



# Power of Preschool

## Program Evaluation Report

September 2009





# First 5 California Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report

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## Message from Kris Perry, Executive Director, First 5 California

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Research has long established that attendance at a quality preschool nurtures a child's healthy development and promotes long-term learning success. As such, support for quality early learning is a wise investment. In the context of California's current economic situation, it becomes increasingly important to direct our efforts and precious resources to those areas in which the strongest outcomes can be realized and sustained. The First 5 California Power of Preschool (PoP) program represents one such investment.

This report highlights the impact that high-quality preschool has on young kids. These children can benefit greatly from the unique characteristics of the PoP program. Through access to high-quality learning environments, PoP participants develop strong school readiness levels – levels that are demonstrably higher than many other preschool programs.

The purpose of this report is to present the evaluation results of the preschool experiences within the state's nine PoP demonstration counties, from their unique approaches and strategies to their successes and challenges. Collectively, the PoP sites represent an array of stages of development, and some of them have not yet reached their full potential. As such, this meta-analysis captures a "point in time," summarizing the first three years of the five-year program and is not intended to be definitive. This report is a companion to the *PoP Demonstration Program Progress Report* dated October 2008.

We are proud of the benefits that First 5 California's Power of Preschool program provides for California's children. We look forward to the completion of this demonstration project and to developing specific policy and program recommendations for policymakers, early childhood practitioners, and advocates of high-quality preschool.

### ***Kris Perry***

Executive Director  
First 5 California

# First 5 California Power of Preschool Program Evaluation Report

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Yolo—Davis Consultant Network

### Internet Access

This report is also available through First 5 California’s Web site: [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).

## Executive Summary

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The urgent need for high-quality preschool programs is well established for all socioeconomic groups, and particularly so for disadvantaged children. In July 2003, the First 5 California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) approved \$100 million for five to seven years to establish the Power of Preschool (PoP) Program, a high-quality, free, voluntary, part-day preschool program for all 4-year olds (or 3- and 4-year olds). The program assists children in becoming personally, socially, and physically competent, effective learners, and ready to transition into kindergarten. Nine counties began operating the PoP program during Fiscal Year (FY) 05/06 and have completed three years of operations. The nine counties are Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Ventura, and Yolo.

First 5 California contracted with Evaluation Matters in September 2008 to conduct the PoP program evaluation meta-analysis. The meta-analysis compiles and reviews county self-reported quantitative and qualitative aggregate data as well as descriptive and anecdotal information contained in annual PoP local evaluation reports and statewide<sup>1</sup> reports. The purpose of the meta-analysis is to gain a more robust understanding of unique approaches and strategies that have worked successfully, and to uncover common themes and challenges shared across multiple projects.

The contractor communicated by telephone and/or e-mail with the primary PoP evaluator in each PoP demonstration county to obtain the most recent evaluation report for that county. The data collection process began in early September 2008 and ended in late-October 2008. All nine PoP counties submitted data for the FY 07/08 school year, and eight of the nine counties provided local evaluation reports for either FY 06/07 or FY 07/08. At the time of data collection, Los Angeles County was in the process of completing its local evaluation report, so those findings are not included in this report.

The largest known ethnic group among the First 5 California PoP participants was Hispanic/Latino, and this group made up 66 percent of all children with known ethnicity. Approximately 8.2 percent of the children were African-American and 9.7 percent were Asian. About 45 percent were English learners, and 7 percent were children with special needs. Approximately 87 percent of PoP teachers were classified as either “quality” or “advancing,” with 13 percent or less reported as “entry-level.” PoP sites reported that effective outreach strategies included the use

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this report, the term “statewide” refers to the nine participating county PoP programs.

of flyers, the Internet, meetings, television, word-of-mouth, newspaper articles, siblings of PoP kids, targeting 0 to 3 programs, phone calls, and walk-ins. Most counties had high enrollment levels, with waiting lists in some cases.

As part of the requirements for the PoP program evaluation meta-analysis, First 5 California generated a list of questions related to teacher quality and retention, strategies for English learners and children with special needs, parent involvement at school and at home, common challenges, and compliance with National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) standards. This report addresses each question in depth, identifies common challenges, highlights unique and innovative programs, and recommends high-quality programs to inform policy change. An analysis of the available data reveals that all nine counties displayed strong school readiness levels and high-quality learning environments based upon self-reported Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R) scores and Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) scores for FY 07/08.

Teacher quality was high and there was a commitment to professional development in all counties. Staff, management, and teachers from all counties commented that PoP has impacted how they view themselves as professionals. There was also substantial attainment of NIEER benchmarks and compliance with PoP program quality standards. Commonly reported parent involvement included periodic activities such as parent conferences and volunteering in the classroom, as well as more in-depth activities such as participating in classroom learning/play activities. Every county reported an increase in parenting skills and knowledge as well as parent behaviors relating to home educational activities. As a result, parents were reading to their children, telling them stories, playing counting games, and singing to them.

Common challenges expressed by PoP programs include issues that arise from working with large immigrant populations. In particular, there are challenges associated with language barriers, children with special needs, and difficulty adjusting to documentation, screening, data collection, and reporting requirements. While many of these challenges exist statewide, counties have developed their own unique strategies for dealing with these challenges.

This report lists 11 recommended criteria to use to design and evaluate a high-quality program. All PoP demonstration counties fulfilled most of the 11 recommended criteria for high-quality programs. A few of the PoP demonstration counties stand out for their ongoing support of professional development, high-quality facilities and classrooms, and streamlined data collection and continuous improvement processes. Each of these five counties (San Diego, San Francisco,

San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura) could serve as a blueprint for a high-quality program. Moreover, a recent RAND study noted that the PoP classrooms in San Francisco outscored the rest of the state and nation for their high-quality.

Finally, the report recommends areas that could be improved in all counties, such as parent engagement, kindergarten transition planning, partnerships with local agencies and/or businesses, outreach to children with special needs, and inconsistencies in DRDP-R reporting.

