One program reported that the material presented by the Coordinator created confusion among PFA staff. It is important to remember that the providers are not simply funded by PFA alone – some providers also receive California Department of Education (CDE) and/or Head Start funds, which also carry programming and reporting requirements. Discussions with staff in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study* indicated that the myriad requirements for programs supported by multiple funding streams can be challenging. In addition, SMCOE has placed a focus in the past program year on clarifying the role of the Coordinator and aligning it with programs' existing technical assistance systems.

The Early Childhood Language Development Institute (ECLDI) offers training for providers and parents to support children in maintaining their home language and culture while learning English. While three programs reported that the ECLDI was "helpful" or "very helpful," two programs indicated that the training was "somewhat helpful." One of these two provided a rationale for their rating, reporting that ECLDI was "too time consuming" and that the program "already has a lot of things in place" that were similar to ECLDI.

Technical Assistance Needs Among San Mateo PFA Providers

San Mateo PFA providers were asked to identify their three most pressing technical assistance needs. The most common response was inclusion of children with special needs (3 programs) and staff training in teamwork (2 programs). Other responses were varied and included increased access to qualified substitutes and training in personal care routines, staff-child interactions, dual language learners, and evaluation. Three of the five programs agreed that training opportunities provided through PFA address their programs' needs, one program disagreed with this statement, and one program was unsure.

Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised and Individual Learning Plans

PFA programs are required to use the newly revised Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP-R), from the CDE, twice per year to assess children's progress and develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for all children. Programs were asked a series of questions regarding how these tools were used in the classroom. All five San Mateo PFA programs reported that:

- teachers use DRDP-R results to develop ILPs,

- teaching staff discuss ILPs for individual and/or groups of children,
- activities are developed and implemented for individual children, and
- DRDP-R results are shared with parents.

Four of the five programs reported that observations are conducted on individual children based on the ILP. Two of the five San Mateo PFA programs reported that activities are also developed for individual children for parents to use at home.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

To comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and other federal and state civil rights laws, PFA programs are expected to serve children of all skill and ability levels. To screen children for developmental delays, PFA programs are required to administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which is a parent/teacher-completed child-screening tool. San Mateo programs indicated the extent to which they agreed with the statements listed in Exhibit 2.3 regarding the use of the ASQ, based on a four-point scale.

Exhibit 2.3. Use of the ASQ by San Mateo PFA Providers

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
The ASQ is an effective tool for teachers to develop a relationship with parents.	5	-	-	-	4	1*
The ASQ is an effective tool for identifying children who may need additional assessment for special needs.	5	-	-	1	4	-
I would use the ASQ in my program even if it was not required by PFA.	5	1	-	-	4	-
Teachers are adequately trained to use the ASQ.	5	-	2	2	1	-

*All programs are required to use the ASQ. By marking "not applicable," this program may be indicating that it does not consider the ASQ an appropriate tool to develop relationships with parents or has not used the ASQ in this manner.

At least four of the five San Mateo PFA programs agreed that the ASQ was an effective tool for teachers to develop relationships with parents and identify children who may need additional assessment for special needs, and that they would use the ASQ even if it was not a PFA requirement. Two of the programs, however, did not agree that their teachers were adequately trained to use the ASQ.

When asked if the use of the ASQ has impacted the number of referrals made for children identified with a special need, one program reported that the number of referrals had increased compared to previous years, and one program said the number had stayed about the same compared to previous years. One program was unsure and two programs indicated that the question was "not applicable."

Serving Children with Special Needs

San Mateo PFA programs were asked to comment on services provided to children with special needs. Four of the five programs either "strongly agreed" (3 programs) or "agreed" (1 program) that children with special needs were effectively integrated into their PFA classrooms.[11] However, three of the programs disagreed with the statement, "PFA teachers have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs."

Three of the five programs indicated that their PFA teachers regularly participate in IEP meetings for children in their classroom who have been identified as having special needs. One program reported that their PFA teachers rarely participate in IEP meetings, and one program indicated the question was "not applicable." Similarly, three of the programs responded that, beyond participating in IEP meetings, PFA teachers regularly interact with special education staff to address the needs of children in their classroom who have been identified as having special needs. One program reported that PFA teachers rarely have such interactions. The remaining program indicated the question was "not applicable."

While three of the five programs reported regular interaction between PFA and special education staff, only one program said they were satisfied with the level of collaboration between the two groups of staff. PFA programs were asked to identify the factors, from an existing list, that should be addressed in order to improve the level of collaboration between PFA teachers and special education staff. The most common factor identified by programs as needing to be addressed was dedicating time for joint meetings among staff (4 programs), followed by developing an established communication system between PFA teachers and special education staff (3 programs), and increasing the cooperation of special education staff (1 program) and of PFA teachers (1 program).

Impact of PFA in San Mateo County

Programs were asked to reflect on their agency's experiences as a PFA provider, indicating the extent to which PFA has impacted various aspects of implementation, including the level of awareness of PFA among staff and parents, and the way in which PFA has positively or negatively affected various curricular areas, staff-child interactions, and staff-related issues.

Awareness of PFA among San Mateo Staff and Parents

As shown in Exhibit 2.4, the majority of programs reported that teachers and staff were aware of PFA. Only one program suggested that teaching staff did not have an understanding of the overall purpose of PFA, although the program indicated that staff did understand the specific requirements associated with the initiative.

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[11] One program indicated "not applicable."

Exhibit 2.4. Awareness of PFA Among San Mateo Staff and Parents

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
Teaching staff understand the overall purpose and goals of PFA.	5	-	1	2	2	-
Teaching staff understand the specific requirements of PFA.	5	-	-	3	2	-
Parents are aware their child is enrolled in a PFA classroom.	5	-	-	3	2	-
Parents understand the difference between PFA and non-PFA preschool programs.	5	-	-	3	2	-

Impacts on San Mateo Program Implementation

San Mateo program directors described the extent to which PFA has impacted a range of program areas, as shown in Exhibit 2.5.

Exhibit 2.5. PFA Impact on San Mateo Providers

		Impact on Program				
		1	2	3	4	5
	N	Negative impact	No impact – things are about the same as they were before PFA	Some positive impact	Strong positive impact	Very strong and significant positive impact
Language facilitation	5	-	-	2	3	-
Teacher-child interactions	5	-	-	2	2	1
Literacy instruction	5	-	-	2	2	1
Supporting the mental health needs of children and families	4	-	1	-	2	1
Meeting the needs of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds	5	-	-	2	2	1
Inclusion of children with special needs	4	-	1	1	2	-
Communication and teamwork among teaching staff	5	-	-	2	2	1

The ratings in Exhibit 2.5 suggest that PFA has had a positive impact across a range of program areas. None of the programs reported that PFA has had a negative impact. Three of the five programs indicated that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on language facilitation among children, teacher-child interactions, literacy instruction,

supporting the mental health needs of children and families, meeting the needs of children's diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and communication and teamwork among teaching staff. One program reported that PFA had a "very strong and significant positive impact" on five of the seven areas listed in Exhibit 2.5.

In regard to the impact of PFA on language facilitation, two providers offered comments regarding their ratings of 3 (some impact) and 4 (strong impact), respectively. "The ECERS indicators have made staff more attune [to language facilitation]" and "Staff have attended national and state workshops, and brought ideas back." Explaining why PFA has and a very strong and significant impact on teacher-child interactions, one program wrote, "Prior to PFA, daily conversations were limited, now they are much more opened-ended and expanded."

All programs were asked to respond to an open-ended question to explain the impact, if any, of PFA on the quality of teacher-child interactions. One program wrote that there is "more support and training on teacher-child interactions" due to PFA. Another program reported "the ECERS assessment has allowed for an objective rating from which to present to staff and allowed for development and planning." Teacher-child interactions were already strong, prior to PFA, according to a third program. The fourth program indicated that PFA has "helped some, due to workshops and classroom experiences."

San Mateo PFA providers were also asked to describe the impact, if any, of PFA on how teaching practices meet the cultural and linguistic needs of the children served by the program. One program wrote that there is "more support and resources on this topic." Another program indicated that they have become "more inclusive of families' culture and other languages." A third program remarked that PFA has enabled them to buy more bilingual books. One program indicated that influences, other than PFA, have impacted how they meet the diverse needs of the children served by their program. The fifth program wrote that this area was already strong prior to PFA, citing their bilingual staff and high parent involvement rate.

Ratings on the lower end of the range of responses included one program that stated that PFA has had no impact on how the program supports the mental health needs of children and families and one program that reported PFA has had no impact on how they include children with special needs in the classroom.

Impact on Future San Mateo ECERS-R Scores

As noted earlier, in order to be eligible for PFA funding in both San Francisco and San Mateo Counties, preschool programs must have an external ECERS-R or FDCRS observation conducted by San Francisco State University's Gateway to Quality. Gateway to Quality is a collaborative effort among city agencies in San Francisco, community-based organizations, institutions of higher learning, and private foundations. 2006-2007 PFA providers in San Mateo included the three programs that have received PFA funding since the beginning of the preschool initiative and two new providers that joined the PFA system in the last year. All programs are reassessed 2 years after their initial ECERS observation as well as if there are major program changes, such as a move to a new physical site or significant changes to program staffing.

San Mateo programs were asked to think ahead to their next Gateway to Quality review and indicate whether they thought their program would receive higher, about the same, or lower scores on the six subscales of the ECERS-R, compared to their last review, as listed in Exhibit 2.6. A few of the five programs also provided a narrative rationale for their ratings, as shown in the table.

Exhibit 2.6. Future ECERS-E Observation Scores in San Mateo

Rating Scales	N	Compared to the first review by Gateway to Quality, do you think your program will receive a higher score, lower score, or about the same score on the next ECERS review?			Why?
		Higher	About the same	Lower	
Space and Furnishings	5	3	2	-	• Additional materials have been added to science and nature areas. • Scores were high to begin with. • Furnishing problems were corrected.
Personal Care Routines	5	4	1	-	• Training has been conducted and all sites are strategizing to implement effective routines. • Many classes are using more effective personal care routines.
Language-Reasoning	5	4	1	-	• Teachers expand more on children's language. • Training has been conducted and all sites are strategizing to implement more effective language and reasoning strategies. • More books are available in the classroom.
Activities	5	4	1	-	• Classrooms are more inclusive of families' culture and other languages. • There is a greater understanding of how "substantial portion of the day" is defined by the ECERS-R. • Blocks and materials are available all day.
Interaction	5	3	2	-	• Training was conducted and staff are implementing strategies to improve staff-child interactions. • This is an area that still needs improvement.
Program Structure	5	1	4	-	• Scores were high to begin with. • This was a strong point of the program to begin with.
Parents and Staff	5	2	2	1	• Changes have been made to facilities for staff.

Most of the five programs anticipated that they will receive a higher score on the space and furnishing, personal care routines, language-reasoning, activities, and interaction scales of the ECERS-R. Only one program expects to do so in regard to the program structure scale, although this may be due to a "ceiling effect" – other providers indicated that they already received high scores on the program structure scale in their first ECERS-R assessments. One program indicated that they would likely receive lower scores on the parents and staff subscale, but did not indicate why beyond stating, "activities are down this year due to implementation."

San Mateo Family Partnerships

Funding requirements in both San Francisco and San Mateo stipulate that PFA providers engage parents and families in their children's preschool experiences. To this end, PFA programs must schedule regular parent meetings, provide regular communication with parents about the progress of their children, connect parents/families to education opportunities, provide verbal and written information to assist families in their efforts at home, welcome family input in all aspects of the program including curriculum and evaluation, promote shared decision-making, and provide individual conferences with parents each year to discus their child's progress.

When asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the current level of family participation in program activities, one of the five San Mateo PFA providers indicated they were "very satisfied" and the remaining four programs indicated they were "satisfied." Exhibit 2.7 shows the number of programs agreeing (i.e., a response of "yes") with various statements related to family involvement in PFA programs.

Exhibit 2.7. Level of Family Involvement in San Mateo PFA Programs

Levels of family involvement	Number of programs agreeing with statement
Parents are considered to be true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development.	5
Parents are actively involved in most program activities.	3
Some parents are involved in some program activities.	2
Parent involvement is mostly limited to attendance at parent conferences; parent participation in other activities is low.	1
It is a challenge to find ways to meaningfully involve parents.	1

While each of the five PFA providers in San Mateo considered parents to be true partners with program staff in supporting children's development, two programs indicated that only some parents are involved in some program activities. One program reported that parent involvement is limited and one program indicated that it is challenging to identify ways to meaningfully involve parents in the program.

Providers were surveyed to identify ways PFA might support their efforts to partner with families. As shown in Exhibit 2.8, four of the five programs (80%) indicated they would benefit from the following: staff training on family partnership strategies, resources for parents (e.g., information on how families can get involved in the program, support for children's learning at home), and parent training regarding how they can support their children's learning and development.

Exhibit 2.8. Percentage of San Mateo PFA Programs Identifying Resources Needed in Their Efforts to Partner with Families
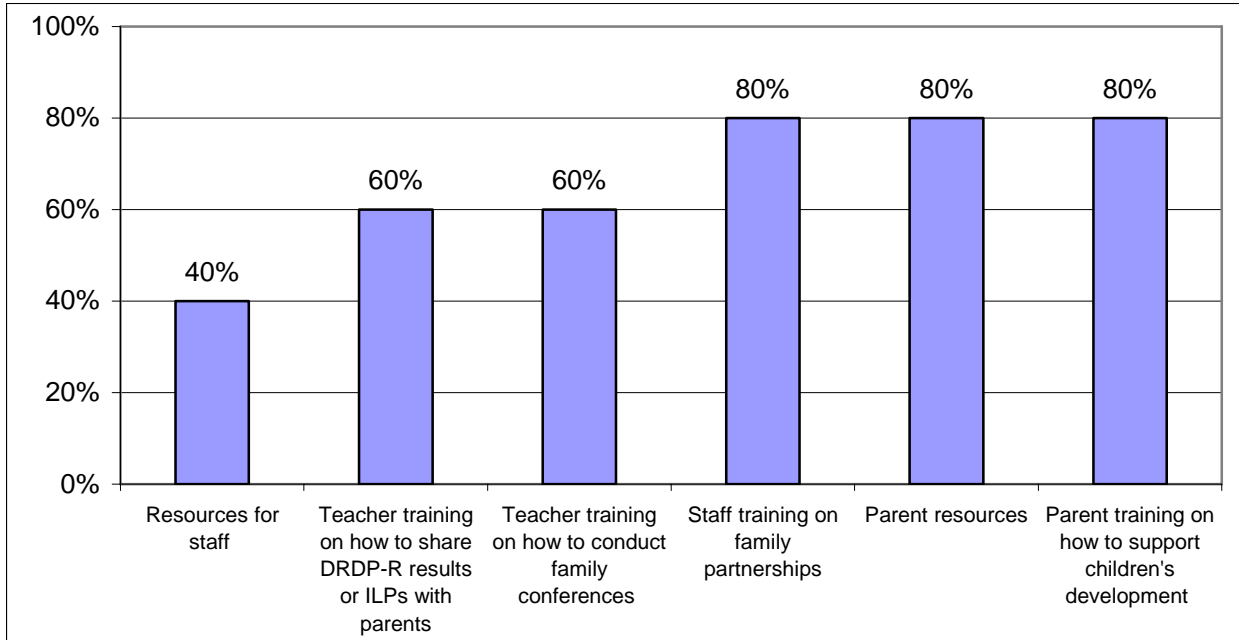
Transition to Kindergarten in San Mateo County

PFA programs reported on the strategies they are employing to support children's transition to kindergarten. Based on survey responses, all of the five PFA programs in San Mateo County are involving parents in transition planning, discussing children's school readiness with parents, and aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards. The least common strategy currently employed (by 1 program) is facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues.

Exhibit 2.9. Transition Strategies Employed by San Mateo PFA Providers

Transition Strategies	Number of programs implementing strategy
Involving parents in transition planning	5
Discussing children's "school readiness" with parents	5
Aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards	5
Providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents	4
Helping parents understand how they can be involved in the K-12 public school system (e.g., helping them understand the K-12 environment, opportunities for parent involvement, etc.)	4
Providing information to parents about before- or after-school child care options for kindergarten children	3
Facilitating or participating in professional development for preschool teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	3
Facilitating kindergarten tours for parents	2
Facilitating kindergarten visits for children	2
Facilitating or participating in joint transition planning meetings between kindergarten and preschool teachers	2
Facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	1

Challenges to PFA Implementation in San Mateo County

In the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, PFA providers were interviewed to gather their perspectives on various challenges they face in program implementation. In the Year 2 survey, providers were asked to rate the extent to which certain items were a challenge, as shown in Exhibit 2.10.

Exhibit 2.10. Challenges Faced by San Mateo PFA Providers

Challenges	N	1 Not a challenge	2 A small challenge	3 A moderate challenge	4 A very big challenge	Not sure/not applicable
Conducting outreach to families	5	2	2	1	-	-
Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA	5	1	1	2	1	-
Meeting enrollment targets	5	1	3	1	-	-
Recruiting qualified PFA staff	5	-	-	2	3	-
Meeting PFA ECERS-R criteria	5	-	2	2	1	-
Complying with PFA data collection requirements	5	1	1	3	-	-
Participating in training required by PFA	5	1	2	2	-	-
Supporting the professional development of staff (e.g., finding subs to allow teachers to participate in training, providing release time, etc.)	5	-	2	1	1	1
Preventing teacher burnout	5	2	-	-	3	-
Addressing inequities across PFA and "non-PFA" classrooms	5	2	1	1		1
Providing services to children with special needs	5	1	-	2	1	1
Supporting English language development among the English learners in your program	5	2	3	-	-	-
Training teachers to use the DRDP-R	5	2	1	2	-	-
Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs	5	1	-	3	1	-

Recruiting qualified PFA staff and preventing teacher burnout are considered "very big challenges" among three of the programs. Four of the five programs reported that providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs is either a "moderate" or a "very big" challenge. Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA, meeting ECERS-R criteria, and providing services for children with special needs are considered either "moderate" or "very big" challenges by three of the programs. Providers were also asked if PFA was impacting their programs' ability to fully earn their contract with the CDE. Three programs reported that PFA was not having an impact, while two programs were unsure.

Many of the challenges that providers emphasized in the Year 2 survey were also identified through the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*. In the Year 1 study, conversations with PFA program directors highlighted several issues that impact the early care and education field more generally and which will continue to require a broad-based effort to address. These challenges include the need for significant funding to address facility upgrade issues among center-based and family child care programs, and recruiting, training, and maintaining a high-quality workforce.

Recommendations from San Mateo PFA Providers

All five San Mateo providers plan to participate in PFA next year, in 2007-2008. When asked to provide recommendations to improve the PFA system, suggestions included the following:

- Provide more training for teachers on the ASQ/ASQ-SE, DRDP-R, and how to conduct parent conferences.
- Additional time and support (e.g., technical, financial) to help programs get ready for PFA implementation.
- Clarify and communicate PFA expectations and decisions with both PFA administration and teachers.
- Align staff development training with areas of need identified by program staff (e.g., current issues in the classroom).
- Provide more support, in terms of training and staff, to support the inclusion of children with special needs in PFA classrooms.

Summary of San Mateo Survey Findings

Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Mateo providers. The majority of programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on language facilitation among children, teacher-child interactions, literacy instruction, support for the mental health needs of children and families, support of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and communication and teamwork among staff. The majority of PFA programs also anticipate increased quality improvement in the future, expecting to receive higher scores on their next ECERS-R assessment due to the specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments.

In general, the five San Mateo providers characterized the supports provided through PFA as helpful or very helpful. In particular, programs emphasized the benefits of funding for equipment and materials and the Gateway to Quality ECERS-R assessments. Survey responses indicated that programs are using the DRDP-R results to develop and discuss Individual Learning Plans for children. A smaller number of programs (two) reported that activities are developed for individual children for parents to use at home.

The majority of programs provided positive feedback on the use of the ASQ – however two of the five programs reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the tool; this may be an area for SMCOE to consider for additional training. Similarly, three of the five programs reported that PFA teachers did not have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs. Moreover, the majority of programs indicated the need for enhanced collaboration between PFA and special education staff. Other challenges identified by programs include recruiting qualified PFA staff and preventing teacher burnout.

In terms of family partnerships, the majority of programs reported that parents are actively involved in most program activities. Three programs acknowledged that there is room to improve in this area, noting that only "some" parents are involved in some activities, or that family involvement is limited. Programs identified key supports that may be beneficial in their efforts to

support families, including parent and staff training, and parent resources. PFA providers were also asked to indicate how they are supporting children and families in the transition to kindergarten. Survey responses indicate that most programs are implementing a range of strategies, such as joint transition planning with parents, aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards, providing enrollment information to parents, and helping parents understand how they can get involved in the K-12 public school system.

All five San Mateo providers plan to continue to participate in the PFA system in 2007-2008. Suggestions to improve the PFA system focused on the need for additional teacher training on topics such as the ASQ, DRDP-R, family partnerships, and serving children with special needs.

Implications for Practice

Based on the Year 2 survey responses, the San Mateo County Office of Education might consider the following recommendations:

- Gather more specific feedback regarding why the trainings offered by the Early Childhood Language Development Institute are "very helpful" to some programs and only "somewhat helpful" to others.
- Determine if PFA teachers require additional training to use the ASQ and offer training or technical assistance as needed.
- Determine the training needs among staff to help them effectively meet the needs of children with special needs and offer training and technical assistance as appropriate.
- Share the effective family partnership strategies used by the PFA programs reporting that parents are actively involved in most program activities with the PFA programs reporting less intensive involvement.
- Offer staff and parent training on family partnerships and how parents can support their children's development, as requested by four of the five PFA programs.
- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to support the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.

San Francisco Survey Findings

The following section includes the survey results for San Francisco County. Survey findings focus on becoming a PFA provider, the Gateway to Quality (ECERS-R/FDCRS) observation process, PFA support services, technical assistance needs among providers, the Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised, Ages and Stages Questionnaire, serving children with special needs, impact of PFA on various aspects of program implementation, family partnerships, transition to kindergarten, challenges to program implementation, and recommendations to improve the PFA system.

Becoming a PFA Provider in San Francisco County

As in San Mateo, the Year 2 implementation survey asked San Francisco providers to comment on the application (or re-application) process for PFA funding. Seventy-eight percent of the responding programs either agreed (68%) or strongly agreed (10%) that the application process was easy to understand. Sixteen percent of programs disagreed that the application process was

easy to understand and 6% strongly disagreed. Survey responses varied somewhat across SFUSD versus non-SFUSD respondents. Fifty-four percent of SFUSD (n=8) respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the application process was easy to understand, compared to 6% of non-SFUSD respondents (n=1) who disagreed.

San Francisco ECERS/FDCRS Observation Process

Programs were asked to comment on the ECERS (or for family child care providers, the FDCRS) process. As shown in Exhibit 2.11, the majority of programs reported that Gateway to Quality staff were responsive and that, prior to the assessment, they had a good understanding of what the process entailed (although 20 percent, or three of the responding programs, disagreed that they had a good understanding of what the process entailed). These findings differ from those in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, in which many providers described delays in communication with Gateway to Quality. Providers may be more satisfied with Gateway to Quality, compared to last year, given that First 5 San Francisco worked with the agency in the spring of 2006 to resolve issues raised by providers regarding communication.

Exhibit 2.11. Perceptions of the ECERS or FDCRS Observation Process among San Francisco PFA Providers

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
Before the ECERS/FDCRS assessment, Gateway to Quality staff were responsive (e.g., returned phone calls in a timely manner, answered specific questions) to me or my delegated staff.	14	-	7%	71%	21%
Before the ECERS/FDCRS assessment, I had a good understanding of what the assessment process entailed.	15	-	20%	67%	13%

San Francisco PFA Support Services

First 5 San Francisco provides a variety of training and technical assistance resources to PFA contractors. A summary of each of the major support services offered to San Francisco PFA sites is listed in Exhibit 2.12. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all of the resources, support, and partnerships that providers benefit from through PFA.

Exhibit 2.12. Helpfulness of San Francisco PFA Support Services

How helpful were the following PFA supports?	Description of Services	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
Learning Circles	Quarterly meetings of PFA staff, designed to share information and network among providers	24	8%	33%	25%	17%	17%
Tree Frog Treks	Provides science curriculum, training for staff on implementing science programs, and materials needed for ongoing science activities during school year.	25	-	-	32%	60%	8%
Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)	The QIP guides programs by examining components of program implementation, determining program strengths and areas for improvement, and establishing program goals for the coming year.	24	8%	13%	46%	25%	8%
Quality Improvement Grants	Quality improvement grants up to $3,000 per classroom to PFA programs every three years.	25	-	4%	24%	60%	12%
Mental health consultation and support	Mental health consultants assigned to classrooms to help observe children and collaborate with teachers on interventions.	24	-	-	13%	58%	25%
Gateway to Quality ECERS assessments	Conducts independent assessments of PFA sites.	25	12%	32%	28%	20%	8%
Performing Arts Workshops	Artists-in-residence assigned to work within classrooms to support creative movement activities.	24	13%	8%	29%	38%	13%
Raising a Reader book bag program	Supplies PFA sites with lending libraries for families, a book bag for each PFA child at year end and early literacy training to PFA classrooms and staff.	25	8%	-	24%	52%	16%
Training sponsored by F5 SF (e.g., Ages and Stages and DRDP-R trainings)	Trainings and workshops offered by First 5 San Francisco	25	12%	20%	28%	24%	16%

The support services rated as "very helpful" by a majority of respondents were Tree Frog Treks and the Quality Improvement Grants (60% of responding programs indicated these resources were "very helpful"), followed by mental health consultation (58%) and the Raising a Reader book bag program (52%). Most programs rated all of the supports listed in Exhibit 2.12 as either "helpful" or "very helpful," with the exception of the Learning Circles and the Gateway to Quality assessments (for which respondents were fairly evenly split between helpful/very helpful and not helpful/somewhat helpful).

Fourteen of the 25 survey respondents provided a narrative rationale for their rating of Tree Frog Treks. Provider comments were highly positive of the science resource program. Staff wrote, "[Tree Frog Treks] is innovative and easy to implement for teachers", "We could never have exposed our students to this without PFA", and it is a "great addition to our program". One provider reported that the ideas and concepts taught by staff were too advanced for preschool age children. In the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, staff from the eight PFA programs included in the study were asked to comment on Tree Frog Treks through interviews and focus groups. Several PFA staff members (management and teachers) commented that the activities conducted by Tree Frog Treks in the classroom were not considered developmentally appropriate for preschool children. Following Year 1, Tree Frog Treks made some modifications to better meet the needs

of preschool programs. In the Year 2 implementation study, all of the responding providers rated Tree Frog Treks as "helpful" or "very helpful."

As noted earlier, 60% of respondents rated the Quality Improvement Grants as "very helpful." Five programs also commented on these grants, stating, "we loved the money to buy much needed supplies." They were a "helpful addition to budget and enhancement of room environment." Other programs reported, "The grant provided financial support for ECERS recommendations" and "We bought a lot of much needed materials."

The mental heath consultation was rated as helpful or very helpful by 71% of respondents. Programs stated that the resource is a "great support to staff and families", describing it as "essential." One program director wrote, "she [the mental health consultant] provides powerful consultation to our teachers – never cut this!" Another survey respondent indicated, "my mental health professional is fabulous."

In regard to the Learning Circles, 8% of programs rated this resource as "not helpful" and 33% rated it as "somewhat helpful." Fourteen survey respondents provided a narrative rationale for their ratings of the Learning Circles. Of these, nine respondents, five of whom are SFUSD sites, reported that staff are often too busy to attend the meetings.

Twelve percent of programs rated the Gateway to Quality assessments as "not helpful" and 32% of programs rated these assessments as only "somewhat helpful." Fifteen programs provided a narrative rationale for their ratings of Gateway to Quality assessments. Five of the fifteen programs commented on the ECERS-R itself, arguing that it was a rigid tool that is not the most appropriate instrument to assess PFA program quality. The majority of the other provider comments focused on the benefits of the assessment process: "[It] stimulated staff to improve their classrooms" and the assessment "served as an acknowledgement and guide." Another program wrote the process was "helpful as guidance toward facilities and environment improvement standards."

The training sponsored by First 5 San Francisco also received somewhat mixed reviews, with 32% of programs providing ratings of "not helpful" or "somewhat helpful" (12% and 20%, respectively), and 52% of programs providing ratings of "helpful" or "very helpful" (28% and 24%, respectively).[12] Provider comments regarding their ratings were also mixed – some providers reported they had not accessed the trainings, several reported they felt overwhelmed by the trainings, and others stated the trainings were helpful.

Survey respondents were asked to explain how they have used the Quality Improvement Plans they developed. Twenty-five programs responded. All programs, except one which indicated they have not used their Quality Improvement Plan, reported that the plan has guided changes in the classroom environments. One program explained, "The QIP informed purchases and repairs, as well as health and safety practices." Another respondent reported, "teachers responded to the QIP/ECERS scores that were below four. The director and teachers worked together to correct the low scores." A program stated, "[we] have been using the plan to better the children's physical environment and to create more stimulating learning spaces within the classrooms for

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[12] Another 16% responded "Not Applicable/Not Sure."

the children." A respondent wrote, "We used the QIP to adjust scores by making suggested improvements like replacing shelves, painting and removing some books from the library."

In the Year 2 survey, PFA providers were also asked to comment on the *PFA Program Quality Guidelines*, a resource that defines the quality standards required by PFA. The Guidelines do not attempt to prescribe exactly what and how programs should teach children, but rather present a broad picture of quality that can be adjusted to meet the needs of diverse provider settings. Sixty-nine percent of responding providers indicated they had used the *PFA Program Quality Guidelines*. Twenty of these programs commented on whether the *Guidelines* were helpful. Two of the 20 programs indicated that the Guidelines were "very helpful," 12 programs reported that they were "helpful," 5 programs indicated that they were "somewhat helpful," and only one program indicated that they were "not helpful."

Technical Assistance Needs Among San Francisco PFA Providers

San Francisco providers were asked to identify their three most pressing technical assistance needs. Across all the responses, the most common needs were administrative support (9 programs), inclusion of children with special needs (6 programs), computer training for teachers (5 programs), and working with children with behavior problems (4 programs). Other responses were varied, and included on-site technical assistance with classroom environments, increased access to substitutes, and training on such topics as math and science, working with mixed-age groups, literacy, and the ASQ.

Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised and Individual Learning Plans

PFA programs are required to use the newly revised Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP-R), from the CDE, twice per year to assess children's progress. The San Francisco survey included a series of questions about how the DRDP-R tool was used in the classroom, with responses summarized below.

- 81% of programs (n=26) reported that they share DRDP-R results with parents,
- 72% of programs (n=23) reported that they develop and implement activities for individual children based on the results of the DRDP-R,
- 69% of programs (n=22) reported that teaching staff discuss Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for individual children and/or groups of children,
- 66% of programs (n=21) reported that they use DRDP-R results to develop ILPs,
- 50% of programs (n= 16) reported that they conduct additional observations on individual children based on the ILP, and
- 41% of programs (n=13) reported that they develop activities for individual children for parents to use at home.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

As noted earlier, the ASQ is used to screen children for developmental delays. Survey responses regarding the use of the ASQ are listed in Exhibit 2.13, based on a four-point scale.

Exhibit 2.13. Use of the ASQ by San Francisco PFA Providers

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
The ASQ is an effective tool for teachers to develop a relationship with parents.	32	19%	22%	47%	9%	3%
The ASQ is an effective tool for identifying children who may need additional assessment for special needs.	32	16%	22%	47%	9%	6%
I would use the ASQ in my program even if it was not required by PFA.	32	31%	22%	38%	6%	3%
Teachers are adequately trained to use the ASQ.	32	13%	31%	41%	9%	6%
The ASQ screening support through the High Risk Infant Interagency Council (HRIIC) is helpful.	32	13%	22%	44%	-	22%

Over half (53%) of responding programs either "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" with the statement, "I would use the ASQ in my program even if it was not required by PFA." However, 56% of programs "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with the statements, "The ASQ is an effective tool for teachers to develop a relationship with parents" and "The ASQ is an effective tool for identifying children who may need additional assessment for special needs." This disconnect may be due to the fact that 44% of responding programs (combining respondents who "strongly disagreed" and "disagreed") reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the ASQ. In addition, as noted in the "Challenges" section later in this report, 81% of responding programs reported that providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs is either a "moderate" or a "very big" challenge.

Ratings for the ASQ varied across SFUSD and non-SFUSD respondents. Fifty-eight percent of SFUSD respondents (n=7) somewhat disagreed that the ASQ is an effective tool for developing relationships with parents, compared to 33% among non-SFUSD respondents (n=6). Seventeen percent of SFUSD respondents (n=2) reported they would use the ASQ even if it was not required by PFA, compared to 61% of non-SFUSD respondents (n=11). Seventeen percent of SFUSD respondents (n=2) stated that teachers were adequately trained to use the ASQ, compared to 67% of non-SFUSD respondents (n=12).

The varied responses to the ASQ in the Year 2 study echoed some of the findings from the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, in which many PFA staff reported that the ASQ sometimes duplicated existing child screening procedures. For example, a PFA program director remarked that the ASQ was helpful, although it duplicated the purpose and activities of their established screening and referral system for children with special needs. Staff from another PFA program said, "The ASQ process has been huge. Even sites that don't have a Head Start program, we do have a comprehensive screening. We have mental health and social workers at the site and we do our

own screening – we have a system. We do referrals through the school district." Concerns about the ASQ were echoed by almost all of the school district staff participating in the interviews. They reported that the school district has an existing system in which children are screened and connected to services.

When asked if the use of the ASQ has impacted the number of referrals made for children identified with a special need, almost half of responding programs (48%) reported that referrals stayed about the same compared to previous years, with only one program reporting that referrals had increased. Almost a fifth of programs (19%) stated they were not sure if referrals increased, and one program stated that referrals had decreased. Approximately a quarter of the programs (26%) stated that their program had used the ASQ prior to becoming a PFA provider.

Serving Children with Special Needs

Seventy-eight percent of responding programs in San Francisco either agreed or strongly agreed that children with special needs were effectively included in their PFA classrooms. A somewhat smaller proportion of programs, just over two-thirds, agreed (58%) or strongly agreed (6%) that teachers had the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs. Almost a third of the responding programs either strongly disagreed (6%) or disagreed (26%) that teachers had these necessary skills.

Exhibit 2.14. Serving Children with Special Needs in San Francisco PFA Classrooms

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
Children with special needs are effectively included in my program's PFA classrooms.	32	3%	9%	47%	31%	9%
PFA teachers have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs.	31	6%	26%	58%	6%	3%

Programs were also asked about the extent to which San Francisco PFA teachers have interactions with special education staff to address the needs of children in their classroom who have been identified as having special needs, as shown in Exhibit 2.15. Responses were varied – about a quarter of responding programs described the frequency of interactions between PFA and special education staff as occurring "frequently," "sometimes," and "rarely," respectively, with another quarter responding with "not applicable," "never," or "not sure."

Exhibit 2.15. Frequency of Interactions between San Francisco PFA and Special Education Staff (n=31)
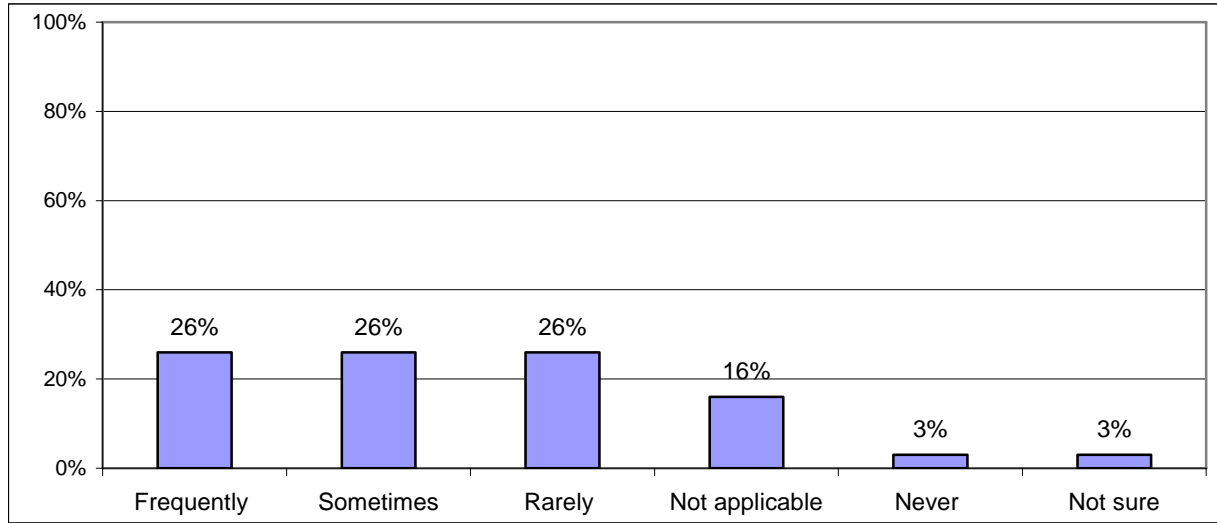
PFA programs were asked to identify the factors, from an existing list, that should be addressed in order to improve the level of collaboration between PFA teachers and special education staff. The most common factor identified by programs was the need for dedicated time for joint meetings among staff (14 programs), followed by the need for an established communication system between PFA teachers and special education staff (13 programs), and increased cooperation of special education staff (3 programs) and of PFA teachers (2 programs). These findings mirror those that emerged in San Mateo County.

Impact of PFA in San Francisco County

San Francisco programs were asked to reflect on their agency's experiences as a PFA provider, indicating the extent to which PFA has impacted various aspects of implementation, including the level of awareness of PFA among staff and parents, and the way in which PFA has positively or negatively affected various curricular areas, staff-child interactions, and staff-related issues.

Awareness of PFA among San Francisco Staff and Parents

The majority of responding programs in San Francisco reported that teaching staff understood the overall purpose and goals of PFA (85%) and the specific requirements of PFA (81%). Just over three-quarters of responding programs (77% – combining those respondents who agreed or strongly agreed) reported that parents were aware their child was enrolled in a PFA classroom. Forty-two percent of responding programs reported that parents did not understand the difference between PFA and non-PFA preschool programs.

Exhibit 2.16. Awareness of PFA Among San Francisco Staff and Parents

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
Teaching staff understand the overall purpose and goals of PFA.	32	-	6%	63%	22%	9%
Teaching staff understand the specific requirements of PFA.	31	-	16%	65%	16%	3%
Parents are aware their child is enrolled in a PFA classroom.	30	-	20%	57%	20%	3%
Parents understand the difference between PFA and non-PFA preschool programs.	31	-	42%	23%	6%	29%

Impacts on San Francisco Program Implementation

San Francisco programs' descriptions of the extent to which PFA has impacted a range of program areas are shown in Exhibit 2.17.

Exhibit 2.17. PFA Impact on San Francisco Providers

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
PFA has helped raise the quality of staff-child interactions.	31	3%	29%	35%	26%	6%
Training opportunities provided through PFA address my program's needs.	32	-	9%	53%	31%	6%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has increased teacher knowledge.	32	3%	25%	41%	13%	19%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has changed classroom practice.	32	3%	31%	34%	3%	28%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has increased teacher knowledge.	32	3%	19%	50%	6%	22%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has changed classroom practice.	32	3%	25%	38%	6%	28%

Program responses were varied regarding the extent to which PFA has helped raise the quality of staff-child interactions. About a third of programs (32%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed that PFA had done so, while 61% either agreed or strongly agreed. Responses varied between SFUSD and non-SFUSD respondents. Among SFUSD respondents, 83% (n=10) agreed or strongly agreed that PFA has helped raise the quality of staff-child interactions, compared to 40% (n=5) among non-SFUSD respondents.

The majority of responding programs agreed (53%) or strongly agreed (31%) that training opportunities through PFA addressed their needs. Programs were also asked about the impact of teacher training and education requirements for PFA. Fifty-four percent of responding programs either agreed or strongly agreed that requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has increased teacher knowledge, while 37% agreed or strongly agreed that this requirement has changed classroom practice. Similarly, 56% of responding programs either agreed or strongly agreed that requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has increased teacher knowledge, while a smaller percentage (44%) either agreed or strongly agreed that this requirement has changed classroom practice.

Exhibit 2.18. Impact of PFA on Program Areas Among San Francisco Providers

Program Area	N	Impact in this area for my program				
		1 Negative impact	2 No impact – things are about the same as they were before PFA	3 Some positive impact	4 Strong positive impact	5 Very strong and significant positive impact
Science instruction	31	-	6%	52%	29%	13%
Literacy instruction	30	-	20%	47%	27%	7%
Arts instruction	29	-	21%	52%	14%	14%
Inclusion of children with special needs	31	-	55%	32%	13%	-
Mental health consultation/ support	31	-	52%	23%	13%	13%

Approximately half of the responding programs reported that PFA has had "some positive impact" on science (52%), arts (52%), and literacy (47%) instruction. The strongest impact of PFA, according to program reports, is in the area of science instruction – 42% of programs reported that PFA has had a "strong positive impact" or a "very strong and significant positive impact" in this area. As of spring of 2007, over half of programs (55%) reported that PFA has not had an impact on the inclusion of children with special needs. However, First 5 San Francisco is planning a major investment in the delivery of special education services to PFA sites in the coming year (2007-2008). Mental health consultation and support is another area that more than half of the responding programs (52%) indicated has not been impacted by PFA.

Impact on Future San Francisco ECERS-R or FDCRS Scores

As noted earlier, in order to be eligible for PFA funding in both San Francisco and San Mateo Counties, preschool programs must have an external ECERS-R or FDCRS observation conducted by San Francisco State University's Gateway to Quality. Gateway to Quality is a collaborative effort among city agencies in San Francisco, community-based organizations, institutions of higher learning, and private foundations.

San Francisco PFA programs were asked to think ahead to their next Gateway to Quality review and indicate whether they thought their program would receive higher, about the same, or lower scores on the six subscales of the ECERS-R or the FDCRS. Seventy-two percent of responding programs indicated that their program would likely receive higher scores, 24% predicted that they will receive about the same scores, and one program stated that scores would likely decrease, due to staff turnover.

San Francisco Family Partnerships

Funding requirements in both San Francisco and San Mateo stipulate that PFA providers engage parents and families in their children's preschool experiences. To this end, PFA programs must schedule regular parent meetings, provide regular communication with parents about the progress of their children, connect parents/families to education opportunities, provide verbal and written information to assist families in their efforts at home, welcome family input in all aspects of the program including curriculum and evaluation, promote shared decision-making, and provide individual conferences with parents each year to discuss their child's progress.

Exhibit 2.19 shows the percentage of programs agreeing (yes or no) with various statements related to family involvement in PFA programs.

Exhibit 2.19. Level of Family Involvement in San Francisco PFA Programs

Levels of Family Involvement	Percentage of programs agreeing with statement*
Parents are considered to be true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development.	72%
Some parents are involved in some program activities.	31%
Parents are actively involved in most program activities.	38%
Parent involvement is mostly limited to attendance at parent conferences; parent participation in other activities is low.	22%
It is a challenge to find ways to meaningfully involve parents.	16%

*Percentages are not meant to total to 100%.

Many programs appear to be finding meaningful ways to involve parents. Seventy-two percent of responding providers considered parents to be true partners with program staff in supporting children's development. Sixty-nine percent of responding providers are involving parents in program activities to some extent – approximately half of these programs report active parent involvement and half indicate less intensive participation among parents. Seven programs (22%) reported that parent involvement is limited to attendance at parent conferences and five programs (16%) indicated that it is challenging to identify ways to meaningfully involve parents in the program.

PFA providers indicated, from an existing list, resources that would be helpful in supporting their programs' efforts to partner with families, as shown in Exhibit 2.20.

Exhibit 2.20. Family Partnership Strategies to Support San Francisco PFA Providers

How could PFA support your program's efforts to partner with families?	Percent of programs identifying support as needed
Training for parents on how to support their children's learning and development	72%
Resources for parents (e.g., information on how families can get involved in the program, support children's learning at home)	53%
Resources for staff (e.g., educational information on family engagement)	50%
Training for staff on family partnership strategies	44%
Training for teachers on how to conduct conferences with family members	44%
Training for teachers on how to share DRDP-R results or Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with parents	41%

Training for parents on how to support their children's learning and development was identified as needed by 72% of responding San Francisco programs. Approximately half of responding programs reported that resources for parents and for staff were needed, and 41% to 44% responded that training for staff and teachers would help to support their efforts to partner with families. Responses varied somewhat across SFUSD and non-SFUSD programs. Seventy-five percent of SFUSD respondents (n=9) indicated resources for staff on family partnerships would be helpful, compared to 33% among non-SFUSD programs (n=6). Similarly, 67% of SFUSD programs (n=8) reported a need for staff training in this area, compared to 28% of non-SFUSD programs (n=5).

Transition to Kindergarten in San Francisco County

San Francisco PFA programs reported on the strategies they are employing to support children's transition to kindergarten. Based on survey responses, 91% of programs discuss children's school readiness with parents, 84% of programs provide kindergarten enrollment information to parents, and 59% involve parents in transition planning. Less than half of responding programs reported they implement 8 of the 11 strategies listed in Exhibit 2.21. The least common strategy currently employed by programs is facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues.

Not surprisingly, implementation of transition strategies varies across SFUSD and non-SFUSD programs, with school-district PFA sites reporting greater use of varied activities to support children and families' move to the K-12 system. For example, more SFUSD programs reported they help parents understand how they can be involved in the K-12 public schools compared to non-SFUSD programs (58% compared to 22%), facilitate kindergarten visits for children (67% compared to 22%), and facilitate kindergarten visits for parents (50% compared to 28%).

Exhibit 2.21. Transition Strategies Employed by San Francisco PFA Providers

Transition Strategies	Percentage of programs implementing strategy
Discussing children's "school readiness" with parents	91%
Providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents	84%
Involving parents in transition planning	59%
Communicating information about children's preschool progress to kindergarten teachers	56%
Providing information to parents about before- or after-school child care options for kindergarten children	44%
Aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards	41%
Facilitating or participating in joint transition planning meetings between kindergarten and preschool teachers	41%
Helping parents understand how they can be involved in the K-12 public school system (e.g., helping them understand the K-12 environment, opportunities for parent involvement, etc.)	38%
Facilitating kindergarten visits for children	38%
Facilitating kindergarten tours for parents	34%
Meeting with elementary school principals regarding kindergarten transition	31%
Facilitating or participating in professional development for preschool teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	22%
Facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	13%

Challenges to PFA Implementation in San Francisco County

In the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*, PFA providers were interviewed to gather their perspectives on various challenges they face in program implementation. In the Year 2 implementation survey, providers were asked to rate the extent to which certain items were a challenge. Exhibit 2.22 shows the responses for San Francisco County.

Exhibit 2.22. Challenges Faced by San Francisco PFA Providers

Challenges	N	1 Not a challenge	2 A small challenge	3 A moderate challenge	4 A very big challenge	Not sure or not applicable
Conducting outreach to families	30	30%	30%	17%	23%	-
Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA use	31	32%	26%	13%	16%	13%
Meeting enrollment targets	29	41%	24%	17%	14%	3%
Recruiting qualified PFA staff	30	40%	17%	20%	20%	3%
Complying with PFA data collection requirements	30	17%	33%	40%	10%	-
Participating in training required by PFA	30	17%	27%	27%	27%	3%
Supporting the professional development of staff (e.g., finding subs to allow teachers to participate in training, providing release time, etc.)	31	10%	19%	16%	48%	6%
Recruiting and/or retaining qualified teachers	30	30%	17%	20%	23%	10%
Providing services to children with special needs	30	27%	23%	23%	17%	10%
Supporting English language development among the English learners in your program	30	30%	30%	27%	7%	7%
Training teachers to use the DRDP-R	31	16%	32%	39%	13%	-
Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs	31	3%	16%	29%	52%	-
Finding time to report on my program's progress toward implementing our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)	31	-	13%	52%	23%	13%

As noted earlier, providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs was identified as a "very big challenge" by 52% of responding programs and a "moderate challenge" by 29% of responding programs. A related challenge – supporting the professional development of staff – was rated as a "very big challenge" by 48% of programs. Some ratings varied somewhat across SFUSD and non-SFUSD programs. Only one school-district site indicated that recruiting qualified PFA staff was a "very big challenge", compared to 28% of non-SFUSD programs (n=5). Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs was a very big challenge for 64% of SFUSD programs (n=7), compared to 44% of non-SFUSD programs (n=8).

Year 2 survey responses in San Francisco vary somewhat from the findings described in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*. In the Year 1 study, conversations with San Francisco PFA program directors highlighted several issues, including the need for significant funding to address facility upgrade issues among center-based and family child care programs, and recruiting, training, and

maintaining a high-quality workforce. While these areas remain as continuing challenges for PFA providers and the ECE field in general, a surprisingly high proportion of responding providers (32%) reported that renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA use was "not a challenge" in Year 2. Similarly, 40% of responding providers in Year 2 indicated that recruiting qualified PFA staff was "not a challenge."

PFA Wage Policies

Non-school district PFA sites in San Francisco were asked a specific question in regard to wage policies. For 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco eliminated the wage rate requirement for PFA staff that was effective the previous year. Programs were asked if they, after the policy was eliminated, increased, maintained, or reduced staff wages. Three programs indicated they increased wage rates and four programs reported that they maintained 2006-2007 wage rates at about the same level as the 2005-2006 rates. None of the programs responded that they had reduced wage rates after the policy was eliminated.

PFA Quality Enhancement Budget Requirement

For 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco required PFA programs to submit a detailed annual budget on PFA quality enhancements. Programs were divided when asked if the requirement was helpful – 52% of responding programs reported that it was helpful, and 48% stated it was not. Among those programs that indicated the budget requirement was helpful, one respondent reported, "[The budget requirement] helped by establishing priorities and fiscal responsibilities." Another program stated, "It helped us to develop a plan that addresses the site needs." Among the programs that indicated the quality enhancement budget was not a helpful process, respondents stated, "This is like filling another form," "It was too detailed," "Not enough hours for clerks to work on these," "More paperwork that is unnecessary," and "It was hard for me to understand its purpose."

PFA Impact on Earning State Contracts

Programs were asked to indicate if PFA has had an impact on the program's ability to fully earn its state contract. Twenty-eight programs responded. Among these, 13 programs reported that PFA had not impacted their state contract, 8 programs were unsure, and 4 programs indicated the question was not applicable. While three programs did report that PFA was impacting their ability to fully earn their state contracts, the respondents did not explain why this was the case.

Recommendations from San Francisco PFA Providers

When asked to provide recommendations to improve the PFA system, suggestions from San Francisco included the following:

- **Streamline Reporting Requirements.** The most common recommendation from the *Year 1 Qualitative Study* was related to the perceived reporting burden among PFA providers. In the Year 2 implementation survey, 7 of the 20 programs who offered suggestions to improve the PFA system focused on reporting burden. A provider wrote,

"recognize that subsidized programs are required to follow CDE guidelines; it seems a bit redundant to have [to] re-create information for PFA." Another program emphasized the need to align PFA reporting requirements with those from other funding streams. A similar suggestion focused on the need for training for administrative staff in order to effectively complete PFA paperwork. One program reported, "There is too much paperwork; teachers are frustrated that they are not able to be more focused on the children. State, Licensing, Head Start, District, Dept and PFA standards and expectations are all consuming and 'out of control'!" A teacher who contributed to her program's survey responses reported, "PFA is a great program for all parents and preschoolers because it provides funding and encourages parents to send their preschoolers to school. However, the funding also includes too much paperwork! It required us (the teachers) to spend a lot of our time and energy in filling out paperwork instead of working with our students. Look into how much time it takes to implement the required paperwork that goes along with the PFA program. [Reporting burden] has added enormous stress to sites to complete the [PFA] mandates."

- **Address Training Needs.** Four programs submitted recommendations related to training. One program asked First 5 San Francisco to "continue assisting our schools to become better through training and site visits." Three programs stated that on-site training is needed, to support teacher participation. One of these programs also identified specific training needs, including on-site assistance to support teacher practice. "On-site assistance to increase best practice rather than teachers being required to take 1-unit courses off site. Technical assistance for science and math with a group that understands young children and how they learn and how to think about science curriculum that's relevant to an urban environment. Trainings on homelessness, domestic violence and substance abuse, and how they impact children's learning."

- **Increase PFA Education Requirements and Compensation**. One program recommended a BA requirement for PFA lead teachers. "It is time that we bring higher quality to our ECE programs and PFA classrooms by requiring teachers with a BA in each PFA class. In addition we need to bring more funding to increase wages to be able to maintain and attract our most educated teacher[s]." Another program reported, "Use [PFA] to raise teacher salaries to hire better qualified teachers for a quality program."

- **Streamline Enrollment Procedures.** One program commented on the challenge of working within specific PFA zip codes. They noted that once PFA is universal in San Francisco, "enrollment will be easier and more streamlined for us." In the interim, the program suggested that First 5 San Francisco allow programs to include surrounding non-PFA zip codes when identifying eligible children, and also take into account that many parents who work in the city do not live there, and thus enrollment requirements can be challenging.

- **Develop Kindergarten Transition Strategies.** One program suggested that PFA implement a requirement or agreement with SFUSD so that all PFA programs have a "buddy" school that they can visit or call for information on kindergarten transition and standards.

- **Expand Orientation Training for PFA**. One program recommended that First 5 San Francisco focus more effort on engaging new teachers before they start teaching in a PFA program: "More than a cursory intro session is needed."

- **Deemphasize PFA ECERS-R Requirements.** One program suggested that First 5 San Francisco place less emphasis on ECERS-R scores, with more focus on supporting programs through observations and mentoring.
- **Schedule Meetings at More Convenient Times for Family Child Care Providers**. A family child care provider requested that First 5 San Francisco programs schedule meetings on weekends or after hours, enabling them to attend.

One PFA program reported, "Thank you for all of the support providing a quality program to our kids and families." Another provider stated, "[First 5 San Francisco] is doing well." She recommended that First 5 "continue to be open to feedback."

Summary of San Francisco Survey Findings

Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Francisco providers. Most programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on teacher-child interactions, and science, arts, and literacy instruction. The majority of PFA programs (72%) also anticipate increased levels of quality in the future, expecting that they will receive higher scores on their next ECERS-R assessment due to specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments. In general, San Francisco providers characterized the supports provided through PFA as helpful or very helpful. Tree Frog Treks, Quality Improvement Grants, mental health consultation, and the Raising a Reader book bag program were among the resources rated as the most helpful.

Survey responses indicated that the majority of programs are sharing DRDP-R results with parents and using the DRDP-R results to develop and discuss Individual Learning Plans for children. As also seen in San Mateo County, a smaller number of programs reported that activities are developed for individual children for parents to use at home. Findings from the parent focus groups indicated that parents greatly appreciated receiving materials, activities, and strategies from their PFA programs that they could implement at home.

Programs provided mixed feedback on the use of the ASQ. Over half of responding programs reported they would not use the ASQ if it was not required by PFA, yet almost half of the programs stated that the tool was an effective strategy to partner with families. It is important to note that 44% of responding programs reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the ASQ. In addition, 81% of programs reported that "Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs" is either a "moderate" or a "very big" challenge. Other challenges identified by programs include supporting the professional development of staff and finding time to report on programs' progress toward implementing Quality Improvement Plans. Taking a broad view of survey responses, many of these findings suggest that staff are still feeling burdened by PFA reporting requirements, especially when these are viewed as duplicative of requirements associated with their other funding streams.

In terms of family partnerships, approximately three-quarters of programs consider "parents as true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development." Parents are actively involved in most program activities according to 38% of responding programs. Seven programs

reported that parent involvement is limited and five programs indicated that it is challenging to identify ways to meaningfully involve parents in the program.

PFA providers were also asked to indicate how they are supporting children and families in the transition to kindergarten. Survey responses suggest that most programs are implementing a range of strategies, such as discussing children's school readiness with parents, providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents, and involving parents in transition planning. However, only a third of PFA programs employ strategies that involve collaboration with public schools (e.g., 38% of programs facilitate kindergarten visits for children, 34% facilitate kindergarten tours for parents, and 13% of programs participate in joint professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers regarding transition issues), although school-district PFA sites reported using a greater variety of kindergarten transition strategies.

Suggestions to improve the PFA system focused on the need for continued training, located at the site level, and the need to reduce the PFA reporting requirements. Both of these topics were also raised in the *Year 1 Qualitative Study*.

Implications for Practice

Based on the Year 2 survey responses, First 5 San Francisco might consider the following recommendations:

- Solicit feedback from providers to identify ways of making the Learning Circles more helpful and accessible to staff.
- Provide technical assistance to programs to develop activities for individual children for parents to use at home.
- Offer more training opportunities on the ASQ to staff.
- Offer more training opportunities to help teachers effectively serve children with special needs.
- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to facilitate the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.
- Raise awareness among San Francisco parents regarding what PFA means (e.g., high-quality preschool services).
- Collaborate with community and state college instructors regarding the connections between coursework and practice, given that approximately one third of program directors did not agree that the one-unit required courses have changed classroom practices in the areas of language and literacy and serving children with special needs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to programs around family partnerships and finding ways to meaningfully involve parents; consider parent training on how to support their child's learning and development.
- Continue to examine how reporting requirements can be streamlined or coordinated across funding sources.

Chapter 3. PFA Classroom Quality

Documenting the quality of PFA classrooms was a central component of the Year 2 PFA process evaluation. A significant body of research has identified the benefits of high-quality preschool experiences for children, which include increased reading, mathematics, and problem-solving skills (Apples, 2007; Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, & Dawson, 2005; Magnusun, Ruhm, & Waldfogel, 2004; Reynolds & Temple, 1998), as well as reduced grade retention (Gilliam & Zigler, 2004; Reynolds & Temple, 1998). The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study (2005) found that adults at age 40 who had participated in a high quality preschool program had higher incomes, were more likely to be employed, had committed fewer crimes, and were more likely to be high school graduates compared to those without preschool experience. The quality of preschool programs is important – research has shown that higher quality early learning settings promoted greater gains in children's cognitive and social skills (Peisner-Feinberg et al., 1999). In particular, there is an increasing focus on teacher-child interactions as a critical component of high quality child care programs.

Classroom observations were conducted in a sample of PFA classrooms in San Mateo and San Francisco counties using two tools, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, in press) and the literacy subscale of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Expanded (ECERS-E; Sylva, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2003). A sample of eight classrooms was selected for each county, per the Year 2 scope of work. First 5 San Francisco contracted with AIR to conduct observations in an expanded sample for San Francisco County (32 classrooms in total), in order to analyze differences between groups of classrooms based on funding type.[13] Detailed information on the two observation tools, the sampling plan, and the observation findings is included in this chapter.

Overview of Classroom Assessment Scoring System

The CLASS was selected because it gathers rich information about teacher-child interactions, beyond what has been gathered by the ECERS-R subscales, used as part of the Gateway to Quality assessment process for all PFA sites. The CLASS builds on a broad body of research that highlights the critical nature of adult-child interactions in supporting children's learning and development. The CLASS framework measures adult-child interactions across several domains, including emotional and instructional support and classroom organization, drawing from the varied research base on teacher-child relationships, children's language and cognitive development, emotional and social functioning, self-regulatory skills, and classroom management practices. For example, researchers have found that teacher-child relationships are positively related to children's language skills and reading competence (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinburg, Pianta, & Howes, 2002) and children's social competence (Mitchell-Copeland, 1997).

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[13] The decision was made to restrict the use of the CLASS to center-based programs in the first year it was used in San Francisco because: 1) the tool has primarily been used in prior research in center-based settings, and 2) the number of family child care providers in 2006-2007 was relatively low compared with center-based programs in San Francisco (three family child care providers versus 21 center-based agencies). In addition, since this was the first time the CLASS was used to assess San Francisco PFA classrooms, its use was somewhat exploratory. Now that it appears to offer programs a valuable assessment of teacher-child interactions, its use in family child care homes will be considered for future years.

The Cost, Quality & Outcomes Study (1999) indicated that children's cognitive development was positively related to the quality of classroom practices and that close teacher-child relationships were associated with better behavior and social skills through early elementary school. Hamre and Pianta (2005) found that students at-risk of school failure who were enrolled in classrooms characterized by strong instructional and emotional support had greater achievement scores and less child-teacher conflict compared to children in less supportive environments. Underpinning the entire CLASS tool is the theory that the "primary mechanisms through which children acquire readiness-related competences are social relationships children form with peers, parents, and teachers" (Mashburn & Pianta, 2006).

