



Orange County
Countywide Preschool Plan
2006-2007

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BACKGROUND

NATIONAL MOVEMENT

A growing number of states have established policy goals to make preschool available on a voluntary basis to all children, regardless of income, at least within certain specified school districts or geographic areas. Currently, these states include Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, and Oklahoma, and West Virginia. In addition, significant statewide planning has been conducted in California, Illinois and Massachusetts in an effort to make preschool services available to all.¹

STATE LEVEL ACTIVITIES

State of California

The Universal Preschool Task Force, convened by state Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin, published a report entitled *Ready to Learn* (1998) calling for "publicly funded universal preschool within ten years for all three- and four-year-old children in California."²

In 2002, the California Master Plan for Education included a recommendation for preschool that stated, "for the two years prior to kindergarten entry, the State should provide voluntary access to formal preschool programs that offer group experiences and developmentally appropriate curricula."³

Packard Foundation

In 2003, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation made a long-term commitment to support nonprofit organizations working toward voluntary preschool for every three- and four-year old in California. The Foundation has funded leadership and constituency-building, technical assistance and systems building, research, and public preschool programs in selected California communities with the goal of securing high-quality preschool opportunities for all three- and four-year-olds in the state.⁴

First 5 California

First 5 California approved \$100 million dollars in July 2003 to fund new and improved preschool spaces in school district(s), city, or countywide preschool 'systems' that include high-quality providers in a variety of settings over 5 years. The basis of this demonstration project,

¹ Additional information on specific state activities can be found through the following websites- www.nieer.org, www.preknow.org, www.preschoolcalifornia.org

² *Ready to Learn*, California Department of Education, 1998

³ *Master Plan for Education*, California Postsecondary Education Commission, 2002 is available at http://www.cpec.ca.gov/CompleteReports/ExternalDocuments/2002_FINAL_COMPLETEMASMASTERPLAN_2.PDF

⁴ Details on goals and grantmaking activities can be found at www.packard.org

known as the First 5 California Power of Preschool (PoP)⁵, was established by the First 5 California School Readiness Initiative, the California Master Plan for Education, and the report by the Universal Preschool Task Force. First 5 California PoP Demonstration Projects are high-quality, free, voluntary, part-day preschool programs for all four year-olds in a specified area and provide a common framework for financial and policy commitments, and for quality standards. An Orange County grant proposal was submitted through the Children and Families Commission of Orange County but was not selected as a First 5 California PoP Demonstration Project.

Preschool For All: A First Class Learning Initiative⁶

During his 2005 State of Education address⁷, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell announced the development of an initiative to lay the foundation for quality preschool for all in California. The initiative proposed critical state and local policy actions to guide preschools toward their primary role of preparing three- and four-year-olds for kindergarten through grade two (K-2) education. These components include: develop high-quality pre-K content standards; build a first-class professional learning system for preschool teachers; implement a results-based accountability system; create seamless transitions from pre-K to kindergarten and first grade; and involve all stakeholders in the learning process.

Proposition 82: The Preschool for All Act

The Preschool for All Act would have established free, part-day preschool for all California children whose parents chose to enroll them in the year prior to kindergarten. This June 2006 ballot measure was defeated at the polls; however, advocates believe it succeeded in placing the issue of preschool on the California radar.⁸

AB 172: Prekindergarten and Family Literacy Program

Assembly Bill (AB) 172 implements Governor Schwarzenegger's May 2006 proposal to invest \$50 million to increase preschool enrollment in programs located in the attendance areas of elementary schools in deciles 1-3 on the Academic Performance Index. It also funds an important new family literacy component designed to teach parents the skills needed to help their children succeed in preschool and beyond. Governor Schwarzenegger signed AB 172 on September 7, 2006⁹ authorizing the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to distribute this funding under the "Prekindergarten and Family Literacy Program" (PKFLP) to agencies throughout California that meet established eligibility requirements.

California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN)

The California Department of Education initiated in 2003 the "California Preschool Instructional Networks (CPIN) to provide professional development and technical assistance to preschool

⁵ PoP was formally known as Preschool For All (PFA) prior to its official name change in November 2005.

⁶ Preschool For All, California Department of Education, 2005 <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/se/yr05preschoolwp.asp>

⁷ 2005 State of Education Address <http://www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/se/yr05stateofed.asp>

⁸ Full text of the measure can be downloaded from www.preschoolcalifornia.org

⁹ http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/bill/asm/ab_0151-0200/ab_172_bill_20060907_chaptered.pdf

teachers to ensure preschool children are ready for school. The Networks are organized into 11 regions of the state that disseminate information, training and resources to their particular region. Topics include early language and literacy, mathematics, the Desired Results System, school readiness and transition to kindergarten, children with disabilities, and English Language Learners.”¹⁰

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Children and Families Commission of Orange County

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County (Commission) launched and initially funded a local School Readiness Initiative in 2000 and was built on the concept that children will be ready for school and schools will be ready for children. This program is the foundation for the Commission’s school readiness framework that includes school nurses, school readiness centers, and early literacy programs.