This evaluation report concludes that the PoP program is a success. Founded on core values and quality standards, the PoP program demonstrates the key components of designing and implementing a successful quality preschool program for all children.



## I. Background

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### Narrowing the Achievement Gap

There is a growing body of research that strongly suggests that quality preschool programs provide a strong foundation for children as they prepare for kindergarten and the school years that follow. Those who could benefit most are the groups of children who start out behind in kindergarten and stay behind in elementary school.<sup>2</sup> In other words, high-quality preschool could provide children with critical school readiness skills and thus serve as part of a multifaceted strategy to narrow the achievement gap in California.

### Difficulty Finding High-Quality Preschool Programs

Children who could reap the greatest gains from preschool are least likely to be in high-quality preschool. In fact, just under half of three- and four-year olds in economically disadvantaged families are in center-based preschool programs of any quality, compared to 70 percent of those in more financially stable families. Less than 15 percent of those who could benefit the most are in high-quality programs.<sup>3</sup>

### Nurturing School Readiness through Early Childhood Education

The urgent need for high-quality preschool programs has been well established for all socioeconomic groups, particularly so for disadvantaged children (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001). Parenting practices that promote optimal language and social development tend to occur less frequently in low-income families than in higher-income families. Children who have difficulty paying attention, following directions, getting along with others, and controlling negative emotions of anger and distress do less well in school (Arnold, Homrok, Ortiz, & Stowe, 1999). Children with emotional difficulties are likely to “lose out” academically in a number of ways (Raver 2004). In other words, the science points to a whole-child approach that emphasizes social and emotional development as being just as important as (and perhaps a prerequisite for) developing literacy and numeracy skills. A recent research article concluded that “the most promising

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<sup>2</sup> The study reports that 40-60 percent of California 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are not achieving grade-level proficiency, and the shortfall is greater among Latinos, African Americans, English learners, and children from economically disadvantaged families. The study points out that these achievement gaps have early roots and begin in kindergarten. These same children are less likely to have been in high-quality preschools and, therefore, exhibit less school readiness. Cannon, JS & Karoly, LA (2007). *The Promise of Preschool for Narrowing Readiness and Achievement Gaps Among California Children*. The research brief is available at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/2007/RAND\\_RB9306.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/2007/RAND_RB9306.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Karoly, LA, Ghosh-Dastidar, B, Zellman, GL, Perlman, M & Fernyhough, L (2008). *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool-Age Children in California*. The report is available at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR539](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR539).

strategy” for supporting school readiness “is to increase access to high-quality center-based early childhood education for all low-income three- and four-year olds.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Rouse, Brooks-Gunn, & McLanahan (2005). p.12

## II. PoP Program Evaluation Report

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### The Power of Preschool Model

Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act of 1998, established the California Children and Families Commission (also known as First 5 California) and authorizes the use of tobacco tax revenue to fund early childhood development programs for children ages 0 to 5. First 5 California is working with First 5 county commissions to invest nearly a billion dollars over the next few years to create opportunities for all children in California to attend a quality preschool. First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) is a five- to seven-year demonstration program offering high-quality, free, voluntary, part-day preschool program for all four-year olds (or 3- and 4-year olds). The program assists children in becoming personally, socially, and physically competent, effective learners, and ready to transition into kindergarten.

Nine counties began operation of the PoP program during FY 05/06 and have completed at least three years of operations. These nine counties are Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Ventura, and Yolo. The PoP model focuses on creating programs in disadvantaged and underserved communities and low-performing schools. It aims to be highly inclusive for children with special needs and English learners, and to reduce disparities in children's school readiness levels. While the long-term goals for these PoP demonstration projects are comprehensive and challenging, programs do not have to attain full quality standards until their fifth year of operation. In order to participate in the PoP projects, programs must meet existing California Code of Regulations, Title 5 standards that govern state-funded preschool and child-care facilities.

### Purpose of PoP Meta-Analysis

The purpose of this program evaluation meta-analysis is to analyze, integrate, and synthesize local evaluation reports and qualitative data from the nine PoP demonstration counties, and to gain a more robust understanding of unique approaches and strategies that have worked successfully, as well as common themes and challenges shared across multiple projects. The goal is to weave together a rich overall picture of what works and what does not, to highlight notable innovations and successes, to recommend high-quality programs, and to identify program challenges that might have affected the study. First 5 California contracted with Evaluation Matters in September 2008 to conduct the PoP program evaluation meta-analysis.

## Methodology and Data Collection

This evaluation relies solely on secondary data sources and does not include analysis of original data. The program evaluation meta-analysis compiles and reviews county self-reported quantitative and qualitative aggregate data as well as descriptive and anecdotal information contained in annual PoP local evaluation reports<sup>5</sup> and statewide reports to gain a more complete understanding of unique approaches and strategies that have worked successfully and to uncover common themes and challenges shared across multiple projects. The contractor communicated by telephone and/or e-mail with the primary PoP evaluator in each PoP demonstration county to obtain the most recent evaluation report for that county.

The data collection process began in early September 2008 and ended in late October 2008. Individual PoP sites are at varying stages of development and some have not reached full maturity. Thus, this evaluation provides information for only a point in time and is not definitive. While this evaluation does demonstrate some impressive outcomes, more mature programs could show different results.

All nine PoP counties submitted data for FY 07/08. Eight of the nine counties provided local evaluation reports for the FY 05/06, FY 06/07, and/or FY 07/08 school years.<sup>6</sup> At the time of data collection, Los Angeles was in the process of completing its local evaluation report, so these findings are not included in this report.

All counties reported data via a Web-based multi-dimensional assessment instrument created and distributed by First 5 California.<sup>7</sup> All PoP counties provided DRDP-R and ECERS-R scores, and some counties included results of teacher and parent surveys, focus group data, demographic data, interview data, and program administrative and accountability data. The data analyzed in this report includes both new and improved spaces.