The CLASS addresses four domains, *Emotional Support*, *Classroom Management*, *Instructional Support*, and *Student Engagement*, each consisting of one or more dimensions, as shown in Exhibit 3.1. Scoring on each dimension is based on observation of a series of indicators, also listed in Exhibit 3.1. Scoring for the CLASS dimensions is not determined by the presence of materials, the classroom's physical environment, safety issues, or a specific curriculum. Rather, the CLASS focuses on what teachers do with the materials they have and on staff-child interactions. A version of the CLASS is available for preschool through grade 3, with upper elementary and secondary school versions in development.

Exhibit 3.1. CLASS Domains, Dimensions, and Indicators

Emotional Support	
Dimensions	**Indicators**
Positive Climate. Positive Climate reflects the overall emotional tone of the classroom and the connection between teachers and students. The warmth of the teacher's interactions with students and the teacher's display of enjoyment and respect of students during instruction as well as social conversations are included in this dimension. Interactions among peers are also considered.	• Relationships • Positive Affect • Respect • Positive Peer Interactions
Negative Climate. Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. Teacher negativity (e.g., anger, sarcasm, irritability) as well as peer negativity (arguing, aggression, victimization, bullying) is considered in this dimension. The quality, severity, and intensity of expressed negativity are important.	• Negative Affect • Punitive Control • Sarcasm/Disrespect • Negativity not Connected to Events • Negativity Escalates • Severe Negativity
Teacher Sensitivity. Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher's responsivity to students' needs and awareness of students' level of academic and emotional functioning. The extent to which the teacher is available as a secure base (allowing students to actively explore and learn and being there to provide comfort, reassurance, and encouragement) is included in this dimension.	• Responsive • Notices When Students Need Assistance • Appropriate Activities • Addresses Problems • Students Seek Support • Student Comfort
Regard for Student Perspectives. Regard for Student Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher's interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students' interests, motivations, and points of view. The teacher's flexibility within activities and ability to demonstrate respect for students' autonomy to participate in and initiate activities are considered under this dimension.	• Flexibility and Student Focus • Support of Autonomy • Student Expression • Student Responsibility • Peer Interaction Encouraged • Restriction of Movement

Exhibit 3.1 (continued)

Classroom Management	
Dimensions	**Indicators**
Behavior Management. Behavior Management encompasses the teacher's ability to use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior. Included in this dimension is the extent to which clear expectations for students' behavior are evident. The amount of instructional time taken up by behavior management issues is also considered.	• Proactive • Monitoring • Redirecting Misbehavior • Clear Behavioral Expectations • Loss of Time • Effective Praise • Student Misbehavior
Productivity. Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines so that students have the *opportunity* to learn. This dimension measures the degree to which time is effectively managed and down time is minimized for students; it is not about the quality of instruction or student engagement.	• Provision of Activities • Routines • Transitions • Preparation • Disruptions • Managerial Tasks
Instructional Learning Formats. Instructional Learning Formats focuses on what the teacher does either during the lesson or in providing activities, centers, and materials to maximize students' engagement and ability to learn. The manner in which the teacher facilitates activities so that students have opportunities to experience, perceive, explore, and utilize materials is considered.	• Utilization of Materials • Student Engagement • Teacher Facilitation • Modalities
Instructional Support	
Dimensions	**Indicators**
Concept Development. Concept Development measures the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition in contrast to a focus on rote instruction.	• Higher-Order Thinking and Cognition versus Rote Learning • Analysis and Reasoning • Hypothesis Testing • Integration with Previous Concept • Connections to the Real World
Quality of Feedback. Quality of Feedback assesses the degree to which the teacher's provision of feedback is focused on expanding learning and understanding, not correctness or the end product.	• Process Feedback • Feedback Loops • Specific Feedback • Providing Hints
Language Modeling. Language Modeling captures the quality and amount of the teacher's use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques during individual, small-group, and large-group interactions with students. Components of high-quality language modeling include self and parallel talk, open-ended questions, repetition, expansion/extension, and use of advanced language.	• Frequent Conversation • Student-Initiated Language • Open-Ended Questions • Repetition and Extension • Self and Parallel Talk • Advanced Language
Student Engagement	
Dimension	**Indicators**
Student Engagement. This dimension captures the degree to which all children in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity presented or facilitated by the teacher. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is of note in this dimension.	• Active versus Passive Engagement • Sustained Engagement

*Source: CLASS Manual, Preschool Version

Scoring the CLASS

The CLASS requires the observer to select a score for each of the 11 dimensions listed in Exhibit 3.1, based upon the degree to which behavioral, emotional, and physical markers are observed

and indicative of the extent to which each dimension characterizes the classroom, rated from 1 (minimally characteristic) to 7 (highly characteristic). CLASS observations consist of 3 or more observation cycles. Each cycle includes a 20-minute observation period and a 10-minute period to record codes. To select a rating for each dimension, the observer must make judgments based upon the ranges of frequency, intention, and tone of interpersonal and individual behavior during the observation time.

For the *Year 2 PFA Process Evaluation*, the CLASS observations ran the entire length of the PFA session (approximately 3 to 3.5 hours), with the exception of outdoor play time, during which observations were not conducted.[14] At least four observation cycles (20-minute observations and 10-minute recording periods) were conducted at each program. When multiple teachers were in a classroom, teacher behaviors were weighted according to the number of children they worked with, the amount of time spent with children, and their responsibility for activities. Similar to the ECERS-R, the CLASS is meant to reflect the typical experiences for a child in the classroom.

CLASS scoring is completed immediately after each observation cycle. Each dimension is rated using a seven-point scale. Dimension descriptions at the "low," "mid," and "high" range are included in the CLASS manual and are used to select a rating. For example, after a 20-minute observation period that is guided by the indicators for each dimension as shown in Exhibit 3.2 and in which notes are taken, the observer reads through the "low," "mid," and "high" range classroom descriptions that are included in the CLASS manual for each dimension. Once the appropriate level is selected, the observer then rates the dimension with a specific score (for "low" classrooms, a 1 or a 2; for "mid," a 3, 4, or 5, etc.). The following rating scale provides guidance to observers in selecting the appropriate score for each dimension.

Exhibit 3.2. CLASS Rating Scale

Low		Mid			High	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The low range description fits the classroom/ teacher very well. All, or almost all, relevant indicators in the low range are present.	The low range description mostly fits the classroom/ teacher but there are one or two indicators that are in the mid range.	The mid range description mostly fits the classroom/ teacher but there are one or two indicators in the low range.	The mid range description fits the classroom/ teacher very well. All, or almost all, relevant indicators in the mid range are present.	The mid range description mostly fits the classroom/ teacher but there are one or two indicators in the high range.	The high range description mostly fits the classroom/ teacher but there are one or two indicators in the mid range.	The high range description fits the classroom/ teacher very well.

*Source: CLASS Manual, Preschool Version

San Mateo CLASS Scores

In 2006-2007, SMCOE contracted with five agencies to provide PFA – three continuing programs from 2005-2006 and two new programs. In consultation with SMCOE, AIR selected classrooms for observation from among the three PFA programs in their second full year of PFA implementation. The two new PFA providers, operating for the first time in 2006-2007, were not

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[14] The developers of the CLASS do not recommend conducting observations during outdoor play times, given it can be difficult to hear and observe staff-child interactions while teachers move around the outdoor space.

included in the classroom observations. Two or three classrooms from each of the three continuing PFA programs were selected, based on the size of the program (number of PFA classrooms operated). Classrooms were randomly selected within each of the three agencies.

Exhibit 3.3 shows average CLASS scores for the eight San Mateo classrooms observed, including the average observation cycle scores and overall average scores for each dimension, standard deviations, the range in actual scores across classrooms, and the average domain scores. Throughout the report, dimension scores are discussed in terms of where they fall in the CLASS rating scale (low, mid, or high). For this purpose, the score for each dimension was rounded; scores of 1–2 fall into the low range, scores of 3–5 fall into the mid range, and scores of 6–7 fall into the high range.

Exhibit 3.3. San Mateo Average PFA CLASS Scores

		Average Cycle 1	Average Cycle 2	Average Cycle 3	Average Cycle 4	**Overall Average**	SD	Min-Max	**Average Domain Scores**
Emotional Support	Positive Climate	6.13	6.00	5.88	6.25	**6.06**	.22	5.75-6.25	**Emotional Support** **6.2**
	Negative Climate	1.00	1.13	1.13	1.00	**1.06**	.12	1.00-1.25	
	Teacher Sensitivity	5.88	6.00	5.38	6.13	**5.84**	.42	5.00-6.50	
	Regard for Student Perspectives	5.75	5.75	5.75	6.50	**5.94**	.68	4.75-6.75	
Classroom Management	Behavior Management	6.13	5.50	5.00	5.75	**5.59**	.80	4.00-6.50	**Classroom Management** **5.1**
	Productivity	5.75	5.88	5.00	5.38	**5.50**	.68	4.25-6.25	
	Instructional Learning Formats	4.75	4.38	3.88	4.38	**4.34**	.68	3.00-5.25	
Instructional Support	Concept Development	2.88	2.63	2.13	2.88	**2.63**	.93	1.25-3.75	**Instructional Support** **3.8**
	Quality of Feedback	4.00	3.13	2.75	4.75	**3.66**	.73	3.00-4.75	
	Language Modeling	5.00	4.88	4.38	5.75	**5.00**	.77	3.75-5.75	
Student Engagement	Student Engagement	6.00	5.63	5.75	5.88	**5.81**	.61	4.50-6.50	**Student Engagement** **5.8**

As shown in Exhibit 3.4, the highest average domain score across San Mateo classrooms was 6.2 for *Emotional Support*, which falls in the "high" range on the CLASS continuum, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.8), *Classroom Management* (5.1), and *Instructional Support* (3.8).

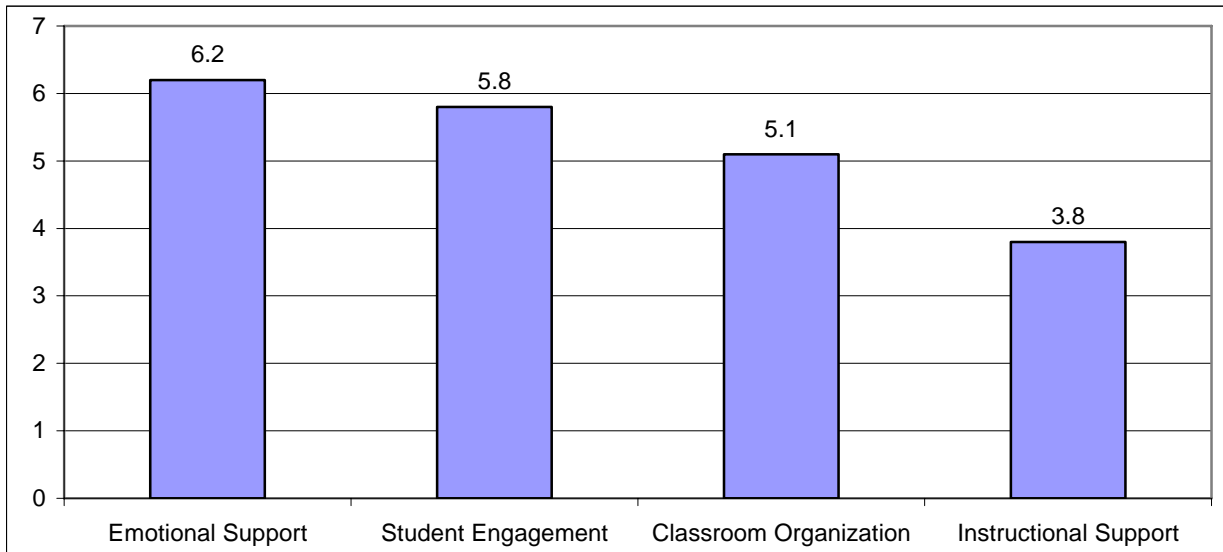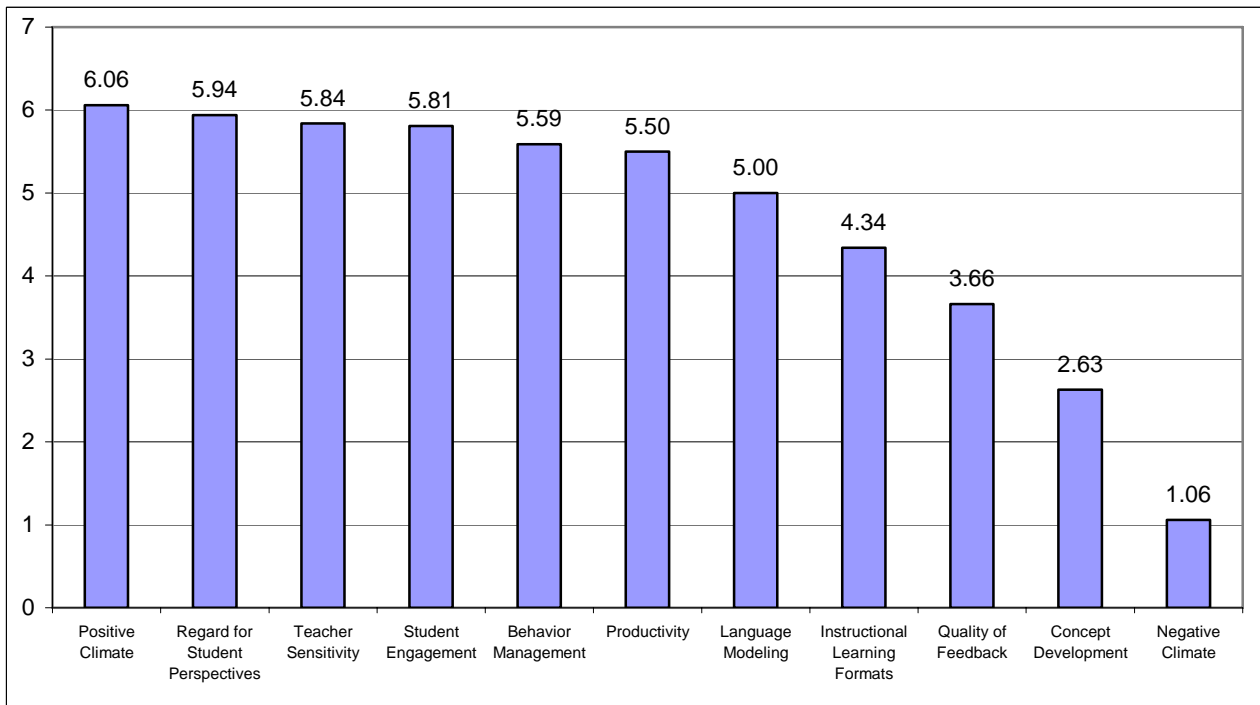**Exhibit 3.4. San Mateo Average CLASS Domain Scores**

Exhibit 3.5 displays the average scores for each of the 11 dimensions across the observations conducted in San Mateo PFA classrooms.

Exhibit 3.5. San Mateo Average CLASS Dimension Scores

Summary of San Mateo CLASS Scores, by Domain

Emotional Support. The *Emotional Support* domain reflects the emotional tone of the classroom, and includes measures of the classroom's positive and negative climate, the extent to which teachers are sensitive to children, and their regard for children's perspectives (e.g., focus on child autonomy and child-initiated activities). Within the *Emotional Support* domain, the *Positive Climate* dimension received the highest average rating (6.06). Similarly, the *Negative Climate* dimension received almost a perfect average score of "1" (*Negative Climate* is the only dimension in which a low score indicates higher quality). *Teacher Sensitivity* and *Regard for Student Perspectives* were scored highly as well, at 5.84 and 5.94 respectively.

Exhibit 3.6. San Mateo: Average CLASS Dimension Scores for the Emotional Support Domain
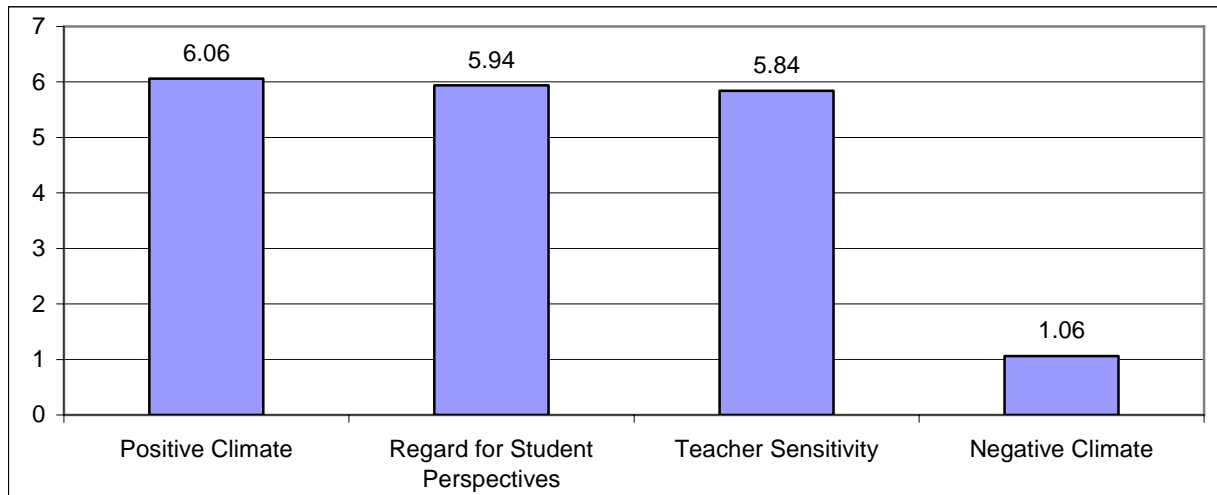
Exhibit 3.7 indicates the number of San Mateo PFA classrooms that fall in the low, mid, and high range for each of the four dimensions that make up the *Emotional Support* domain. As shown, all eight of the sampled classrooms received a score in the high range for *Positive Climate*, all eight received low range scores for *Negative Climate*, and seven of the eight received high range scores for *Teacher Sensitivity* and *Regard for Student Perspectives*. Overall, San Mateo PFA teaching staff provide strong emotional support for children, with seven of the eight classrooms scoring in the highest level of quality across the four dimensions that make up *Emotional Support*.

Exhibit 3.7. Number of San Mateo Classrooms in the Low, Mid, and High Ranges for Emotional Support on the CLASS
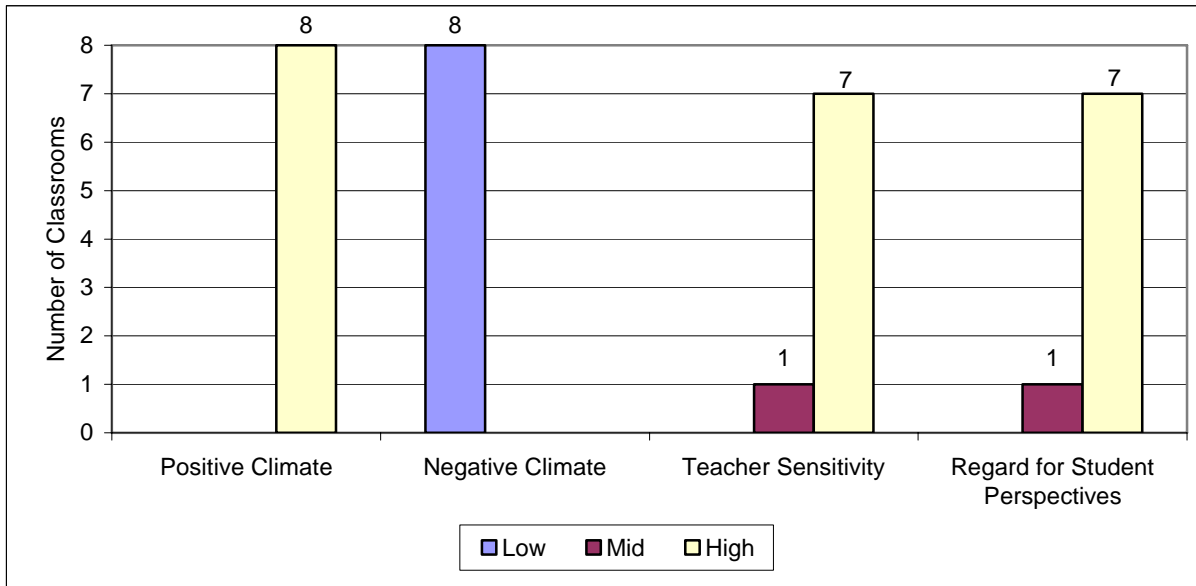
Student Engagement. The *Student Engagement* domain focuses on the degree to which all children in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity presented or facilitated by the teacher. The *Student Engagement* domain consists of one dimension, of the same name. The *Student Engagement* domain received an average score of 5.8. Examining the number of classrooms that fell into the low, mid, and high ranges of the CLASS system, seven of the eight sampled classrooms received scores that fell in the high range, with only one classroom receiving a mid-range score.

Classroom Management. The *Classroom Management* domain reflects the effectiveness of teachers' behavior management strategies, the extent to which children have opportunities to learn through the preschool session, and what the teachers do to maximize children's engagement and ability to learn. Within *Classroom Management*, the *Behavior Management* dimension received the highest average score (5.59), followed by *Productivity* (5.50), and *Instructional Learning Formats* (4.34).

Exhibit 3.8. San Mateo: Average CLASS Dimension Scores for the Classroom Management Domain
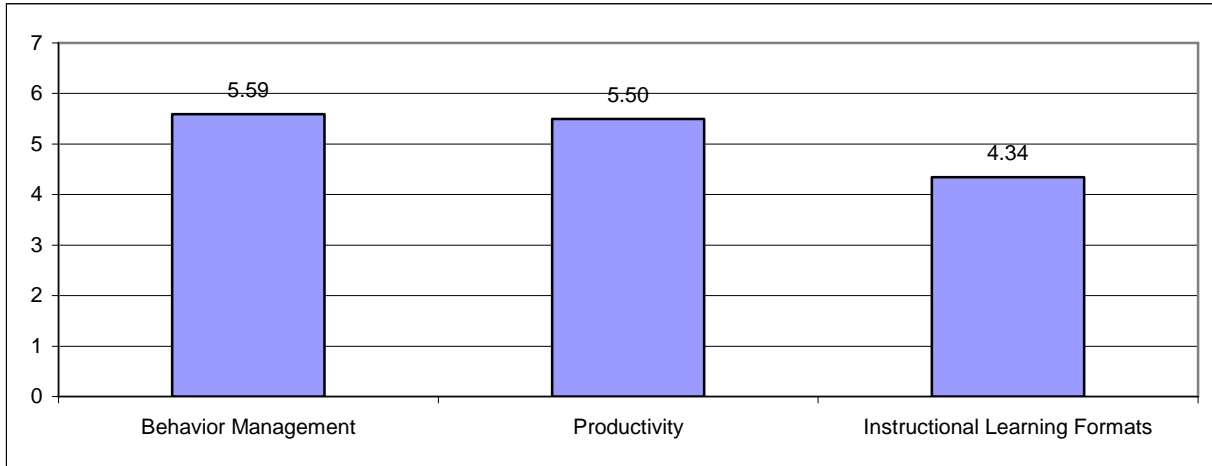
Exhibit 3.9 shows the number of San Mateo classrooms in the mid or high ranges for *Classroom Management* (none scored in the low range). Most of the programs received a high-range score for *Behavior Management* and *Productivity* (six and five classrooms, respectively). All eight classrooms received a mid-range score for *Instructional Learning Formats*, which measures what the teacher does either during the lesson or in providing activities, centers, and materials to maximize students' engagement and ability to learn.

Exhibit 3.9. Number of San Mateo Classrooms in Low, Mid, and High Ranges for Classroom Management on the CLASS
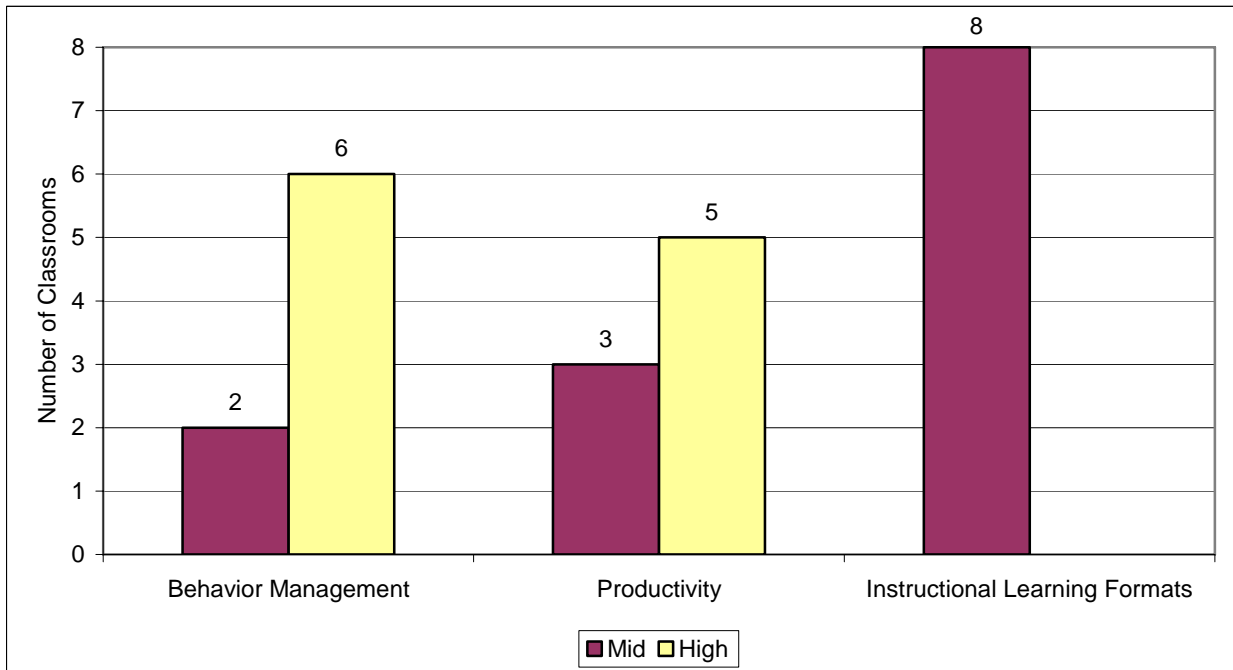
Instructional Support. The lowest average domain score across PFA classrooms is *Instructional Support*; however, it is important to note that the average total score for this domain falls into the "mid" category on the CLASS rating scale (3.8). *Instructional Support* reflects the teachers' use of discussions and activities to promote children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition, the degree to which teachers' feedback to children is focused on expanding learning, rather than "correctness," and the quality and amount of teachers' use of language stimulation and language facilitation. *Instructional Support* included the lowest-scoring dimension – the *Concept Development* dimension, which received a 2.63. *Concept Development* includes the extent to which the teachers promote children's higher-order thinking and cognition versus rote learning, analysis and reasoning, hypothesis testing, integration with previous concepts, and connections to the real world. Among the two other dimensions in the *Instructional Support* domain, *Language Modeling* received a rating of 5.00, followed by *Quality of Feedback* with 3.66, both in the "mid" range. *Quality of Feedback* had the most varied scores, ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 6 on the rating scale.

Exhibit 3.10. San Mateo: Average CLASS Dimension Scores for the Instructional Support Domain
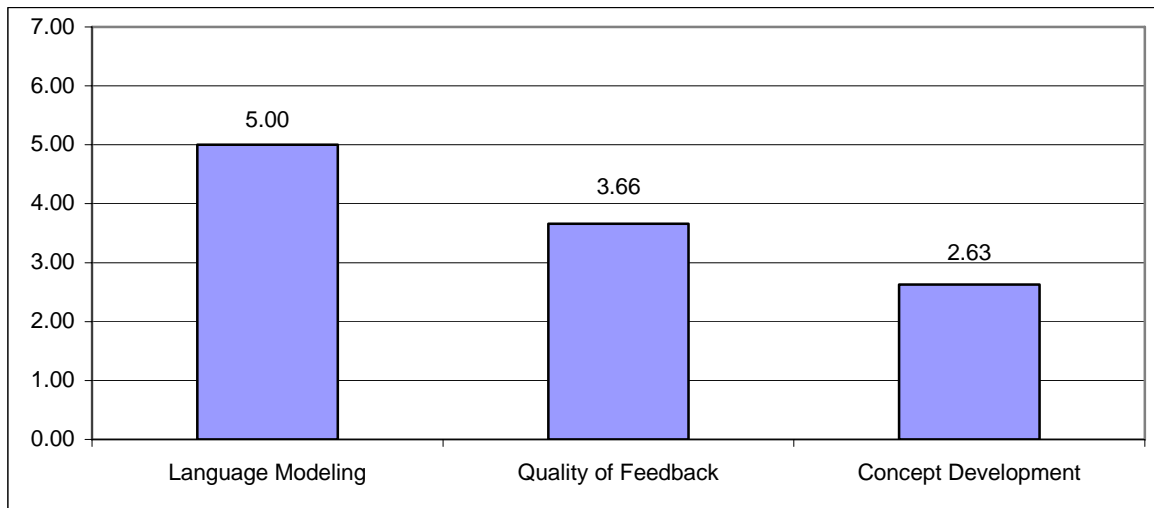
Three of the eight classrooms received a score in the low range for *Concept Development*, with the remaining five programs scoring in the mid range. All eight classrooms received a mid-range score for *Quality of Feedback*. In regard to *Language Modeling*, five classrooms received a mid-range score and three classrooms received a high-range score.