The program funds 31 School Readiness Coordinator positions at the county’s 25 elementary and unified school districts to implement the program that adapts to the strengths and needs of each district and the children they serve. Specifically, the Coordinators engage in activities within and beyond the school sites boundaries including outreach, referrals and linkages among the school district, early childhood education providers and other community agencies; and identify strategies to assess the progress of children transitioning into and through the school district.

The Commission is also partnering with First 5 California on a state/local school readiness initiative that is targeted to 44 elementary schools in 13 qualifying Orange County school districts. This state/local initiative utilizes the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)¹¹ definition of school readiness which covers three aspects of a child’s life: children’s readiness for school, schools’ readiness for children, family and community supports, and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success. That definition is the framework for the five “Essential and Coordinated Elements”¹² which drives the program delivery of this initiative. The State School Readiness Initiative provides direct services to children and families in the areas of early childhood education; parent involvement and education; health services; and social services. The goal is to improve the transition from early care settings to elementary school, and to increase the capacity of schools and communities to promote the success of young children at low-performing schools.

The Commission was funded by both the Packard Foundation and First 5 California to develop a city-based demonstration project in Anaheim, in collaboration with Anaheim City and Magnolia school districts, linking preschool expansion with school readiness and other Commission and community efforts; and to develop this local countywide preschool plan positioning Orange County as committed to offering voluntary preschool programs available to all 4-year olds, ensuring that every local child arrives at school healthy and ready to learn. This city-based

¹⁰ <http://www.sonoma.edu/cihs/cpin>

¹¹ *Ready Schools*, The National Education Goals Panel, 1998

<http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/Reports/readysch.pdf>

¹² <http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu/FIRST5LATA/Conferences/materials/FiveElements.pdf>

demonstration project, known as the School Readiness Expansion Project (SRE), served as the basis for the Commission's PoP Demonstration Project application to First 5 California. This project was not selected as a PoP Demonstration Project.

While not selected as a PoP Demonstration Project, the Commission approved funding SRE as a Commission strategy to expand school readiness opportunities in collaboration with multiple community organizations serving children and families in December 2005. The project includes a Commission commitment of \$1 million dollars annually for five years in partnership with Anaheim City School District, Magnolia School District and Children's Home Society of California. This locally funded project utilizes Commission, school district and grant dollars to substantially increase the number of children receiving comprehensive school readiness services in the City of Anaheim.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

DEMOGRAPHICS¹³

With a population over 3,072,000, Orange County is the second largest county in California and is the fifth largest county in the nation. By 2030, population is expected to exceed 3.5 million. Children ages 0-5 comprise 8.5% of the county's population, at more than 262,000.

No single racial or ethnic group comprises more than 50% of the total population, thus creating a "majority minority." Approximately 47% of children ages 0-5 are Hispanic or Latino, 37% are White, 11% are Asian and Pacific Islander, 4% are Other, and 1% are Black or African American.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS¹⁴

English Learners (EL) accounted for 28.3% of Orange County's public school enrollment in the 2005-2006 academic year. "The acquisition of the English language and academics by children who speak another language is a challenge for teachers, administrators, children and families, and their communities. Early support for literacy is a critical need, as is guidance for the parents and families of these students."¹⁵

Special education enrollment has grown at a faster rate than that of general enrollment. In 2005-2006, 10.2% of the total Orange County K-12 student enrollment received special education services. "Research supports the importance of parent involvement and the partnership between families and schools in a child's academic success. When the family includes a child with a special need, these partnerships are critical... children with disabilities must be appropriately educated with their non-disabled peers and that separate classes or programs should only occur when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."¹⁶

CHILD CARE SUPPLY AND DEMAND¹⁷

"Orange County child care costs are above average, ranking 2nd highest among the counties compared. Between 2002 and 2004, center-based child care costs rose about 10 times as fast as the median family income and over twice as fast as average annual child care worker pay. One factor affecting cost of care is the rapidly rising cost of Workers' Compensation insurance for center-based programs. However, the rise in cost is largely a function of the gap between child care supply and demand.

¹³ Data cited from The 12th Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, Center for Community Collaboration (2007) <http://www.ochealthinfo.com/cscc/report/>

¹⁴ Conditions of Children report

¹⁵ Conditions of Children report

¹⁶ Conditions of Children report

¹⁷ County of Orange Child Care Coordinator, as cited in the Orange County Community Indicators Report, County of Orange (2007) <http://www.oc.ca.gov/pdf/2007CIPReport.pdf>

“In 2006, there were 85,006 licensed child care slots and more than three times that many children potentially needing child care. The gap between the supply of licensed child care slots and the estimated need places Orange County among the worst of California’s 58 counties. There is a similar gap for subsidized care. Since July 2006, more than 10,000 income-eligible children have applied to be placed on the Centralized Eligibility List for state or federally subsidized child care. Only 9% of Orange County children who qualify for subsidized child care are receiving those services. Either by choice or due to the scarcity of licensed or subsidized spots, many parents turn to informal care such as family members, babysitters, nannies, or other ‘license-exempt’ care providers.

