



AGENDA ITEM: 11
DATE OF MEETING: April 21, 2010
ACTION: X
INFORMATION: _____

CARES PLUS

SUMMARY OF REQUEST

First 5 California staff requests Commission approval of up to \$12 million a year for three years (7/1/10 – 6/30/13) to support the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus in order to increase the quality of early learning programs for children 0 to 5 and their families by supporting the education and preparation of an effective, well-compensated, and diverse early learning workforce. Continuing the CARES Program will allow First 5 California to build on the organizational infrastructure and the positive momentum already created by the development of existing CARES Programs throughout the state and to leverage additional federal and local funds.

This request consists of investments in:

1. Stipends/incentives and educational support services to support obtainment of educational units and degrees by the early learning workforce (workforce)
2. Improved higher education pathways to increase efficiency and success
3. A competencies-based career pathway and certification system
4. Ongoing evaluation and a Web-based workforce registry to ensure accountability and support data collection; and
5. Training and technical assistance to the local CARES Plus programs

BACKGROUND

The Science - How Babies Learn

The experiences children have as babies, toddlers, and preschoolers shape the kind of students they will be as they enter the K-12 school pipeline. Neurological science shows us that the basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins prenatally and continues into adulthood. Early experiences affect the quality of that architecture by establishing a foundation for all later development, behavior, learning and health. In order to support healthy brain development, we also know babies' brains actually require stable, caring, interactive relationships with adults.¹

¹ Center on the Developing Child, The Science of Early Childhood Development, IN BREIF. Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

The Challenge – Inadequate Quality, High Turnover, Low Education

Research is consistent in demonstrating that if we want children — particularly children in poverty — to enter our public education system with the skills, abilities, and support needed to have the most positive experiences in school, we must start early by investing in the learning that begins the moment a child is born. Even with this evidence, a recent RAND Institute study shows that only 13 percent of California's low income children are in high quality early learning programs.² Additionally, nearly 60 percent of U.S. early childhood centers are found to be of “inadequate or minimal” quality. The poor quality of care is especially disturbing in light of recent studies that reveal that the first three years of life are a crucial time for brain development and profoundly affect an individual's long-term healthy development and learning.

Nationally, 72 percent of children under the age of five are in non-parental care arrangements. Findings in the field suggest that the quality of care is closely related to the education, compensation, and retention of staff. Research has found that teachers with Bachelor's degrees and specialized training in child development provide young children with the best preparation to succeed in kindergarten (Whitebook, M. 2003. *Early education quality: Higher teacher qualifications for better learning environments – a review of the literature*) and that teacher effectiveness is among the most important factors impacting the quality of early learning programs.³ A recent National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) report indicates the following:

- Better educated teachers are more effective.
- Programs employing teachers with 4-year degrees are highly effective and good economic investments for taxpayers.
- Low educational qualifications and a lack of specific preparation limit educators' effectiveness.
- Better compensation is required to hire and retain more effective teachers.⁴

Although money has been invested in early childhood educators training programs, these rarely lead to pay raises or offer sufficient incentives for providers to stay in the field. Sites that pay better wages experience double the retention rate of other sites, even though frequent turnover impedes the formation of nurturing relationships and their benefits to children. Therefore, strategies are needed for both increasing education and professional development and reducing turnover.

At the same time the awareness of the importance of quality early learning programs on school readiness and the value of teacher education to the quality of early learning programs was increasing,⁵ the educational level of the early learning workforce was

²Karoly, L., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., Zellman, G., Perlman, M. & Fernyhough, L. (2008). Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California, TR-539-PF/WKKF/PEW/NIEER/WCJVSF/LAUP. http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR539/.

³ Bueno, M., Darling-Hammond, L., and Gonzales, D. (March 2010). A Matter of Degrees: Preparing Teachers for the Pre-K Classroom, The PEW Center on the States, Education Reform Series. Washington, DC.