Exhibit 3.11. Number of San Mateo Classrooms in the Low, Mid, and High Range for Instructional Support
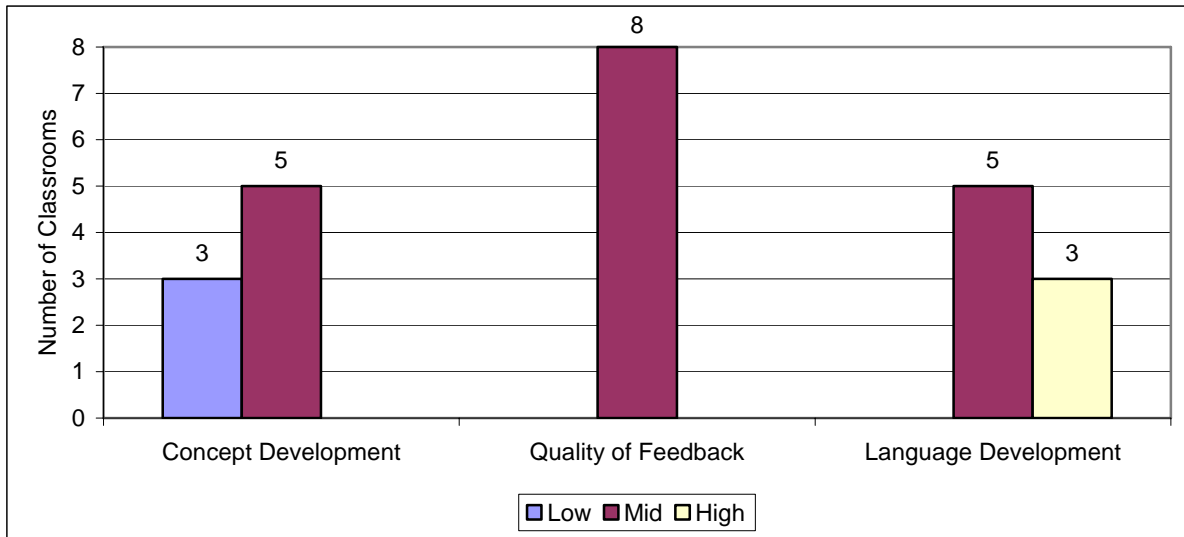
Summary of San Mateo CLASS Findings

Overall, most of the eight sampled classrooms in San Mateo scored in the mid or mid-to-high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. Eight of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher. The descriptions of low, mid, and high-range classrooms for each dimension are excerpted verbatim from the CLASS Preschool Manual (Pianta, La Paro, and Hamre, in press). Given the nature of the CLASS scoring continuum, verbatim descriptors from the CLASS manual were used to ensure the explanations for the San Mateo ratings accurately reflected the intent of the CLASS tool.

Emotional Support. PFA classrooms in San Mateo have strong positive climates in which teachers regard children's perspectives and are sensitive to children's needs. Seven of the eight classrooms received high-range scores (6 or 7) across the dimensions included in the *Emotional Support* domain. Based on the CLASS descriptors, in high-range *Emotional Support* classrooms there are many indications that the teachers enjoy warm, supportive relationships with children. There is frequent joint smiling and laughter, with the teacher consistently demonstrating respect for the children. Children are also clearly positively connected to each other. Teachers are consistently responsive to children, notice when children need extra support or assistance, provide activities and speak at levels consistent with the needs and abilities of children, and are effective in addressing children's questions, concerns, or problems. The typical teacher is flexible in her plans and/or "goes with the flow" of children's ideas and organizes instruction around children's interests. Teachers make an effort to maximize children's abilities to be autonomous within the context of both structured and unstructured lessons and activities. There are many opportunities for children's expression, and children have clear and real responsibilities and roles within the classroom. Teachers actively encourage children to interact with one another, and children have freedom of movement and placement during activities.

Student Engagement. Seven of the eight sampled classrooms in San Mateo received scores that fell in the high range of the CLASS rating system for *Student Engagement*. Based on CLASS descriptors, children in a typical high-level classroom for *Student Engagement* are actively engaged – frequently volunteering information or insights, responding to teacher prompts, and/or actively manipulating materials. In addition, high engagement is sustained throughout different activities and lessons.

Classroom Management. The three dimensions within *Classroom Management* received strong ratings, albeit slightly lower than those for *Emotional Support* and *Student Engagement*. Most classrooms scored in the high range for the dimensions *Behavior Management* and *Productivity*, with only two and three classrooms scoring in the mid-range for these dimensions, respectively. *Behavior Management* focuses on the teacher's ability to use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehaver. In the high-range *Behavior Management* classroom, teachers consistently take a proactive stance to behavior management issues, monitor the classroom and intervene before problems occur, and consistently use effective strategies to redirect minor misbehavior. Rules and behavioral expectations are clearly stated or understood by all members of the classroom community. Behavior management does not take time away from other activities. Teachers use praise that increases the chances that desirable behavior will be repeated and undesirable behavior will be eliminated. In the mid-range *Behavior Management* classroom, there is less consistency in the implementation of these types of effective strategies. For example, sometimes the teachers take steps to prevent misbehavior (e.g., during circle time), but at other periods they are much more reactive (e.g., during free play or center times).

Productivity considers how well the teachers manage instructional time and routines so that children have the opportunity to learn. For example, in the three PFA classrooms that received mid-range *Productivity* ratings, most of the time there are clear activities provided for children, but learning time is not consistently maximized. At times, the teachers structure classroom routines so that learning time is maximized, but at other times, fail to do so. Transitions often take too long or are too frequent. The teachers are mostly prepared for activities, but take some time away from instruction in last-minute preparation. Finally, the teachers generally stay on task in a mid-range productive classroom, but may occasionally, or briefly, allow distractions to interfere with time for learning. For the five PFA classrooms that scored in the high range for *Productivity*, the CLASS descriptors state that there are consistently clear activities for children and time for learning is maximized. The classroom resembles a "well-oiled machine" where everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it. Transitions are quick and efficient and the teachers are fully prepared for activities and lessons. No more time than is necessary is spent on managerial tasks.

In regard to the third dimension within the *Classroom Management* domain, *Instructional Learning Formats*, all eight San Mateo PFA classrooms scored in the mid-range on the CLASS rating scale. Based on the CLASS descriptors, the teachers in a mid-range classroom for *Instructional Learning Formats* sometimes facilitate awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of materials and information but do not consistently do so. As a function of teachers' efforts, children may be engaged and/or volunteering during periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not focused on the activity or lesson. At times the teachers are active facilitators of activities but at other times they merely provide activities and materials for

the children. Finally, the teachers may use a variety of materials and present through a variety of modalities, but their use of them is not consistently effective or interesting to the students.

Instructional Support. Within the domain of *Instructional Support*, San Mateo classrooms all fell within the mid range for *Quality of Feedback*, which assesses the degree to which teachers' feedback to children expands learning and understanding, rather than focuses on "correctness" or a specific answer or "end product." In a mid-range *Quality of Feedback* classroom, teachers sometimes focus on the process of learning but at other times focus much more on correctness when providing feedback to children. There are occasional feedback loops – back and forth exchanges between the teacher and children – but at other times feedback is more perfunctory. Teachers' comments and praise are sometimes specific and other times much more general (e.g., sometimes the teacher appears to individualize her feedback to specific children or contexts of learning, while other times relies on global statements such as "nice work").

In regard to the *Language Modeling* dimension, three of the eight classrooms scored in the high range, with the remaining classrooms falling in the mid range. The primary difference between a mid- and high-range *Language Modeling* classroom is the consistency with which teachers implement language stimulation and facilitation techniques. In the high-range classroom, teachers often converse with students. Although there is a mix of teacher and student talk, there is a clear and intentional effort by the teacher to promote children's language use. The teachers ask many open-ended questions and often repeat or extend children's responses. Teachers consistently map their own actions and the children's actions through language and description. Teachers often use advanced language with children. For example, in a high-range *Language Modeling* classroom, open-ended statements are ones that invite more elaborate responses, such as "Tell me about that," or "Share your story with the group." Often these are questions for which the answer is unknown, such as, "What do you think?" or "How do you know?" In a mid-range *Language Modeling* classroom, the teachers sometimes ask questions that require students to put together language to express an idea or reason, or think deeply about their response. However, the majority of questions are not open-ended enough to encourage the students to use complex language and thinking.

The *Concept Development* dimension received the lowest average score across PFA classrooms. Three of the eight classrooms fell in the low range, and five classrooms in the mid range. In the low-range *Concept Development* classroom, based on CLASS descriptors, activities and discussions focus on getting children to give correct answers, or other forms of rote learning or recitation. For example, the preponderance of teaching is focused on getting children to remember facts and practice basic skills. Teachable moments that could develop children's thinking are missed as the teacher moves through the activity, with the focus on facts and recall and repetition, not the process of learning. For example, in this classroom, while reading a book about farm animals, the teacher only asks questions about what sounds the animals make and the color of animals; she does not ask questions about the similarities and differences of animals that live on farms and animals that may be in the zoo or about similar and different characteristics of animals, such as "How are a cow and a goat alike?". The teachers do not typically use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. The teachers do not use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. The teachers do not typically link

current activities to previous concepts, or concepts are presented independent of children's previous learning. Teachers do not routinely relate concepts to the real world of students' lives.

Five classrooms fell into the mid range of *Concept Development*. In the mid-range classroom for *Concept Development*, activities and discussions sometimes focus on getting children to give the right answer and other times on developing high-order thinking skills and cognition. Teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. For example, when reading a book, the teacher asks children what they think may come next, but does not consistently ask follow-up questions about why children think that or how they made their decisions about what could happen next in the story. Opportunities for analysis and reasoning are either interspersed with more rote learning or these opportunities do not require complex thinking or follow-up. The teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. Teachers sometimes link current activities to previous concepts or activities and at other times present concepts independent of children's previous learning. Teachers make some attempts to relate concepts to the real world of children's lives.

Comparison CLASS Data

Given that the CLASS is a relatively new instrument, there are limited data available against which to compare PFA CLASS scores. However, the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) has conducted two major studies of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs: the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten (which included California) and the State-Wide Early Education Programs Study (SWEEP)[15] that have used the CLASS. Among the families served by the preschool programs in these studies, most (55%) had an annual income less than or equal to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines for their family's size. Families were asked what language(s) were spoken at home; in some cases more than one language was spoken. English was the most frequently reported home language (86%), followed by Spanish (26%). Thirty-five percent of the children were White, 28% Latino, and 22% African American. Among the teachers, 73% had a bachelor's degree or above.

Compared to the NCEDL studies, the profile of San Mateo PFA teachers and families is somewhat different, with more low-income families and a significantly lower proportion of teachers with BA degrees or above. San Mateo comparison data indicate that only 13% of all families served by PFA had incomes that exceeded any state or federal subsidy income guidelines and 87% had annual incomes below $40,000. In most cases more than one language was spoken at home, Spanish being the more frequently reported at 67%, followed by English at 27% and 6% reported speaking a language other than English or Spanish at home. Eighty-five percent of children enrolled were Latino, 4% were African American, 3% Pacific Islander, 2% Asian and 2% White. Among the teachers, 36% reported holding a bachelor's degree or above.

The data in Exhibit 3.12 include the average CLASS scores from the combined MS and SWEEP studies (n=694), compared to the average scores for San Mateo observations (n=8). Only eight of the 11 CLASS dimensions are listed – the MS and SWEEP studies used an older version of the

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[15] The eleven states included across both studies included: California, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin.

CLASS that did not include the dimensions for *Regard for Student Perspectives*, *Language Modeling*, and *Student Engagement*.

Exhibit 3.12. MS/SWEEP and SM PFA CLASS Scores
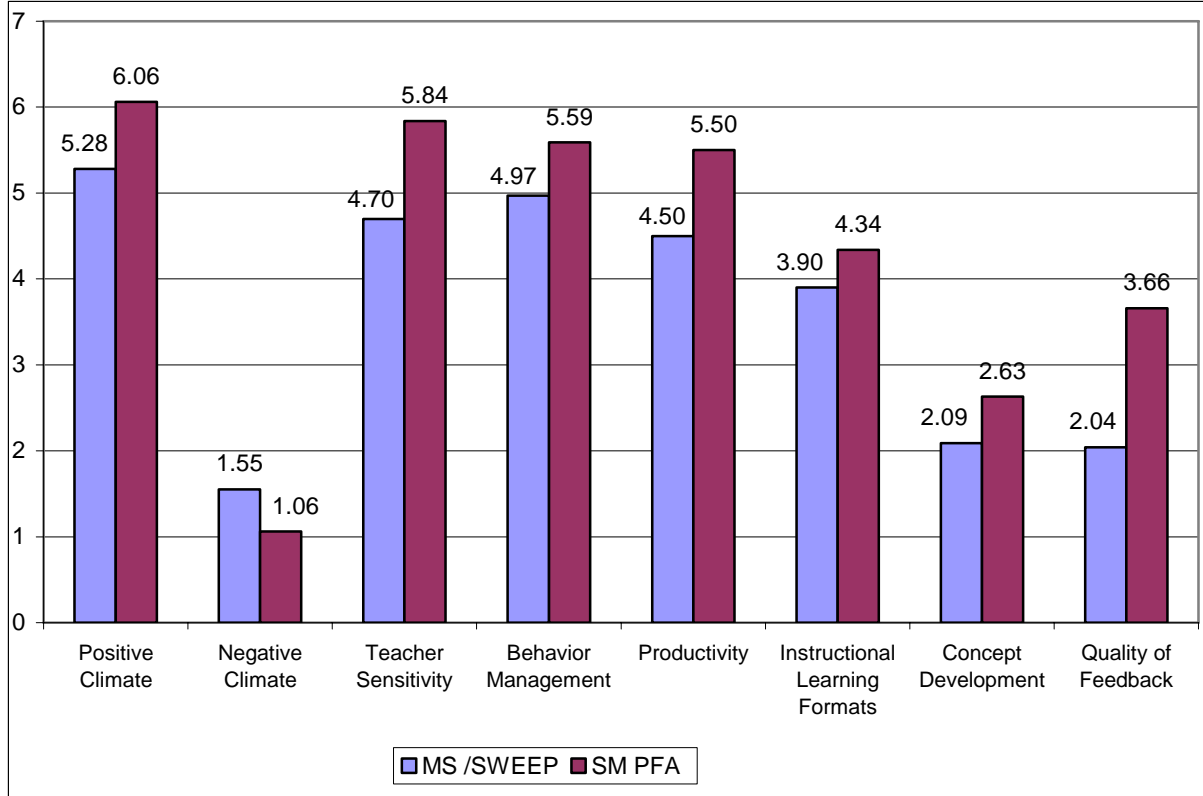
In every dimension listed in Exhibit 3.12, the San Mateo PFA sampled classrooms received higher ratings compared to the MS/SWEEP data (with the exception of *Negative Climate*, in which San Mateo classrooms received a lower score, indicating higher quality). San Mateo ratings ranged from 0.44 (*Instructional Learning Formats*) to 1.14 (*Teacher Sensitivity*) points higher than the MS/SWEEP data. In regard to the one dimension that received an average score in the low range, *Concept Development*, the San Mateo rating was still higher than the average for the MS/SWEEP studies, 2.63 compared to 2.09.

San Francisco CLASS Scores

In 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco provided funds to 24 agencies to operate a total of 89 PFA classrooms. For the classroom observations, a stratified random sample was selected among San Francisco PFA center-based classrooms in order to:

1) Examine CLASS and ECERS-E scores across a large sample of PFA classrooms
2) Examine differences in CLASS and ECERS-E scores between public and non-public PFA classrooms,
3) Examine differences in scores between subsidized and unsubsidized PFA classrooms, and

4) Collect baseline information for a potential longitudinal analysis of PFA classrooms in which teaching staff are enrolled in a bilingual BA completion program at San Francisco State University, partially funded by First 5 San Francisco as a strategy to promote BA achievement among preschool teachers.

The sampling plan included six "non-public, unsubsidized" classrooms, and a random sample of public classrooms from the remaining agencies in proportion to their representation in the population. In addition, the eight PFA classrooms in which a BA completion program participant worked were included. A total of 32 of the 86 classrooms comprised the sample for the CLASS and ECERS-E observations.

Exhibit 3.13. San Francisco Classroom Observation Sample

Funding Type	Number of center-based programs in universe	Number of classrooms in universe	Number of center-based programs in sample	Number of classrooms in sample
Non-Public	18	45	12	19
Public	3	41	3	13
Total	21	86	15	32
Unsubsidized	6	7	6	6
Subsidized	15	79	9	26
Total	21	86	15	32

San Francisco CLASS Results

The following table displays average CLASS observation cycle and total dimension and domain scores across the 32 sampled PFA classrooms, standard deviations, and the range of scores across the observation cycles. Four observation cycles were conducted in each program.

Exhibit 3.14. Average San Francisco CLASS Scores

		Average Score Cycle 1	Average Score Cycle 2	Average Score Cycle 3	Average Score Cycle 4	Overall Average	SD	Min-Max	Average Domain Scores
Emotional Support	Positive Climate	6.31	6.34	6.09	6.00	**6.19**	.70	4.00-7.00	**Emotional Support** **6.0**
	Negative Climate	1.00	1.19	1.31	1.47	**1.24**	.45	1.00-300	
	Teacher Sensitivity	5.81	5.50	5.34	5.28	**5.48**	.88	3.50-7.00	
	Regard for Student Perspectives	5.75	5.84	5.69	5.28	**5.64**	.78	3.50-7.00	
Classroom Management	Behavior Management	6.34	5.94	5.66	5.66	**5.90**	.67	4.50-7.00	**Classroom Management** **5.2**
	Productivity	5.97	5.50	5.59	5.50	**5.64**	.88	4.00-7.00	
	Instructional Learning Formats	4.22	3.91	3.97	3.69	**3.90**	.90	2.25-5.50	
Instructional Support	Concept Development	3.09	2.72	2.97	2.72	**2.88**	.90	1.25-4.50	**Instructional Support** **3.7**
	Quality of Feedback	3.50	3.47	3.72	2.91	**3.40**	.68	2.00-4.75	
	Language Modeling	4.66	4.88	4.78	4.47	**4.70**	.93	3.00-6.25	
Student Engagement	Student Engagement	6.31	5.81	5.78	5.88	**5.95**	.51	5.00-7.00	**Student Engagement** **5.9**

As shown in Exhibit 3.15, across all selected classrooms in San Francisco, the *Emotional Support* domain received the highest score (6.0), which is in the "high" range of the CLASS rating continuum, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.9), *Classroom Management* (5.2), and *Instructional Support* (3.7).

Exhibit 3.15. Average CLASS Domain Scores Across San Francisco PFA Classrooms
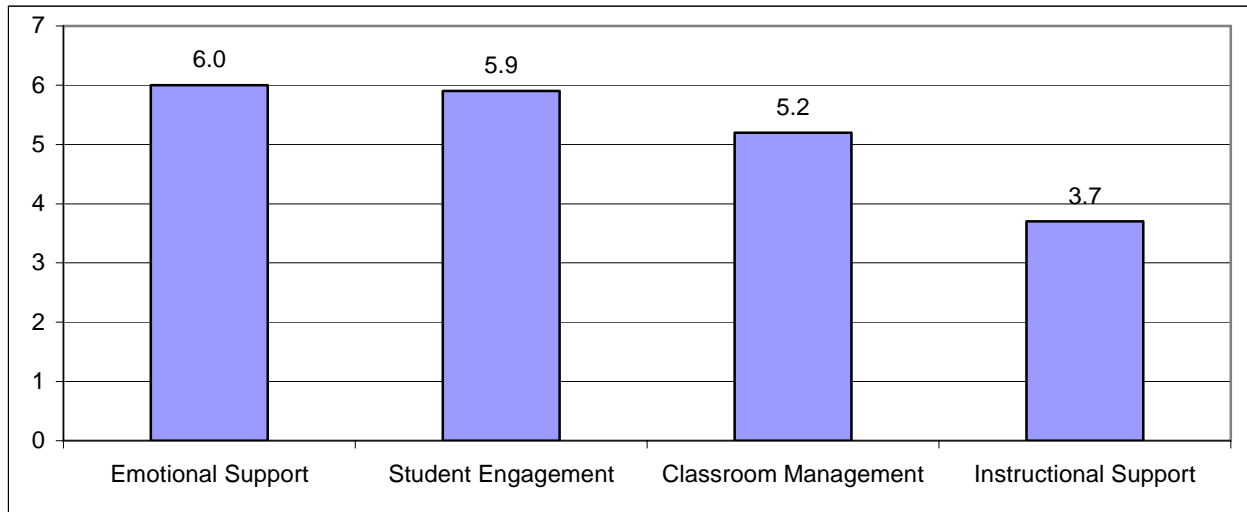
Exhibit 3.16 displays the average San Francisco classroom scores for each of the 11 dimensions that make up the four domain areas shown in Exhibit 3.15.

Exhibit 3.16. San Francisco Average Dimension Scores
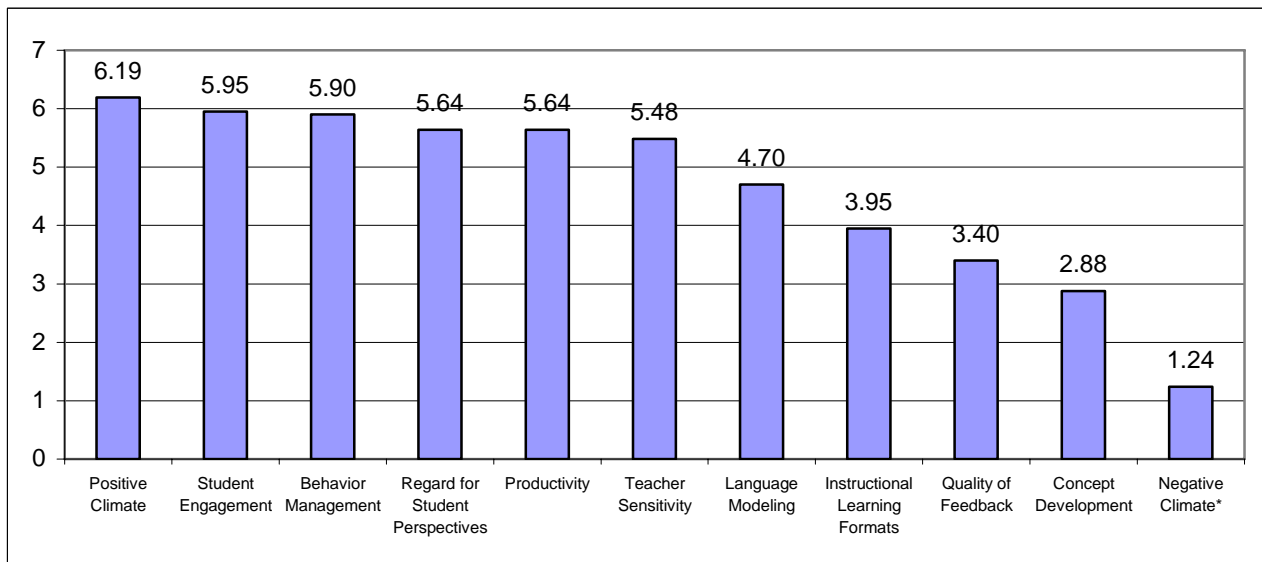
*The rating scale for Negative Climate is inversed – lower scores indicate higher quality.

Emotional Support. This domain reflects the emotional tone of the classroom, and includes measures of the positive and negative climate of the classroom, the extent to which teachers are sensitive to children, and their regard for children's perspectives (e.g., focus on child autonomy and child-initiated activities). Within the domain of *Emotional Support* – and across all other domains – the *Positive Climate* dimension received the highest average dimension score, 6.19. The dimension *Negative Climate* received the lowest score, 1.24 (*Negative Climate* is the only dimension in which a low score indicates higher quality). *Negative Climate* average scores increased slightly across cycles – in other words, a slightly (albeit still very low) higher negative

climate was documented as the preschool session progressed over time. High mid-range actual scores were received for the remaining dimensions in the *Emotional Support* domain (5.48 for *Teacher Sensitivity* and 5.64 for *Regard for Student Perspective*). Exhibit 3.17 shows the average scores for the four dimensions that comprised the *Emotional Support* domain among San Francisco PFA classrooms.

Exhibit 3.17. San Francisco: Average CLASS Dimension Scores for the Emotional Support Domain
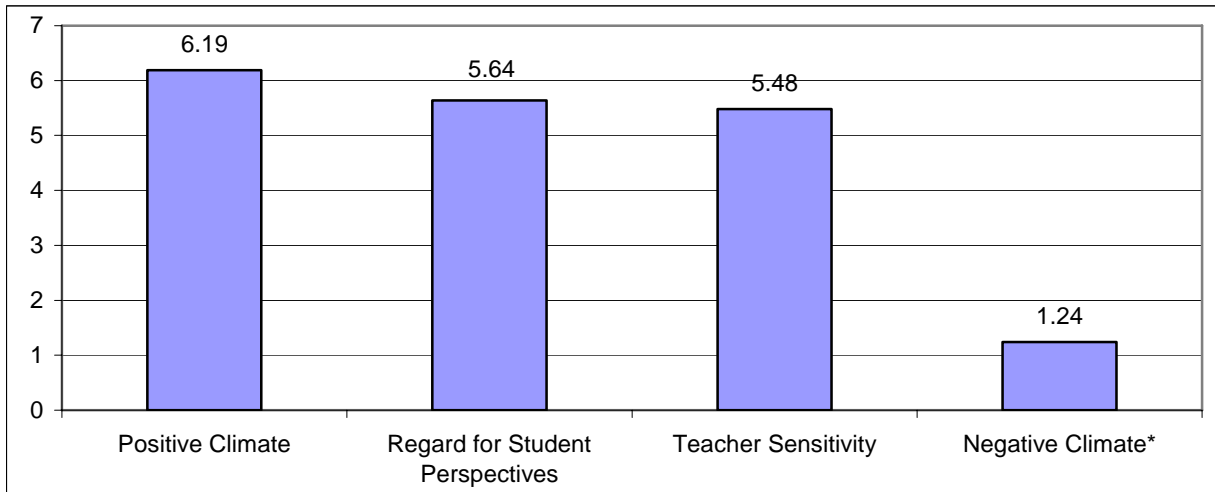
*The rating scale for Negative Climate is inversed – lower scores indicate higher quality.

Exhibit 3.18 shows the distribution of PFA classrooms across the low, mid, and high ranges for the four dimensions comprising the *Emotional Support* domain. Classroom scores for each dimension were rounded; scores of 1–2 fall into the low range, scores of 3–5 fall into the mid range, and scores of 6–7 fall into the high range. As shown, the vast majority of classrooms provided a strong positive climate for children. Somewhat less than half of the programs fell into the mid range for *Teacher Sensitivity*, with the remaining classrooms scoring in the high range. Most classrooms – almost three-quarters – also scored in the high range for *Regard for Student Perspectives*.

Exhibit 3.18. Percentage of San Francisco PFA Classrooms in the Low, Mid, and High Range for Emotional Support
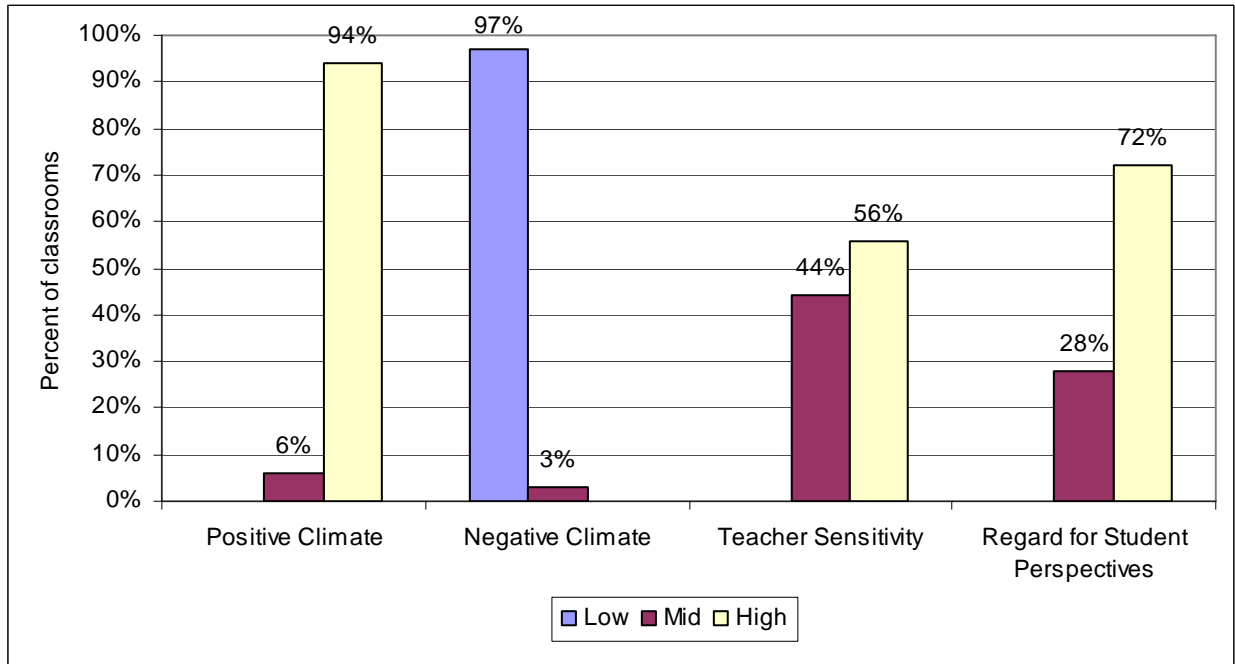
Student Engagement. The *Student Engagement* domain focuses on the degree to which all children in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity presented or facilitated by the teacher. The *Student Engagement* domain consists of only one dimension, of the same name. San Francisco PFA classrooms received an average score of 5.95. Ninety-one percent of programs fell into the high range for this domain, with only 9% scoring in the mid range.

Classroom Management. The *Classroom Management* domain reflects the effectiveness of teachers' behavior management strategies, the extent to which children have opportunities to learn through the preschool session, and what the teachers do to maximize children's engagement and ability to learn. Within the *Classroom Management* domain, the *Behavior Management* dimension received the highest average score (5.90), followed by *Productivity* (5.64) and *Instructional Learning Formats* (3.95). *Behavior Management* average scores decreased slightly from the first observation cycle (6.34) to the last observation cycle (5.66). This may be related to the trend observed across the *Negative Climate* dimension – as behavior management strategies are less effective over time, the negative climate of the classroom may increase. Exhibit 3.19 shows the average scores for the three dimensions that comprise the *Classroom Management* domain.