## OVERALL LIMITATIONS

This study explores causal connections, correlations, or lack of correlations between data sources, and includes detailed summaries of common themes. It is important

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<sup>5</sup> Each PoP county is conducting its own local evaluation, and details about these evaluations have been excerpted or summarized from annual evaluation reports (FY 05/06, FY 06/07, and/or FY 07/08), statewide reports (November 2008), and the PoP Progress Report (October 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Much of Ventura county's information included in this report is from its annual evaluation report that includes aggregated countywide program data. Since PoP is not distinct within the annual report, the meta-analysis evaluation includes all of Ventura's programs.

<sup>7</sup> A sample assessment instrument ("Blank PoP Evaluation Reporting Form"), and instructions on how to fill out the form, is available at <http://www.first5eval.com/reporting0708.htm>.

to note that it is challenging to provide meaningful comparisons of data across counties. For example, counties may define certain populations, such as children with special needs and English learners differently, and data collection methods vary from one county to the other. Additionally, all quantitative data reported by counties were at the aggregate level. Therefore, statistical analyses to compare or correlate results across counties are limited.

### ASSESSMENT TOOL LIMITATIONS

First 5 California requires participating PoP programs to use specific assessment tools as part of the evaluation process. The tool limitations include:

- ***Desired Results Developmental Profile-Revised (DRDP-R)***

First 5 California uses the DRDP-R to measure the developmental progress of PoP participants. The DRDP-R is a child assessment tool designed by the California Department of Education and administered by teachers to help them create individualized learning plans for children. By averaging the responses at each developmental level, the data may mask gains in some areas because it collapses 39 indicators across all developmental areas into one item for analysis.

- ***Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R)***

Scores from the ECERS-R assessment across counties may not be directly comparable. Although all PoP counties are required to use independent observers to conduct environmental assessments on their classrooms, individual training and testing methods vary by county. Additionally, the timing of program implementation and the timing of the ECERS-R assessment can impact the rating requirement to achieve at least a five out of seven score within 24 months of operation.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The county programs are vastly different in size and scope. For context between the county programs and how they may influence observed and reported differences, refer to the description of each county's program in the *Power of Preschool, Demonstration Program Progress Report* (2008).<sup>8</sup>

Additional information on common terminology and titles is available in the "Abbreviations and Definitions" table at the end of this report.

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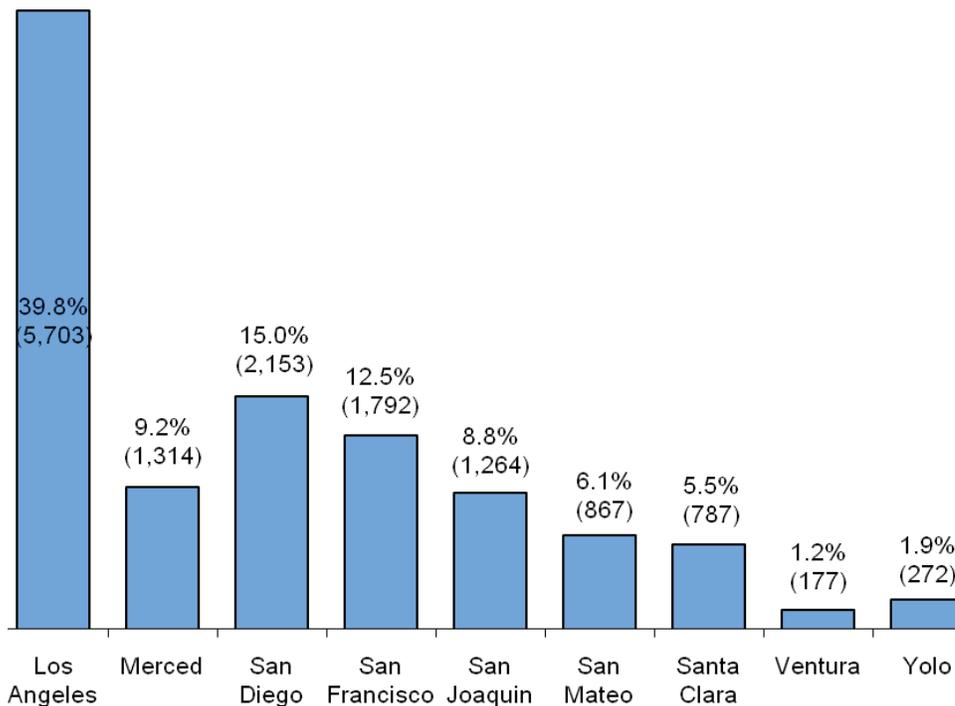
<sup>8</sup> The report is available at <http://www.ccfca.gov/pdf/press/PoP%202008%20Final.pdf>

### III. Demographics – Statewide and By County

The nine PoP counties reported a total of 14,329 participants as of June 2008, the vast majority of whom were four-year olds. Since an important focus of the PoP programs is to reduce the achievement gap and improve school readiness among disadvantaged communities, the following charts provide some statistics on the total of PoP participants, their race/ethnicity, and whether they were English learners or had special needs. Chart 1 displays the number of PoP children served in each of the nine county programs and the percentage of each county's PoP participants to the statewide total.

**Chart 1:**

**PoP Participants Served FY 07/08  
by County (n=14,329)**



May not add to 100% due to rounding.

## Race/Ethnicity

PoP counties provided race and ethnicity data for 11,813 of the 14,329 children at PoP preschools statewide.<sup>9</sup> The largest known ethnic group among the First 5 California PoP participants was Hispanic/Latino; this group represented 66 percent of those children who reported their ethnicity. In FY 07/08 in the state of California as a whole, approximately 50 percent of preschool-age children were Hispanic/Latino. Table 1 provides a comparison of the ethnic breakdown of the PoP participants served to the preschool-age children (three- and four-years old) in California.<sup>10</sup>

**Table 1: Ethnic Comparisons**

	PoP Participants Served	California Preschool-age Children
Alaska Native/American Indian	<1%	<1%
Asian	10%	9%
Black/African American	8%	5%
Hispanic/Latino	66%	50%
Pacific Islander	1%	<1%
White	10%	29%
Multiracial	3%	6%
Other or unknown	2%	-

May not add to 100% due to rounding.