“Accreditation by one of four accrediting bodies (National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association for Family Child Care, Association of Christian Schools International, or National School Age Consortium) has grown dramatically in the past year. As of September 2006, there were 136 accredited centers, up 40% from the total of 97 last year. Still, the proportion of all licensed facilities that are quality accredited is slim (5%).”¹⁸

¹⁸ County of Orange Child Care Coordinator, as cited in the Orange County Community Indicators Report, County of Orange (2007) <http://www.oc.ca.gov/pdf/2007CIPReport.pdf>

PLANNING PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The development of this plan was based on the premise that the credibility of the process and the final plan document would have a profound impact on the future success and viability of a countywide preschool effort.

As such, the planning process was developed based on the following assumptions:

- Strategic planning ensures key stakeholders are working toward the same goals.
- The process of strategic planning is as important as the plan itself.
- Once the document is complete, the plan should not be viewed as “finished” but “beginning.”
- The plan outlines the work to be done, informing and directing future preschool activities.
- The plan will be reviewed at agreed-upon intervals, with adjustments and revisions made if warranted.

Great care was taken to identify and outreach to the following key stakeholder groups:

Direct Service Providers

Center-Based Child Care, public & private
Family Child Care
Head Start

Educational & Professional Development Systems

Community Colleges/Universities
Asociacion Latina Para Cuidado Infantil
Association of Christian School International
Early Childhood Mentor Program
Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children
Orange County Child Care Association

Early Childhood Initiatives and Planning Bodies

Children & Families Commission of Orange County
Orange County Child Care & Development Planning Council
Orange County United Way, Success By 6®

K-12 Educational System

Orange County Department of Education
Local School District Administrators
School Readiness Programs

Legislators/Policymakers/Elected Officials

County of Orange
Orange County Superintendent of Schools

Parents

Parent Teacher Association

Special Needs/Disabilities

Regional Center of Orange County
United Cerebral Palsy of Orange County

Support Agencies

Children’s Home Society of California
Community Care Licensing

COUNTYWIDE PRESCHOOL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Support was garnered from key leaders representing the above stakeholder groups to participate as members of the Countywide Preschool Planning Committee. The roles and responsibilities of committee members were to serve as a conduit and resource to the various stakeholder groups to inform the planning process; analyze local stakeholder feedback, research and other promising practices; and develop recommendations for the development of a program delivery system.

Major planning activities included the completion of a review of existing data; development of recommendations for best practice protocols; facilitation of local discussions to improve linkages; incorporation of fiscal leveraging strategies; and nurturing relationships to move the project toward implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW, RESEARCH AND DATA

Sources of information and expertise that have informed the development of this plan include Orange County demographics and community context related to school readiness, preschool, early care and education, child care and parent involvement programs in Orange County. In addition, information on universal preschool efforts in other counties and states has been considered.

The following related research and data were reviewed:

- *Conditions of Children in Orange County Report*, Center for Community Collaboration (2006)
- *Early Care & Education Needs Assessment (ECENA)*, Children & Families Commission of Orange County (2001)
- *The Economic Impact of the Child Care Industry in Orange County*, Orange County United Way (2002)
- *Making the Case for Early Care and Education: A Message Development Guide for Advocates*, Berkeley Media Studies Group (2004)
- *Orange County Early Care & Education Salary & Working Conditions Survey*, Orange County United Way (2002)
- *Orange County Child Care Plan*, Orange County Child Care & Development Planning Council (2004)
- *Orange County Community Indicators Report*, County of Orange (2006)
- *Preschool for All: Step by Step A Planning Guide and Toolkit*, American Institutes for Research (2004)
- *Principles for Preschool For All*, Preschool California (2004)
- *Teacher Credentialing in Early Care and Education: Prospects for Universal Preschool in California, and Lessons from Other States*, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2004)
- *The 2003 California Child Care Portfolio*, California Resource & Referral Network (2004)
- *Training the Next Generation of Teachers: A Preliminary Survey of California's Higher Education Programs in Early Education and Child Development*, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2004)
- *Raising Teacher Education and Training Standards For Universal Preschool in California: Assessing the Size of the Task*, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2004)
- *Universal Preschool in California: An Overview of Workforce Issues*, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2003)
- *Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualification for Better Learning Environments- A Review of the Literature*, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2003

COUNTYWIDE PRESCHOOL PLAN

This plan identifies Orange County’s perspective on the development of a local preschool system, its broad community goals and objectives, program design and delivery, partnerships and collaborations, and fiscal leveraging. It is designed to serve as a coordinating tool, planning aid, and communications device to help identify and convey the key elements of the efforts to be undertaken. It is acknowledged that this countywide preschool plan does not exist in a vacuum and will continue to be informed by evolving local and statewide efforts.

VISION

Orange County is committed to ensuring that every local child arrives at school healthy and ready to learn.