Exhibit 3.19. San Francisco: Average Dimension Scores for the Classroom Management Domain

Exhibit 3.20 shows the distribution of PFA classrooms that fall into the low, mid, and high ranges for the three dimensions that comprise the *Classroom Management* domain. As shown, most sampled PFA classrooms are characterized by effective behavior management strategies and high productivity. The vast majority of classrooms scored in the mid range for *Instructional Learning Formats.* This means that, in most classrooms, the teacher sometimes facilitates awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of materials and information but does not consistently do so. At times, the teacher is an active facilitator of activities but at other times he/she merely provides activities for the children.

Exhibit 3.20. Percentage of San Francisco Classrooms in Low, Mid, and High Ranges for Classroom Management
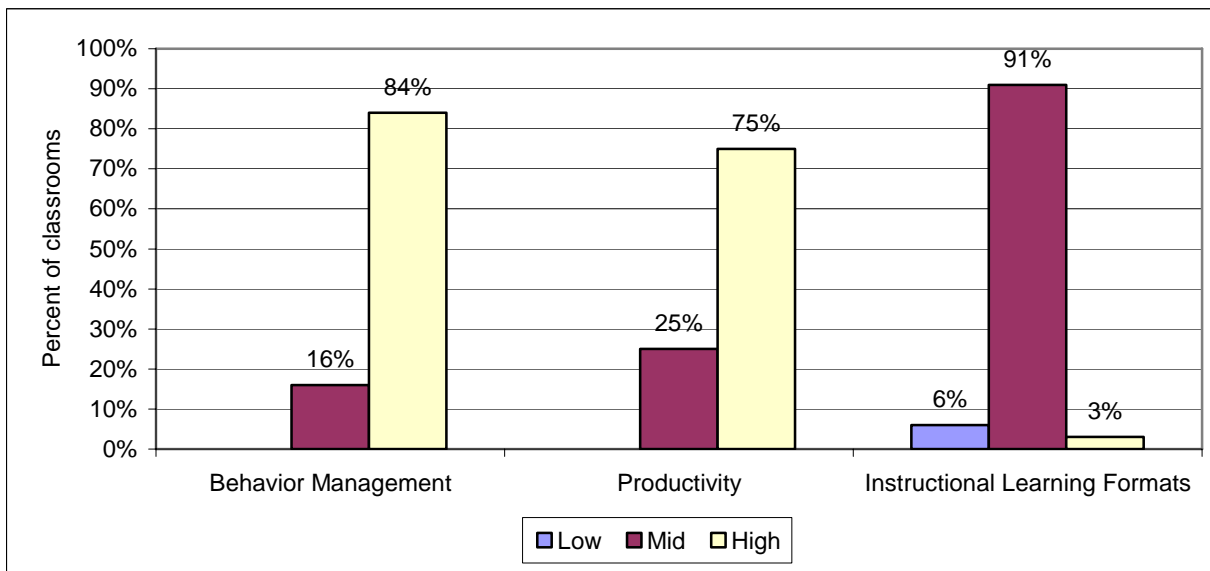
Instructional Support. The lowest average domain score (3.7) across PFA classrooms is *Instructional Support*; however, it is important to note that the average total score for this domain falls into the mid category on the CLASS rating scale. *Instructional Support* reflects the teachers' use of discussions and activities to promote children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition, the degree to which teacher feedback to children is focused on expanding learning, rather than "correctness," and the quality and amount of teachers' use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques during interactions with children Within *Instructional Support*, the highest scoring dimension was *Language Modeling* (4.70), followed by *Quality of Feedback* (3.40) and then *Concept Development* (2.88), which was the only dimension to receive an actual average score in the "low" range. Exhibit 3.21 shows the average scores for the three dimensions that comprise the *Instructional Support* domain.

Exhibit 3.21. San Francisco: Average Dimension Scores for the Instructional Support Domain
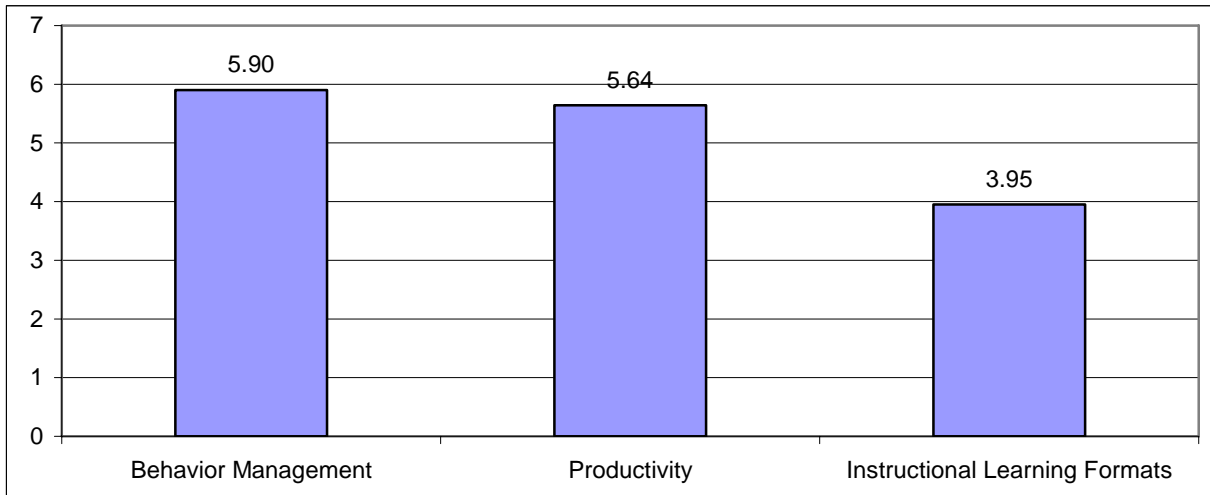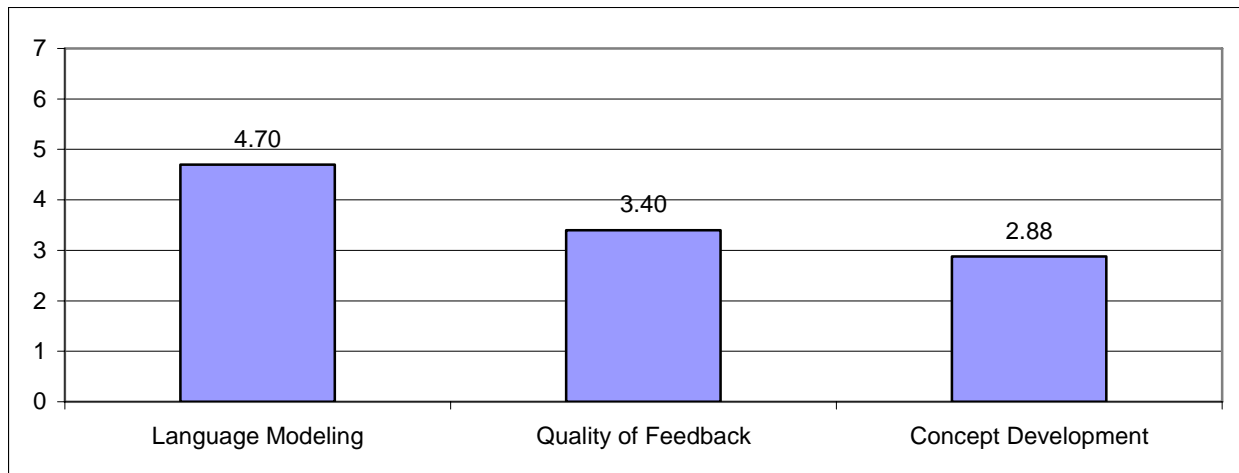

Exhibit 3.22 shows the percentage of San Francisco PFA classrooms that fall in the low, mid, and high ranges for the three dimensions that comprise the domain *Instructional Support*. As shown, the majority of classrooms received mid-range scores for *Language Modeling*, *Quality of Feedback*, and *Concept Development*. Twenty-five percent of programs scored in the high range for *Language Modeling*. In these classrooms, there is a high quality and amount of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques, such as self and parallel talk, open-ended questions, repetition, expansion/extension, and use of advanced language. Approximately a quarter of programs received a low-range score for *Concept Development*, indicating that typically activities and discussions in these classrooms focus on getting children to give the correct answer or other forms of rote learning or recitation, rather than on developing higher-order thinking skills and cognition.

Exhibit 3.22. Percentage of San Francisco Classrooms in Low, Mid, and High Ranges for Instructional Support

Summary of San Francisco CLASS Findings

Overall, most of the 32 sampled PFA classrooms in San Francisco scored in the mid to high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. Seven of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher. The descriptions of low, mid, and high-range classrooms for each dimension are excerpted verbatim from the CLASS Preschool Manual (Pianta, La Paro, and Hamre, in press). Given the nature of the CLASS scoring continuum, verbatim descriptors from the CLASS manual were used to ensure the explanations for the San Francisco ratings accurately reflected the intent of the CLASS tool.

Emotional Support. In general, the vast majority of PFA classrooms in San Francisco (94% scored in the high range for *Positive Climate*) are characterized by teachers that enjoy warm, supportive relationships with students. There is frequent joint smiling and laugher, genuine praise, and/or physical affection among the teachers and students. Teachers consistently demonstrate respect for the students and students are clearly positively connected to one another.

The majority of classrooms (72% scored in the high range for *Regard for Student Perspectives*) are characterized by teachers who are flexible in their plans and organize their instruction around students' interests. They make an effort to maximize children's abilities to be autonomous, and there are many opportunities for children's talk and expressions. Children have clear and real responsibilities and roles, and the teachers actively encourage children to interact with each other. In the mid-range *Regard for Student Perspectives* classroom, these strategies are not consistently implemented – for example, teachers may follow the children's lead during some periods and be more controlling during others. The teachers sometimes provide support for children's autonomy but at other times fail to do so. For instance, there may be cases in which the teacher conducts whole-group instruction, asking occasionally for children's input and

providing roles for one or two children, but most of the lesson is teacher driven and children are simply asked to respond to questions rather than having a more formative role.

In regard to *Teacher Sensitivity*, 44% of the sampled PFA classrooms scored in the mid range and 56% in the high range. The classrooms in the high range typically include teachers who are consistently responsive to students, consistently notice when children need extra support or assistance, provide activities or speak at levels consistent with children's needs and abilities, and are consistently effective in addressing children's questions, concerns, and problems. Children also appear comfortable approaching teachers for support or guidance, sharing ideas, and responding to teacher questions. In the mid-range classroom, typically these strategies are not implemented consistently. For example, a teacher may seem very attuned to students' academic needs, giving them appropriate tasks, supporting their learning, etc., but less aware of their emotional functioning. Or, a teacher may demonstrate the elements of responsiveness, but at times ignore children's bids or fail to elaborate upon them. For example, during a book reading the teacher ignores several comments that children make, such as "I have a dog like that" and "I see a big red balloon", but then during a group discussion following the book reading she is more responsive.

Student Engagement. The *Student Engagement* domain focuses on the degree to which all children in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity presented or facilitated by the teacher. Ninety-one percent of classrooms fell into the high range for this domain, with only 9% scoring in the mid range. Classrooms with a high score on *Student Engagement* are those in which children are actively engaged – frequently volunteering information or insights, responding to teacher prompts, and/or actively manipulating materials. High engagement is sustained throughout different activities and lessons. For example, children are clearly interested in what the teacher is saying or the current activity, as evidenced by their active participation, asking questions, and responding to prompts. While there may be one or two children who are disengaged or a short period of time when engagement is just passive, during the preponderance of time children in the classroom appear interested and involved in the activities that the teacher has planned.

Classroom Management. The *Classroom Management* domain reflects the effectiveness of teachers' behavior management strategies, the extent to which children have opportunities to learn through the preschool session, and what the teachers do to maximize children's engagement and ability to learn. Most of the sampled PFA classrooms fell into the high range for *Behavior Management* and *Productivity*. According to the high-range CLASS descriptors for *Behavior Management*, teachers consistently take a proactive stance to behavior management issues (e.g., teachers appear to be one step ahead of problems in the classroom, anticipating and preventing misbehavior). The teachers monitor the classroom and intervene before problems occur. Teachers consistently use effective strategies to redirect minor misbehavior, and rules are clearly stated or understood by all members of the classroom community. Behavior management does not take away time from other activities and teachers use praise that increases the chances that desirable behavior will be repeated and undesirable behavior is eliminated. There are few, if any, instances of student misbehavior.

In regard to high-range *Productivity*, there are consistently clear activities provided for children and time for learning is maximized. The classroom resembles a "well-oiled machine" where everybody knows what is expected of them and how to go about doing it. Transitions are quick and efficient and the teachers are fully prepared for activities and lessons. The teachers do not allow disruptions to compete with time for learning. No more time than is necessary is spent on managerial tasks.

The vast majority of classrooms (91%) scored in the mid range for *Instructional Learning Formats.* Based on the CLASS descriptors, the teachers in a mid-range classroom for *Instructional Learning Formats* sometimes facilitate awareness, exploration, inquiry, and utilization of materials and information but do not consistently do so. As a function of teachers' efforts, children may be engaged and/or volunteering during periods of time, but at other times their interest wanes and they are not focused on the activity or lesson. At times the teachers are active facilitators of activities but at other times they merely provide activities and materials for the children. Finally, the teachers may use a variety of materials and present through a variety of modalities, but their use of them is not consistently effective or interesting to the students.

Instructional Support. The lowest average domain score across PFA classrooms is *Instructional Support*; however, it is important to note that the average total score for this domain falls into the mid category on the CLASS rating scale. *Instructional Support* reflects the teachers' use of discussions and activities to promote children's higher-order thinking skills and cognition, the degree to which teacher feedback to children is focused on expanding learning, rather than "correctness," and the quality and amount of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques with children. The majority of classrooms received mid-range scores for *Language Modeling*, *Quality of Feedback*, and *Concept Development*.

According to the CLASS descriptors, in mid-range *Language Modeling* classrooms, teachers sometime converse with students. For example, teachers talk with children and appear genuinely interested in children. However, these exchanges do not consistently aid the children's language acquisition. Conversations between teachers and children are sometimes teacher-controlled and sometimes more child initiated. Teachers ask a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions and sometimes repeat or extend children's responses. The teachers occasionally map their own actions and the children's actions through language and descriptions. Finally, teachers sometimes use advanced language with students. Twenty-five percent of programs scored in the high range for *Language Modeling*. In these classrooms, there is a high quality and amount of teachers' use of language-stimulation and language-facilitation techniques, such as self and parallel talk, open-ended questions, repetition, expansion/extension, and use of advanced language.

Almost all of the sampled San Francisco classrooms (97%) fell in the mid range for *Quality of Feedback*. In a mid-range *Quality of Feedback* classroom, teachers sometimes focus on the process of learning but at other times focus much more on correctness when providing feedback to children. There are occasional feedback loops (back and forth exchanges between the teacher and children), but at other times feedback is more perfunctory. Teachers' comments and praise are sometimes specific and other times much more general (e.g., sometimes the teacher appears to individualize feedback to specific children or contexts of learning, but at other times relies on global statements such as "nice work").

Seventy-two percent of San Francisco PFA classrooms fell into the mid range of *Concept Development*. In the mid-range classroom for *Concept Development*, activities and discussions sometimes focus on getting children to give the right answer and other times on developing high-order thinking skills and cognition. Teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that encourage analysis and reasoning, such as sequencing, compare/contrast, and problem solving. For example, when reading a book, the teacher asks children what they think may come next, but she does not consistently ask follow up questions about why children think that or how they made their decisions about what could happen next in the story. Opportunities for analysis and reasoning are either interspersed with more rote learning or these opportunities do not require complex thinking or follow-up. The teachers occasionally use discussions and activities that promote prediction, experimentation, and brainstorming. Teachers sometimes link current activities to previous concepts or activities and at other times present concepts independent of children's previous learning. Teachers make some attempts to relate concepts to the real world of children's lives. Approximately a quarter of programs received a low-range score for *Concept Development*, indicating that typically activities and discussions in these classrooms focus on getting children to give the correct answer or other forms of rote learning or recitation, rather than on developing higher-order thinking skills and cognition.

Comparison Data

As noted in the San Mateo CLASS section of this report, the National Center for Early Development and Learning (NCEDL) has conducted two major studies of state-funded pre-kindergarten programs: the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten (which included California) and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) Study that used the CLASS as one of their measures. Among the families served by the preschool programs in the studies, most (55%) had an annual income less than or equal to 150% of the federal poverty guidelines for their family's size. Families were asked what language(s) were spoken at home; in some case more than one language was spoken. English was the most frequently reported home language (86%), followed by Spanish (26%). Thirty-five percent of the children were White, 28% Latino, and 22% African American. Among the teachers, 73% had a bachelor's degree or above. In comparison, 75% of participating PFA children in San Francisco received a state or federal child care subsidy (State Preschool, General Child Care, Alternative Payment, or Head Start), meaning they belong to low-income families earning no more than 75% of the state median income, or in the case of Head Start, 100% of the federal poverty level. The number of low-income children participating in PFA is likely even higher, however, as PFA children in Title I or solely PFA-funded programs are not subject to means testing.

The data in Exhibit 3.23 include the average CLASS scores from the combined MS and SWEEP studies (n=694), compared to the average scores for San Francisco observations (n=32). Only 8 of the 11 CLASS dimensions are listed – the MS and SWEEP studies used an older version of the CLASS that did not include the dimensions for *Regard for Student Perspectives*, *Language Modeling*, and *Student Engagement*.

Exhibit 3.23. MS/SWEEP and San Francisco PFA CLASS Scores
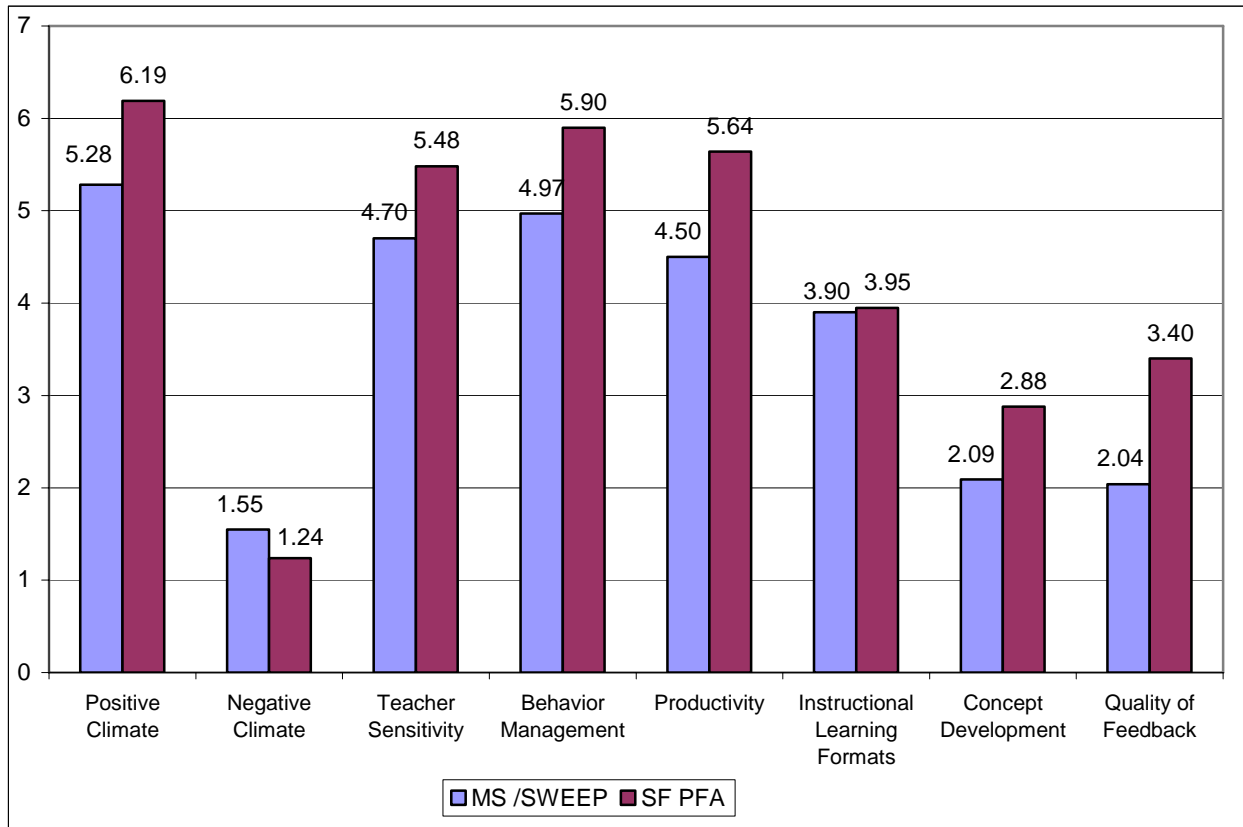
In every dimension listed in Exhibit 3.23, San Francisco PFA classrooms received higher ratings compared to the MS/SWEEP data (with the exception of *Negative Climate*, in which San Francisco classrooms received a lower score, indicating greater quality). San Francisco ratings ranged from 0.05 points (*Instructional Learning Formats*) to 1.36 points (*Quality of Feedback*) higher than the MS/SWEEP data. In regard to the one dimension that received an average score in the low range, *Concept Development*, San Francisco classrooms were rated at 2.88, compared to 2.09 in the MS/SWEEP studies.

San Francisco PFA CLASS Scores by Funding Type and BA Cohort Classrooms

An expanded sample was selected in San Francisco in order to examine differences between PFA classrooms operated by public versus non-public agencies and between subsidized and unsubsidized agencies.

Funding Type	Number of programs in sample	Number of classrooms in sample
Non-Public	12	19
Public	3	13
Total	15	32
Unsubsidized	6	6
Subsidized	9	26
Total	15	32

To analyze differences between public and non-public classrooms and subsidized and unsubsidized classrooms independent sample t-tests were performed. CLASS scores were weighted according to the proportion of sampling for both public/non-public and subsidized/unsubsidized classrooms.

Public Versus Non-Public PFA Classrooms. Non-public classrooms scored significantly higher (p<.05) than public classrooms on the following CLASS dimensions: *Teacher Sensitivity* (5.70 versus 5.17), *Regard for Student Perspectives* (5.80 versus 5.40), and *Language Modeling* (4.92 versus 4.37). Public classrooms scored significantly higher than non-public classrooms in *Instructional Learning Formats* (4.15 versus 3.72) and *Concept Development* (3.13 versus 2.70). There were no other significant differences found for any of the remaining dimensions or for the four domains.

Subsidized Versus Unsubsidized PFA Classrooms. The only dimension that showed a significant difference (p<.05) in subsidized versus unsubsidized classrooms was the *Behavioral Management* dimension. Unsubsidized classrooms had an average *Behavioral Management* score of 6.38 while subsidized classrooms had an average *Behavioral Management* score of 5.79. To check whether this difference was related to the number of adults in the classrooms, a t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant difference in the number of adults and students in the subsidized classrooms vs. the unsubsidized classrooms. The results of this test showed that subsidized classrooms had significantly more adults in the classrooms (3.18 versus 2.50), although they also had significantly more students (17.82 versus 14.75), meaning the staff-to-child ratio was very similar – approximately 1 to 6 (calculated as an average ratio across classrooms during the CLASS observations).

BA Cohort Classrooms Versus Non-BA PFA Classrooms. First 5 San Francisco is collaborating with San Francisco State University to offer a BA-completion program, designed to support bilingual preschool teachers in obtaining their bachelor degrees. Currently, eight PFA teachers are participating in the program and are still in the process of obtaining their BA degrees, thus, we may not necessarily expect to observe differences between the "BA cohort classrooms" and other classrooms. CLASS observations were conducted in the PFA classrooms with a BA cohort teacher. Analyses comparing BA cohort classrooms to non-BA cohort classrooms indicated that BA cohort classrooms had a significantly lower (p<.05) *Behavior Management* average dimension rating (5.38), compared to non-BA cohort classrooms (6.07). BA cohort classrooms had a significantly higher (p<.05) *Language Modeling* average dimension rating (5.31) compared to non-BA cohort classrooms (4.49). There were no other significant differences between the two groups of classrooms.

Overview of the ECERS-E Literacy Subscale

Given the importance of early literacy experiences for children's learning and school success, the Year 2 PFA process evaluation used the ECERS-E literacy subscale to gather rich data on the literacy environments of PFA classrooms, beyond what is currently collected from the ECERS-R. The National Early Literacy Panel (NELP), in a 2007 review of 300 peer-reviewed research articles, found that there was "strong evidence for the importance of alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, rapid naming tasks involving either naming of letters and digits or

naming of objects and colors, writing/writing name, and phonological short-term memory as predictors of later reading and writing skills." Similarly, research has highlighted the importance of storybook reading, discussions about books, listening comprehension, and writing in relation to early literacy skills (Bus, Van IJzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995). The development of early literacy skills in preschool has been found to positively impact children's literacy success later in school (Snow, Barnes, & Griffen, 1998; Stickland & Shanahan, 2004).

The ECERS-E is an extension of the ECERS – Revised, the tool widely used by early childhood education researchers and programs to measure classroom quality. The ECERS-E is a relatively new tool, published in 2003, and developed by researchers in England as an instrument to measure quality in four areas: 1) literacy, 2) numeracy, 3) science, and 4) diversity in preschool settings. The ECERS-E is scored using the same system as the ECERS-R, based on a seven-point scale for each item, from which an average score is derived for each subscale. The ECERS-E literacy subscale contains the following items:

- **Environmental print: letters and words.** This item includes indicators related to display of pictures with printed labels, attention to letters or words outside of books, display of printed words around the classroom, recognition of printed words on everyday objects, recognition of letters in children's names, discussion of environmental print, discussion of the relationship between spoken and printed word, and recognition of letters and words in the environment.
- **Book and literacy areas.** This item includes indicators related to books (accessibility and variety), the presence and comfort level of a literacy area, encouragement of book use, and use of books outside the literacy area.
- **Adult reading with children.** This item includes indicators related to frequency of adults reading to children; encouragement of repetitive words and phrases in text; the role of children in group reading activities; encouragement of conjecture about text; discussion of letters, print, and content of books; accessibility of literacy support material (e.g., flannel board, tapes); and the frequency of one-to-one reading with children.
- **Sounds in words.** This item includes indicators on the use of rhymes (spoken or sung), recognition of rhyming components of songs, attention to alliteration and syllabification, and linking sounds to letters.
- **Emergent writing.** This item includes indicators related to accessibility of writing materials, adults writing down what children say, a dedicated writing area, focus on the purpose of writing, and display of children's writing.
- **Talking and listening.** This item includes indicators related to the nature and frequency of adult-child conversations, encouragement of children to ask and answer questions and share ideas, adult scaffolding of children's conversations, and encouragement of children to talk with each other.

It is important to note that the ECERS-E was developed for use in prekindergarten classrooms in England, rather than typical classrooms in the United States. In addition, the tool has not been widely used in research conducted in the United States. Unlike the ECERS-R tool, which has undergone extensive reliability and validity testing (as well as a revision in 1998), the ECERS-E is a relatively new instrument, published in 2003. Therefore, there are limited sources of comparative data based on U.S. preschool classrooms, although anecdotal information from

other researchers who used the tool in U.S. studies suggest that the ECERS-E scores tend to be lower than scores on the ECERS-R. The ECERS-E may provide insight into some aspects of literacy that have not been explored through other measures of program quality. The ratings for PFA classrooms should be used as a guide to inform further exploration and technical assistance efforts.

San Mateo ECERS-E Literacy Subscale Scores

The ECERS-E literacy subscale was administered in the eight classrooms in the San Mateo sample. The average ECERS-E literacy subscale score (the average of the six items) was 4.60, ranging from 3.0 to 5.5 across programs. Exhibit 3.24 shows the average scores for each of the six items that comprise the literacy subscale.

Exhibit 3.24. ECERS-E: Average Item Scores in San Mateo PFA Classrooms
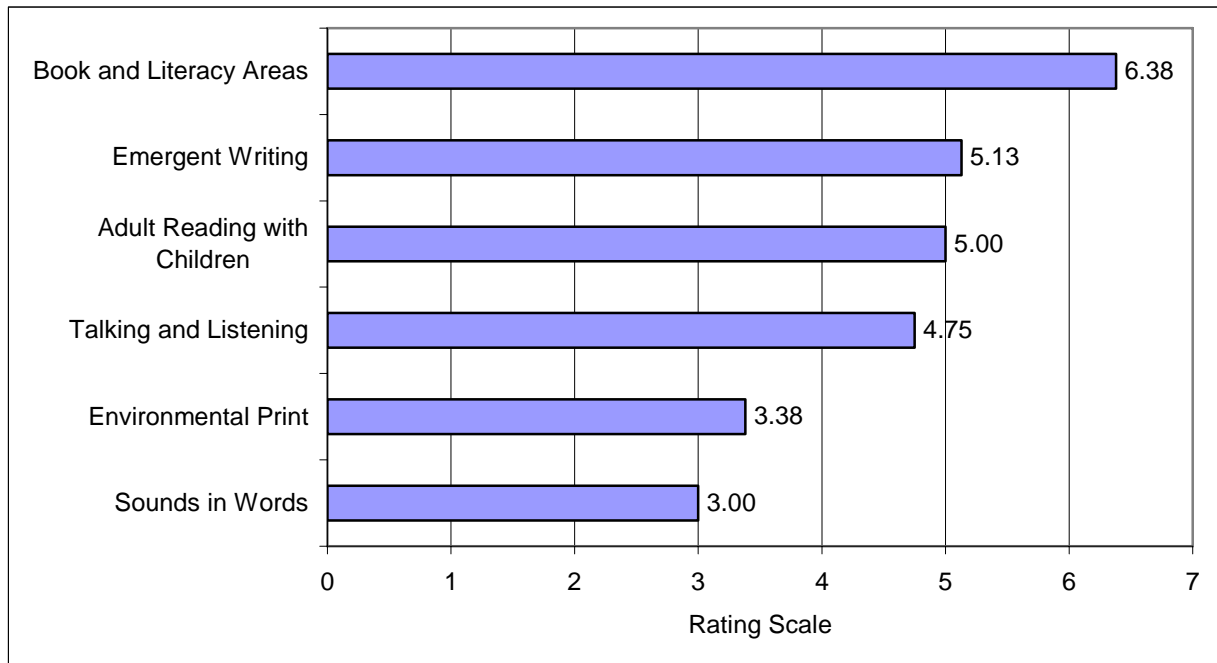
Book and Literacy Areas. The highest average item score was for *Book and Literacy Areas* (6.38). Six of the eight San Mateo PFA classrooms received a 7 for book and literacy areas. Classrooms with a score of 7 on the *Book and Literacy Areas* item have a wide variety of books, including some picture books and many with text, at a variety of reading levels. Children regularly use books in these classrooms, and the book area is comfortable. Adults encourage children to use books and books are included in learning centers outside of the book area.