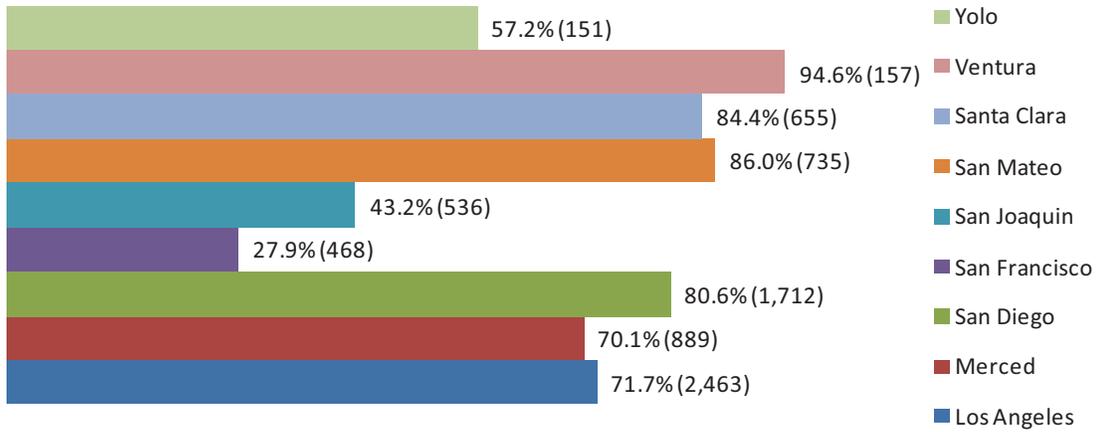
Since the largest racial and/or ethnic subgroup is Hispanic/Latino, the chart below provides a more detailed breakdown of this population on a county-by-county basis. Chart 2 shows the percentage of each county’s Hispanic/Latino participant count in FY 07/08 and the number of PoP children classified as Hispanic/Latino in each PoP county. Note that Ventura has a large percentage of Latino children at its PoP sites (almost 95%) and Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Diego are at or above 80 percent at their PoP sites.

<sup>9</sup> The remaining 2,516 children were reported to be of unknown ethnicity.

<sup>10</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000–2050. Sacramento, CA, July 2007.

Chart 2:

**Hispanic/Latino Children in PoP Preschools  
by County FY 07/08 (n=7,766)**



### English Learners

According to the California Department of Education, 41 percent of K-12 students speak a language other than English at home, and 25 percent of all California public school students are classified as English learners (ELs). Chart 3 shows that approximately 45 percent (5,417) of preschoolers at PoP sites are classified as ELs.<sup>11 12</sup>

**Chart 3:**

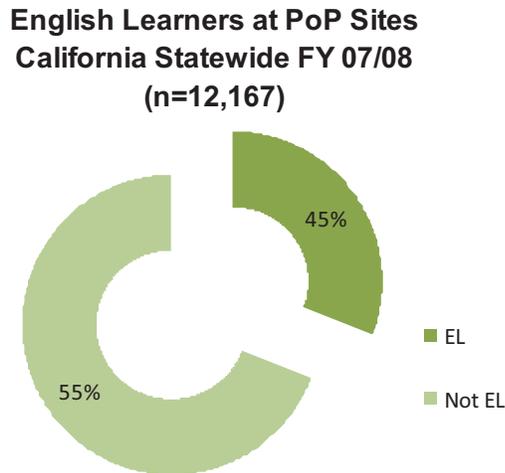
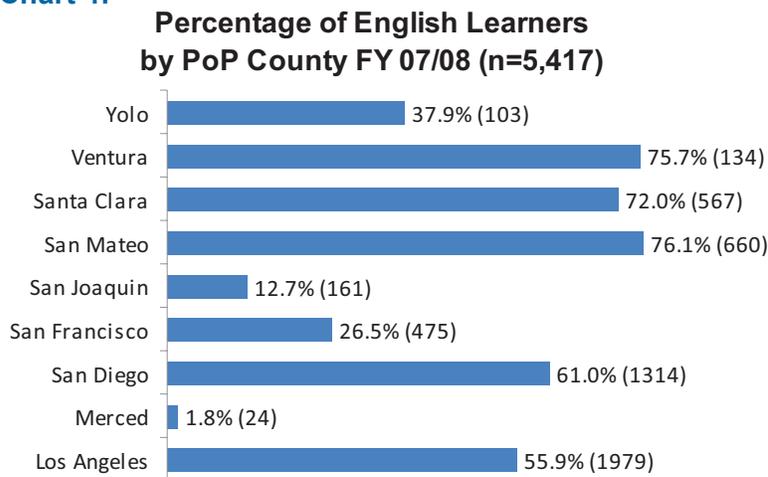


Chart 4 illustrates the number of EL children enrolled within each PoP program. This chart reflects a wide range in the percentage and number of English learners served within each PoP program, from 1.8 percent in Merced to 76.1 percent in San Mateo in FY 07/08.

**Chart 4:**



**Note:** Not all counties reported PoP children as EL or not-EL.

<sup>11</sup> San Joaquin County was able to report EL figures for only one of the two participating school districts. One school district does not collect EL data until kindergarten.

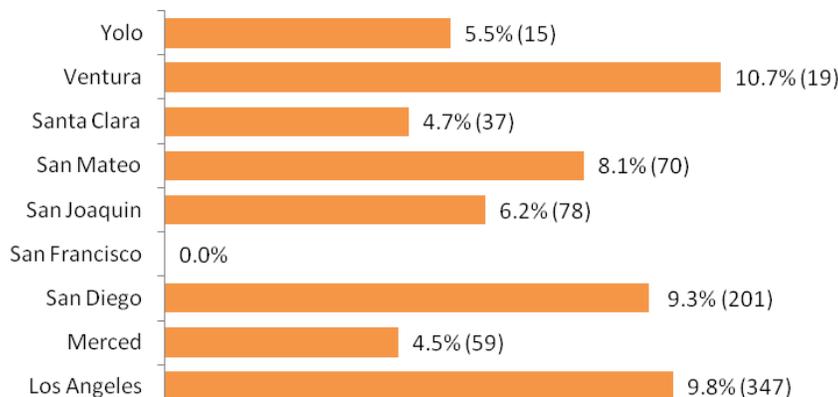
<sup>12</sup> Los Angeles County submitted EL data for only those children with a Child Enrollment Form.