MISSION

Develop a coordinated, quality preschool system serving Orange County’s four-year old children and their families.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Five Dimensions of Learning

It is of vital importance to acknowledge that early development and learning takes place across five dimensions, as identified by the National Education Goals Panel, is addressed equally in high-quality preschool programs.¹⁹

- (1) Physical well-being and motor development
- (2) Social and emotional development
- (3) Approaches toward learning
- (4) Language development
- (5) Cognition and general knowledge

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) “refers to teaching decisions that vary with and adapt to the age, experience, interests, and abilities of individual children within a given age range.”²⁰ Developmentally appropriate programs address both the age level and individual

¹⁹ Reconsidering Children's Early Development and Learning: Toward Common Views and Vocabulary, National Education Goals Panel, 1995 <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/Reports/child-ea.htm>

²⁰ Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice, Copple and Bredekamp, 2006

cognitive need of a child.²¹ Developmentally appropriate practice should be used in all program aspects, including but not limited to curriculum, materials, instruction and interactions.

Child-Initiated versus Teacher-Facilitated

“The right balance of child-initiated activities and teacher-facilitated activities must be sought when designing programs. A curriculum that is balanced in both child-initiated activities and teacher-facilitated activities will better serve the children in receiving a quality early childhood education.”²²

Play

It should be recognized that children learn through play across the five dimensions of early learning and development. Play is the process through which children learn to know and are able to do. “We need to focus on both: the ends (or the standards) and the means (or the process) of early education, which is play.”²³

While adult support is needed to “enhance the richness and complexity of children’s play”²⁴, free and unstructured play is equally important. Recently, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) called “free and unstructured play healthy- and in fact- essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient.”²⁵

GOALS

The plan strives to create a high-quality, results oriented preschool program delivery system linked to other local and statewide efforts, via the following long-term goals:

- Develop an integrated service system;
- Establish standards for quality;
- Offer programs in a variety of settings and building on existing programs, including but not limited to public and private center-based child care programs, family child care, and Head Start;
- Offer programs in culturally, ethnically and linguistically appropriate settings;
- Support and value parental choice;
- Inclusion of children with special needs;
- Linkages to full-day early care and education programs to meet the needs of working families;

²¹ HighReach Learning Curricula Theoretical Research-Based Principles and Practices, 2003
<http://www.highreach.com/hrlresearchpaper1.pdf>

²² HighReach Learning Curricula Theoretical Research-Based Principles and Practices, 2003

²³ *Early Learning Standards: A Huge Problem or A Huge Possibility?* Kagan, 2005
www.idaofcal.org/Images/Standards.ppt

²⁴ *Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice*, Copple and Bredekamp, 2006

²⁵ The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2006 <http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf>

- Attract and retain professionals who are educated and compensated at levels comparable to teachers in California's K-12 system;
- Develop an infrastructure for educating a culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse workforce; and
- Support a publicly funded system.

QUALITY STANDARDS

Objective:

Utilize Title 5 regulations and National Accreditation, as standards for quality.

Promote Title 5²⁶ regulations and National Accreditation²⁷ standards as the ideal and encourage programs to work towards quality improvements.

Provide consistent messaging that Title 22²⁸ is a minimum standard for health and safety requirements and it is not a guarantee of quality.

Develop an easy-to-understand matrix of Title 5 regulations and National Accreditation standards.

Work with Community Care Licensing to address program facility requirements for Title 5 and Title 22, with special attention provided to license-exempt providers and problematic facility issues such as playgrounds, water, bathrooms and shade.

Support standardized model for ratios and group size such as 1:12 or 2:20 (2 teachers) or 1:18 (1 teacher, 1 aide).

Objective:

Support incremental quality improvements of programs.

Develop a provisional level for programs that are seeking to meet established quality standards. Minimum qualifications should include meeting Title 22 requirements and have a classroom observation utilizing Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) tool with a score of five (5) or above as conducted by an outside validator. Non-renewable provisional status should be granted for one year, one time only, with conditions based upon observation findings.

Require programs to develop an improvement plan to meet quality standards with timelines.

Provide technical assistance to programs through provider cohorts, mentors, and other mechanisms.

²⁶ Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations establishes requirements for state-funded child care programs to offer a part-day comprehensive educational, health and social service program for 3- and 4-year-olds from low-income families. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/lr/>

²⁷ A number of organizations have developed accreditation systems to recognize early care and education programs that generally meet higher standards than are required by State regulations. Brief descriptions and links to early childhood program accrediting organizations can be found at <http://www.nccic.org/poptopics/nationalaccred.html>

²⁸ Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations outlines the State of California's laws and regulations governing licensure of child care centers and family child care homes to ensure that minimum health and safety standards are met. http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/ord/CCRTitle22_715.htm

Objective:
Develop curricula recommendations.

Develop curricula recommendations that are consistent with the Orange County *Countywide Preschool Plan* guiding principles and goals. Although curricula recommendations should be developed, programs should not be required to select from that list. In support of academic freedom, no one curriculum should be required.

Utilize existing resources such as California Instructional Networks (CPIN), California Department of Education Preschool Learning Foundations, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Criteria for Curriculum Standard.

Provide training and technical assistance for recommended curricula to support quality implementation.

Objective:
Develop a process for programs to petition use of a curriculum, outside of recommended curricula.

