

Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory

California Implementation

The *Early Childhood Higher Education Inventory*, administered by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California at Berkeley, assists policymakers and other stakeholders develop a more coordinated and comprehensive professional preparation and development system for the early care and education workforce. The *Inventory* provides a mechanism for states to establish baseline descriptions of higher education offerings for early care and education practitioners, assess changes in the capacity of the higher education system over time, and answer the following policy questions:

- What is the primary focus and purpose of early childhood degree programs?
- To what extent do degree programs include clinical/field experiences?
- What content is addressed and what is the age group focus of this content?
- To what extent do programs articulate with each other?
- To what extent do programs align with state professional development systems?
- What services are provided to students?
- What challenges do the degree programs face?
- What are the academic and professional backgrounds of the faculty and what are their professional development needs?

The *Inventory* consists of:

- I. **Mapping Process:** Through an extensive document review, identifies the early childhood higher education programs in a state by collecting information on the: college or university; department in which the program is housed; and degrees and certificates offered.
- II. **Program Module:** Using an on-line survey tool completed by a department chair, dean, or program coordinator or other program leader, collects information on: academic topics and age group focus; required clinical experiences including student teaching and practica; program/institutional information; connections to state standards; and characteristics of the students.
- III. **Faculty Module:** Using an on-line survey tool completed by all faculty members teaching in the program, collects information on: faculty demographics and employment status; teaching experience and expertise; professional development experiences and needs; and past experience within the early childhood field.

Implementing the *Inventory* in California

It has been nearly a decade since California has undertaken a comprehensive review of its early childhood higher education landscape. In the ensuing decade, numerous changes to the early care and education system have taken place including the development of early learning guidelines and educator competencies, improved articulation within and between college systems, Transitional Kindergarten, and planning for an early learning credential and quality rating and improvement systems. As California continues to develop a coordinated professional development system that is responsive to these new and ongoing developments in the field, the ability to understand the early childhood higher education offerings and answer the policy questions identified above are critical for policy makers, funders, advocates and other stakeholders.

With support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and the Heising-Simons Foundation, the *Inventory* will be conducted in California in 2013-2014 with community colleges and public and private colleges/universities that offer a degree in early education and/or child development, including early childhood special education. Further, as early educators are increasingly being asked to demonstrate their ability to implement effective family engagement strategies and to teach specific content areas to children including math/numeracy development, the *Inventory* will include specific questions related to these topics.

If your college is selected to be part of the *Inventory*, you will be contacted by staff of the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. We know that your institution participates in many data collection and reporting efforts. Please be assured that we are familiar with these efforts and that the *Inventory* will build upon and enhance the information already available. We hope that you will participate in this study. Your knowledge of the early childhood degree program at your institution will contribute to this important effort to inform policy and ensure a coordinated professional preparation and development system for early childhood educators in California.

For more information, email laustin@berkeley.edu. Please include "CA Early Childhood Higher Education *Inventory*" in the subject line.