## Children with Special Needs

The counties served 826 children with special needs (7 percent of those reporting data on special needs) across all PoP sites at the end of the FY 07/08 academic year. Chart 5 shows the number and percentage of reported children with special needs served within each PoP county. As noted in Chart 5 below, however, the actual number of children with special needs served is likely higher as many counties either did not report or under-reported this data.

**Chart 5:**

**Percentage of Children with Special Needs by PoP County FY 07/08 (n=826)**



**Notes:** San Francisco did not collect special needs data for FY 07/08. In FY 08/09, however, 10.2% of entering kindergarteners (from San Francisco PoP sites) were children with special needs.

San Joaquin County only reported the number of special needs children with Individual Education Plans.

Los Angeles County submitted special needs data only for those children with a Child Enrollment Form.

In FY 08/09, Santa Clara screened over 700 PoP children with ASQ. Over 30% of children showed areas of alarm and/or parent or teacher concerns. As the follow-up process with these children and their families continues, Santa Clara County anticipates more than 4.7% of children will have special needs.

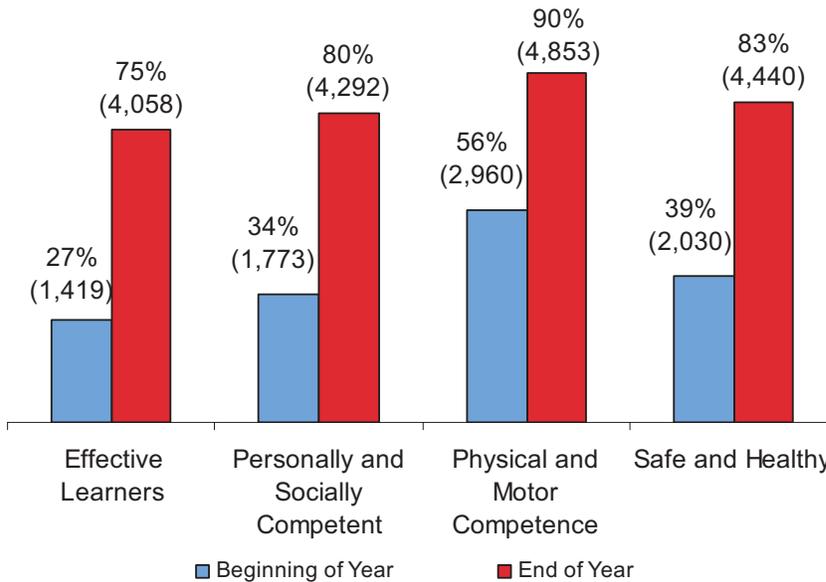
## IV. Developmental Outcomes and Classroom Environment

### Increased School Readiness

All nine counties demonstrated improvements in school readiness levels using the Desired Results Developmental Profile – Revised (DRDP-R) to measure the increase in the percentage of children at the “Building” or “Integrating” levels from the beginning of the pre-K year to the end of the pre-K year (averaged across all DRDP-R subscales). Additional information about the DRDP-R is in the Abbreviation and Definition table at the end of this report. Chart 6 below displays the increases in school readiness skills as measured using the DRDP-R.

**Chart 6:**

**PoP Increase in School Readiness Skills  
(Fall 2007 to Spring 2008)**



**Note:** Los Angeles reported DRDP-R data only on a sample of PoP participants.

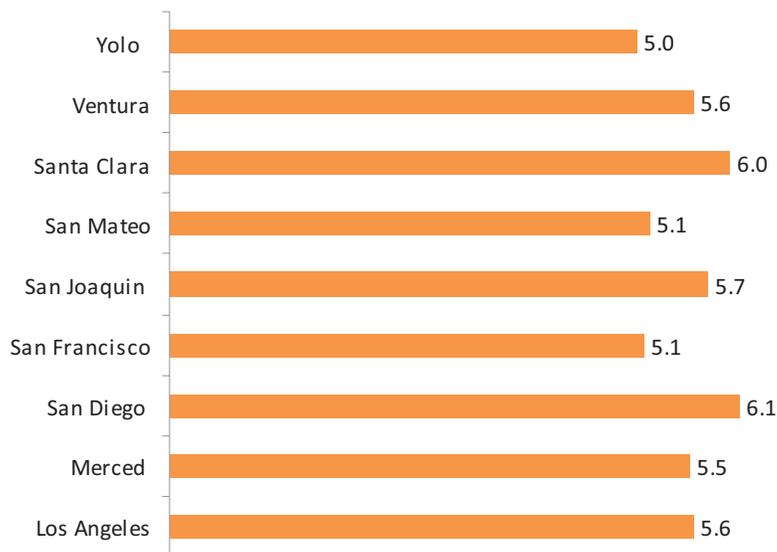
## High-Quality Learning Environments

Demonstration sites of all nine PoP counties have high-quality learning environments based upon their Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale - Revised (ECERS-R) scores for FY 07/08. Additional information on the ECERS-R is in the Abbreviations and Definition table at the end of this report. The average global ECERS-R scores ranged from 5.0 to 6.1 with a mean score of 5.5 across all nine PoP counties. All counties have scores that are in the good to excellent range on the ECERS-R (scores of 5 or greater). In compliance with the PoP requirements, the average acceptable score is five or better out of a possible score of seven at the end of 24 months.

Chart 7 displays the average global ECERS-R scores for each of the nine PoP demonstration counties.