Emergent Writing. The average item score for *Emergent Writing* was 5.13. Emergent writing scores ranged from a low of 3 to a high of 7. Children in a classroom with a score of 5 for *Emergent Writing* have access to writing implements and paper. There is a place set aside for writing in the classroom, and staff sometimes write down what the children say. To obtain a score of 6 or 7 on the *Emergent Writing* item, programs must have a writing area that includes a theme to encourage children to "write" (e.g., an office), the purpose of writing must be

emphasized (e.g., children are encouraged to "write" and "read" to communicate to others what they have produced) and children's emergent writing must be displayed for others to see.

Adult Reading to Children. The average item score for *Adult Reading with Children* was 5.0, ranging from a low of 3 to a high of 6. Half of the eight classrooms received a score of 6 for this item. This indicates that in four of the PFA classrooms, an adult reads with children, children are encouraged to join in with repetitive words and phrases in the text, children take an active role in group reading during which the words and/or story are discussed, and children are encouraged to conjecture about and comment on the text. In addition, in these classrooms at least two of the following three indicators are present: 1) there is discussion about print and letters as well as content, 2) there are support materials for the children to engage with the story by themselves (e.g., flannel board, other props), and 3) there is evidence of one-to-one reading with some children.

Talking and Listening. The *Talking and Listening* item received an average score of 4.75, ranging from a low of 2 to a high of 7. Six of the eight classrooms received a score between 4 and 6. A classroom with a score of 5 on this item is characterized by the following indicators: some conversation between adults and children occurs, children are permitted to talk amongst themselves, interesting experiences are planned by adults and drawn upon to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, and children are encouraged to ask and answer questions. Two classrooms received a 6 on this item and one classroom received a 7. To receive a score of 7 on the *Talking and Listening* item, evidence for the following two indicators must be found: 1) adults provide scaffolding for children's conversations, and 2) children are often encouraged to talk in small groups and adults encourage their peers to listen to them.

Environmental Print. Somewhat lower average scores (3.38) were received on the *Environmental Print* item. *Environmental Print* scores ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 5, with four of the eight programs receiving a score of 4. These four classrooms had a few labeled pictures present and visible. Children could see some printed words, such as labels on shelves or their own names on their coat pegs or paintings, and printed words were prominently displayed throughout the classrooms (e.g., "welcome" on the door or "wash your hands"). These classrooms also displayed evidence of two of the following three indicators: 1) many labeled pictures are on view, 2) children are encouraged to recognize printed words on everyday objects, and 3) children are encouraged to recognize letters in their own name. To receive a score of 7 for *Environmental Print*, there must also be evidence that discussion of environmental print takes place and often relates to objects the children bring to the center, discussion of the relationship between the spoken word and printed word is present, and children are encouraged to recognize letters and words in the environment.

Sounds in Words. The average score for the *Sounds in Words* item was 3.00. *Sounds in Words* scores ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 4, with five of the eight programs receiving a score of 3. In these five classrooms, rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults to children and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes. In addition, evidence of one of the following two indicators can be found: 1) rhyming components of songs and nursery rhymes are brought to the attention of children, and 2) the initial sounds of alliterative in words and/or alliterative sentences are brought to the attention of children (e.g., Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers). In

order to receive a 7 for *Sounds in Words*, attention must be paid to syllabification of words through activities such as clapping games or jumping, and some attention must be given to linking sounds to letters.

Exhibit 3.25 shows the distribution of ECERS-E ratings across the six items.

Exhibit 3.25. ECERS-E Ratings, by Number of San Mateo PFA Classrooms (N = 8)

Rating	Number of Classrooms Receiving Rating					
	Environmental Print	Book and Literacy Areas	Adult Reading with Children	Sounds in Words	Emergent Writing	Talking and Listening
1	1	-	-	1	-	-
2	1	-	-	-	-	1
3	1	-	1	5	2	1
4	4	1	2	2	1	1
5	1	1	1	-	1	2
6	-	-	4	-	2	2
7	-	6	-	-	2	1

San Mateo ECERS-E Literacy Summary

The total average score for the literacy subscale for the sampled San Mateo classrooms was 4.6. Based on the ECERS-E average item scores, the sampled San Mateo PFA classrooms are generally characterized by high-quality book and literacy areas, with a wide variety of books. Children are encouraged to use books. In addition, most classrooms have areas for emergent writing, and staff write down what children say. Children take an active role in group reading and are encouraged to conjecture about and comment on the text. Conversations between children and adults occur and children are mostly permitted to talk amongst themselves. In most of the classrooms (five out of eight) interesting experiences are planned by adults to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, and children are encouraged to ask and answer questions. In half of the eight sampled classrooms, there are labeled pictures visible to children, children can see some printed words such as labels on shelves or their own names on coat pegs, printed words are prominently displayed, and additional evidence of environmental print and encouragement of children to recognize printed words is present. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – five of the eight classrooms received a score of 3 for this item. In these classrooms rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes. Less attention is paid to the rhyming components of songs and alliteration.

San Francisco ECERS-E Literacy Subscale Scores

The average ECERS-E literacy subscale global score across the 32 PFA sampled classrooms in San Francisco was 4.44, ranging from 2.67 to 5.83. The ratings for each of the six items that comprise the literacy subscale are shown in Exhibit 3.26.

Exhibit 3.26. Average ECERS-E Literacy Item Scores in San Francisco PFA Classrooms
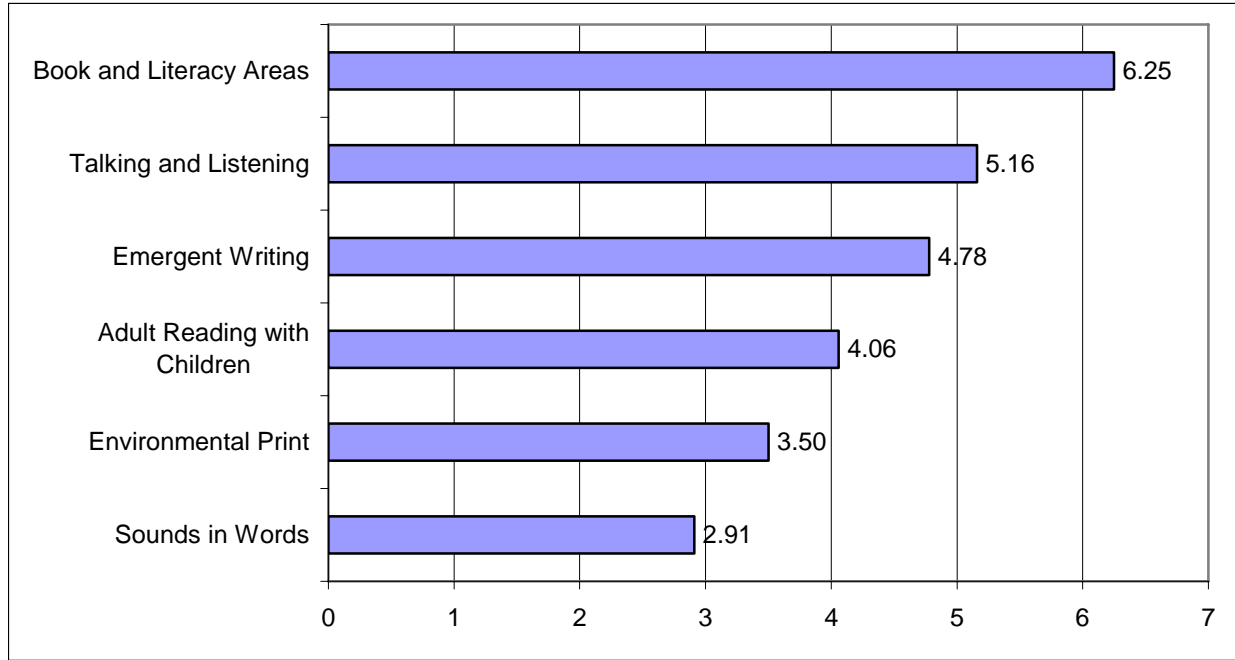
Book and Literacy Areas. The average score for this item was 6.25, with 20 of the 32 classrooms receiving a score of 7. Classrooms with a 7 for *Book and Literacy Areas* have a book area that is comfortable (rug and cushions or comfortable seating), filled with a wide range of complexity. There is a wide variety of books, many with text, and at a variety of levels to cater for different skills and interests. Adults encourage children to use books and direct them to the book area. Books are included in learning areas outside of the book corner.

Adult Reading with Children. The average score for this item was 4.06, ranging from scores of 1 to 7. Ratings for *Adult Reading with Children* were varied. Thirty-one percent of classrooms scored a 2 for this item, whereas 37% scored a 6 or a 7. To receive a rating of 2 on *Adult Reading with Children*, a classroom would fail to meet one of the following two indicators for a rating of 3: 1) an adult reads with children most days, and 2) children are encouraged to join in with repetitive words and phrases in the text. To receive a score of 5, classrooms must meet all the indicators through a rating of 3, in addition to the following two indicators: 1) children take an active role in group reading during which the words and/or story are usually discussed, and 2) children are encouraged to conjecture about and comment on the text. To receive a score of 7, classrooms must meet all the indictors through a rating of 5, in addition to the following three indicators: 1) there is a discussion about print and letters as well as content, 2) there is support

material for children to engage with the story by themselves (e.g., tapes, flannel board, other props), and 3) there is evidence of one-to-one reading with some children.

Listening and Talking. The average score for this item was 5.16, ranging from 2 to 7. Fifty-nine percent of classrooms received a score of 4 to 6, and 31% received a score of 7. In the "5" classroom for *Listening and Talking*, some conversation between adults and children occurs, children are mostly permitted to talk amongst themselves, interesting experiences are planned by adults and drawn upon to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, and children are encouraged to ask and answer questions. In the "7" classroom, adults also provide scaffolding for children's conversations with them (e.g., accepting and extending children's verbal contributions in conversations) adults often encourage children to talk and listen to one another to talk in small groups listen to their peers.

Emergent Writing. The average score for this item was 4.78, ranging from 1 to 7. Sixty-nine percent of classrooms received a rating of 5 through 7. To receive a score of 5 on *Emergent Writing*, children must have access to writing implements and a place in the classroom set aside for writing, and staff sometimes write down what the children say. In the "7" classroom for *Emergent Writing*, the writing area also has a theme to encourage children to write (e.g., an office), the purpose of writing is emphasized, and children's emergent writing is displayed for others to see.

Environmental Print. The average score for this item was 3.5. Twenty-two of the 32 classrooms scored a 3 or a 4 for this item. In this range, classrooms have a few labeled pictures present. Children can see some printed words, such as labels on shelves or their own names on their coat pegs or paintings. Printed words are prominently displayed (e.g., "welcome" on the door or "wash your hands"). To receive a score of 4 for *Environmental Print*, classrooms must comply with two of the following three indicators: 1) many labeled pictures are on view, 2) children are encouraged to recognize printed words on everyday objects such as juice cans, food packaging, and bags, and 3) children are encouraged to recognize letters in their own names.

Sounds in Words. The average score for this item was 2.91, ranging from scores of 1 to 5. Fifty-three percent of classrooms scored a 3, and 22% scored a 4 or a 5. In a classroom with a score of 3 for *Sounds in Words*, rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults to children and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes. To receive a score of 5, all the indicators through a 3 rating must be met. In addition, the rhyming components of songs and rhymes are brought to the attention of the children, and the initial sounds of alliterative in words and/or alliterative sentences are brought to the attention of children (e.g., Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers). To receive a score of 7, all indicators through a 5 rating must be met. In addition, attention is paid to syllabification of words through clapping games, jumping, etc., and some attention is given to linking sounds to letters.

Exhibit 3.27 shows the percentage of San Francisco PFA classrooms that received scores of 1 to 7 on each of the six items that comprise the literacy subscale of the ECERS-E.

Exhibit 3.27. San Francisco ECERS-E Scores, by Percentage of San Francisco PFA Classrooms

Rating	Environmental Print	Book and Literacy Areas	Adult Reading w/ Children	Sounds in Words	Emergent Writing	Talking and Listening
1	3%	-	9%	9%	13%	-
2	13%	-	31%	16%	-	3%
3	34%	-	6%	53%	9%	6%
4	34%	16%	-	19%	9%	41%
5	13%	6%	16%	3%	28%	3%
6	3%	16%	25%	-	25%	16%
7		63%	13%	-	16%	31%

ECERS-E Differences by Funding Type and BA Cohort Classrooms

To analyze differences between public and non-public classrooms and subsidized and unsubsidized classrooms independent samples t-tests were performed. ECERS-E scores were weighted according to the proportion of sampling for both public/non-public and subsidized/unsubsidized classrooms.

Public Versus Non-Public PFA Classrooms. Public classrooms scored significantly higher (p<.05) than non-public classrooms on the following ECERS-E items: *Book and Literacy Areas* (6.62 versus 6.00), *Adult Reading with Children* (4.92 versus 3.47), and *Talking and Listening* (5.47 versus 4.77). There were no other significant differences found for the remaining items on the ECERS-E (*Environmental Print*, *Sounds in Words*, *Emergent Writing*) or for the overall global literacy subscale score.

Subsidized Versus Unsubsidized PFA Classrooms. There were no significant differences between subsidized and unsubsidized PFA classrooms on any of the ECERS-E literacy items or the overall global subscale score.

BA Cohort PFA Classrooms Versus Non-BA PFA Cohort Classrooms. As noted earlier, observations were conducted in PFA classrooms with a teacher in the BA cohort program at San Francisco State University. BA cohort classrooms had lower (but not statistically significantly lower) scores than non-BA cohort classrooms for all items on the ECERS-E literacy subscale except *Emergent Writing* and *Talking and Listening*. However, the ratings for these two items were not significantly higher for BA cohort classrooms compared to non-BA cohort classrooms. The average *Environmental Print* score was significantly lower (p<.05) in BA-cohort classrooms (2.75), compared to non-BA cohort classrooms (3.75). There were no other significant differences between the two groups of classrooms.

San Francisco ECERS-E Literacy Subscale Summary

The total average score for the literacy subscale for the sampled San Francisco classrooms was 4.44. Based on the ECERS-E average item scores, the sampled classrooms are generally characterized by high-quality book and literacy areas, with a wide variety of books. Children are encouraged to use books. In addition, most classrooms have areas for emergent writing, and staff write down what children say. The extent to which adults read with children varied somewhat across classrooms – about a third of the classrooms received relatively lower scores (2), whereas about a third received high scores (6 or 7). Ninety-one percent of classrooms received a rating of 4 to 7 on the *Talking and Listening* item, with 50% of classrooms showing evidence that interesting experiences are planned by adults to encourage talk and the sharing of ideas, children are encouraged to ask questions, adults provide scaffolding for children's conversations, and children are often encouraged to talk in small groups and listen to their peers. In about a third of the sampled classrooms (those that received a rating of 3 for *Environmental Print*) there are labeled pictures visible to children, children can see some printed words such as labels on shelves or their own names on coat pegs, and printed words are prominently displayed. In 50% of classrooms, additional evidence of environmental print and encouragement of children to recognize printed words is also present. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – 78% of the classrooms received a score of 1, 2 or 3 for this item. In these classrooms, the extent to which rhymes are spoken or sung by adults and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes varies. Less attention is paid to the rhyming components of songs and alliteration.

Recommendations and Implications for Practice

CLASS findings. San Mateo and San Francisco PFA classrooms received very similar CLASS scores. In both counties, each of the dimension scores fell into the same category on the CLASS rating scale (low, mid, high). Differences in overall scores between the counties did not vary significantly; on a 7-point scale they ranged from a .01 point difference for *Positive Climate* to .39 for *Instructional Learning Formats*. In both counties, the lowest scoring dimensions were *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback*. This pattern mirrors available national data from the MS/SWEEP studies, in which these two CLASS dimensions also received the lowest average scores. While it is difficult to explain precisely why *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback* tend to receive lower scores, it is likely that a combination of factors are involved, including limited attention to these areas in pre-service education programs and professional development opportunities. Moreover, the CLASS holds teachers to a high standard – for example, the strategies embedded within *Concept Development* (e.g., promotion of higher-order thinking skills and cognition, analysis and reasoning, hypothesis testing) are likely the most challenging practices to implement in the classroom, particularly if teachers have not been trained to do so.

Based on the CLASS scores, both San Mateo and San Francisco PFA administrators may wish to review the lowest scoring dimensions to identify ways to integrate these content areas into existing training and coaching efforts or new professional development opportunities. In addition, the authors of the CLASS at the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), University of Virginia, offer several professional development opportunities. Teachers can access the CLASS website (http://classobservation.com/) to view video clips of teachers

demonstrating strategies that are embedded in the CLASS framework. In addition, CASTL offers a web-based program known as MyTeacherPartner (MTP) (http://www.myteachingpartner.net/) where teachers have access to a library of videos in which teachers demonstrate strategies linked to the CLASS; MTP activities for use in the classroom; and online training modules. In addition, MTP offers an intensive four-step individualized consulting process in which: 1) teachers videotape themselves implementing a MTP activity twice a month, 2) a MTP consultant edits the classroom video to draw attention to CLASS dimensions, which is then posted on a secured website for the teacher, with written comments and questions, 3) the teacher reviews the video and responds to the consultant's comments, which are intended to help the teacher reflect on their teaching practices, and 4) the teacher and the MTP consultant participate in a video conference to discuss the process and identify goals and next steps.

Other states are currently using the CLASS in their preschool and professional development efforts. The Wyoming Department of Education is piloting the CLASS with 35 preschool teachers in the state as part of its *Quality Rating System* initiative. The Massachusetts Department of Education is using the CLASS in conjunction with its *Building Careers* project, designed to support teachers in obtaining a college degree. As a part of this project, CASTL trained college faculty on the CLASS for use with their students.

ECERS-E Findings. ECERS-E literacy item scores were also similar in San Mateo and San Francisco counties. Across the six items, differences in San Mateo and San Francisco scores (as noted earlier, each item receives a score on a 7-point scale) ranged from .09 (*Sounds in Words*) to .94 (*Adult Reading with the Children*). The lowest scoring items for San Mateo and San Francisco were *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words*. In regard to *Environmental Print*, some of the indicators refer specifically to the classroom environment (e.g., pictures with printed labels, labels on shelves), which could be addressed by reviewing the nature of the environmental print in the classroom setting and upgrading as needed. Other indicators for this item focus on the extent to which teachers encourage children to recognize letters and printed words, as well as discuss environmental print with children and the relationship between the spoken and printed word. Given the nature of these items, targeted training or coaching to support teachers may be beneficial.

Similarly, professional development regarding the indicators included in *Sounds in Words* (e.g., rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults to children, rhyming components of songs and nursery rhymes are brought to the attention of the children, attention to initial sounds/alliteration, syllabification, and linking sounds to letters) would likely best be addressed through in-person training or coaching, with particular attention to blending and segmenting sounds in words more generally, which are the precursors to being able to apply the decoding skills necessary for reading. While research to date is inconclusive with regard to the particular instructional benefits of rhyming activities with preschool children, blending and segmenting of sounds in words has been associated with early literacy success. These activities can be taught and practiced by teachers to enhance instruction in this area.

A review of curriculum used by PFA sites may help identify areas in which to enhance instruction in this area, such as new books, instruments, or audio CDs aligned with activities to promote the types of indicators included in *Sounds in Words*. In addition, the California

Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN), a professional development network, has focused on language and literacy in its 2007 training series, including the following topics: oral language development, concepts of print, developing vocabulary through books, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, early writing, and supporting language and literacy for children with disabilities and for English Language Learners.

In regard to interventions that target child outcomes, it is more difficult to identify practices or curricula that have been proven through rigorous research studies to specifically promote the outcomes embedded in the CLASS dimensions of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback,* or the ECERS-E *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* items. The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) (http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/), established in 2002 by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, is designed to provide educators, policymakers, researchers, and the public with an analysis of the scientific evidence of effective education strategies. The Clearinghouse conducts rigorous reviews of the effectiveness of educational interventions, including a focus on early childhood education. In particular, the WWC reviews empirical studies that meet specific criteria (e.g., randomized controlled trials and well-controlled quasi-experimental designs, and other studies that meet rigorous research standards). As of October 2007, the WWC has reviewed research on 16 preschool interventions to determine if they have a proven impact on oral language, print knowledge, phonological awareness, early reading/writing, cognition, and math outcomes for children. The 16 WWC intervention reports were reviewed, with a focus on the child outcomes related to the CLASS dimensions of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback* and the ECERS-E *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* items. The WWC did not detect any discernible effects or affirmative evidence of effects for any of the 16 curricular models for the outcome of cognition. Research on one intervention – dialogic reading – found strong evidence of a positive effect for oral language outcomes and the Literacy Express curriculum found potentially positive effects.

The lack of significant research findings for specific interventions may be due to the limitations of the current research literature. According to Shonkoff and Phillips (2000), in Neurons to Neighborhoods, a "fundamental barrier to comparisons across studies, however, is the considerable variability among intervention programs on a number of important dimensions, such as the age of the children at time of entry, the characteristics of the target population, the nature of the program components, the intensity and duration of service delivery, issues regarding comparison or control conditions, and the nature of the staff and their training. Consequently, it is not possible to be certain that differences in outcomes, when they are found, are due to any one (or a combination) of these factors." However, the researchers do suggest that programs that have been the most effective are those that are targeted at high-risk children, are intensive in nature, and are inclusive of both children and parents.

Research regarding the effectiveness of preschool curricula may soon be available. In 2002, the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences funded a four-year project, Preschool Curriculum Evaluation Research (PCER). Given the lack of rigorous studies of preschool interventions, IES funded 12 grantees nationwide to implement and evaluate preschool curricula, using randomized field trials. The study will address the following questions:

- What are the impacts of each intervention on important dimensions of children's development, including cognitive and social-emotional domains?
- How do the curricula change the prevailing classroom environments?
- How do the impacts vary for subgroups of children, classrooms, teachers, or communities? What works for whom?
- What are the patterns of impacts over time, as children progress through preschool and kindergarten?

Findings from the PCER are expected to be released in 2008.

Chapter 4. Parent Focus Group Findings

To gather input from parents served by PFA programs, AIR conducted parent focus groups with a total of six PFA providers (three in San Mateo and three in San Francisco). Focus groups were conducted in the parents' preferred language. In San Mateo, a total of 16 parents participated in the focus group discussions. One San Mateo program requested a toll-free conference call in lieu of the in-person focus group, and separate conference calls were held in English and in Spanish for parents. The second San Mateo focus group was held entirely in Spanish, and at the third site, two focus groups were held (one in English and one in Spanish). In San Francisco, a total of 17 parents participated in focus groups. One focus group was held entirely in English, one group in Spanish, and one group in Cantonese.

Parents were asked a range of questions related to PFA, such as their level of satisfaction with their respective preschool programs, communication with teachers, and the programs' support of children's development and readiness for kindergarten. Parents also were asked to provide recommendations for improving their PFA programs. Because comments from PFA parents in both counties were very similar, their feedback is combined across counties below, with the few significant differences between counties noted.

Parent Satisfaction with PFA Programs

In both San Mateo and San Francisco counties, parents were very satisfied with their children's PFA preschool programs overall. Parents in both counties characterized their respective PFA programs as warm, open communities where they felt welcomed and accepted. One San Francisco parent said the PFA program gave children "the foundation of education, like the roots of a tree." A San Mateo parent reported, "This [PFA] program is interesting because I can see the children advancing socially and they are getting ready for kindergarten. Physically, mentally, and socially, the education is important and preparing them for the higher level of kindergarten. It's interesting, and important, and it's free! It provides us with this benefit that I would not be able to pay for. A lot of us would not be able to afford this." Parents also commented on the individualized attention and understanding shown to their children by PFA staff. One San Francisco parent spoke of her child's vision problems and how the teacher provides her daughter the extra attention that she needs: "Our IEP went very well. In the first two weeks she was here she didn't know anything, and after two weeks, she could write her name! The teacher helps her so much. They are accommodating…they are very understanding." The majority of parents in both counties said they would recommend their PFA program to anyone; indeed, many parents had already done so to family and friends.

Some parents in both counties described their experience with PFA as one that began with apprehension. However, once parents observed how much their children were learning and growing, they said their worries were put to rest. Parents repeatedly commented on the love and respect their children receive from PFA staff and how they have benefited from the preschool program. One San Mateo parent said, "This program allows you to be a better parent. You can focus on what you need to do to take care of your family. You can focus on getting your job done, because you know your child is not only safe, but she is also getting the best education.

Other programs just put the children in front of a television all day, but at my child's program they are learning science and math." Parents at one San Francisco program emphasized the experience and qualifications of the teachers, reporting they were of "a different caliber."

Parents described how their children have experienced PFA. One parent said, "I think the hardest part for my son is vacation from school. Those two weeks breaks are horrible for him, they are torture. He really enjoys the involvement with other children, the teachers, going out and doing things, the projects, coming home with different stories or something to show for it…he loves that." Parents provided other examples of positive outcomes they have observed with their children as a result of PFA. Comments from San Mateo parents included: "My daughter always used to look down, and she does not do that anymore. The [PFA] class greets her when she arrives and she has made friends. She is so proud – she holds her head up high!" Another San Mateo parent said, "My child is so much more outgoing [now that she is in a PFA program] – she was so shy. She is more socialized and has made many friends." Many parents from San Francisco shared the same sentiment, with one mother stating, "I have also had a positive experience, I also have two children here at the facility and they are great about being able to take on a second child and communicating with families with two children and working out a schedule, teachers are very caring. The facility too…it is nice and light and spacious. So overall we have been really happy here." Other parents from a San Francisco program described how their children have become used to routines and responsibilities, such as picking up after themselves and putting away toys.

Communication Between Parents and PFA Teachers

Parents were asked to describe the frequency and nature of their communication with PFA teachers. Most of the parents who participated in focus groups in both counties reported that they typically communicated with their children's PFA teachers in person, during drop-off and pick-up times. In general, parents were satisfied with the degree to which they connected with program staff. One San Mateo parent said, "I see that the communication is very good about what is going on with my child, how they are doing. I like very much how they have shared ideas with me about what to do with my child. We communicate when we come in to the classroom and pick up or drop off our child. We also talk by the telephone, and we use notes to communicate. But mostly it's in person." Another San Mateo parent said, "The teachers communicate with us very well; they always let you know what's going on and how your child is doing." One San Francisco parent talked about how her child's PFA program made home visits, and another parent from the same classroom said, "I talk to [the lead teacher] in person. I'm always participating in the school, so I have no problem communicating with all of the staff here."

Spanish-speaking parents were asked if they could communicate with at least one PFA program staff member in their preferred language. The majority of PFA parents in San Mateo reported that language was not a barrier in their communication with PFA classroom teachers – at one San Mateo PFA site, one parent said she had difficulty communicating with the PFA teacher who does not speak Spanish. Another parent from this site said she often helps translate between the two. Similarly, at one of the three San Francisco PFA programs, some Spanish-speaking parents in the focus group expressed frustration regarding their ability to communicate with their child's teacher, finding it very difficult to converse effectively if a translator was not available. One

parent stated, "The teacher speaks English, so it's hard to talk with the lead teacher, if the other teacher is not there to translate, it can be confusing and difficult to communicate 100 percent effectively." Another Spanish-speaking parent who spoke some English explained that she helps translate between parents and the teacher. She reported, "Before, there was another teacher that spoke Spanish and now there is not, and I have to ask questions for other parents that do not speak English. I understand English – I know what they are saying, but I can't explain things very well. A lot of the other parents do speak English, and they can translate for us. There should be an interpreter for one-on-one meetings. We talk to the teachers every day."

Children's development and behavior were among the most common topics discussed between parent and teachers. Many parents in both counties said they talk to their child's teacher on a daily basis regarding what their children accomplished in class, how they behaved, the strengths of their children's development, and any areas in which they might need additional support. Many parents appreciated the suggestions provided by teachers regarding things they can do at home to guide their children's behavior and learning. A San Mateo parent said, "They [the teachers] tell you about how to help your child with areas of their development. They offer a lot of advice; the teachers give you a lot of suggestions of what to do. My teacher told me about my child needing to learn more about shapes, and how to introduce him to shapes in the home." Other parents described materials that have been sent home for their child to strengthen specific skills.

One San Francisco parent provided a specific example of how her child's teacher helped her better support her son's development. "On [my son's] most recent evaluation they are really focused on observational drawing, the teachers observed that he was scribbling a lot and I had not noticed it until [the teacher] had mentioned it and taken pictures and she showed me. She said at home when he is drawing to ask him more detailed questions about his drawing, and he actually did start to draw wheels on the cars as we started to ask him more specific questions. We always used to just say 'that is great, that is great.' Now he is four and a half and he does more detailed drawing now and I would say that is a specific achievement!"

Another parent reported, "I was asking them how to deal with a situation when two kids wanted a toy. They said you just take the toy and hold it up and tell them that as soon as they can work out who gets the toy and how they are going to share the toy, then you will give it back to them, and tell them that if they cannot figure out who will get it first then you will put it away. I told them at home and they figured it out like lightning. They don't want to miss out playing with the toy so they will think of a fair way to play with it and share. If it weren't for the teacher telling me that, I would have had a lot more trouble at home, and they are preparing them for kindergarten and sharing with others. I would have never figured that one out on my own."

Parents were asked to share their experiences and feelings regarding the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), which is a parent/teacher-completed child-monitoring tool that screens for developmental delays and disorders and is used by all PFA sites. In many cases, parents had difficulty in clearly remembering the ASQ. However, those parents who did recall the ASQ said they liked the tool because it provided baseline individualized information for teachers. Parents at a San Francisco program found the ASQ quite useful in helping them understand children's developmental needs and observe how the child progressed over the year.