Programs must demonstrate selected curriculum is consistent with the Orange County *Countywide Preschool Plan* guiding principles and goals; is consistent with a program's vision, mission and desired outcomes for children; supports the program's philosophy about how children learn; and is implemented to enhance student learning.

Objective:
Require the use of Content, Performance and Program Standards aligned with the California Department of Education (CDE) "Desired Results System for Children and Families" for participation as a program.

Utilize preschool content and performance standards as developed by CDE. These standards articulate with grades K-3 and are assessed through the use of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). The DRDP is intended to serve as a measurement tool for the standards and is not separate from them.

It must be recognized that the DRDP is not standardized across classrooms and teachers and that the value of the assessment is directly related to the teacher. 1) Support should be provided for use of outside evaluators to relieve any real or perceived pressure to perform and/or teach to the test. 2) Develop a set of criteria for use with the DRDP tool to include a menu of options and/or a matrix.

Objective:

Support the development and implementation of a quality rating system for both center-based and family child care homes.

Support a system to measure progress on quality improvements and standards, and include curriculum. Any quality rating system implemented should connect with other accreditation systems and consider tools already in use in various program settings.

Ensure coordination with local efforts through Orange County United Way Success By 6 Star-Quality Rating System for center-based programs. This system is based upon ECERS, Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ITERS), Program Administration Scale (PAS) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Accreditation Standards.

Ensure the quality rating system can be used as a tool for parents to understand and identify high-quality programs. Support “brand-identity” as a way to visually identify participating programs.

Existing tools include:

Accreditation standards and criteria are voluntary, national standards for early childhood education programs and involve extensive self-study and outside validation. Various organizations have developed accreditation systems including the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC).

Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) Child Development Instrument focuses on seven interrelated dimensions that call for consistency and is required of any child development program receiving State funds.

Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) assess process quality on seven subscales and includes scales specific to Early Childhood, Infant/Toddler, and Family Day Care settings.

Program Administration Scale (PAS) measures leadership and management with strands that programs can choose to concentrate on.

Support statewide efforts for a quality rating system. A statewide quality rating system should serve to raise the quality of all early care and education programs and settings, and not be limited to preschool. The system should be transparent and serve to support quality improvements without being punitive.

Objective:

Require programs to offer nutritious meals and snacks that meet federal nutritional guidelines as established through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Provide training and technical support to programs to ensure federal nutritional guidelines are met and to seek reimbursement through the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP): Meals served to children are reimbursed at rates based upon a child’s eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

Develop partnerships with other community organizations, such as school districts or hospitals, for catering to support programs without fully equipped kitchens.

Develop models for meal fee for non-qualifying families.

Require programs to provide documentation of compliance based on USDA/State required monitoring.

Objective:

Encourage programs to facilitate periodic comprehensive health and developmental screenings, assessments and follow-up for preschool program participants.

Support efforts to provide screenings to all children across the county, and fund through either public funding, leveraged existing resources, and/or development of new resources.

Develop partnerships between programs and local school districts through the Children and Families Commission of Orange County's School Nurse Initiative and other community-based services such as Family Support Network, to ensure screenings are offered to children in all programs.

Include provision of health and development assessments as a measure of quality. Develop a menu of services, based on degree and intensity, for programs to meet requirement, accommodating for differences in capacity of various program types and settings.

Support a requirement for programs to ensure screening, assessment and follow-up services be provided to children in any new publicly-funded system.

Develop a mechanism for programs to track and report on child health outcomes of all participating children as a group. Information should be made available to health partners to assist in provision of services.

Objective:

Ensure family support services are available to preschool program participants.

Connect local preschool program and wrap-around care providers to home school districts for family support services.

Collaborate with comprehensive service programs, including Head Start and those supported by the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. Leverage existing resources including the School Readiness Coordinators and School Nurses, California Nutrition Network, and CalWORKs.

Develop a model based on Head Start and Even Start Family Service Advocate (FSA) program model to support preschool families. FSA roles and responsibilities include enrollment/recruitment activities; individual/family assessment; and case management.

Provide support and training to FSA personnel on identifying resources; assessing depth of family need and emerging/new needs; assisting families in articulating needs.

Encourage FSA personnel to obtain Family Development Credential.

INTEGRATED SERVICE SYSTEM

Objective:

Encourage collaborative efforts between school district and local provider systems.

Conduct a “summit” to enlist support of district superintendents and principals.

Increase articulation between various provider settings: school district programs; Head Start; State Preschool; and private providers, including center-based, faith-based and family child care. Develop articulation agreements between school districts and participating preschool providers. Articulation agreements between preschool programs and districts should include curriculum guidelines.

Develop a mechanism to connect preschool providers with “home school district(s).” Maximize School Readiness Coordinators as a resource to develop coordinated relationships between early care and education community, district personnel and school principals. Provide connections for local participating and non-participating preschool providers.

Garner support for K-3 grade teachers to take child development as part of 9 unit continuing education requirement. Provide updated lists of community college/university classes and support the development of K-3 grade teacher cohorts.

Objective:

Develop a transition plan for children entering preschool programs and for preschoolers entering kindergarten.