**Chart 7:**

**Average Global ECERS-R Scores for California PoP Counties FY 07/08**



**Note:** The display of ECERS-R data across counties does not take into account the various methods of administering the ECERS-R assessment.

## V. Questions for Meta-Analysis

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As part of the requirements for the PoP program evaluation meta-analysis, First 5 California generated a list of questions that address teacher quality and turnover, strategies for English learners and children with special needs, parent involvement at school and at home, common challenges across counties, and attainment of NIEER benchmarks.

### First 5 California Questions for PoP Program Evaluation Meta-Analysis

**Question 1:**

Does teacher turnover impact program quality as evidenced by ECERS scores?

**Question 2:**

Does the teacher quality (and funding level associated with the teacher quality) impact program quality as evidenced by ECERS-R scores?

**Question 3:**

Which strategies and services most effectively promote positive outcomes for children, particularly children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?

**Question 4:**

Which strategies and services most effectively promote positive outcomes for children with disabilities and other special needs?

**Question 5:**

What are the most effective outreach strategies for parents?

**Question 6:**

Are parents who have children in PoP increasing their involvement in their child's learning through contact with the schools?

**Question 7:**

Are parents doing more home educational activities with their children that foster their school readiness skills?

**Question 8:**

Are there common challenges experienced by counties? How have counties addressed these challenges?

**Question 9:**

Within these themes, are there differences in counties' approaches, and what can we learn from those differences?

**Question 10:**

Are the counties meeting the quality standards of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)?

The evaluation meta-analysis examined the local evaluation reports and qualitative data to answer these questions. A detailed discussion of each of these issues follows.

## **1: Does teacher turnover impact program quality as evidenced by ECERS-R scores?**

### ***High-quality preschools have lower teacher turnover***

Teacher turnover is high in early childhood education settings, with estimates ranging between 15 to 30 percent each year (Bloom, 1996; Whitebook & Sakai, 2003). Not surprisingly, centers with higher turnover experience greater disruption and lack of consistency in the classroom. Children in environments with higher turnover also suffer in their language and social development and express more aggression toward their peers. (Howes & Hamilton, 1993; Whitebook et al., 1990). Helburn (1995) has noted that centers with low turnover have significantly higher quality ratings when compared to centers with turnover of 10 percent or more per year.

### ***Tracking teacher turnover***

Currently, there is no systematic method of tracking teacher turnover among the PoP demonstration counties. While a strong link between teacher turnover and program quality has already been established (Helburn, 1995), the ECERS-R does not include questions or measures related to staff stability. For this reason, we use other program data (related to turnover rates) to determine whether there is a correlation between staff departures and global ECERS-R scores, indicating program quality.

Some counties report low turnover. The turnover rate for the FY 06/07 cohort of Preschool for All (PFA)<sup>13</sup> teachers in First 5 San Diego is less than 7.5 percent. At the same time, the average global ECERS-R score for First 5 San Diego PFA sites was 6.07 (in the good to excellent range).<sup>14</sup> In Year 1, the overall ECERS-R and Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) average mean scores for each subscale were fairly high – with a rating of “Good” or better for each subscale. Similarly, Yolo reported a 100 percent teacher retention rate for FY 07/08 along with high ECERS-R scores.

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<sup>13</sup> Note that some counties use the name “Preschool for All” (PFA) for their PoP programs. All PFA references are technically “First 5 California Power of Preschool (PoP) Demonstration Projects.”

<sup>14</sup> In an October 2007 report prepared as part of an evaluation of the San Diego PFA program, Harder & Co. point out that “According to the California Early Care and Education Workforce Study (July 2006), the turnover rate for early education teachers in California is 22 percent. Only 39 percent of center-based providers in Southern California have been employed in their current setting over five years.”

### ***All PoP demonstration counties have strong ECERS-R scores***

As stated earlier, the average global ECERS-R scores ranged from 5.0 to 6.1 and the mean score is 5.5. All counties have scores that are in the good to excellent range on the ECERS-R (scores of 5 or greater). PoP data relating to the ECERS-R scores, teacher satisfaction, and program quality all indicate that teachers are using the ECERS-R data as a tool to enhance the classroom environment and their own knowledge and expertise as teachers. Staff stability and overall program quality impact the ability of programs to continually improve. Whitebook, et al. (2001) examined the relationship between the ECERS-R and staff stability and found that “centers that retained a greater percentage of highly-skilled teachers and paid higher wages were significantly more likely to receive good or better ratings on overall classroom quality.”

### ***Relationship between teacher stipends and higher ECERS-R scores***

San Diego analyzed a relationship between stipends and ECERS-R scores. San Diego awarded PoP-funded stipends to eligible preschool teachers, instructional assistants and site supervisors during FY 07/08. San Diego County Preschool for All (SDCPFA) issued these stipends basing eligibility on the highest level of education and quality score on the ECERS/FCCERS for classroom staff and the Program Administrator’s Scale (PAS) for site supervisors. Staff indicated the stipends were an extremely motivating factor in improving quality and furthering their education. San Diego also reported a high ECERS-R average score of 6.3 (for FY 06/07), approaching the excellence level for classroom quality.

Staff in San Mateo discussed the benefit of PFA for the workforce, including staff returning to school to advance their education and more mentorship among staff. A project director talked about the impact of encouraging staff to pursue higher levels of education and the skills they brought back to the program. “We have so many of our staff back in school. For staff, they are getting higher pay because of that [and] they are coming back with stronger skills. There is so much writing that is required of teachers right now. In terms of lesson plans, those skills are really critical.”

### ***ECERS improves classroom quality***

A PFA management-level staff person in San Mateo provides one example of ECERS improving quality in the classroom. “The PFA initiative has led classroom standards higher. ECERS is how we are providing higher quality. We get monitored by [the training and technical assistance coordinator] who comes out and suggests things we should do in the classroom. It is very helpful. Action plans for improving program quality based on the results of the ECERS-R scores are documented in Quality Improvement Plans (QIP) developed by Gateway to Quality and the PFA programs. Teachers at the sites are in training.”

