



AGENDA ITEM: 10  
DATE OF MEETING: October 21, 2009  
ACTION:   X    
INFORMATION: \_\_\_\_\_

## **GAPS IN QUALITY EARLY LEARNING FOR CHILDREN 0 TO 5 AND THEIR FAMILIES, PROJECT LEGACY AND FEDERAL LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **SUMMARY OF REQUEST**

The Project Legacy process is now complete and First 5 California staff recommends that the State Commission approve the Measurable Program Goals (MPGs) and Program Concepts resulting from the Project Legacy process (Exhibit 1). Staff will use the MPGs and the early learning Program Concepts to develop quality First 5 California Signature Programs with measures to ensure accountability to prepare California's most vulnerable children for success in school.<sup>1</sup>

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

#### The Project Legacy Process:

July 15, 2009, marked the beginning of the streamlined Project Legacy process, which included:

- a panel of parents and experts from early childhood health and education;
- public input sessions attended by educators, parents and early care and health providers; and
- a survey taken by over 3,000 respondents.

This input led to the identification and prioritization of the MPGs. The MPGs then drove the creation of Program Concepts, which will drive the establishment of high quality early learning Signature Programs. It is also critical that the Program Concepts and Signature Programs strategically align with the early learning systems reform efforts at both the state and federal levels.

#### First 5 California's Early Learning Mandate and 2007 Strategic Plan:

The California Children and Families Act requires that First 5 California's strategies be integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative to enhance optimal childhood development and to ensure that children are ready to enter school:

There is hereby created a program in the state for the purposes of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. These purposes shall be accomplished through the establishment, institution, and coordination of appropriate standards, resources, and integrated and comprehensive programs emphasizing community awareness, education, nurturing, childcare, social services, and research. California Health and Safety Code Section 130100)

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning encompasses the school readiness definition including family functioning, child health, child development and systems of care.

In 2007, the State Commission adopted its Strategic Plan which includes Strategies 2.1.1 and 2.1.2. These strategies call for convening a program assessment workgroup designed to assess the ongoing viability of programs and to provide recommendations for MPGs. In July 2009, this workgroup convened and recommended a comprehensive set of MPGs for consideration. Through Project Legacy, First 5 California staff shared these recommendations statewide and solicited public input to prioritize the MPGs.

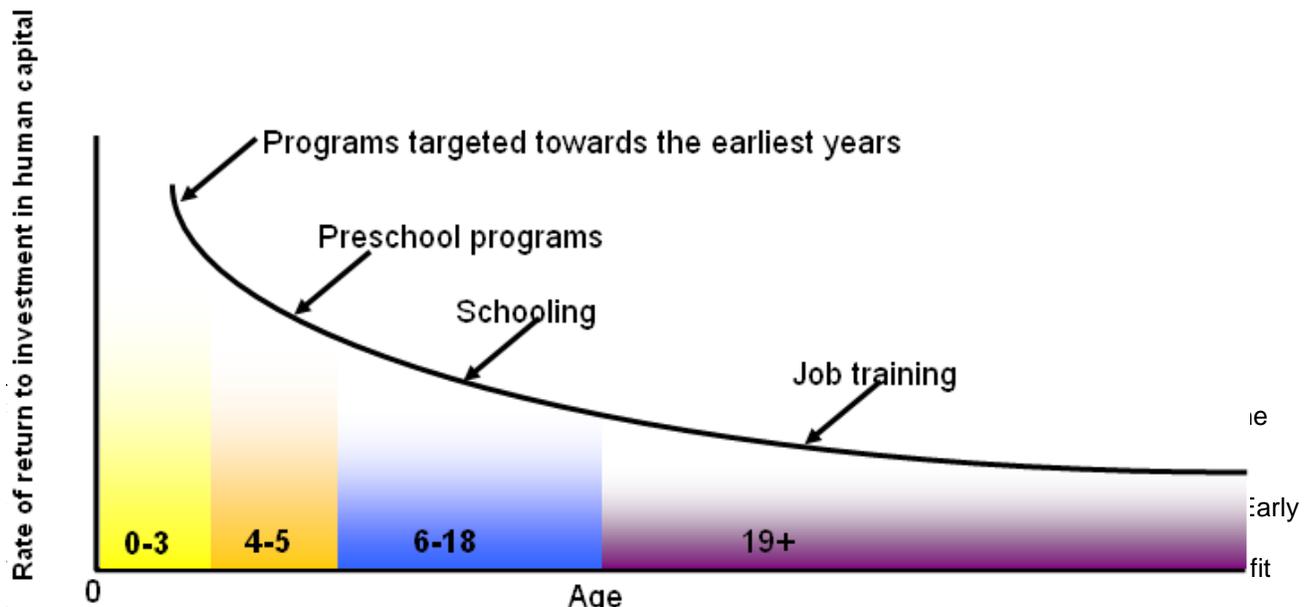
The Time Is Now to Close the Quality Gap:

A vast body of research indicates that early learning programs are one of the best investments a society can make. 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.<sup>2</sup> Over the last year, both the U.S. federal government and the California state government have embarked on comprehensive early learning systems reform. At the heart of both these efforts is a system that 17 other states have already adopted called a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). In fact, several California counties, through First 5 investments, have already established their own QRIS models.

**Early Learning is One of the Most Powerful Investments California Can Make**

Return on Investment Is 10 Percent Per Annum<sup>3</sup>

Research shows that effective early learning programs, when combined with access to healthcare and preventive services, can prepare children for success in school. In 2000, University of Chicago economist James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate in Economics, analyzed the effects of early learning investments. He concluded that the younger the child is at the time of the intervention, the greater the payoff to the child's positive development and to the well-being of the larger society (see *Heckman Curve below*). Heckman found that early nurturing, positive learning experiences, and good physical health from ages 0 to 5 greatly impact future success. The returns to society include long-term outcomes such as, higher reading and math achievement, lower rates for special education, 44 percent lower grade retention rates, higher graduation rates by as much as 29 percent, increased 4-year college enrollment, higher earnings, and less welfare assistance.<sup>4</sup>



## **New Federal Investments in Early Learning**

*I'm issuing a challenge to our states: Develop a cutting-edge plan to raise the quality of your early learning programs; show us how you'll work to ensure that children are better prepared for success by the time they enter kindergarten. If you do, we will support you with an Early Learning Challenge Grant that I call on Congress to enact. That's how we will reward quality and incentivize excellence, and make a down payment on the success of the next generation.*

--President Obama, March 10, 2009, in remarks to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

President Obama has committed to increase federal investments in early learning by \$10 billion a year. Thus far, this commitment has resulted in:

- \$5 billion in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) investments in Head Start, Early Head Start, and the Child Care Development and Block Grant;
- the Early Learning Challenge Fund (HR 3221), having passed out of the House of Representatives and being considered in the Senate, would provide states with \$8 billion over eight years to increase the quality of early learning programs, primarily through a QRIS; and,
- early learning being named as a competitive priority for Race to the Top funds.

## **California Begins Comprehensive Early Learning System Reform**

In anticipation of the commitment to early learning at the federal level, California recently began a process to create a high quality early learning system that will get children ready to learn and help close the achievement gap before they start school. Senate Bill 1629, authored by Senator Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, passed by the state legislature and signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in 2008, established a committee, the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (ELQIS), to develop policy recommendations and an implementation plan for an Early Learning Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition to the ELQIS, the Head Start Reauthorization Act of 2008 calls for the governor of all states to create an Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC). ELQIS and ELAC are governing bodies charged with improving the statewide system of early learning and quality. ELQIS is supported by funds from First 5 California and several examples of high-quality programs are supported by First 5 county commissions, most notably in Los Angeles, San Mateo, and San Diego, through the Power of Preschool (PoP) program.

Seventeen states, however, already have a state QRIS in place and are ahead of California in being ready to compete for the new Early Learning Challenge Fund. First 5 California needs to play a critical role in ensuring California becomes competitive and maximizes its share of new federal investments.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

With the Project Legacy process now complete, First 5 California staff recommends that the State Commission approve the MPGs and Program Concepts resulting from the Project Legacy process (Exhibit 1). Staff will use the MPGs and the early learning Program Concepts to develop quality First 5 California Signature Programs with measures to ensure accountability to prepare California's most vulnerable children for success in school.

The strategy is to invest in proven programs that help drive the state's early learning systems change effort, and position California to leverage additional funding, especially the federal Early Learning Challenge Fund. Examples of such programs are: Early Head Start/Head Start expansion, or a statewide QRIS pilot. Furthermore, together these concepts support an integrated and comprehensive platform that engages families, is consistent with the California Children and Families Act, covers early learning and health, and incorporates the MPGs.

### Program Concepts:

The following Program Concepts will allow First 5 California to impact systems change by leveraging federal, state, local and philanthropic funds to create a system that is greater than the sum of its parts. The Program Concepts are organized by the program participants and recipients of the services: the child, the parents, and the teachers. The Program Concepts are key drivers for building a high quality, accountable, state early learning system.