Develop a transition plan for children entering preschool programs and their parents that includes a visit, orientation, and handbook/policies and procedures.

Develop transition plan for preschoolers entering kindergarten that includes communication by the preschool program with each child’s new home school and the timely transition of records.

Existing resources should be maximized: Title 1 funds can be used to support transition activities for qualified children; and transition information at www.terrifictransitions.com.

Objective:

Promote/support kindergarten round-up across the county.

Promote kindergarten registration dates/window on a countywide basis.

Develop a standard parent guide on “What to Expect in Kindergarten”.

WORKFORCE

Objective:

Formalize communication between community colleges and the four-year universities serving the Orange County regional area on child development and/or early childhood education.

Child Development and/or Early Childhood Education faculty have supported evolving preschool efforts, but to address the workforce development needed for quality programs, commitment from higher education institutions must go beyond that of individual faculty members.

Convene a regional “Higher Education Summit” to:

- Dialogue on the preschool movement and its impact on the local higher education system
- Demonstrate the need and local demand for preschool
- Provide an opportunity for roundtable discussion
- Present best/promising workforce development practices from both the state and local levels
- Obtain commitment on specific staffing/workforce objectives identified in this Orange County *Countywide Preschool Plan*

Objective:

Develop and implement local/regional articulation agreements between the community college and university systems.

Articulation agreements ensure that students transferring from community colleges to public or private universities will be properly prepared for progressing in their field of study immediately upon transfer, eliminating the need to repeat coursework.

Develop a local/regional articulation committee to:

- Establish formal collaborative efforts between all community colleges and universities
- Encourage and support curriculum quality among various public and private universities and colleges
- Develop articulation agreements between community colleges and Regional Occupational Programs (ROP)
- Encourage use of the California Child Development Permit among teachers in the private sector

Encourage participation and representation by local higher education institutions on CAL-IMPAC to support local articulation efforts. CAL-IMPAC (California Intersegmental Major Preparation Articulated Curriculum) is a statewide faculty-designed and faculty-run project to prepare students in high-unit science majors to transfer from

community colleges to four-year institutions so that they may begin upper-division coursework in their respective majors in a timely fashion.

Objective:

Create bachelor's level Child Development and/or Early Childhood Education degree that meet California Department of Education standards.

Develop a local Child Development and/or Early Childhood Education Bachelor's program. Bachelor's level preparation and specialized early childhood training at the college level is a major contributor to high-quality center-based preschool programs.

New Bachelor's programs ideally should be housed in schools of education within respective university/college systems. Minor and major programs should be matched ensure a direct relationship. It is vital to partner with current degree programs to ensure coordination.

Objective:

Develop Early Childhood Education qualifications/standards.

Develop Early Childhood Education (ECE) qualifications/standards for use with any preschool system.

Develop a Bachelor's degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education. Progress should be made in establishing a Bachelor's degree in an unrelated field, with ECE units as short-term objective. Several pathways should be developed to address the needs of different types of students.

Programs should:

- Align courses more closely with competencies
- Develop classroom management course
 - Provide teachers with strategies to handle the growing complex needs of children
- Offer courses on ECERS and DRDP
- Include special needs training
 - Continue to infuse diversity in higher education curriculum
 - Follow community college mandate to include special needs in curriculum
 - Provide for full inclusion of special education throughout curriculum
 - Develop competence on special needs/disabilities

Objective:

Develop pipeline of new students for Bachelor's degree programs by working with high schools and Regional Occupational Program (ROP) to promote Early Care and Education as a career choice.

Utilize ROP as an entry point for new Bachelor's degree students.

Work with Community Care Licensing on the list of approved ROP courses to ensure transferability to the community college system. Currently, Licensing-approved ROP courses are not transferable.

Develop Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high schools that would have transferable credit to community college.

Objective:

Develop a pipeline for new, local higher education faculty.

Develop a higher education instructor “pipeline” by identify key students with leadership potential and provide opportunities for focus on adult development.

Develop a “job description” for higher education faculty to identify expertise and experience needed for credibility to teach various courses.

Objective:

Provide recommendations to state-level preschool efforts on the development of an Early Childhood Education credential.

Any Early Childhood Education credential should be based on competencies and articulated. The Bachelor’s degree course work should be designed to meet credential requirements.

Credential models might include:

- Bachelor’s degree with 24 ECE units
- Blended degree/credential
- Major in Interdisciplinary Studies/Minor in Early Childhood Education
- 5th year option

Objective:

Establish Early Childhood Education-specific counselors at Orange County community colleges and universities.

Develop a local program from other models.

The AMISTAD (Assist, Motivate and Insure that Successful Teachers Achieve Degrees) program is a unique collaboration between Santa Ana College, California State University, Fullerton, Orange County Head Start and community agencies to provide accessible education and a seamless supportive system for the attainment of the Associate of Arts in Child/Human Development and Bachelor of Science degree in Child and Adolescent Studies. AMISTAD offers cohort classes and extra support, and increased articulation for currently-working Head Start teachers.

