

# First 5 California CARES Plus

## CARES Plus Participants

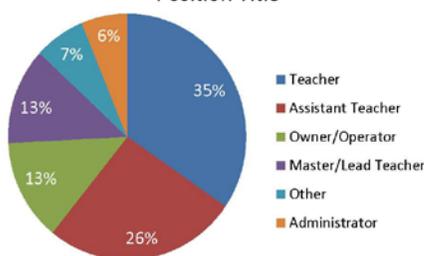
FY 2011-12: 3,790 Participants Completed

FY 2012-13: 4,427 Participants Completed

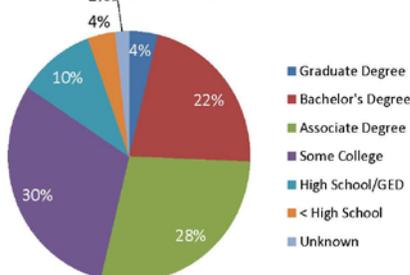
FY 2013-14: 6,083 Participants Enrolled

## CARES Plus Participant Profile Combined FYs 2011-12 and 2012-13

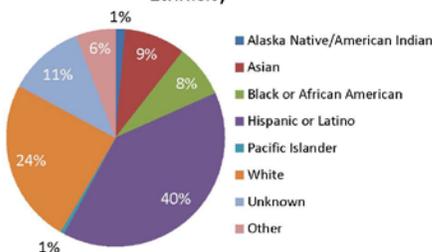
Position Title



Level of Education



Ethnicity



## CARES Plus History

To address the urgent need to enhance the quality and retention of the early learning workforce, First 5 California launched the Comprehensive Approaches for Raising Educational Standards (CARES) in 2000 as a matching-funds program with 44 county commissions. In 2010, First 5 California launched the next iteration of the program – CARES Plus – to support early childhood educators in partnership with 34 counties. CARES Plus builds on the organizational infrastructure and momentum already created throughout the state, leverages additional federal and local funds, and integrates current research on teacher effectiveness to strengthen its impact on improving child outcomes. Since 2000, First 5 California has invested \$80 million and generated local investments of more than \$250 million while providing stipends to an average of 7,700 early childhood educators each year. A CARES survey revealed participants were more than twice as likely as non-participants to remain in the same center over a two-year period. Evaluation of CARES Plus shows improved teacher effectiveness following training provided by the program.

## The Need

Nationally, 76 percent of children under the age of 5 with mothers in the workforce spend a significant amount of time in non-parental care arrangements<sup>1</sup>. Findings in the field suggest that the quality of care children receive is correlated with the education, compensation, and retention of staff. Research has shown that teachers with Bachelor's degrees and specialized training in child development provide young children with the best preparation to succeed in kindergarten<sup>2</sup> and that teacher effectiveness is among the most important factors impacting the quality of early learning programs<sup>3</sup>.

## CARES Plus Builds a Successful Workforce System

CARES Plus improves the quality of early learning programs for children 0 to 5 and their families by supporting the education and professional development of an effective, well-compensated, and diverse early learning workforce. CARES Plus improves the retention of a highly qualified workforce by providing:

- **Incentives:** Stipends incentivize early childhood educators to improve their education, participate in professional development, and obtain degrees.
- **Participant Support Systems:** Academic support and advising helps participants negotiate the maze of educational requirements.
- **Higher Education Articulation:** Pathway partnerships facilitate the recruitment, training, and professional development of qualified early learning educators.
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Regional meetings, special topic webinars, and other methods to support continuous quality improvement.

<sup>1</sup>Capizzano, J. Adams, G. & Sonenstein, F. (2000). Child care arrangements for children under five: Variation across states. Urban Institute. Series B, B-7 (March 2000).

<sup>2</sup>Whitebook, M. (2003). Early education quality: Higher teacher qualifications for better learning environments – a review of the literature. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California, Berkeley.

<sup>3</sup>Bueno, M., Darling-Hammond, L., & 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.

# First 5 California CARES Plus

## CARES Plus Program Design

Inclusive of state requirements, Lead Agencies design their local CARES Plus program by including up to four professional development options (components) in addition to the required CORE, which participants must complete in their first year of participation.

CORE Requirements			
<b>Intro to the CLASS®</b>	<b>Looking at CLASSrooms®</b>		<b>CARES Plus Tobacco Training</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-hour interactive online program to gain an understanding of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) framework</li> <li>Available in English and Spanish</li> <li>Toddler or Pre-K options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online program focusing on identifying and analyzing effective teacher-child interactions</li> <li>Available in English and Spanish</li> <li>Toddler or Pre-K options</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Kids and Smoke Don't Mix: A Tobacco Training for Child Care Providers and Preschool Teachers</i> sponsored by First 5 California and created by California Smoker's Helpline</li> </ul>
CARES Plus Annual Requirements			
<p>Meet with a Professional Growth Advisor two times a year to create and monitor a professional growth plan, and complete three online courses. Complete the annual Participant Satisfaction Survey. Participate in CLASS observation if selected in the random sample.</p>			
Component A	Component B	Component C	Component D
<p>Minimum of 21 hours of CDE- or First 5-approved professional growth trainings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in CLASS observation if selected</li> </ul>	<p>Minimum of 6 units of higher education towards a degree in ECE, CD or related field</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in CLASS observation if selected</li> </ul>	<p>Serve as Professional Growth Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires BA degree</li> <li>Complete CORE Requirements</li> </ul>	<p><b>MyTeachingPartner®</b> one-on-one professional growth coaching model</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required to participate in CLASS observation</li> </ul>

## CARES Plus Improves Teacher Quality

Teacher quality is a key contributor to children's learning and success. Central to CARES Plus is the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System Tools to provide a valid and reliable tool for both evaluation and professional development uses. Sobol et al. (2013)<sup>4</sup> conclude the quality of classroom interactions as measured by the CLASS tool is predictive of child outcomes. CARES Plus introduces program participants to the CLASS tool through a series of online, interactive, multimedia, self-paced courses. MyTeachingPartner one-on-one coaching immerses participants in the more intensive program to improve classroom interactions through coaching, classroom observation, and analysis of teaching practice.

*"I have improved in my positive interactions with the children I teach because of the videos and workshops I have attended over the years that have been organized by First 5. I received my Bachelor's degree recently and am now working toward completing a Master's Degree in education. None of this would have materialized for me without the workshops, trainings, and help of First 5. I am eternally grateful. Thank you!"*  
- Santa Barbara County Participant

*"CARES Plus has been instrumental in helping me achieve my goals of pursuing a secure and rewarding career in the child development field and implementing a well-rounded and enriched preschool program...By improving ourselves, we are simultaneously improving the educational experiences of the children in our care."*  
- Ventura County Participant

## CARES Plus Benefits Participants

Participants in local CARES Plus programs have access to:

- A unique opportunity for individualized one-on-one coaching
- High quality training through multiple delivery methods
- Educational supports (i.e., book lending library, group trainings)
- Stipends/incentives to further educational goals and help defray costs of higher education
- Training materials and online courses
- Opportunities to complete professional development requirements and units to earn and maintain Child Permits through higher education
- Support of a professional growth advisor for professional development planning

CARES Plus participants found key features of the program helpful, including online training, financial stipends, and access to an advisor. They also reported increased job satisfaction and improved skills and qualifications for career advancement as a result of their participation in the program.

<sup>4</sup>Sabol, T.J., S.L. Soliday Hong, R.C. Pianta, & M.R. Burchinal. (2013). Can Rating Pre-K Programs Predict Children's Learning? *Science* 341: 845-846.