### Child

1. Early Learning Program: Develop and implement a national model for a high quality, comprehensive early childhood program to serve California's most vulnerable children. The model will build on the Power of Preschool (PoP) Pilot and the School Readiness Program as well as on existing state child development programs and preschool, and Early Head Start and Head Start. Similar to PoP, this model increases both access and quality.
2. Health Access: Support children's access to health insurance and core health services.

### Parent

3. Network for Parenting to Support Parents in Raising Young Children: Develop and implement a Parent Network that supports millions of parents in preparing their children for success in school and life that builds on the First 5 California Parent Web Site, the *Kit for New Parents*, and the Hands-on-Health Van(s).

### Teacher

4. Quality Improvement Systems:
  - a. Develop and implement a professional development program that provides incentives for the early learning workforce to further their higher education and also provides stimulus for higher education systems change and builds on the First 5 Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) and AB 212 through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

- b. Support the development of an Early Learning Advisory Council and a statewide QRIS pilot that builds on SB 1629 (Steinberg) and is expected to be recommended by the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee.

Fiscal Impact: Fiscal impact will be estimated after the Signature Program concepts are approved.

Advisory Committee Review:

Executive Director Kris Perry and Program Deputy Director, Sarah Neville-Morgan consulted with Commission's Program Committee to obtain feedback on this agenda item. On October 7, 2009, staff met with Commissioner Dartis and on October 12, 2009, staff met with Commissioner Munger. The Commissioners provided suggestions, which have been incorporated into the final versions of these documents.

Alternatives Considered:

Child

**Description of Alternative 1**

Provide only for expansion, not enhancement, of early learning services based on current models and funding amounts to increase access for children.

**Pros**

- Reach more children who do not currently receive services

**Cons**

- Does not increase quality
- Without higher quality, programs won't reach the desired child outcomes nor will utilizing current funding amounts provide enough funds to support infants and toddlers
- Does not support a comprehensive platform for an early learning system

**Description of Alternative 2**

Provide only for quality enhancement, not expansion, of early learning services.

**Pros**

- Higher quality
- Programs will have supports needed to reach the desired impacts and will have the funding amounts needed to make providing infant/toddler programs viable.
- Supports a comprehensive platform for an early learning system
- Less costly than increased access

**Cons**

- Does not expand access to serve additional children and reduce the gaps

**Description of Alternative 3**

Create an entirely new 0 to 5 Early Learning Program that does not build on the state's existing child development programs.

**Pros**

- Complete control over program design

**Cons**

- Not sustainable
- Does not braid or leverage funds
- Does not connect to the federal early learning funding opportunities; a source for additional resources and sustainability

Parent

**Description of Alternative 4**

Implement several individual programs for parents each targeting a different topic such as tobacco cessation or literacy education.

**Pros**

- Allows for intensive focus on one content area

**Cons**

- Too many individual programs and an unfocused effort
- No integration or coordination

Teacher

**Description of Alternative 5**

Maintain CARES Program as currently structured.

**Pros**

- Program continuity
- Field familiar with program and requirements

**Cons**

- Not sustainable and does not position California for potential federal funds
- Does not include higher education systems reform as comprehensively as it could
- Is not accessible state-wide