PFA staff in San Mateo also highlighted key physical enhancements to the classroom environments that have occurred or are planned over the long term, including:

- Reorganizing classroom furniture and learning centers;
- Ensuring program facilities comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (e.g., replacing round doorknobs with ones operable with limited use of hands, modifying an outdoor play area to ensure all children can access it, etc.);
- Labeling shelves with words or symbols;
- Making water accessible in outdoor play; and
- Acquiring more materials, toys, and books.

### ***Improved morale and pride among PoP providers***

PoP providers reported improved morale and pride. For example, the vast majority of San Francisco programs identified positive outcomes for staff as a direct result of participating in PFA. These benefits included increased professional pride among staff, more effective teamwork, and stronger motivation for program improvement. According to staff, PFA has made them feel recognized as high-quality preschool provider and appreciated for the important role they play in children’s development.

### ***PoP provides new tools and skills***

The PoP program affords additional tools and skills to providers. For instance, a program director in San Mateo described PFA as a resource to help staff members to reflect on and enhance various aspects of the program. “PFA helps us to strategize, to give our support differently. To think about ways to have a different approach to staff training, how do we articulate better to staff [about best practices]. PFA really helps us. It’s giving us a lot to think about and make action plans. For us, the benefit of PFA is really the resources, extra pair of eyes, deepen our action plans . . . giving us more tools and skills.”

A Santa Clara PoP teacher shared how she used the ECERS-R to enhance her classroom environment. She joined PoP because she believed it was an innovative project that would provide high-quality learning environments. As a teacher, she attended a five-day Teacher Institute where she received training in various topics including language and early literacy, individualization of educational programs, and use of the ECERS-R. After the training, she set up her classroom to include features and qualities emphasized in the ECERS-R assessment, such as inclusiveness, safety, interaction, and stimulation.

One area she had overlooked in the past was a privacy space for children to be themselves without interruption. After participating in the training, she also learned the importance of language development and early literacy. She better

understood that the most important ingredient of language development was through meaningful conversations that expanded a child’s vocabulary and sentence complexity using the “Observe, Wait, and Listen (OWL)” strategy. The training also helped [the teacher to] support English-language learners in the classroom and to individualize each child’s learning using assessment, observation, and conversation.

## 2: Does the teacher quality (and funding level associated with the teacher quality) impact program quality as evidenced by ECERS-R scores?

Studies of early childhood education centers have found that a strong predictor of program quality is teacher quality, whether teachers have BA degrees or higher, and whether they have specialized training in early childhood education (Whitebook, Sakai, Gerber and Howes, 2001).

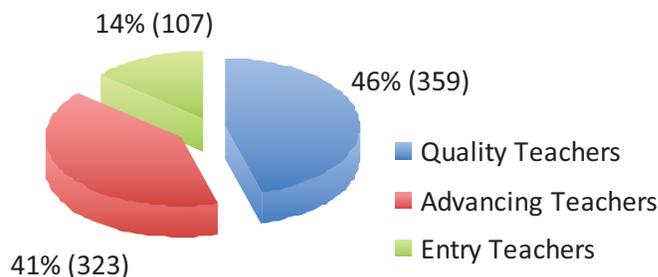
PoP teacher qualifications are classified according to a career ladder with three tiers based on the number of college units related to Early Childhood Education (ECE):

- *Entry Level* – 24 ECE units for the teacher and 6 ECE units for the assistant teacher;
- *Advancing Level* – 60 units of college level work with 24 units in ECE for the teacher and 12 ECE units for the assistant teacher; and
- *Quality Level* – BA degree that includes at least 24 ECE units for the teacher and an AA degree that includes at least 24 ECE units for the assistant teacher.

Chart 8 displays the percentage and number of PoP lead teachers reported as “entry” (14%), “advancing” (41%), and “quality” (46%) as of July 30, 2008.

**Chart 8:**

**PoP Lead Teachers  
(as of July 30, 2008) (n=789)**

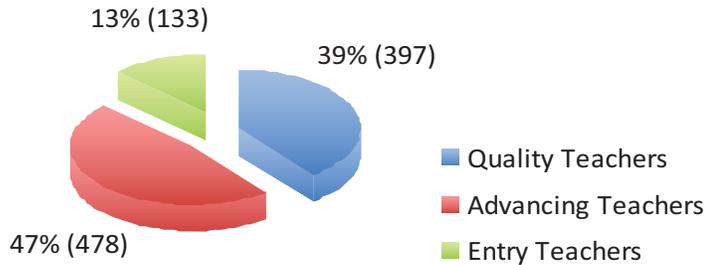


May not add to 100% due to rounding.

Chart 9 illustrates the percentage and number of PoP assistant teachers reported as “entry” (13%), “advancing” (47%), and “quality” (39%) as of July 30, 2008.

**Chart 9:**

**PoP Assistant Teachers  
(as of July 30, 2008) (n=1008)**



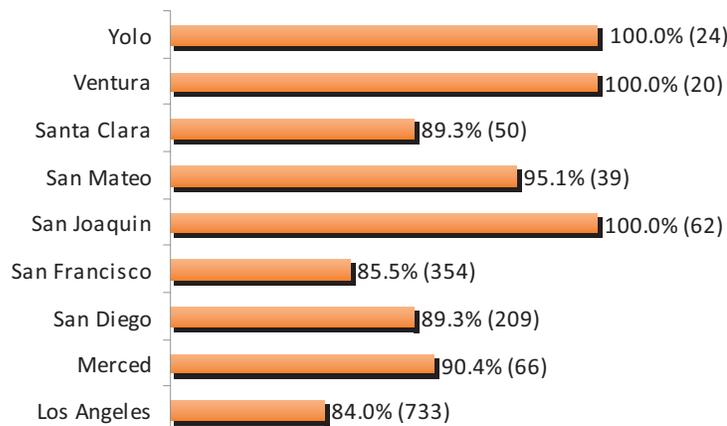
May not add to 100% due to rounding.

