

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 Program Guidelines, Part One and Part Two* is the latest installment of these practical, user-friendly resources. The *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Program Guidelines, Part Three* will be developed in the 2016-17 fiscal year and disseminated at the spring 2017 seminars.

The preschool program guidelines are an essential component of the CDE's preschool learning and development system. The guidelines are based on research and evidence-based information on preschool program policies and practices. This volume is primarily written for preschool program directors, but teachers will also find it useful. It places recommendations for preschool program quality in the current context of early childhood research and practice. Research has increasingly shown that high-quality preschool programs have a significant impact on young children's learning and development and their readiness for school. Moreover, cost/benefit analyses demonstrate a positive return on investments in high-quality early childhood programs. Another area that informs preschool practice is recent research on early brain development. This research indicates that social-emotional development and cognitive development are interconnected, and that exposure to chronic early stress is harmful. Preschool programs need to focus on both social-emotional and cognitive learning and provide an emotionally positive, supportive social environment. Such programs benefit all children, especially those experiencing chronic stress outside the program.

Higher education faculty will easily recognize the content of this publication, for it focuses on many concepts they already teach. The discussion of the preschool child centers on the five essential domains of school readiness, including social-emotional development, language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, physical well-being and motor development, and approaches toward learning. It also considers the fundamentally important role of play in children's learning and development. The chapter that addresses the role of the preschool teacher emphasizes the building and maintaining of positive relationships with children. Emphasis is also placed on planning the learning environment and curriculum and embedding assessment in the process of teaching and learning. The chapter on the role of administrators describes how they establish a climate that supports reflective curriculum planning, collaboration in a learning community, and reflective supervision and mentorship.

The preschool program guidelines envision the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volumes 1-3* as central in supporting young children's learning and development. Indeed, the preschool program guidelines work hand-in-hand with all of the resources of the CDE's Early Learning and Development System, including the curriculum framework, the preschool learning foundations, and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment instrument. Through infusing the preschool program guidelines into their course work, faculty will be able to introduce resources and tools that are intended to facilitate their students' work as early childhood educators.

The *California Preschool Program Guidelines* address two areas that make critical contributions to program quality. In California, students learning to become early childhood educators need to have a deep understanding of early bilingual development and how to support young dual language learners in preschool programs. A chapter is dedicated to this topic. It spells out guiding principles for supporting young dual language learners, describes program approaches, raises key issues when assessing dual language learners, explores family engagement, and discusses how to include in preschool programs young dual language learners who have special needs. In addition to the chapter, information about dual language development and strategies for supporting young dual language learners appear throughout the publication. Faculty can use this resource to help students both deepen their knowledge of young dual language learners and see that supporting young dual language learners is integral to every aspect of early childhood program quality.

The second area that this publication examines in-depth is the use of technology and interactive media with preschool-age children. An overview of research informs a discussion of the benefits and challenges of using technology and interactive media in preschool programs. Guidance is provided on selecting technology and interactive media to enhance young children's learning as well as on integrating technology in the preschool environment.

Of course, the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* publication specifies guidelines for high-quality preschool programs. In Part Three of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* the ten guideline areas are presented, including addressing culture, diversity, and equity; supporting relationships, interactions, and guidance; including children with disabilities or other special needs; and supporting professionalism and continuous learning. Taken together, the guidelines provide a comprehensive definition of high-quality preschool programs.

This instructional guide covers Part One and Part Two of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* publication. The *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Program Guidelines, Part Three* will be developed in the 2016-17 fiscal year and disseminated at the spring 2017 seminars.

The series of instructional guides is designed to meet the needs of faculty in a wide variety of situations. Following a broadly used teaching and learning sequence, it offers open-ended activities that can be used in their current form or adapted. In a nutshell, each instructional guide provides an easy-to-use, ready-to-go set of comprehensive resources, including in-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 that are designed specifically for faculty. It is our hope that this instructional guide will contribute to the efforts of our colleagues in higher education to foster a broad and deep understanding of early learning and development in their students—tomorrow's early childhood educators. 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 childhood education.

Peter L. Mangione
Co-Director, Center for Child and Family Studies
WestEd