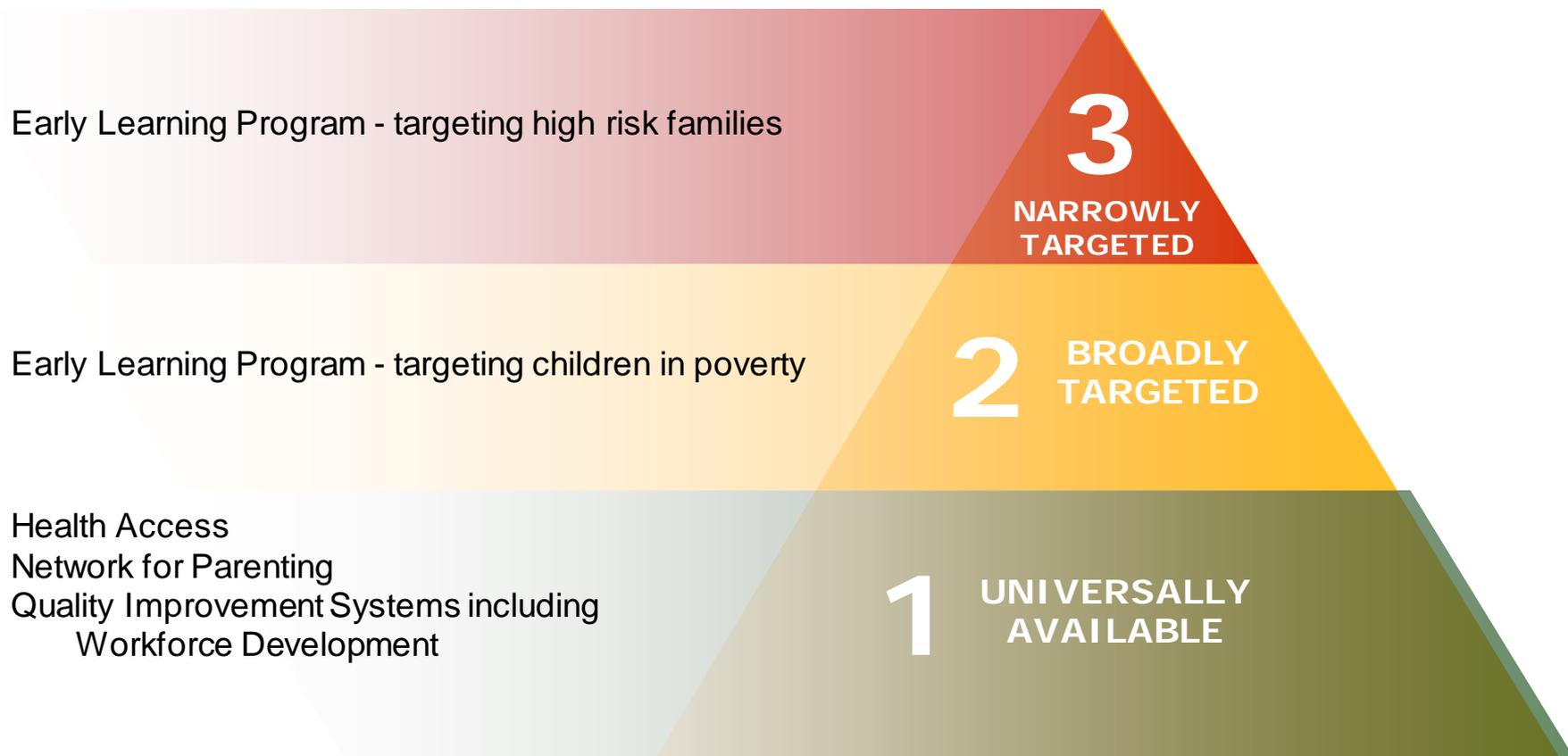
**EXHIBITS**

- 1) Matrix of Measurable Program Goals and Program Concepts
- 2) First 5 California Program Concepts within a 3-Tiered Approach

### Matrix of Measurable Program Goals and Concepts

	Measurable Program Goals (MPGs)	Child		Parent	Teacher
		Early Learning Program	Health Access	Network for Parenting	Quality Improvement Systems
Family Functioning	Literacy	X		X	X
	Family Involvement	X		X	X
	Parent Education	X		X	
	Reducing Toxic Stress	X			
Child Health	Nutrition	X		X	X
	Physical Activities	X		X	X
	Health Insurance	X	X		
	Screening, Assessment, Referrals	X	X		X
	Secondhand Smoke Exposure	X		X	
Child Development	Infant/Toddler/Preschool Programs	X			X
	Quality Rating Systems	X			X
	Special Populations	X			
	QRS Passing Score	X			X
Systems of Care	Wages and Incentives	X			X
	Facilities	X			
	Flexible Schedules	X			
	Alignment	X			
	Smoking Cessation	X		X	

## Science Points Toward a 3-Tiered Approach to Ensure Healthy Development





# **Gaps in Quality Early Learning for Children 0 to 5 and Their Families, Project Legacy and Federal Leveraging Opportunities**

**First 5 California Commission Meeting**  
Los Angeles, CA  
October 21, 2009



# Project Legacy Process: *Accomplished*

- ✓ Convene expert panel:  
Recommended 35 Measurable Program Goals (MPG's)
- ✓ Obtain public input on MPG's:  
over 3,000 survey respondents
- ✓ Prioritize MPG's based on public input
- ✓ Develop Program Concepts



## ***Next Steps***

- Obtain Commission approval on Program Concepts
- Develop Signature Programs and Accountability System
- Obtain Commission approval on Signature Programs
- Release funding mechanisms
- Measure results, continually improve



# California Children and Families Act of 1998

“There is hereby created a program in the state for the purposes of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. These purposes shall be accomplished through . . . comprehensive programs emphasizing community awareness, education, nurturing, child care, social services, health care, and research.”