Objective:

Develop Child Development/Early Childhood Education programs and courses that address the specific needs of the Early Care and Education student population.

Develop programs that are accessible to student populations needing support in language and literacy. Promote models that offer bilingual courses such as Santa Ana College in which 18 units are offered bilingually. Test models that assist students in developing English-language skills while completing their coursework such as first course given in second language only; second course begins with second language, but moves to English during the latter portions of the course; and third course solely in English.

Address student accessibility by offering courses at varying times and locations to meet the needs those currently employed. Provide unit-bearing course offerings based on the “Heads Up Reading” model- regional site receives satellite broadcast of course, with trained on-site facilitators to supervise coursework. In addition, offer combination/hybrid format that includes both online and classroom components.

Address affordability of courses and related course materials. Provide child development/early childhood education specific counseling services on available scholarships; financial aid; and other incentives such as the AB 212 Stipend Project. Seek funding to expand the AB 212 Stipend Project to non-California Department of Education funded staff. Promote and market loan forgiveness programs such as the Pearson Teacher Fellowship; and Perkins Loan.

Assist students with degrees from other countries. Develop a policy requiring students to meet with a counselor before enrolling in classes to avoid duplication of course work. Provide information, technical assistance and support for foreign transcript review.

Support the development of state policy to develop articulation agreements with major foreign universities/colleges offering Child Development/Early Childhood Education degrees.

Identify barriers to students successfully earning credit for general education courses and develop strategies to address.

- Build literacy and language skills of students as they progress through their coursework
- Provide additional remedial/support services in other languages- Santa Ana College offers remedial support in Spanish
- Promote research/data to students that breadth of knowledge achieved through general education course work makes a difference to young children
- Develop cohort leaders

Promote and support mentoring to students. Utilize expertise of local retirees to address mentoring gap. Develop mentor program that utilizes retired higher education faculty in small cohorts; and offer stipends that do not interfere with retirement system benefits.

Objective:

Conduct assessment of the local Early Childhood Education (ECE) workforce.

Conduct an assessment of the local ECE workforce to include information on the number of staff the field is losing; number of family child care providers; and programs offering bilingual program/approach.

Collaborate with Orange County United Way in the 2007 update of the Orange County Early Care and Education Salary and Working Conditions Survey.

DIVERSE PROGRAM SETTINGS

Objective:

Establish a non-competitive local preschool system that encourages capacity among diverse providers to meet quality standards.

Encourage programs to self-select participation based on established quality criteria.

Base participation on individual classrooms meeting all established quality standards.

Objective:

Conduct outreach to local providers to encourage participation in local preschool system.

Conduct town hall meetings.

Develop collaboration with various pipelines of providers including Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children (OCAEYC), Orange County Child Care Association and other family child care association, Children's Home Society of California, Community Care Licensing, community colleges, district School Readiness Coordinators, Orange County United Way Success By 6 Star-Quality Rating System. Identify other cohorts/groupings of providers.

Garner director involvement and support.

Leverage the California Early Childhood Mentor Program. The Director Mentor Program provides paid stipends to directors for guiding and offering practical help to less experienced ("protégé") directors or site supervisors. Experienced directors receive advanced training in mentoring, and interested candidates make formal application to the local Mentor Selection Committee. Selection is based on professional qualifications and a quality review of the candidate.

Develop a messaging strategy recognizing a wide variety of provider attitudes, goals and professionalism. Promote the benefits of participation as quality improvement strategy.

Objective:

Provide support services to assist under-represented provider groups in meeting quality standards to ensure diversity of delivery system.

Family Child Care (FCC)

Develop a family child care network specific to preschool delivery system.

Acknowledging that family child care associations are volunteer run and capacity varies, a consultant/outside organization should be retained to establish and manage the network.

Network would provide assistance to FCC providers to:

- Meet minimum group size requirements

- Create local/neighborhood networks of 3 hour preschool programs
- Match large FCC with small FCC for preschool program to pool resources
- Meet staffing requirements
 - Hire teachers to float between FCC programs for 3 hour preschool component
- Receive mentoring by a neighboring center-based program
- Create FCC Hub model based on Los Angeles Universal Preschool

Faith-Based Child Care

Develop a taskforce, in collaborative with Association for Christian Schools International, to explore the development of comparable faith-based preschool system. A comparable system, supported by private funding, would intend to establish the same program quality standards, yet support and encourage faith-based component.

FULL-DAY LINKAGES

Objective:

Develop wrap around child care as a provider participation option in local preschool system.

Utilize wrap around care as gateway for participation as preschool provider, meeting all requirements, for those that need time to meet standards and develop strategies to assist providers in addressing the barriers to participation.

Utilize wrap around care as an opportunity for local providers, not interested in serving as full provider (i.e. paperwork; red tape; educational attainment), to collaborate with the preschool system.

Develop qualification process for providers to serve as “Wrap Around Care Provider” and establish mechanism for including family child care and faith-based providers. Establish mechanism and identify funding for serving preschool children in a.m. or p.m. program with wrap around care. Encourage participation by providers with ability to care for multiple/different aged children from same family.