Many parents in both counties conveyed that they would have liked to participate in a follow-up discussion with their children's teacher regarding the ASQ, in order to understand what it suggested about their child's development. One San Francisco parent said, "I guess if it [the ASQ] was followed up on it would be helpful. Because we really don't know what they are expecting and we are just telling you what we know. Especially for your first child…when you have a second child you feel like you have something to compare them to." Regardless of the ASQ, all of the parents in both counties, when asked, felt that their children's teachers know what their children like to do and areas in which their children need support. One San Mateo parent commented, "Sometimes I think that they might know more about my child than I do."

Most parents in both counties felt very well informed about what their child does at his or her preschool program. Many of these parents appreciated that the classroom schedule was posted and accessible to them. Parents from all of the programs, except for one in San Mateo County, received weekly newsletters, and most of these parents felt it was a very effective method of communicating classroom activities. However, parents from one classroom in San Mateo voiced a need for written information regarding program activities. One of these parents said, "I feel very informed; the teachers are always communicating with you. We also see the schedule of the things they will be doing on a daily basis. I would like to see a letter that they send home to inform you about what your child has done or will do, on a weekly or monthly basis. It would help keep you even more informed about what your child is learning."

Preparation for Kindergarten

Most of the parents in both counties agreed that their child's preschool program has prepared them for kindergarten. Many of the parents expressed surprise about how much their child has learned at preschool. Parents felt that their children are prepared socially and academically for kindergarten. One San Mateo parent said, "They know how to write, they know the alphabet…and how to share with [other] children. They have helped the children socially. Academically they are forming a great foundation." A few parents in both counties talked about how the preschool program supports their children's language development while maintaining their home language, expressing happiness that their children are learning both Spanish and English proficiently. One San Mateo County parent said, "They are learning more English, and I wouldn't have been able to teach this [at home]. My daughter knows songs and words in English, and she doesn't have an accent; I'm very impressed."

Many of the parents in both counties said that the preschool staff were very helpful in assisting them to find and enroll their children in a kindergarten program. The parents felt they know what to expect when their child goes onto this next level of education. One San Mateo parent said, "[The preschool teachers] gave us information about applying to kindergarten, and helped us get [my son] into the program. Everything is ready for my child to go." A parent from San Francisco shared her experience receiving help from the preschool teachers in preparing her son for an admission exam to enter a private kindergarten: "My child had to take exams, and make certain requirements to enter the Catholic school, and my teacher told me what to focus on in the home to help my child. When my child took the test he passed 80 out of 100 and he made it to the program."

Parents from one PFA program in San Francisco that employs mixed aged groups within classrooms discussed the program's approach. All of the parents participating in the focus group for this program agreed that their children would benefit from a stronger program emphasis on school readiness, numeracy, and literacy. One parent stated, "We all agree that [this preschool program] is a great social skills building environment, but [we would like] just a little more emphasis on reading and numbers." Another parent reported, "I think play during the day is great, but there has to be a balance and a lot of the teachers won't talk about it. They don't even know how much emphasis there is on language skills right away in kindergarten, they are still under the idea that kindergarten is like it was when we were kids." Another parent suggested "an option to pull out the older kids sometime during the day so that they could focus more on school readiness."

Selection of PFA Program

When asked why they chose their respective PFA programs, the most common reasons in both counties were programs' proximity and that they were offered at no cost. At one San Mateo school district PFA classroom, there is a strong collaboration between PFA and the school's special education staff. The PFA classroom includes two PFA teachers as well as an aide funded by the district special education office. A parent referenced this collaborative model, stating, "That is great. We have access to special education people [service providers] because we are on a school campus and they take our kids out for instruction." Another parent with a child with special needs reported, "My daughter has made huge strides this year in comparison to last year and I think we are still going to struggle in kindergarten but I think we are going to struggle in every grade; she is going to be able to go to kindergarten when she is five, which I think is huge, and if she had not been in this classroom she would not be going to kindergarten next year." A mother with a child with special needs reported, "My daughter has [a special need] and she is so much better. She has developed empathy which is huge for a child with autism. She came home and told me about her friend that had fallen down. She stopped and helped her get up and then she held her hand for a long time. She was telling me this story about her friend. She used to do just weird stuff like laugh when someone fell down and now she understands – she's awesome. It is really important that she get it now because it is going to help her for the rest of her life. I don't know where else she would have gotten it if it had not been for here." A third parent with a child with a special need described the support offered by the program. "My son can be so hyper. The teachers really take that in stride and they really know how to take him and calm him down and remove him from the situation and do not chastise him for it which can be easily done. But they just take him and calm him down because he gets way over-stimulated…and sometimes the teacher will take him outside by himself to play, and that is something I am really grateful for because some teachers would really be upset with him – you know, I could see a teacher losing their wits, but this [PFA] program has really helped him in giving him an outlet that I don't think he would have had at any other place."

When asked to identify what care arrangement would be used if the PFA programs were not available, approximately half of the parents across both counties said their children would likely be at home with a parent or relative. Other parents said they would seek out a different child care or preschool program. A San Mateo parent reported, "I think the mothers that keep their children in the home are missing out on the benefits of this [PFA] program."

Summary

When asked what could be improved about the PFA program, the vast majority of parents in both counties did not offer any recommendations. A few San Mateo County parents suggested that children be allowed to bring their own food into the classroom for snack or meals, expressed a desire for expanded preschool hours, and asked that the programs focus on additional areas such as dance or etiquette. Among the San Francisco parents, a few voiced a need for more bilingual teachers, as well as extended program hours. San Francisco parents at one site suggested updating their program's preschool's website and encouraging the teachers to use e-mail more often. San Francisco parents at another PFA site wished the children had access to more outdoor space, in which they could plant a garden and learn more about nature.

Overall, parents were enthusiastic and appreciative of PFA. They felt comfortable with the level of parent involvement and communication with teaching staff. One of the specific themes that emerged in conversations in both counties was how PFA staff provide parents with knowledge, tools, and strategies to support their children in the home. The majority of parents felt that their child is prepared to enter kindergarten and identified a range of positive outcomes they have observed among their children since enrolling in PFA. In San Mateo, parents of children with special needs were particularly positive about the special education services provided through PFA. The only challenge that emerged across both counties was related to communication – in one program in each county, some parents described the difficulties of working with some teachers who only spoke English, although there was a bilingual teacher at each program. In general, conversations with PFA parents suggest the program is a critical factor in supporting children's development and promoting positive parenting strategies in the home. Parents described how enthusiastic their children are about PFA, with one mother emphasizing, "My daughter gets up in the morning and is throwing her clothes on as fast as she can because she wants to go to school. She talks about it afterwards all day."

Chapter 5. Conclusion

Year 2 of the three-year *PFA Process Evaluation* continued to investigate and document PFA implementation and the preliminary impacts of PFA on children, families, providers, and the community. The 2006-2007 evaluation examined two primary areas: 1) PFA implementation issues, from the perspectives of PFA program directors and PFA parents, and 2) PFA classroom quality. The Year 2 study found that the strengths of the PFA system – as shown in program director self-reports regarding implementation, parent satisfaction with their preschool programs, and measures of classroom quality – were very similar in San Mateo and San Francisco, as were the challenges facing PFA providers.

San Mateo Summary

Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Mateo providers. The majority of programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on language facilitation among children, teacher-child interactions, literacy instruction, support for the mental health needs of children and families, support of children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and communication and teamwork among staff. In addition, the majority of programs also anticipate increased quality improvement in the future, expecting to receive higher scores on their next ECERS-R assessment due to the specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments.

Challenges in San Mateo County, as reported by program staff on the implementation survey, focused on the need for additional training on the ASQ and the inclusion of children with special needs. Moreover, the majority of programs indicated the need for enhanced collaboration between PFA and special education staff. Other challenges identified by programs include recruiting qualified PFA staff and preventing teacher burnout. Discussions with parents indicated that they were particularly interested in materials and strategies they could use at home. This is an area SMCOE and programs may wish to focus on, given that only two of the five San Mateo programs reported that activities are developed for individual children that parents can use at home.

Classroom observations in San Mateo PFA classrooms indicated a generally high level of quality, as measured by the CLASS and the ECERS-E (literacy subscale). Overall, most of the eight sampled classrooms in San Mateo scored in the mid-to-high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. Eight of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher on a 7-point scale. The highest average domain score across San Mateo classrooms was 6.2 for *Emotional Support*, which falls in the high range on the CLASS continuum, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.8), *Classroom Management* (5.1), and *Instructional Support* (3.8). San Mateo CLASS dimension scores were higher than ratings of preschools from two major national studies, the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) Study. In regard to areas to strengthen, PFA classroom teachers may benefit from technical assistance and support in the areas of *Concept Development* – the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and

cognition in contrast to a focus on rote instruction – and *Quality of Feedback* – the teacher's provision of feedback to expand learning and understanding, rather than a focus on correctness or the end product.

In regard to ECERS-E literacy subscale scores, the total average score for the sampled San Mateo classrooms was 4.6 on a 7-point scale, a strong global score on the tool. San Mateo classrooms received high scores in regard to the quality of their book and literacy areas, strategies to promote emergent writing, and adult-child reading practices. Somewhat lower ratings were found in regard to *Environmental Print* (3.38), which includes indicators related to display of pictures with printed labels, attention to letters or words outside of books, display of printed words around the classroom, recognition of printed words on everyday objects, recognition of letters in children's names, discussion of environmental print, discussion of the relationship between spoken and printed word, and recognition of letters and words in the environment. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – five of the eight classrooms received a score of 3 for this item. In these classrooms rhymes are often spoken or sung by adults, and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes. Less attention is paid to using the rhyming components of songs and alliteration as part of everyday instruction.

Overall, parents in both San Mateo classrooms were enthusiastic and appreciative of PFA. They felt comfortable with the level of parent involvement and communication with teaching staff. In particular, parents in both counties were appreciative when PFA staff provided them with knowledge, tools, and strategies to support their children in the home. The majority of parents felt that their child is prepared to enter kindergarten and identified a range of positive outcomes they have observed among their children since enrolling in PFA. In San Mateo, parents of children with special needs were particularly positive about the special education services provided through PFA. The only significant challenge that emerged in the parent focus groups was related to communication – in one program, some parents described the difficulties of working with some teachers who only spoke English, although there was a bilingual teacher at each program. In general, conversations with PFA parents suggest the program is a critical factor in supporting children's development and promoting positive parenting strategies in the home.

Based on the Year 2 evaluation activities, the San Mateo County Office of Education might consider the following recommendations:

- Gather more specific feedback regarding why the trainings offered by the Early Childhood Language Development Institute are "very helpful" to some programs and only "somewhat helpful" to others.
- Determine if PFA teachers require additional training to use the ASQ and offer training or technical assistance as needed.
- Determine the training needs among staff to help them effectively meet the needs of children with special needs and offer training and technical assistance as appropriate.
- Share the effective family partnership strategies used by the PFA programs reporting that parents are actively involved in most program activities with the PFA programs reporting less intensive involvement.

- Offer staff and parent training on family partnerships and how parents can support their children's development, as requested by four of the five PFA programs.
- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to support the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.
- Support PFA teachers in providing materials and strategies for parents to use at home to support their children's learning and development.
- Enhance training and technical assistance to PFA teachers in the CLASS areas of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback*.
- Review the ECERS-E items *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* (the two lowest scoring items on the tool across classrooms) to determine how staff can enhance print in the classrooms (e.g., labeled pictures, encouragement to recognize printed words on everyday objects such as juice cans, food packaging, and bags, and letters in children's own names) and emphasize rhymes (spoken or sung), alliteration and syllabification, and linking sounds to letters as a part of everyday instruction.

San Francisco Summary

Based on survey responses, PFA has strongly affected preschool quality among San Francisco providers. Most programs reported that PFA has had either a "strong" or a "very strong and significant" positive impact on teacher-child interactions, and science, arts, and literacy instruction. The majority of PFA programs (72%) also anticipate increased levels of quality in the future, expecting that they will receive higher scores on their next ECERS-R assessment due to specific improvements they have made to their classroom environments as a result of their initial program assessments.

Feedback from survey respondents also highlighted challenges that were very similar to those that emerged in San Mateo County. The majority of San Francisco programs are sharing DRDP-R results with parents and using the DRDP-R results to develop and discuss Individual Learning Plans for children. As also seen in San Mateo County, a smaller number of programs reported that activities are developed for individual children for parents to use at home. In addition, San Francisco programs provided mixed feedback on the use of the ASQ. Over half of responding programs reported they would not use the ASQ if it was not required by PFA, and 44% of responding programs reported that teachers were not adequately trained to use the ASQ. Moreover, 81% of programs reported that "providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs" is either a "moderate" or a "very big" challenge. Other challenges identified by programs include supporting the professional development of staff and finding time to report on programs' progress toward implementing Quality Improvement Plans. Taking a broad view of survey responses, many of these findings suggest that staff are still feeling burdened by PFA reporting requirements, especially when these are viewed as duplicating requirements associated with their other funding streams.

Observations in a sample of San Francisco PFA classrooms reflected a high level of quality, as measured by the CLASS and ECERS-E (literacy subscale). Overall, most of the 32 sampled PFA classrooms in San Francisco scored in the mid to high ranges on the CLASS dimensions. Seven of the 11 dimensions received an average rating of 4 or higher on the 7-point scale. The *Emotional Support* CLASS domain received the highest score (6.0), which is in the high range of

the CLASS rating continuum, followed by *Student Engagement* (5.9), *Classroom Management* (5.2), and *Instructional Support* (3.7). San Francisco CLASS dimension scores were higher than ratings of preschools from two major national studies, the Multi-State (MS) Study of Pre-Kindergarten and the State-Wide Early Education Programs (SWEEP) Study. In regard to areas to strengthen, San Francisco PFA classroom teachers, as was the case in San Mateo County, may benefit from technical assistance and support in the areas of *Concept Development* – the teacher's use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students' higher-order thinking skills and cognition in contrast to a focus on rote instruction – and *Quality of Feedback* – the teacher's provision of feedback is focused on expanding learning and understanding, not correctness or the end product.

The total average score for the literacy subscale for the sampled San Francisco classrooms was 4.44, a strong global score on the tool. Similar to San Mateo, San Francisco classrooms received high scores in regard to the quality of their book and literacy areas, strategies to promote emergent writing, and adult-child reading practices. Somewhat lower ratings were found in regard to *Environmental Print* (3.50), which includes indicators related to display of pictures with printed labels, attention to letters or words outside of books, display of printed words around the classroom, recognition of printed words on everyday objects, recognition of letters in children's names, discussion of environmental print, discussion of the relationship between spoken and printed word, and recognition of letters and words in the environment. The lowest scoring item on the ECERS-E literacy subscale was *Sounds in Words* – 78% of the classrooms received a score of 1, 2 or 3 for this item. In these classrooms, the extent to which rhymes are spoken or sung by adults and children are encouraged to speak and/or sing rhymes varies. Less attention is paid to the rhyming components of songs and alliteration.

The themes that emerged through parent focus groups in San Francisco were highly similar to those that were identified in conversations with San Mateo parents. PFA parents are very satisfied with PFA, and described how their children have benefited from participation in the program, including a stronger interest in learning and increased social skills. Parents were generally satisfied with the level of communication they maintained with PFA teachers, and they appreciated when teachers provided materials and guidance they could use at home to support their children's learning and development. Recommendations to improve the PFA program were limited – among the San Francisco parents, a few voiced a need for more bilingual teachers, as well as extended program hours. Overall, parents emphasized the wide-ranging benefits of PFA for their children.

Based on the Year 2 evaluation activities, First 5 San Francisco might consider the following recommendations:

- Solicit feedback from providers to identify ways to make the Learning Circles more helpful and accessible to staff.
- Provide technical assistance to programs to develop activities for individual children that parents can use at home.
- Offer more training opportunities on the ASQ to staff.
- Offer more training opportunities to help teachers effectively serve children with special needs.

- Support PFA sites in establishing partnerships with elementary schools to facilitate the transition of children and families to the K-12 system.
- Raise awareness among San Francisco parents regarding PFA.
- Collaborate with community and state college instructors regarding the connections between coursework and practice, given that approximately one third of program directors did not agree that the one-unit required courses have changed classroom practices in the areas of language and literacy and serving children with special needs.
- Provide training and technical assistance to programs around family partnerships and finding ways to meaningfully involve parents; consider parent training on how to support their child's learning and development.
- Continue to examine how reporting requirements can be streamlined or coordinated across funding sources.
- Support PFA teachers in providing materials and strategies for parents to use at home to support their children's learning and development.
- Enhance training and technical assistance to PFA teachers in the CLASS areas of *Concept Development* and *Quality of Feedback*.
- Review the ECERS-E items *Environmental Print* and *Sounds in Words* (the two lowest scoring items on the tool across classrooms) to determine how staff can enhance print in the classrooms (e.g., labeled pictures, encouragement to recognize printed words on everyday objects such as juice cans, food packaging, and bags, and letters in children's own names) and emphasize rhymes (spoken or sung), alliteration and syllabification, and linking sounds to letters.

Conclusion

The findings from the Year 2 study build on those from the Year 1 evaluation, an intensive qualitative study in which over 100 individuals involved with PFA in both counties were interviewed. The Year 1 evaluation indicated that PFA funding has had far-reaching impacts across participating programs that include benefits for children, families, and providers. Tangible outcomes of PFA funding, in the form of upgrades to classroom facilities, new materials and equipment, and instructional supports and enhancements for teachers were also observed. In addition, teachers reported more subtle benefits, such as increased professional pride, better teamwork, and improved morale.

The Year 2 evaluation revealed that PFA classrooms generally are of high quality, with a few specific areas in which providers would benefit from training and technical assistance. Survey responses in both counties indicated areas of additional training needs, such as the ASQ, inclusion of children with special needs, family partnerships, and transition strategies to kindergarten. In both counties, new policy changes and technical assistance efforts for the 2007-2008 program year will address some of the issues that were identified in the Year 2 evaluation.

San Francisco County

First 5 San Francisco is implementing a number of policy changes related to enrollment, technical assistance, and kindergarten transition. Beginning with the 2007-2008 program year, First 5 San Francisco is funding all San Francisco four-year-old children participating at a PFA site, regardless of their zip code. This policy change lifts a requirement from the previous two

years, under which only children residing in target zip codes were eligible for PFA, with additional zip codes added each year. Participating PFA programs must still operate within the target zip codes (now covering about 60 percent of the city), but they may enroll and receive a PFA reimbursement for any child who is 4-years-old and a San Francisco resident.

First 5 San Francisco is launching a technical assistance system for early care and education programs that will also benefit PFA programs. Two technical assistance providers will provide peer mentoring, one specifically dedicated to supporting family child care providers and the other focusing on center-based teachers and directors. Three technical assistance providers will provide coaching to early childhood education (ECE) sites, with an emphasis on four content areas: inclusion of children with special needs, business development and fiscal supports, language and early literacy, and health and safety issues. In addition, Gateway to Quality will continue to provide environmental assessments for ECE sites, and will expand its services to provide coaching before and after the ECERS/FDCRS visits. Finally, the technical assistance system will include a clearinghouse that will provide early childhood educators with information on professional development opportunities and other resources.

In 2007-2008, First 5 San Francisco also is focusing on transition from preschool to kindergarten. The agency is helping to connect PFA directors, as well as staff from family resource centers, to training on kindergarten enrollment procedures, in order to support parents through San Francisco's unique school enrollment process. The school district implements an open enrollment process which means there are no designated neighborhood schools. As part of the application process parents list their preferred schools and the district uses a modified lottery to determine placement. First 5 San Francisco is also collaborating with the school district and other organizations to plan events across the city for parents to get to know local schools and learn about the enrollment process. The goal is to have all PFA parents meet the first-round application deadline, to maximize the chances that children will be placed in their preferred schools. In addition, First 5 San Francisco is planning and implementing a series of pilot programs to test various transition strategies, including joint staff development opportunities for PFA preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers who plan to meet several times a year.

For 2008-2009, the fourth year of PFA implementation, First 5 San Francisco has accelerated PFA rollout. Rather than just expanding to Year 4 zip codes, the Commission elected to proceed with full implementation a year earlier than planned to enable all four-year-olds and all preschool programs in the county to participate in PFA. Therefore, First 5 San Francisco is reaching out to prospective centers and family child care homes in both Year 4 and Year 5 zip codes, providing them with information about participating in PFA and assisting them in the application process.

San Mateo County

In San Mateo County, SMCOE has initiated and is in the process of planning a number of professional development opportunities for PFA and non-PFA programs in the 2007-2008 program year. In response to providers' requests, SMCOE has subcontracted with the San Mateo Child Care Resource & Referral Agency, the 4Cs, to provide additional training on the ASQ/ASQ:SE, as well as a workshop series on the inclusion of children with special needs. Furthermore, in August of 2007, the SMCOE hosted a workshop for publicly funded classroom contractors on the fiscal issues connected to "blended funding" models.

In addition to these trainings, the SMCOE is planning a major professional development series, with funding from AB212, for the 2007-2008 program year. The training will be available to all early childhood teachers and administrators in San Mateo County. The training will be presented by state and national researchers and experts in program quality (advanced ECERS-R training), early literacy, math, and social emotional development, with an emphasis on practical application for classrooms. Each training topic will be provided in a two-day conference format, followed by two 2-hour study sessions to allow teachers to network, share, and reflect on classroom practices. The study sessions will be lead by local consultants who will facilitate discussions to align the conference content to the CDE Early Learning Foundations, kindergarten standards and the Desired Results Developmental Profile. The regional study sessions will be held in four different locations throughout the county to accommodate smaller groups. In addition, SMCOE is also offering a Director/Administrator training strand which includes leadership development, facilitation and coaching skills.

Teachers, directors/site supervisors and classroom staff working in CDE contracted child development programs (Title 5) will be eligible to receive stipends through AB212 for their participation in the SMCOE professional development series. Agencies or school districts holding direct contracts with the CDE or subcontracts with the SMCOE can also receive a release time award to cover the cost of substitutes to enable participating staff to use work hours for meeting, planning and reflection time. Conference participants also can apply for one college unit from the San Mateo County Community College District for attending both the conference and study sessions (i.e., a total of two full day trainings and two 2-hour study sessions for one college unit).

The SMCOE is funded by First 5 SMC to provide 780 preschool spaces in the 2007-2008 program year. All classrooms will receive the same interventions and supports to ensure quality as in prior years. Data collection, reporting and analysis functions will be greatly enhanced with the completion of a custom database developed by WestEd Interactive for SMCOE. Longer-term, the SMCOE is focusing attention on how the agency can collaborate across the various preschool and child development programs it manages, which include PFA, State Preschool, and Pre-kindergarten and Family Literacy (PKFL). SMCOE's goal is to eventually offer similar resources across funded programs, to make the programs more alike than different, in terms of quality of programming and supports for staff.

Year 3 Process Evaluation

The evaluation team will continue to solicit feedback from PFA participants and partners, and will monitor implementation, expansion, and quality improvement activities and their impacts on staff and families. The third year of the process evaluation will focus on reviewing administrative data collected from PFA sites, including family and child service data, staff qualifications and compensation, professional development activities, and other evaluation activities to be determined. In addition, AIR will help SMCOE and First 5 San Francisco identify design options for a rigorous longitudinal evaluation that focuses on PFA program outcomes for children and families.

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Appendix A:
San Francisco Unified School District PFA Sites
Survey Findings

San Francisco Implementation Survey Findings: San Francisco Unified School District PFA Sites

To gather information regarding PFA implementation, a survey was administered to PFA programs in San Francisco County, which includes both San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and non-school district programs. This section describes findings for the SFUSD PFA sites only. The survey was administered at the site-level for SFUSD, with 12 of the 15 SFUSD sites responding to the survey. Two of the 12 SFUSD sites submitted multiple surveys (e.g., the principal and the lead teacher submitted surveys individually, rather than collaborating on one set of survey responses). In these two cases, the individual surveys were averaged, to arrive at one set of survey responses per site.

The survey gathered information regarding the successes and challenges of PFA implementation, including the PFA application process, PFA support services, services to children with special needs, impacts of PFA on various program areas, family partnerships, strategies used to help children and families transition to kindergarten, and providers' recommendations for improving the PFA system.

Becoming a PFA Provider

Exhibit A.1. Perceptions of the PFA Application (or Reapplication) Process Among SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
The PFA application (or reapplication) process was easy to understand.	11	18%	36%	45%	_

ECERS-R Observations

Exhibit A.2. Perceptions of the ECERS-R Observation Process Among SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
Before the ECERS-R assessment, Gateway to Quality staff were responsive (e.g., returned phone calls in a timely manner, answered specific questions) to me or my delegated staff.	8	_	13%	63%	25%
Before the ECERS-R assessment, I had a good understanding of what the assessment process entailed.	9	_	33%	56%	11%

Exhibit A.3. Future ECERS-R Scores Among SFUSD PFA Sites

Thinking ahead to the next time the program goes through a Gateway to Quality review, compared to the first review, do you think your program will receive:	N = 10	Percent
Higher score	7	70%
About the same score	3	30%
Lower score	-	-

PFA Support Services

Exhibit A.4. Helpfulness of San Francisco PFA Support Services to SFUSD PFA Sites

How helpful were the following PFA supports?	Description of Services	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat Helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
Learning Circles	Quarterly meetings of PFA staff, designed to share information and network among providers	12	17%	25%	17%	17%	25%
Tree Frog Treks	Provides science curriculum, training for staff on implementing science sites, and materials needed for on-going science activities during school year.	12	–	–	42%	42%	17%
Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)	The QIP guides sites by examining components of program implementation, determining program strengths and areas for improvement, and establishing program goals for the coming year.	12	8%	8%	33%	42%	8%
Quality Improvement Grants	Quality improvement grants up to $3,000 per classroom to PFA programs every three years.	12	–	–	25%	67%	8%
Mental health consultation and support	Mental health consultants assigned to classrooms to help observe children and collaborate with teachers on interventions.	11	–	–	18%	64%	18%
Gateway to Quality ECERS assessments	Conducts independent assessments of PFA sites.	12	17%	17%	25%	42%	–
Performing Arts Workshops	Artists-in-residence assigned to work within classrooms to support creative movement activities.	12	17%	8%	25%	25%	25%
Raising a Reader book bag program	Supplies PFA sites with lending libraries for families, a book bag for each PFA child at year end and early literacy training to PFA classrooms and staff.	12	8%	–	25%	50%	17%
Training sponsored by F5 SF (e.g., Ages and Stages and DRDP-R trainings)	Trainings and workshops offered by First 5 San Francisco	12	17%	33%	25%	25%	–

Exhibit A.5. Helpfulness of PFA Program Quality Guidelines for SFUSD PFA Sites

	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
How helpful was the PFA Program Quality Guidelines as a resource?	7	–	29%	57%	14%	–

Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R)

Exhibit A.6. Use of DRDP-R by SFUSD PFA Sites

Use of DRDP-R	N	Percent Using DRDP-R Strategy
Share DRDP-R results with parents	10	83%
Develop and implement activities for individual children, based on the results of the DRDP-R	8	67%
Discuss ILPs for individual and/or groups of children	9	75%
Use DRDP-R results to develop ILPs	9	75%
Conduct additional observations on individual children based on the ILP	5	42%
Develop activities for individual children for parents to use at home	5	42%

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

Exhibit A.7. Use of the ASQ by SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
The ASQ is an effective tool for teachers to develop a relationship with parents.	12	33%	25%	33%	8%	–
The ASQ is an effective tool for identifying children who may need additional assessment for special needs.	12	25%	25%	33%	8%	8%
I would use the ASQ in my program even if it was not required by PFA.	12	50%	33%	17%	–	–
Teachers are adequately trained to use the ASQ.	12	25%	58%	17%		
The ASQ screening support through the High Risk Infant Interagency Council (HRIIC) is helpful.	12	25%	33%	33%	–	8%

Exhibit A.8. Number of Referrals Made for Children Identified With a Special Need by SFUSD PFA Sites

Comparing this program year (2006-2007) to past years, as a result of using the ASQ has the number of referrals for special education services:	N=11	Percent
Increased	1	9%
Stayed about the same	4	36%
Decreased	1	9%
Not sure	5	45%
My program used the ASQ before we became a PFA provider	–	–

Exhibit A.9. Serving Children with Special Needs Among SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
Children with special needs are effectively included in my program's PFA classrooms.	12	8%	8%	42%	25%	17%
PFA teachers have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs.	12	8%	33%	50%	8%	_

Exhibit A.10. SFUSD PFA Teacher Interactions With Special Education Staff

To what extent do PFA teacher have interactions with special education staff to address the needs of children in their classroom who have been identified as having special needs?	N=11	Percent
Frequently	3	27%
Sometimes	3	27%
Rarely	4	36%
Never	1	9%
Not sure	–	–
Not applicable	–	–

Exhibit A.11. Collaboration Between SFUSD PFA Teachers and Special Education Staff

Factors that should be addressed to improve the level of collaboration between PFA teachers and special education staff.	N	Percent
Time for joint meetings	6	55%
Established communication system between PFA teachers and special education teachers	7	64%
Cooperation on the part of special education staff	1	9%
Cooperation on the part of PFA teachers	2	18%
Other	1	9%
Not applicable	–	–

Impact of PFA

Exhibit A.12. Awareness of PFA Among Staff and Parents at SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
Teaching staff understand the overall purpose and goals of PFA.	12	–	8%	42%	42%	8%
Teaching staff understand the specific requirements of PFA.	11	–	–	73%	27%	–
Parents are aware their child is enrolled in a PFA classroom.	11	–	27%	55%	18%	–
Parents understand the difference between PFA and non-PFA preschool sites.	11	–	45%	27%	–	27%

Exhibit A.13. Impact on SFUSD PFA Sites

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
PFA has helped raise the quality of staff-child interactions.	12	_	17%	50%	33%	_
Training opportunities provided through PFA address my program's needs.	12	_	_	75%	25%	_
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has increased teacher knowledge.	12	_	25%	33%	8%	33%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has changed classroom practice.	12	_	25%	25%	_	50%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has increased teacher knowledge.	12	_	25%	33%	_	42%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has changed classroom practice.	12	_	25%	25%	8%	42%

Exhibit A.14. Impact of PFA on SFUSD Program Areas

		Impact in this area for my program				
		1	2	3	4	5
	N	Negative impact	No impact – things are about the same as they were before PFA	Some positive impact	Strong positive impact	Very strong and significant positive impact
Science instruction	11	_	_	73%	27%	_
Literacy instruction	11	_	9%	45%	36%	9%
Arts instruction	10	_	40%	40%	20%	_
Inclusion of children with special needs	11	_	45%	36%	18%	_
Mental health consultation/ support	11	_	36%	36%	18%	9%

Family Partnerships

Exhibit A.15. Level of Family Involvement in SFUSD PFA Sites

Levels of Family Involvement	N	Percent of sites agreeing with statement
Parents are considered to be true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development.	10	83%
Some parents are involved in some program activities.	8	67%
Parents are actively involved in most program activities.	5	42%
Parent involvement is mostly limited to attendance at parent conferences; parent participation in other activities is low.	4	33%
It is a challenge to find ways to meaningfully involve parents.	2	17%

Exhibit A.16. Percentage of SFUSD Sites Identifying Resources Needed in Their Efforts to Partner with Families

How could PFA support your program's efforts to partner with families?	N=12	Percent of sites identifying support as needed
Training for parents on how to support their children's learning and development	10	83%
Resources for staff (e.g., educational information on family engagement)	9	75%
Resources for parents (e.g., information on how families can get involved in the program, support children's learning at home)	8	67%
Training for staff on family partnership strategies	8	67%
Training for teachers on how to conduct conferences with family members	6	50%
Training for teachers on how to share DRDP-R results or Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with parents	4	33%

Transition to Kindergarten

Exhibit A.17. Transition Strategies Employed by SFUSD PFA Sites

Transition Strategies	N	Percent of Sites Implementing Strategy
Discussing children's "school readiness" with parents	11	92%
Providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents	10	83%
Facilitating or participating in joint transition planning meetings between kindergarten and preschool teachers	8	67%
Facilitating kindergarten visits for children	8	67%
Involving parents in transition planning	7	58%
Providing information to parents about before- or after-school child care options for kindergarten children	7	58%
Aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards	7	58%
Helping parents understand how they can be involved in the K-12 public school system (e.g., helping them understand the K-12 environment, opportunities for parent involvement, etc.).	7	58%
Facilitating kindergarten tours for parents	6	50%
Facilitating or participating in professional development for preschool teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	4	33%
Facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	3	25%

Challenges to PFA Implementation

Exhibit A.18. Challenges Faced by San Francisco SFUSD PFA Sites

	N	1 Not a challenge	2 A small challenge	3 A moderate challenge	4 A very big challenge	Not sure or not applicable
Conducting outreach to families	11	18%	27%	27%	27%	_
Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA use	11	18%	27%	_	36%	18%
Meeting enrollment targets	10	40%	20%	30%	_	10%
Recruiting qualified PFA staff	11	45%	27%	18%	9%	_
Complying with PFA data collection requirements	11	9%	27%	45%	18%	_
Participating in training required by PFA	11	18%	36%	27%	18%	_
Supporting the professional development of staff (e.g., finding subs to allow teachers to participate in training, providing release time, etc.)	11	18%	18%	9%	55%	_
Recruiting and/or retaining qualified teachers	10	50%	10%	30%	10%	_
Providing services to children with special needs	11	27%	27%	27%	9%	9%
Supporting English language development among the English learners in your program.	11	18%	36%	18%	18%	9%
Training teachers to use the DRDP-R	11	9%	36%	27%	27%	_
Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs	11	_	9%	27%	64%	_
Finding time to report on my program's progress toward implementing our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).	11	_	_	64%	27%	9%

Exhibit A.19. Quality Enhancement Budget Requirement for SFUSD PFA Sites

For 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco requires programs to submit a detailed annual budget on PFA quality enhancements. How helpful was this requirement?	N	Percent
Helpful	9	75%
Not helpful	3	25%

Exhibit A.20. PFA Impact on State Contracts for SFUSD PFA Sites

Is PFA having an impact on your site's ability to fully earn your state contract?	N	Percent
Yes	3	27%
No	2	18%
Not sure	6	55%
Not applicable	–	–

Appendix B:
San Francisco Non-School District PFA Programs Survey Findings

San Francisco Implementation Survey Findings: Non-School District PFA Programs

To gather information regarding PFA implementation, a survey was administered to PFA programs in San Francisco County. This section presents the survey responses for the non-school district PFA programs in San Francisco (all PFA programs except those managed by the San Francisco Unified School District). In 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco contracted with 20 non-school district PFA providers. Eighteen of the 20 community-based PFA sites responded to the survey.