- Health and Safety Code Section 130100

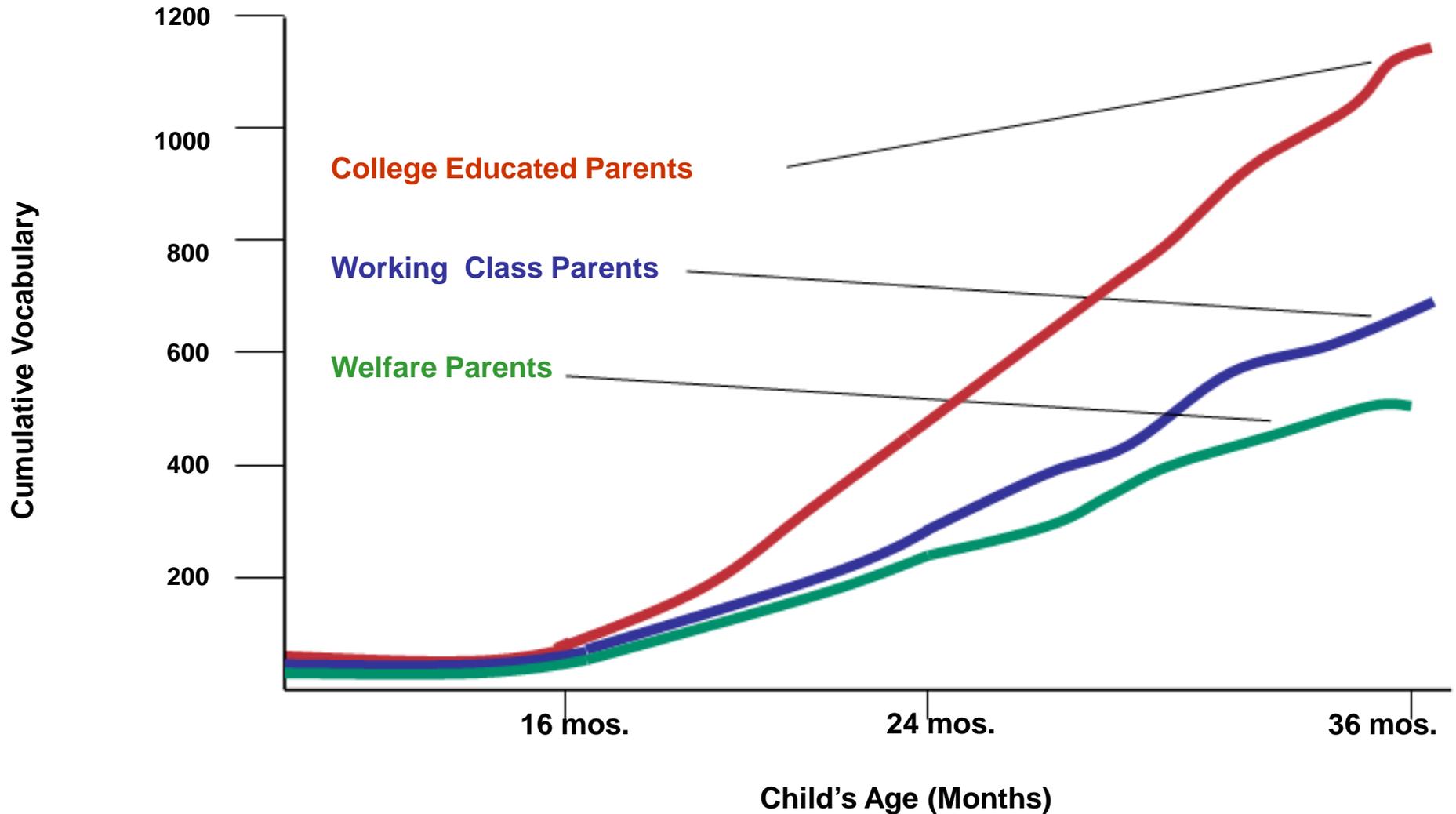




