

# California Community College Early Childhood Educators ~ CCCECE

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March 15, 2010

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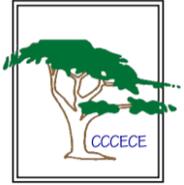
To: California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee Members  
From: Kathi Cliff, President, California Community Colleges Early Childhood Educators  
Subject: Early Learning and Workforce Development

In 2000, the National Academy of Sciences National Research Council recommended that preschool teachers have a BA degree with a specialized curriculum in early childhood education. California's community colleges have played the central role in preparing teachers to work with children from birth to five for nearly 50 years. We have established successful and integrated early childhood education (ECE) teacher preparation programs that stand ready to meet the needs and challenges of a rapidly changing society. "A student-centered workforce development system includes assistance with transfer of credits, movement from community college to university, and accessing financial aid." (ELQIS Interim Report, 12/09). We believe that leveraging California's investment in its public colleges and universities ensures access to an affordable and relevant education infrastructure dedicated to student success and on-going professional development. High quality early education programs begin with well-prepared teachers; ELQIS must ensure that California reclaims a leadership role in early childhood education. To do so, ELQIS must specify that early childhood teacher preparation and benchmarks of certification occur within an integrated program of study leading to a college degree, as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences and as currently required by HeadStart.

In recent years, California Community College Early Childhood Educators (CCCECE) have spearheaded a number of very successful statewide programs to streamline, strengthen, and make more accessible the pathway towards obtaining associate and baccalaureate degrees in early childhood education. CCCECE works collaboratively with community college faculty to support well-organized and academically challenging certificate and degree programs that are grounded in research and teaching competencies in the field. This membership organization is poised to facilitate desired changes in early childhood education/child development programs at the 103 community colleges across the state, and has developed and participated in several successful curriculum development, articulation and transfer projects in recent years, including the Curriculum Alignment Project, approval of eight descriptors in C-ID, and the approval of key coursework in the Pathways Project. Early childhood educators lead their peers in collaborative and innovative projects on the behalf of students and the children and family they serve.

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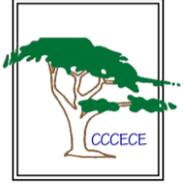


- *The Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP)* has aligned eight core ECE courses across the community colleges; this strategy streamlines the transfer path to a BA degree. Given the evidence that the majority of early care and education professionals who graduate from the state universities began their academic studies at a community college, this consistency in core curriculum will help bolster student success. To date, 81 community colleges are participating and 8 are fully aligned to the CAP requirements. The CAP course descriptors have been approved in the C-ID and Pathways projects facilitated by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. Additionally, universities in the CSU system are beginning to create specific CAP Pathways that clearly identify each student's educational pathway.
- *The Higher Education Council for Early Childhood Education (HEC)* is a joint project of early childhood faculty from community colleges and public state universities (18 CSUs). The Council has started a statewide dialogue focused on an integrated program of study that leads to a BA degree in early childhood education. On March 19-21, 2010, in Sacramento, the Council is hosting an open dialogue and has invited 1400 faculty to participate in "The Higher Education Colloquium for Early Care and Education."
- *The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), Verification of Completion (VOC)* grants authority to community college departments of early childhood education to certify and recommend candidates for Child Development Permits, based on successfully completed coursework. The curriculum at these colleges has been pre-approved by CTC so this streamlines the process of issuing Child Development Permits and increases the number of qualified early childhood teachers.
- *Child Development Centers* at California community colleges serve as state-of-the-art instructional labs for student teachers and demonstration sites for teachers already working in early childhood education. Many of these labs are also observation sites for other disciplines and community organizations. Most offer CDD contract services integrating the CA Early Learning Foundations and Frameworks into their birth to 5 programs.
- *The Faculty Initiative Project (FIP)* provides professional development opportunities to community college faculty in order to align and integrate essential content and competencies of key CDE/CDD materials and initiatives with core early childhood education curriculum. The initiatives and publications included are: The Desired Results Developmental Profile-R, The Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines, Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning-Resource Guide, California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1, and the California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines.
- *The California Early Childhood Mentor Program (CECMP)* links remuneration with better access to education and professional development opportunities for both classroom teachers and program administrators. The Program selects experienced classroom teachers to mentor student teachers from community college, ROP and four-year early childhood programs. The Program, which is located at almost all California community colleges that offer early childhood education/child development coursework, also includes a mentoring component for directors, ECE facility administrators and Large Family Child Care providers.
- *The Child Development Training Consortium (CDTC)* is a statewide project that promotes professionalism of the early care and education workforce, thus increasing the quality of children's programs. There are several components to the CDTC support system. The Community College Program provides financial and educational support at the local level to child development community college students. The Child Development Permit Project provides technical assistance and fee reimbursement for the workforce as they obtain a Child Development Permit renewals or upgrades. The

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Professional Growth Advisor Project provides training and networking sessions, and an online Registry of Advisors to support Child Development Permit holders. Career Incentive Grants provide financial assistance to students attending 4 year colleges or universities in pursuit of advanced degrees. Finally, CDTC provides administrative support to the Curriculum Alignment Project.

California's community colleges are well poised to work with the ELQIS recommendations. We have the capacity, the knowledge base, the programs of study, and the flexibility to assure both access and rigor for early childhood teacher preparation. Many ECE classes are taught in the evening, online and in off-campus community settings, within partnerships that increase access and diversify our early childhood workforce. "... help preserve the diversity of the early learning and care workforce, courses need to be available at hours and at locations accessible to people who already work full-time." (ELQIS Interim Report 12/09) The colleges also offer a wide range of student services, ensuring student success with academic services, ESL, library and transfer resources and financial aid.

The faculty leadership of CCCECE and their colleagues throughout the state are actively working on the development of a strong, and cost-effective early childhood teacher preparation system within California higher education. We look forward to a continuing relationship with CA ELQIS, each of us working on our common goals. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like more information about California Community College Early Childhood Education/Child Development programs and the various initiatives that are in place to enhance and expand early childhood teacher preparation.

cc. Jack Scott, Chancellor California Community Colleges

Jane Patton, President Academic Senate of California Community Colleges ASCCC

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Roberta Peck, Consultant, CDE