The survey gathered information regarding the successes and challenges of PFA implementation, including the PFA application process, PFA support services, services to children with special needs, impacts of PFA on various program areas, family partnerships, strategies used to help children and families transition to kindergarten, and providers' recommendations for improving the PFA system.

Becoming a PFA Provider

Exhibit B.1. Perceptions of the PFA Application (or Reapplication) Process Among Non-School District PFA Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statement?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
The PFA application (or reapplication) process was easy to understand.	18	–	6%	83%	11%

ECERS-R/FDCRS Observations

Exhibit B.2. Perceptions of the ECERS-R/FDCRS Observation Process Among Non-School District PFA Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree
Before the ECERS-R/FDCRS assessment, Gateway to Quality staff were responsive (e.g., returned phone calls in a timely manner, answered specific questions) to me or my delegated staff.	5	–	–	80%	20%
Before the ECERS-R/FDCRS assessment, I had a good understanding of what the assessment process entailed.	5	–	–	80%	20%

Exhibit B.3. Future ECERS-R/FDCRS Scores Among Non-School District PFA Programs

Compared to the first review by Gateway to Quality, do you think your program will receive	N=17	Percent
Higher score	12	71%
About the same score	4	24%
Lower score	1	6%

PFA Support Services

Exhibit B.4. Helpfulness of San Francisco PFA Support Services to Non-School District PFA Programs

How helpful were the following PFA supports?	Description of Services	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat Helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
Learning Circles	Quarterly meetings of PFA staff, designed to share information and network among providers	11	_	36%	36%	18%	9%
Tree Frog Treks	Provides science curriculum, training for staff on implementing science sites, and materials needed for on-going science activities during school year.	11	_	_	27%	73%	_
Quality Improvement Plans (QIP)	The QIP guides sites by examining components of program implementation, determining program strengths and areas for improvement, and establishing program goals for the coming year.	10	10%	20%	50%	10%	10%
Quality Improvement Grants	Quality improvement grants up to $3,000 per classroom to PFA programs every three years.	11	_	9%	27%	45%	18%
Mental health consultation and support	Mental health consultants assigned to classrooms to observe children and collaborate with teachers on interventions.	11	_	_	9%	55%	36%
Gateway to Quality ECERS/FDCRS assessments	Conducts independent assessments of PFA sites.	11	9%	45%	27%	_	18%
Performing Arts Workshops	Artists-in-residence assigned to work within classrooms to support creative movement activities.	10	10%	10%	40%	40%	_
Raising a Reader book bag program	Supplies PFA sites with lending libraries for families, a book bag for each PFA child at year end and early literacy training to PFA classrooms and staff.	11	9%	_	27%	45%	18%
Training sponsored by F5 SF (e.g., Ages and Stages and DRDP-R trainings)	Trainings and workshops offered by First 5 San Francisco	11	9%	9%	27%	18%	36%

Exhibit B.5. Helpfulness of Program Quality Guidelines for Non-School District PFA Programs

	N	1 Not helpful	2 Somewhat helpful	3 Helpful	4 Very helpful	Not applicable or not sure
How helpful was the PFA Program Quality Guidelines as a resource?	11	9%	27%	55%	9%	_

Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R)

Exhibit B.6. Use of DRDP-R by Non-School District PFA Programs

Use of DRDP-R	N=18	Percent using DRDP-R Strategy
Share DRDP-R results with parents	14	78%
Develop and implement activities for individual children, based on the results of the DRDP-R	13	72%
Discuss ILPs for individual and/or groups of children	12	67%
Use DRDP-R results to develop ILPs	10	56%
Conduct additional observations on individual children based on the ILP	10	56%
Develop activities for individual children for parents to use at home	7	39%

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

Exhibit B.7. Use of the ASQ by Non-School District PFA Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
The ASQ is an effective tool for teachers to develop a relationship with parents.	18	11%	22%	50%	11%	6%
The ASQ is an effective tool for identifying children who may need additional assessment for special needs.	18	11%	22%	50%	11%	6%
I would use the ASQ in my program even if it was not required by PFA.	18	22%	11%	50%	11%	6%
Teachers are adequately trained to use the ASQ.	18	6%	17%	56%	11%	11%
The ASQ screening support through the High Risk Infant Interagency Council (HRIIC) is helpful.	18	6%	17%	44%	_	33%

Exhibit B.8. Number of Referrals Made for Children Identified With a Special Need by Non-School District PFA Programs

Comparing this program year (2006-2007) to past years, as a result of using the ASQ has the number of referrals for special education services:	N=18	Percent
Increased	_	_
Stayed about the same	11	61%
Decreased	_	_
Not sure	_	_
My program used the ASQ before we became a PFA provider	7	39%

Exhibit B.9. Serving Children with Special Needs Among Non-School District PFA Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not applicable
Children with special needs are effectively included in my program's PFA classrooms.	18	_	11%	56%	28%	6%
PFA teachers have the skills to effectively meet the needs of children with special needs.	17	6%	24%	59%	6%	6%

Exhibit B.10. Non-School District PFA Teacher Interactions With Special Education Staff

To what extent do PFA teacher have interactions with special education staff to address the needs of children in their classroom who have been identified as having special needs?	N=18	Percent
Frequently	5	28%
Sometimes	5	28%
Rarely	3	17%
Never	_	_
Not sure	1	6%
Not applicable	4	22%

Exhibit B.11. Collaboration Between Non-School District PFA Teachers and Special Education Staff

Factors that should be addressed to improve the level of collaboration between PFA teachers and special education staff.	N=17	Percent
Established communication system between PFA teachers and special education teachers	9	53%
Time for joint meetings	4	24%
Cooperation on the part of special education staff	4	24%
Cooperation on the part of PFA teachers	_	_
Other	_	_
Not applicable	_	_

Impact of PFA

Exhibit B.12. Awareness of PFA Among Staff and Parents at Non-School District PFA Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
Teaching staff understand the overall purpose and goals of PFA.	18	_	6%	78%	6%	11%
Teaching staff understand the specific requirements of PFA.	18	_	28%	61%	6%	6%
Parents are aware their child is enrolled in a PFA classroom.	17	_	18%	59%	18%	6%
Parents understand the difference between PFA and non-PFA preschool sites.	18	_	44%	22%	_	33%

Exhibit B.13. Impact on PFA Non-School District Programs

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	N	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Agree	4 Strongly agree	Not sure
PFA has helped raise the quality of staff-child interactions.	17	6%	41%	24%	18%	12%
Training opportunities provided through PFA address my program's needs.	18	–	17%	39%	33%	11%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has increased teacher knowledge.	18	6%	28%	44%	11%	11%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in inclusion and/or special needs has changed classroom practice.	18	6%	39%	39%	–	17%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has increased teacher knowledge.	18	6%	17%	61%	6%	11%
Requiring teachers to complete one unit of coursework in literacy and language development has changed classroom practice.	18	6%	28%	44%	–	22%

Exhibit B.14. Impact of PFA on Non-School District Program Areas

	N	Impact in this area for my program				
		1 Negative impact	2 No impact – things are about the same as they were before PFA	3 Some positive impact	4 Strong positive impact	5 Very strong and significant positive impact
Science instruction	18	–	11%	44%	33%	11%
Literacy instruction	17	–	29%	53%	18%	–
Arts instruction	17	–	12%	65%	12%	12%
Inclusion of children with special needs	18	–	67%	22%	11%	–
Mental health consultation/ support	18	–	67%	11%	11%	11%

Family Partnerships

Exhibit B.15. Level of Family Involvement in Non-School District PFA Programs

Levels of Family Involvement	N=18	Percent of sites agreeing with statement
Parents are considered to be true partners with program staff in supporting their children's development.	11	61%
Some parents are involved in some program activities.	11	61%
Parents are actively involved in most program activities.	6	33%
Parent involvement is mostly limited to attendance at parent conferences; parent participation in other activities is low.	4	22%
It is a challenge to find ways to meaningfully involve parents.	2	11%

Exhibit B.16. Percentage of Non-School District PFA Programs Identifying Resources Needed in Their Efforts to Partner with Families

How could PFA support your program's efforts to partner with families?	N=18	Percent of sites identifying support as needed
Training for parents on how to support their children's learning and development	13	72%
Resources for parents (e.g., information on how families can get involved in the program, support children's learning at home)	9	50%
Training for teachers on how to share DRDP-R results or Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) with parents	9	50%
Training for teachers on how to conduct conferences with family members	7	39%
Resources for staff (e.g., educational information on family engagement)	6	33%
Training for staff on family partnership strategies	5	28%

Transition to Kindergarten

Exhibit B.17. Transition Strategies Employed by Non-School District PFA Programs

Transition Strategies	N=18	Percent of Sites Implementing Strategy
Discussing children's "school readiness" with parents	16	89%
Providing kindergarten enrollment information to parents	15	83%
Involving parents in transition planning	11	61%
Providing information to parents about before- or after-school child care options for kindergarten children	6	33%
Facilitating kindergarten tours for parents	5	28%
Facilitating or participating in joint transition planning meetings between kindergarten and preschool teachers	5	28%
Aligning preschool curriculum with kindergarten content standards	4	22%
Helping parents understand how they can be involved in the K-12 public school system (e.g., helping them understand the K-12 environment, opportunities for parent involvement, etc.).	4	22%
Facilitating kindergarten visits for children	4	22%
Facilitating or participating in professional development for preschool teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	3	17%
Facilitating or participating in joint professional development for preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers regarding kindergarten transition issues	1	6%

Challenges to PFA Implementation

Exhibit B.18. Challenges Faced by Non-School District PFA Programs

	N	1 Not a challenge	2 A small challenge	3 A moderate challenge	4 A very big challenge	Not sure or not applicable
Conducting outreach to families	17	35%	35%	12%	18%	_
Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA use	18	44%	22%	17%	6%	11%
Meeting enrollment targets	17	47%	24%	12%	18%	_
Recruiting qualified PFA staff	17	41%	12%	24%	24%	_
Complying with PFA data collection requirements	17	18%	35%	41%	6%	_
Participating in training required by PFA	17	18%	24%	24%	29%	6%
Supporting the professional development of staff (e.g., finding subs to allow teachers to participate in training, providing release time, etc.)	18	6%	22%	22%	44%	6%
Recruiting and/or retaining qualified teachers	18	22%	22%	17%	28%	11%
Providing services to children with special needs	17	29%	24%	24%	18%	6%
Supporting English language development among the English learners in your program.	17	35%	29%	29%	_	6%
Training teachers to use the DRDP-R	18	22%	28%	44%	6%	_
Providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs	18	6%	17%	33%	44%	_
Finding time to report on my program's progress toward implementing our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).	18	_	17%	44%	22%	17%

PFA Policies

Exhibit B.19. Quality Enhancement Budget Requirement for Non-School District PFA Programs

For 2006-2007, First 5 San Francisco requires programs to submit a detailed annual budget on PFA quality enhancements. How helpful was this requirement?	N=15	Percent
Helpful	6	40%
Not helpful	9	60%

Exhibit B.20. PFA Impact on State Contracts for Non-School District PFA Programs

Is PFA having an impact on your site's ability to fully earn your state contract?	N=17	Percent
Yes	–	–
No	11	65%
Not sure	2	12%
Not applicable	4	24%

Exhibit B.21. Wage Policy for Non-School District PFA Programs

After the 2006-2007 wage requirement policy was eliminated, did wages for PFA staff. As a result, did the program:	N=7	Percent
Increase wage rates	3	21%
Maintain wage rates about the same as 2005-2006 rates	4	29%
Reduce wage rates	-	7%

Appendix C:
San Mateo Parents Place Sub-study

Study of Parents Place Services to Preschool for All Families
Preschool for All Evaluation

The American Institutes for Research (AIR) is conducting a 3-year joint process evaluation, which began in December of 2005, to assess the implementation of Preschool for All (PFA) in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. The process evaluation is designed to investigate and document the implementation and the preliminary impacts of PFA on children, families, providers, and the community. In 2007, First 5 San Mateo and the San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) contracted with AIR to expand the PFA Evaluation to include a sub-study of the early childhood mental health services provided by Parents Place of Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS), to PFA sites in San Mateo County.

Through the JFCS Parents Place program, consultants provide assistance, staff training, and prevention and early intervention services to licensed, early childhood programs that serve low-income children and families. The consultants establish relationships with preschool program staff to discuss and address issues related to children's behavior and social-emotional well-being. For example, this work might include facilitating communication between teachers, developing behavior management plans for a child or groups of children, or providing guidance on referrals for children who may have special needs. In 2006-2007, Parents Place provided consultant services at eight San Mateo PFA classrooms from three PFA programs, impacting 33 PFA teachers[16]. A total of 571 children were served by the eight PFA classrooms receiving services from Parents Place. In addition to working directly with PFA staff, Parents Place consultants offer individualized consultation with PFA parents who have been referred to or requested services. The focus of the parent consultation varies, based on parents' needs, with the common goal of addressing children's behavior issues and supporting parents' relationships with their children. The consultant's involvement with the family may include providing developmental guidance, exploring more appropriate child rearing practices, encouraging understanding and mutual support between the parents and school staff, and providing short-term therapeutic intervention. In 2006-2007, Parents Place staff provided consultation to 14 PFA parents in San Mateo County. The organization also serves other preschool programs that currently do not receive PFA funding.

The Parents Place sub-study included telephone interviews with PFA parents who received individualized consultation services from Parents Place in 2006-2007. Six PFA parents (i.e., mothers) who received support from Parents Place consultants provided their consent to participate in the interviews. Interviews with five of the six parents were scheduled and completed.[17] As requested by the parents, all of the interviews were conducted in Spanish by AIR staff. The interviews were designed to gather information on PFA parents' experiences with Parents Place, their satisfaction with the services, perceived impacts of the services for their children, and suggestions to improve the services. This document summarizes the major themes which emerged from the parent interviews.

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[16] Parents Place worked with the following PFA sites: Taft Community Education Center (CEC), Hoover CEC, Redwood City School District (RCSD) Hawes Child Development Center (CDC), RCSD Roosevelt CDC, RCSD Garfield CDC, RCSD Fair Oaks CDC, Magnolia Institute for Human and Social Development (IHSD), and Fair Oaks IHSD. This work was supported with funds from SMCOE PFA and First 5 San Mateo.

[17] The study team was unable to reach one of the parents to schedule an interview.

Impacts of Parents Place Consultation Services

PFA parents were overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of the Parents Place consultation services. The consultants have helped parents understand their children's development, implement more effective behavior management strategies, identify opportunities to create more positive interactions with their children, learn ways to respond constructively to their children's behavior, and develop strategies to support their children in areas that are needed. Comments from parents included, "I have learned how to play with him [my son], which I never did before. So it [the consultation] has helped me very, very much, I get along very well now with my son." One parent emphasized how she "really liked how they [the consultant] were able to accommodate my schedule; they were very flexible for my busy schedule." Several parents described how the consultants have helped them understand their child's need for affection and comfort. "It has helped me. I can listen to my child better; I can give her more affection." Another parent said, "I feel much better, I feel like I'm a better mother...before, when my child didn't understand me it really frustrated me, but now I understand that I need to help them. My child is very sentimental and I learned I have to give him a lot of affection instead of scolding…because he needs affection."

Parents were asked to comment on how the support services have strengthened their parenting skills. One parent talked about how the program helped her to reach out to others more easily, "Yes, it has helped me like a mother, I can see in myself, that I am growing as a mother and other parents can see a change in me as well. I'm not afraid to look for help. It has helped me feel more able to attend to both of my children." Several other mothers described how the consultation process has made them more patient as parents.

Parents reported that the consultation services have improved their understanding of their children's needs. One parent described how the consultant helped her recognize the importance of exploration in a child's development, stating "I learned that he [my son] is a child and he has to explore and see his world. Before, he used to do things that I wouldn't allow, but now I know that he is exploring and I let him do that. Yes, I understand now that children have their stages in development and each stage is different, and their behavior is different." Another parent echoed this theme, explaining that the Parents Place consultant helped her understand what is developmentally appropriate for her child. "The counselor first taught me that the thing we must remember is that your son is just a child; that is the first point. She taught me that when I speak to my child I should only say 2 to 3 sentences, because that's all they can retain, before I used to just say 'blah blah blah', and he just tuned it out, but she taught me how to speak to him more sensibly."

A common theme which emerged through the interviews was that the consultants helped parents understand and implement effective behavior management strategies with their children. One PFA parent said, "She [the Parents Place consultant] taught me about discipline, things that I wasn't aware of. She asked me what my son's favorite thing was and I was ashamed I didn't know, so it taught me to pay more attention to the small details about my child." One parent reported how she learned the benefits of positive reinforcement. "When he [her son] is doing things well and behaving well that's when we are supposed to give him more attention. I see that this has been effective." Another parent stated, "It has helped me understand his behavior and

work on preventing bad behavior." A PFA parent emphasized, "It has been a little better, at first I went to see the counselor [the Parents Place consultant] because my child has always been poorly behaved. And now the teachers are sending notes and telling me he is behaving better." A PFA mother said, "I was having problems with my child. It has helped me very much with managing my child's behavior. It has really helped me a lot. I have received a lot of support. They oriented me in how to discipline a child, how to have more contact with your child, they gave me tips on how to respond to certain things, that I may have not detected. The things she [the consultant] observed in the classroom were enlightening. I wouldn't have been able to detect these things."

Parents reported that the consultants have helped them identify patterns in their children's behavior and respond in ways that have promoted more positive behavior and interactions. A parent explained, "Yes, I have had some problems with him, but they [the Parents Place consultant] taught me that there is a cycle, if a child gets hurt or falls down; they need comfort from a parent. Before, if he fell I would just say 'well, you fell down, I'm not going to help you,' but now if he falls down I run over there give him a hug, make sure he's ok, and then he'll just continue to play." Another mother said, "I learned that if you can detect that your child is about to get mad or tense, give them options of things they can do which they like, and this helps prevent the child from getting very upset."

Parents said that their communication with their children's teachers has benefited from the program. One parent described how her behavior and attitude toward her child's preschool program has changed, due to her participation in the Parents Place consultation process. "It [the consultation] has helped me relate me to my son's teacher and to the parents of the classroom. Before, I wasn't very social, I used to just leave my child at school, but now I am trying to stay around and talk more to the teacher and the parents of my son's friends." Another parent emphasized how the consultation has made her feel more confident connecting with PFA program staff. "Because I used to feel that they [PFA teachers] didn't understand me, and I didn't understand them. When they would give me advice it would make me mad, because I thought it was their fault too. Now I realize that it is difficult for my child to make friends, and I need to help him. I feel that the teachers understand me better, and when they give me advice I listen and try to make the situation better." One parent talked about how the support services received through Parents Place helped her reflect on her own responses to emotional situations, stating, "I am a person who gets mad very easily; I can explode or get very mad if you do something that bothers me. The counselor helped me understand that I need to try and not yell at the teachers, because the teachers used to make me very mad. Now I learned how to wait, and listen to what the teachers are saying."

The benefits of the program also extend to parents' relations with professionals in the community. One parent described how the Parents Place consultation services impacted her interactions with her child's doctor, "Before, I thought everything was such a big deal, when it came to my son. When I would visit with my son's doctor or teacher, I always thought problems were so big and grave, but I learned that it doesn't always have to be such a big deal. My doctor noticed that I had calmed down and wasn't as anxious."

In addition to providing parenting support, parents were asked if the program has helped them personally, as individuals. Parents reflected on the impact of the consultation for their personal growth. A parent said, "For me, personally it has helped so much! I feel very good about myself I have a higher self-esteem than before. I think this has a lot to do with the support I have received from this program." Another parent reported, "I haven't changed completely, but the communication between my children, myself and my husband has improved." One PFA mother emphasized how the program has helped her communicate more effectively with her family, stating, "It opened the lines of communication in the house….My husband, my son and I communicate better, my husband didn't used to be involved with my son, now we talk about my son more often and I tell him how we can support our child."

Parents were asked if Parents Place consultants had facilitated the process of accessing community services, if needed. Three of the five parents indicated that the consultants had supported them in connecting to services. For example, one parent reported, "We have been talking about it, and they gave me an application for my children to get into summer school. The counselor gave me the application and the dates that I needed to turn everything in."

Challenges

Only two of the five parents had any specific recommendations to enhance services offered through Parents Place. Two parents commented on the level of Spanish proficiency of the consultants with whom they worked. One parent said, "Well, it was a lot of work for me because I don't speak English and my counselor didn't speak Spanish, so it was a little difficult. She said she understood me well, but it wasn't perfectly well. Out of 100% she probably understood me at 80%." Another parent commented on the difficulty of using a PFA teacher as a translator with a consultant who did not speak Spanish. "It was difficult for me to open up to two people, because my son's teacher used to have to translate for me to the counselor."

To the extent possible, Parents Place hires bilingual consultants. Currently, five of the seven consultants on staff are bilingual. The organization is challenged by the limited pool of available, qualified, bilingual consultants who work with young children and childcare providers. Parents Place attempts to meet parents' language needs, although the organization is aware it is not always feasible. In cases where Parents Place cannot assign a bilingual consultant to a Spanish-speaking parent, the organization will consider the alternative strategy of using a translator. This language issue is complicated by the fact that consultants are assigned to specific PFA sites, where they develop close working relationships with teachers and other program staff. Parents Place is hesitant to shift Spanish-speaking consultants across sites and disrupt the partnerships they have developed with PFA staff. Parents Place is considering the option of providing Spanish language classes for their monolingual English consultants, to address this language challenge.

Another parent suggested that more effort be placed on joint meetings between the consultant, parent and PFA teacher, "I think that I could have seen more communication. I would have liked to have a session with the counselor, the teacher and myself meet together. They offered it to me, but I think the teacher was too busy." Another parent was unsure whether her child's teacher was aware of the consultant services she was receiving. Parents Place described their overall approach as collaborative, with the goal of bringing parents and teachers together to arrive at a

shared understanding of the child. Consultants offer to meet with teachers and parents together, although they recognize that this may not always be feasible, given the schedules of teachers and parents. When meetings with a parent and teacher cannot take place in-person, the consultant often serves as a liaison between the two, bringing information and insights back and forth, with permission, so that both parties can benefit from the other. This inclusive consultation continues throughout the duration of the services, either by bringing together parents and teachers, or by sharing information through the consultant, so that a common understanding of the issues may be achieved. It is also important to note that each parent receives individualized services, based on his or her specific needs, which may focus primarily on issues beyond the PFA classroom. Teachers are aware of which parents the consultants are meeting with, as the referral for consultation most often starts with the teacher. Teachers are also aware of when a consultant is ending a case with a family, and they, together with parents, are often involved in that decision.

Impact on PFA Teachers

The Parents Place substudy conducted in the spring of 2007 focused specifically on parents who received intensive consultation from Parents Place. However, the Year 1 (2005-2006) and Year 2 (2006-2007) PFA evaluation did gather some information on the impact of the Parents Place program on PFA teachers. In Year 1, AIR interviewed program directors and teachers regarding the services. Feedback from Parents Place staff and PFA program management emphasized how the Jewish Family and Children's Services supports teachers in their work. "They feel supported…..their sense of efficacy is supported and enhanced…they are given the tools and they develop in themselves that sense that they can manage these complicated behaviors [among children], and manage complicated relationships with parents." In addition, teachers "feel like they have a place to share their experience and to feel supported through those difficulties."

PFA provider and partner staff felt that Parents Place supports children who may not receive services elsewhere. Children may not qualify for services through special education or the school district because they demonstrate a mixture of behaviors (e.g., aggressiveness, delays in social emotional development, lack of focus, problems with transitions) or lack a specific or diagnosed issue such as a speech or language delay. Other families cannot effectively access services due to language barriers. According to PFA staff and partners, these children who are not typically served by the special education system are supported by Parents Place, which is also helping to fill a gap in support for teachers.

One management-level staff person said, "With Parents Place, they can also work with the parents. Again, they can be another objective eye with the parents. They are removed, knowledgeable. They have the trust and the rapport. They can help develop a plan for a child with problems and help the child's emotional health. The counselors are able to work with both personal issues that staff have and they work with kid's issues. And if there are issues between staff, they serve as a mediator. They can observe in the child's home and bring that information back to the teachers." A PFA program director recommended the service be expanded to provide more hours of mental health support to staff each week. For many programs, the mental health support was viewed as a critical support for staff.

In Year 2 of the PFA Evaluation, the five PFA program directors were asked to comment on the helpfulness of PFA support services, including Parents Place. Three of the five PFA programs responded to the Parents Place survey item, all of whom related the services provided as "helpful" or "very helpful".

Summary

Overall, parents were extremely appreciative of the support they have received through Parents Place, providing concrete examples of how they have changed their behavior to better respond to their child's needs, employ positive behavior management strategies, and communicate with their children's teachers. Comments from parents suggest that the consultation services have helped them to recognize the connection between their own behavior and that of their children, and that changes in their parenting practices can positively impact their children's learning and development. Parents described modifications in how they speak to, play with, and respond to their children that have resulted in a range of positive outcomes for their families. In addition, parents reported that a greater awareness of their own behavior has positively changed the way they interact with teachers. Parents also described the impact of the program in personal terms, citing increased communication within their family, a greater sense of self-esteem and confidence, and the benefits of facilitated access to needed community services.

Two of the five parents commented on the difficulty of communicating with consultants who spoke limited or no Spanish, and one of these parents suggested it was also challenging to have her PFA teacher serve as a translator. The majority of staff employed by Parents Place is bilingual and the organization attempts to match consultants with the home language of clients to the extent possible. Parents Place might wish to reconsider the benefits and drawbacks of shifting Spanish-speaking consultants to sites on an as-needed basis, balancing the desire to maintain the unique consultant—teacher relationships at each PFA site, with the benefits of providing linguistically appropriate consultation services to all parents. In addition, based on the comments of two of the five parents, JCFS might consider emphasizing to parents that teachers are kept informed of the services they and their child are receiving. Overall, it is clear that Parents Place is providing a critical support to parents that promotes family functioning and healthy child development.