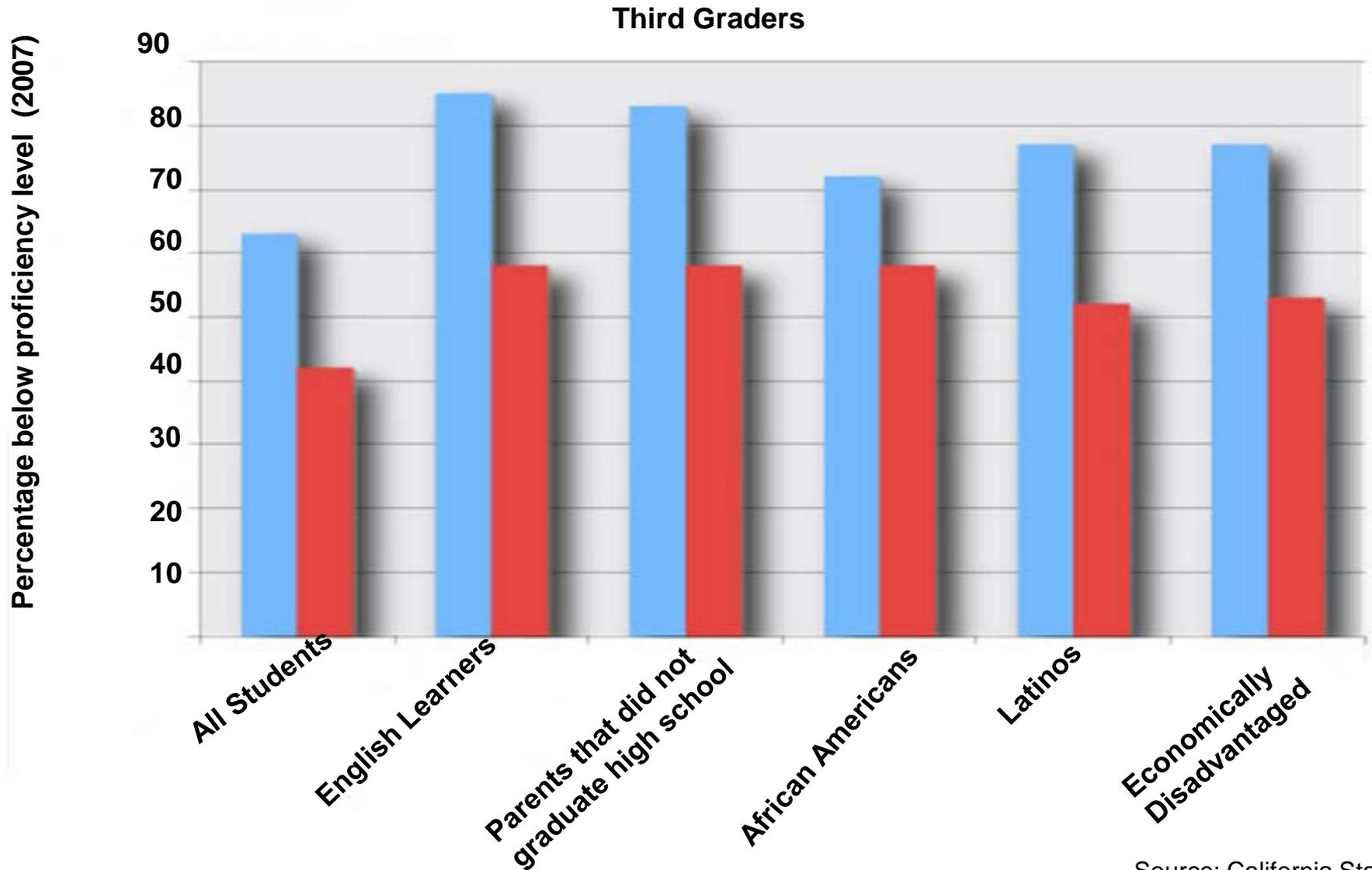
# Early Learning Helps Close the Achievement Gap