⁴ Barnett, W.S. (2003). Better Teachers, Better Preschools: Student Achievement Linked to Teacher Qualifications, *Preschool Policy Matters*, 2. New Brunswick, NJ: NIEER

⁵ Whitebook, M. *Early Education Quality: Higher Teacher Qualifications for Better Learning Environments:*

decreasing.⁶ A 2006 study of the California early learning workforce revealed that only slightly more than half of the teachers in early learning programs had earned any kind of postsecondary degrees; only one-quarter had a Bachelor's degree.⁷ Unfortunately, younger members of the workforce were even less educated. Moreover, less than two-fifths of early learning center teachers had been at the same job for five years or more. One reason for these statistics is the level of compensation. The highest-paid teachers with Bachelor's degrees in early learning programs earned approximately only two-thirds as much as public school kindergarten teachers.⁸ In FY 07/08, the median salary of a CARES participant working in a center-based facility was \$24,000 per year. The median salary of a CARES participant working in a family child care facility was \$20,000 per year. This figure represents less than half of the mean annual salary of \$50,370 for K-12 teachers in California.⁹

California workforce data also reveal startling demographics of our youngest children's teachers and caregivers: "Most ECE students in California work full-time, typically at low-wage jobs; speak a language other than or in addition to English; and face significant challenges in pursuing college-level work in English."¹⁰

First 5 California CARES Program History

In an effort to address this urgent statewide need to improve the quality and stability of the early learning workforce, First 5 California launched CARES in FY 00/01 as a matching-funds program with 44 county commissions. State Commission approval for CARES funding concluded in December 2009 while staff were determining which programs would continue as Signature Programs. During its tenure, CARES gained national recognition from organizations including Head Start, Zero to Three, and the Center for Law and Social Policy as a model for increasing the quality and stability of the early learning workforce.

Over the first 8.5 years of CARES, from July 1, 2000 – December 31, 2008 (FY 09/10 expenditures are not yet available), First 5 California and the county commissions collectively invested over \$224 million. First 5 California's \$50.23 million investment leveraged over \$174 million through a 1:4 match with large counties and a 1:2 match with small counties. This investment supported the provision of approximately 87,000 incentives and/or stipends to early learning educators based on their retention and education unit requirements. In FY 08/09, more than 12,800 early educators received

A Review of the Literature, Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, 2003.

⁶ Herzenberg, S., Price, M, and Bradley, D., *Losing Ground in Early Childhood Education*, Economic Policy Institute, 2005.

⁷ Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, and California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, *California Early Care and Education Workforce Study: Licensed Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers, Statewide Highlights*, July 2006.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Bellm, D. and Whitebook, M. *Building California's Preschool For All Workforce, A SERIES OF POLICY BRIEFS. Compensation and Comparable Worth: What Lies Ahead for California's Preschool Teachers?*, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley. Berkeley, CA.

¹⁰ Dukakis, K., Bellm, D., Steer, N., & Lee, Y. (2007) *Chutes or Ladders? Creating support services to help early childhood students succeed in higher education*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley.

support services from CARES. In the same year, approximately 300 of the 9,000 CARES participants obtained higher education degrees, over 1,340 participants obtained a Child Development Permit, and an additional 1,400 advanced up a level on California's Child Development Permit.

First 5 California CARES Evaluation Findings

Several major evaluations of CARES found it to be successful and indicated that professional development activity and educational levels increased among a large and varied group of early childhood educators, retention of the workforce improved, and county-level professional development infrastructures were strengthened.

- Ninety-six percent of participants still worked in the field 12 months after joining the program and 93 percent remained 18 months later.
- CARES program participants were more than twice as likely as non-participants to remain in the same center over a two-year period.
- Participants accumulated an average of 5.7 more early care and education units than non-participants. Participants were three-and-a-half times more likely to obtain a Child Development Permit and twice as likely to move up to a higher level than non-participants.
- Furthermore, positive results of the CARES programs included increased professional morale among participants and the formation of new collaborations with community partners, such as community colleges, to address barriers to the attainment of Early Childhood Education (ECE) units.

The 07/08 survey of CARES participants revealed high levels of program satisfaction, with participants reporting that it had increased their commitment to stay in the field and contributed to their career advancement.¹¹ Additionally, local evaluations provided additional feedback on the success of CARES in areas such as increased resources and motivation in working toward a degree, increased likelihood of CARES participants staying in the field and continuing their education, and improved earnings for family child care providers and center teachers.

DISCUSSION: CARES PLUS - Building on a Proven Model

CARES Plus Objectives

Implementing the CARES Plus Program will allow First 5 California to build on the organizational infrastructure and positive momentum created by the original CARES Programs throughout the state to:

1. Systematically enhance the retention, education, and professional development of the workforce across the continuum – from informal family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers to teachers working in centers – thereby supporting quality for children ages 0 to 5 regardless of care setting.

¹¹ Ibid.