Conduct outreach to informal care providers (Family, Friend & Neighbor- FFN).

- Develop program to get FFN providers knowledgeable and involved in standards; provide assistance with transition
- Promote KCET A Place of Our Own/Los Ninos En Su Casa program
- Encourage licensing among FFN providers interested

Work with wrap around care sites to extend learning, training, standards, and curriculum.

Connect wrap around child care programs with home school district(s).

Objective:

Ensure availability of quality full-day and part-day wrap around child care services, with minimal transitions, for families that need it.

Part-day preschool programs (3 hours/day for school year) do not address the needs of all families. In the development of a preschool system, the current full-day child care supply must not be depleted. In addition to the current number of full-day programs, quality wrap around of part-day child care services must be created to ensure that part-day and wrap around services are available to families with full-day child care needs. The overall system must be improved and not simply shift resources.

Costs of wrap around child care services could be addressed utilizing current funding streams. Examples may include braiding subsidized funding streams such as Head Start with State Preschool Programs; ensuring all eligible families access CalWORKs

Although every effort should be made to ensure minimal transition for children, a connection to safe transportation should be provided, especially where geographically dense. Research transportation models such as Child Shuttle and the Newport-Mesa Unified School District busing program.

Assessment of family needs, including identification of need for care of multiple and/or various aged children, would be necessary to determine program availability. Conduct an update of the Orange County Early Childhood Education Needs Assessment.

FACILITIES

Objective:

Support countywide collaborative effort on child care facilities development.

Support the vision and mission of Child Care Connections. Child Care Connections seeks to create a system in which business, the community development and child care sectors work together to develop quality sustainable child care facilities to meet the needs of children and their families. The collaboration is working to create a clearinghouse for child care facilities development and aims to achieve favorable land use and building regulations, financial resources and a child care industry that understands business management.

Support the work plan goals of the Collaborative:

Goal I. Establish and maintain a centralized and systematic way for individuals and organizations to access information and technical assistance on developing quality child care in Orange County.

Goal II. Create a network that includes representatives from the business sector, governmental agencies and non-traditional partners for the purpose of developing quality child care.

Goal III. Address the significant barriers in our cities to the development of quality child care facilities.

Goal IV. Provide resources, materials and technical assistance to those seeking to develop child care facilities at all stages of development.

Goal V. Strengthen the internal functions and sustainability to enhance the effectiveness of the Collaborative.

FUNDING

Objective:

Support development of fiscal leveraging strategies to fund quality preschool in Orange County.

Create fiscal leveraging models and encourage usage of braided funding strategies.

Support blending of full-day and part-day subsidized funding to improve quality.

Support development of tiered reimbursement based on quality standards.

Objective:

Advocate for a higher reimbursement rate for state subsidized programs.

Currently inadequate reimbursement rates to operate quality programs have caused a number of full-day providers to relinquish their contracts with the State. In order to protect local programs serving the neediest families, a significantly higher reimbursement rate is required in high cost counties such as Orange County.

Leverage the *2007 County of Orange Legislative Platform*, which includes child care, and voices of other local preschool advocates, to advocate at both the State and Federal level for additional funding of both part-day and full-day preschool services.

Objective:

Develop countywide partnerships to ensure capacity and readiness of local providers to draw down Orange County's full allocation of government funds to operate early education programs.

Coordinate efforts of countywide partners, including but not limited to: Children and Families Commission of Orange County, Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children, the Orange County Child Care Coordinator, Orange County Child Care and Development Planning Council, Orange County Department of Education, and Orange County United Way Success By 6.

Objective:

Provide local providers with training, technical assistance and support services to apply for public-funds to operate early education programs.

Create a technical assistance team to provide training in completing applications for state funds and in managing state contracts.

Develop a toolkit for providers to use when applying for funds. Applications are data intensive. A toolkit would help providers gather necessary data and materials; provide sample forms; assist in developing a case-statement.

Collaborate with the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children, the Orange County Child Care Coordinator, Orange County Child Care and Development Planning Council, Orange County Department of Education, Orange County United Way Success By 6 and other preschool advocates to assist local programs submit adequate applications/proposals to ensure Orange County draws down its full designated allocation of State funds.

Objective:

Outreach to local legislators on legislative changes and funding issues that impact the child care community.

Develop strategy for coordinated outreach, engagement and follow-up with local legislators.

CONCLUSION

Currently, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) has taken the next step in moving forward the goals and objectives identified in this Orange County *Countywide Preschool Plan 2006-2007*. OCDE has convened a Preschool Planning Collaborative with the goal of engaging civic and business leaders, early education providers, and parents to increase preschool quality, improve coordination among programs, improve coordination between preschool and the K-12 systems, and increase access for families with the greatest need. The Orange County Preschool Planning Collaborative will utilize this *Countywide Preschool Plan* and build upon the work developed herein.

A community-wide effort is necessary to achieve the goals discussed in this document. Yet, working together the vision of ensuring that every local child arrives at school healthy and ready to learn through the development of a coordinated, quality preschool system serving Orange County's four-year old children and their families can be achieved.