# Barriers to Educational Achievement Emerge at a Very Young Age

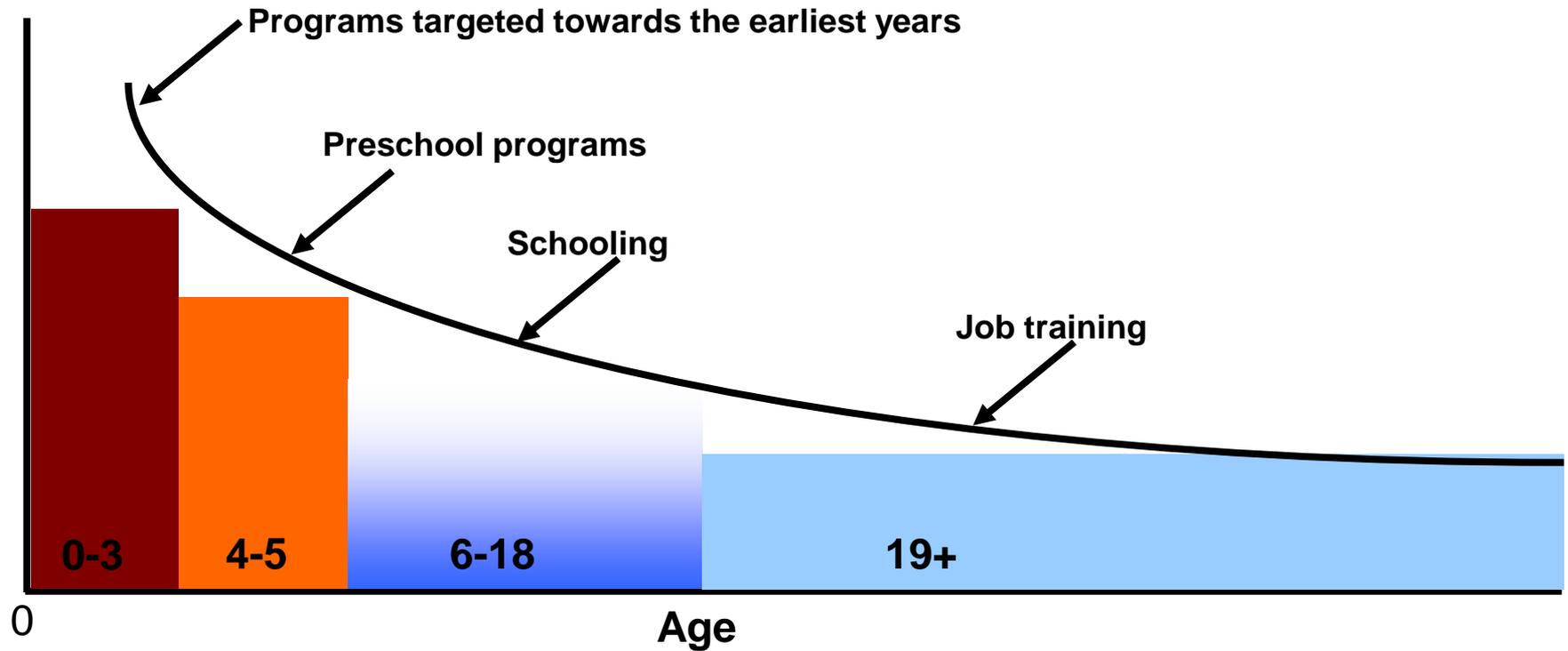


# Some Groups of Students are Falling Short of State Standards by Even Larger Margins



# Preventive Intervention is More Efficient and Produces Higher Returns than Later Remediation

Rate of return to investment in human capital





# Federal Landscape: Early Learning Opportunities for California



“I'm issuing a challenge to our states: Develop a cutting-edge plan to raise the quality of your early learning programs; show us how you'll work to ensure that children are better prepared for success by the time they enter kindergarten. If you do, we will support you with an Early Learning Challenge Grant that . . . will reward quality and incentivize excellence, and make a down payment on the success of the next generation.”

- President Obama, March 10, 2009  
Remarks to the U.S. Hispanic Chamber  
of Commerce



# New Federal Early Learning Initiatives

- \$5 Billion of ARRA Funding
- \$8 Billion over 8 years for Early Learning Challenge Fund (HR 3221) to fund QRIS in States
- Head Start and Early Head Start: higher funding, higher standards and accountability
- Early learning a competitive priority in Race to the Top grant
- National Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)





# Transforming California's Early Learning System



# Governor's and Legislature's Leadership on Early Learning

- SB 1629 (Steinberg), AB 2759 (Jones), 2008
- Recipe for Success:
  - Collaborative relationships
  - Broad, bi-partisan support: K-12, business, law enforcement, early learning
  - Consolidate bureaucracy, optimize existing investments

"Pre-kindergarten education is the first formal step a child takes toward academic success and California's children deserve the highest-quality programs that put them on track to a successful future."

-Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, 2008



# Senate Bill 1629: Early Learning Quality Improvement Act

- Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (ELQIS) crafting plan to improve ECE program quality:
  - Incentives for higher quality (QRIS)
  - Parental Choice
  - Position California to compete for federal funds

“If we want all California children to have a chance to succeed in school, we need to make sure that the neediest children get high-quality preschool. SB 1629 will create the roadmap for transforming our preschool programs into the high-quality experience our children deserve.”

-Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, 2008



# What is a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)?

- Accountability systems centered around quality ratings
- Improve the quality of early learning by:
  - defining quality standards
  - making program quality transparent to consumers and providers
  - providing incentives and supports
- Localities can create their own; several counties already have
- New statewide system will impact early education and child care programs across the state





# A Critical Need: Key Gaps



# Child Poverty in California

Statewide, 45% of young children live in low-income environments.