2. Build toward a well-educated, culturally and linguistically diverse workforce that can support agency efforts to improve access to and quality of early learning including First 5 California's 0 to 5 Power of Preschool Program, Early Head Start, Head Start, and General Child Care.
3. Position First 5 California to potentially adopt and support recommendations from the Governor's newly enacted California State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (ELAC) and the California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (ELQIS) Advisory Committee that is working on a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) plan that includes workforce development.¹²

CARES Plus Program Components

CARES Plus supports the professional development and preparation of an effective, well-compensated workforce through the provision of incentives, academic support, higher education articulation, and a Web-based Registry. All CARES Plus grantees must consist of consortiums that represent county commissions, two- and four-year higher education institutions, AB 212 state-subsidized programs, community-based organizations, local educational agencies, and other stakeholders. CARES Plus builds on the lessons learned from the past nine years of the original CARES Program and other recent national workforce efforts, and includes the core elements necessary for a successful workforce development system:

Incentives: Stipends to Incentivize Early Childhood Educators to increase their education and professional development and obtain degrees

CARES Plus will provide financial stipends to individual participants who are obtaining educational units that lead toward a degree in early childhood education or a related field. This includes teachers and providers along the continuum of care, from those with no formal training to those seeking advanced degrees. To increase accountability and intentionality, all participants will be required to annually meet with an advisor and complete an Educational Plan. Additionally, stipends will be provided at the end of the program year, after participants have successfully accomplished the program requirements.

Participants' Support Systems: Academic Support and Advising to Help Participants Negotiate the Maze of Educational Requirements

All CARES Plus Programs will be required to link to or provide multi-lingual academic and other support services (e.g., outreach, bilingual classes, course advising, and book subsidies) in order to maintain and increase the diversity of the workforce while simultaneously enhancing participants' access to higher education and degree attainment.

The CARES Plus support services need to include but are not limited to:

¹² ELQIS will become an official committee of the State Advisory Council once operable.

1. Academic advising and counseling to familiarize students with a college's structure and offerings and guide them through their coursework and educational paths. It may also include a focus on transferring to a four-year institution
2. Links to financial aid and scholarships, books (may include lending library), and/or financial support to attend unit-based classes
3. Forums, seminars, workshops, meetings, trainings, and unit-based classes necessary for advancement in the CARES Plus Program toward a degree

Higher Education Articulation: Higher Education Quality Pathway Partnerships

Local CARES Programs consortium partnerships will work to facilitate the recruitment, training, and professional development of an expanded pool of qualified early learning educators. Partnerships will create the programs and opportunities needed by the local workforce and address articulation and higher education pathways, course content, and student readiness and support issues that interfere with student success in obtaining degrees in early childhood education or related fields.

First 5 California and the California Department of Education's Child Development Division partnered to develop the Early Childhood Educator Competencies, anticipated to be completed in June 2010. CARES Plus will require all grantees to provide a plan for their respective higher education partners addressing how they will incorporate the Early Childhood Educator Competencies into their programs. These consortiums will create curriculum and course content to reflect the Early Educator Competencies as well as infuse content with current research and knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Competencies-Based Career Ladder and Certification System

The original CARES Program revealed statewide limitations, including the need to revise the current Child Development Permit to a competencies-based career ladder. Currently, the Packard Foundation is funding some initial work and planning into this area. As CARES Plus moves toward a systems approach, First 5 California will partner with the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), the California Department of Education's Child Development Division and other interested parties to lead statewide efforts to revise the Child Development Permit to focus on a competencies-based approach, the foundation of California's Early Learning Workforce Career Ladder. Once established, all CARES Plus Programs will be required to use the new Career Ladder and certification system.

Accountability: The Early Learning Workforce Web-Based Registry (Registry) & On-going Program Evaluation

Building on the previous CARES database, all CARES Plus Programs will be required to submit accountability, participant, and program summary data through the Registry and to participate in any First 5 California evaluation and research efforts. Data contained in the Registry allows for program and individual evaluation and monitoring including the educational and professional progress of the early learning workforce. In addition, other data elements contained in the Registry may

include participant demographics, site and employment information, including salaries and incentives received as well as a particular site's QRIS quality level. The Registry also could link to the recommendations of the ELQIS and support multiple users and tasks such as State licensing requirements and CARES program supports.

Program Training and Technical Assistance

To support the quality of the local CARES Plus programs and enhance shared lessons learned and program effectiveness, statewide program technical assistance will be provided such as: regional meetings, briefs, special topic webinars and symposiums, and a listserv to enhance program and administration communication.

