

A Foreword from the Co-Director of the Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd

Seeking to forge a strong link between the California Department of Education's (CDE) early care and education quality improvement activities and higher education in California, the Faculty Initiative Project (FIP) has been supporting the efforts of faculty to infuse information from the CDE's activities into their course work. The instructional guides, which are being created collaboratively with higher education faculty, are an essential component of the Faculty Initiative Project's work. This document, the *CDE/ECE Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1*, is the latest installment of these practical, user-friendly resources.

The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1* works hand in hand with the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1*. Based on research and evidence-based information, the foundations are at the center of the CDE's early learning and development system. Simply stated, the foundations describe what young children learn. In contrast, the curriculum framework focuses on how to facilitate children's learning. Volume 1 addresses principles for supporting young children's learning, key components of curriculum planning, descriptions of routines, environments, and materials that engage young children in learning, and sample strategies for building on children's knowledge, skills, and interests. The framework offers an integrated approach to planning for children's learning, with Volume 1 focusing particularly on social-emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development for dual-language learners, and mathematics.

Higher education faculty will easily recognize the content of the preschool curriculum framework, for many of the principles, concepts, and strategies it presents correspond to content they already teach. An overarching principle, for example, is "Play is a primary context for learning." Observation and documentation are presented as integral to the curriculum planning process. And in the mathematics domain, for example, a strategy for supporting children's developing knowledge of classification is placing materials in the classroom with attributes (e.g., color, shape, size, function, texture, or visual pattern) that children can readily identify. As the foregoing examples suggest, the curriculum framework provides general guidance on planning learning environments and experiences for young children. In addition to being aligned to the foundations, it is aligned to the CDE's Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment instrument. Through

exploring the curriculum framework in their course work, faculty will be able to introduce resources and tools whose purpose is to facilitate their students' work as early childhood educators.

This instructional guide is designed to meet the needs of faculty in a wide variety of situations. Following a commonly used teaching and learning sequence, it offers open-ended activities that can be utilized in their current form or adapted. In a nutshell, the instructional guide provides an easy-to-use, ready-to-go set of comprehensive resources, including class activities and handouts, that relate to all instructional levels, from an introductory class to master's level graduate study.

My colleagues and I at WestEd greatly appreciate having the opportunity to partner with the Faculty Initiative Project advisors and consultants from higher education. We are excited about this collaborative effort to create resources for faculty to use with their students—tomorrow's early childhood educators. It is our hope that this instructional guide will help faculty foster their students' understanding of how to intentionally support early learning and development. Together with the CDE, we look forward to continuing our work with higher education to ensure that all young children have teachers who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to provide high-quality early care and education.

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