This figure is:

62% for Latino children

56% for African American children

23% for White children

22% for Asian children

46% for young children age zero to two

Low income is about twice the federal poverty level.  
100% (\$44,100 family of four in 2009)

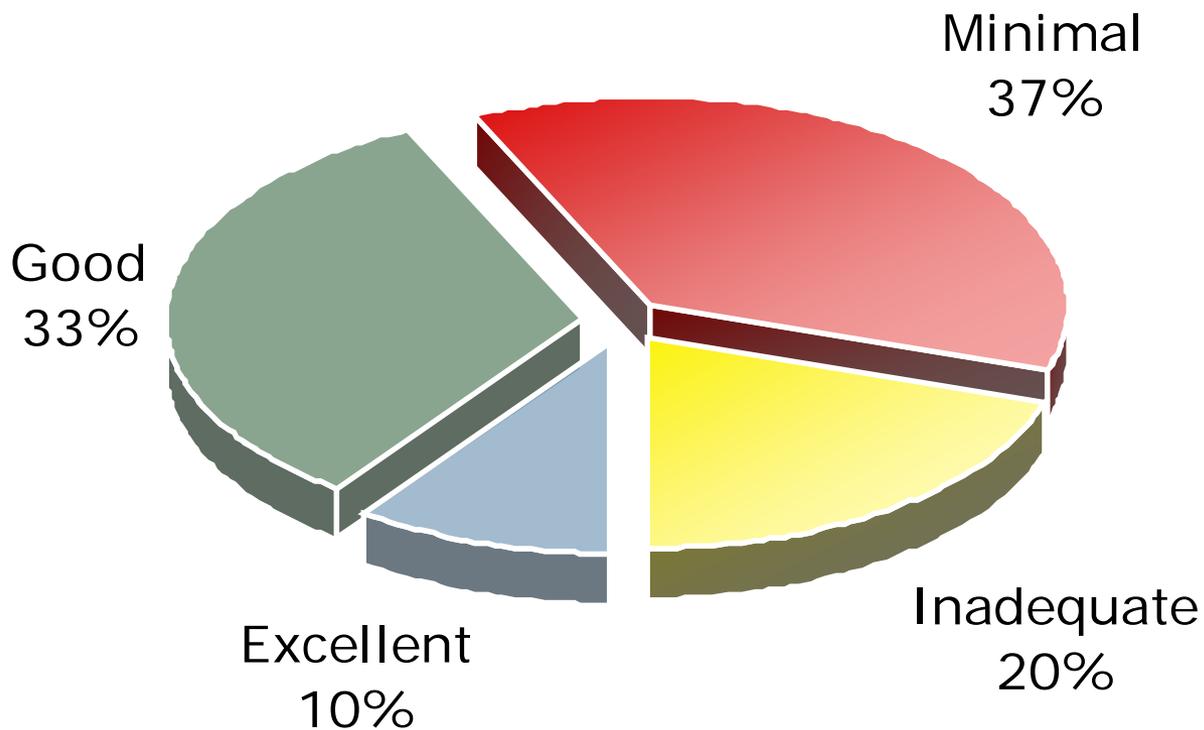


# Early Learning Gaps

- RAND found that only **13%** of the children who need early education most are in high quality programs
- Early Head Start serves only **3%** of California's eligible children ages 0-2
- Head Start serves only **30%** of California's eligible children ages 3-5



# U.S. Child Care & Early Education Quality: Uneven at Best



Source: Rigby, Ryan & Brooks-Gunn (2006)



# Proposed Program Concepts



# Science Points Toward 3-Tiered Approach to Ensure Healthy Development

Narrowly targeted, specialized services for children experiencing toxic stress.

**3**

**NARROWLY TARGETED**

Broadly targeted interventions for children in poverty (e.g., income supports and early enrichment).

**2**

**BROADLY TARGETED**

Basic health and early care services to help all children build and sustain strong brains and bodies.

**1**

**UNIVERSALLY AVAILABLE**



# First 5 California Program Concepts within a 3-Tiered Approach

- Early Learning Program – targeting high risk families

**3**

**NARROWLY  
TARGETED**

- Early Learning Program – targeting children in poverty

**2**

**BROADLY  
TARGETED**

- Health Access
- Network for Parenting
- Quality Improvement Systems including Workforce Development

**1**

**UNIVERSALLY  
AVAILABLE**



# Summary of Request

- Approve Measurable Program Goals and Program Concepts resulting from the Project Legacy Process
- At the January Commission meeting, staff will present further information on the Signature Programs



“The human baby's computational system is really a network, held together by language and love, instead of optic fiber.”

- Gopnik, Meltzoff and Kuhl, *Scientist in the Crib*, 1999