Links to Federal and State Direction

CARES Plus provides the foundation for core services critical to California's quality system of early learning designed to improve school readiness and close the achievement gap. CARES Plus aligns with federal and state early learning efforts designed to improve the quality of and access to early learning programs.

ELAC and ELQIS

The State Advisory Council (ELAC) is charged with strengthening state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs in the State. Several of its main foci align with the direction of CARES Plus: (1) the establishment or improvement of core elements of the State early childhood system, such as a statewide unified data collection system, (2) a statewide professional development system and career ladder for early childhood educators, and (3) high-quality State early learning standards. The ELAC also will assess the capacity and effectiveness of institutes of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators. In addition, early discussion around the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) focus on how resources might better support school readiness through increasing early educator quality.

CARES Plus also supports the requirements of a professional development system and higher teacher requirements consistent with the ELQIS and the Water Cooler Workforce Subcommittee recommendations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

First 5 California staff recommends the Commission approve the proposed CARES Plus Program and up to \$12 million a year for three years (7/1/10 – 6/30/13) to support it.

FISCAL IMPACT

The funding First 5 California invests in CARES Plus will leverage additional local dollars, philanthropy, and federal funds such as Head Start. The funds will be used on the core elements of CARES with the majority flowing directly to local programs to operate the participant, support, and higher education pathways pieces. Funds will also be used to

support the revision of the current Child Development Permit Matrix to a competencies-based career ladder, and to support increased accountability through the development and operation of the Registry, evaluation, and program training and technical assistance

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative

Do not authorize funding approval for CARES Plus.

Pros

- Maintains higher level of available annual revenue.

Cons

- Does not continue and build upon the momentum from the original First 5 California CARES Program.
- Does not add jobs to the local economy.
- Lack of adequate state funds available to help workforce component of the future ELQIS.
- Difficult to find qualified early learning teachers for early learning programs, including Power of Preschool and future Child Signature Program.

FUNDING REQUEST FISCAL DETAIL

Title of Request:		Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES) Plus Funding				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Program Disbursement <input type="checkbox"/> Special Disbursement			
Amount of Current Agreement:		Up-to	N/A	Expenditures to Date:	N/A				
Current Term of Agreement:		N/A	Through	N/A					
		Fiscal Year Detail							
			FY 10 - 11	FY 11 - 12	FY 12 - 13	FY __ - __			
New Amount Requested:		Up to	\$36,000,000	\$12,000,000	\$12,000,00	\$12,000,00			
Total Amount of Agreement:		Up to							
Proposed Funding Term:		July 1, 2010		Through	June 30, 2013				
First 5 California Account Name:		Child Care		Account Number	0636	Fund Availability Confirmed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes By: Sandy Beck		
		Research and Development			0637				
Statutory Purpose:		<p>Health and Safety Code 130105(d)(1)(C) and 130105(d)(1)(D)</p> <p>Three percent shall be deposited in a Child Care Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for programs relating to child care, including, but not limited to, the education and training of child care providers, the development of educational materials and guidelines for child care workers, and other areas described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 130125.</p> <p>Three percent shall be deposited in a Research and Development Account for expenditures to ensure that children are ready to enter school and for the research and development of best practices and standards for all programs and services relating to early childhood development established pursuant to this act, and for the assessment and quality evaluation of those programs and services.</p>							
Do our funds leverage others?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes (explain) <input type="checkbox"/> No		Commission Funds		Leveraged Funds		Total Funds	
				\$36,000,000		To Be Determined		To Be Determined	
Leveraged Funds will be based on \$30 million of the total authority for CARES Plus. The \$2 million in FYs 2010-11 and 2011-12 and \$1 million in FY 2012-13 will be committed to development and maintenance of the Early Learning Workforce Registry.									
Key Deliverable Descriptions								Deliverable Date	
Early Learning Workforce Registry - to track the educational and professional progress of the early learning workforce. The Registry would place workers on the career ladder to monitor movement of participants and create a space to obtain accurate and up-to-date data on them as well as linking to the fuller Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) and the Child Signature Program.								June 30, 2012	
Compensation Incentives/Stipends – to support the recruitment and retention of a highly qualified, well-compensated and diverse early learning workforce								Ongoing	
Advising and Supports - to assist early learning students with navigating the higher education system. Advising participants in order to obtain a degree and credentials. Supports include links to financial aid, tutoring, homework assistance, practicum placement, etc.								Ongoing	
Coaching and Mentoring – support hand-on practicum for early learning higher education students.								Ongoing	