Charts 8 and 9 above reflect the levels of PoP teachers separately. Together, about 42 percent of the PoP lead and assistant teachers are “quality teachers” and another 45 percent are “advancing teachers.” There does not appear to be a strong correlation between teacher quality and ECERS-R scores, although overall teacher quality remains high and all counties were able to meet the requirement of a minimum ECERS-R score of five after 24 months of program implementation.

San Diego reported the highest ECERS-R score at 6.1 and yet 89.3 percent of its teachers were at the advancing/First 5-quality level (compared to 100% at that level for San Joaquin, Ventura and Yolo, all of which had lower ECERS-R scores). Chart 10 below displays the percentage and number of PoP teachers at “Advancing” or “First 5 Quality” levels by county in FY 07/08.

**Chart 10:**

**"Advancing" or "First 5 Quality"  
PoP Teachers FY 07/08 (n=1,839)**



While all nine of the PoP demonstration counties are strongly committed to high teacher quality, highlights of a few notable programs that promote workforce professional development follow in the explanation of the role that Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) plays in the PoP program.

### ***Role of CARES:***

CARES<sup>15</sup> is a First 5 California program in 44 counties that rewards early childhood educators and family child care providers for educational attainment and professional development. The CARES Training & Technical Assistance Project offers services to CARES administrators/partners to improve the quality of their programs. Eight of the nine PoP counties have integrated their PoP programs with CARES. While each county provides different stipends and incentives, the emphasis remains the same: to encourage and reward higher educational attainment by early childhood educators. While some participants are attracted to the incentives, others join the program because of the professional training and academic counseling. In San Joaquin, the First 5 CARES program, referred to as Child Care Professional Growth Program or CCPGP, operates out of the County Office of Education. Most San Joaquin PoP preschool teachers (87 percent) indicated that either they or another member of their classroom staff has received a stipend from CCPGP. Santa Clara awarded 1,300 financial stipends to early educators in FY 06/07 (based on educational attainment, certification and longevity in the field).

### ***San Francisco: Incentivizing higher education***

San Francisco reports that it has made workforce development central to its Preschool for All initiative. As part of its strategic plan for PFA, the county has set a goal to have a lead teacher with a bachelor's degree and specialized early childhood training in every PFA classroom by 2010. To support achievement of this goal, First 5 San Francisco made a number of investments in workforce development. In FY 06/07, classrooms headed by teachers with a teacher permit (the minimum) received up to \$4,125 per child, while classrooms headed by teachers with a program director permit (the maximum) received up to \$5,025 per child. These rates increased for FY 07/08.

In March 2007, First 5 San Francisco allocated \$1 million for a new compensation initiative to attract and retain highly qualified teachers (particularly with bachelor's degrees). The new program provides a bonus of up to \$5,000 annually to teachers, assistant teachers, and site supervisors with at least a bachelor's degree and 24 units of ECE training who teach children at PFA sites. More than 85 percent of San Francisco's teachers were either "advancing" or "First 5 quality" as of July 2008. The DRDP-R scores increased from an average of 46.3 percent of children at the

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<sup>15</sup> This evaluation did not request CARES data, therefore not all counties reported activities related to this program.

building or integrating levels in fall 2007 to an average of 73.1 percent of children at these levels in spring 2008. The average global ECERS-R score was 5.1 for FY 07/08 and this is within the good to excellent range.

While San Francisco was unable to provide its local evaluation report for FY 07/08 for this meta-analysis, the FY 06/07 evaluation and report by American Institutes for Research (AIR) is very positive about San Francisco's teaching staff. AIR reports that staff in both San Francisco and San Mateo agreed that higher levels of teacher compensation had resulted in attracting a quality workforce.

### ***San Diego: Using ECERS-R feedback to improve professionally***

At least five directors reported that participation in PFA encouraged teachers to pursue Bachelor of Arts (BA) degrees and look more objectively at their classrooms, "When we went through the ECERS-R review process . . . it made us kind of look at it through different eyes and I think it was helpful. It kind of became a road map for further improvement."

### ***San Joaquin: Providing education stipends***

Data show that many of the preschool teachers are actively involved in their professional development. A majority of teachers (62.3%) were involved with teacher-related training and development and a majority of teachers (63.5%) received stipends through the Child Care Professional Growth Project/CARES. The Child Care Professional Growth Project/CARES provides professional development opportunities and education stipends to PoP teachers and assistants who are working toward achieving higher levels of education. The basis of education stipends are advancement on the Child Development Permit Matrix, as well as movement toward a Bachelor of Arts in Child Development or related discipline.

### ***Merced: Training & education to improve classroom quality***

In partnership with six school districts, First 5 Merced County (F5MC) provided multiple trainings to enhance and promote quality early care and education, such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS), Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). Working together with the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES), F5MC assisted sites in developing comprehensive plans to engage teachers in obtaining higher education to increase the quality of their classroom.

### ***Other Counties:***

Yolo County reported providing training in administration of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) as well as the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP-R) to all PoP staff members. Yolo staff members also received training in health/nutrition.

Ventura PoP teachers and administrators expressed high levels of satisfaction with professional development services (98.5% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they gained knowledge about new topics, and 97.9% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they increased their abilities relating to specific training objectives). Their annual evaluation report, however, did not indicate what these courses or programs were and failed to provide any outcome data about the effects of the professional development on staff performance.

The investment in teacher training and the increased compensation of teachers based on their educational attainment is critical for recruiting and retaining a quality preschool workforce (Whitebook, Sakai, Gerber and Howes, 2001). While all nine PoP counties reported strong ECERS-R scores, some of these counties made more investments in higher education and training than others. In addition, the increase in knowledge among early childhood educators through CARES professional development opportunities contributed to the strength of the PoP programs.

### **3: Which strategies and services most effectively promote positive outcomes for children, particularly children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds?**

More than half a million children are born each year in California and over half of these children are Latino<sup>16</sup>. All of the PoP demonstration counties are home to a large number of immigrant families and serve children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. For many of these families, the language spoken at home is not English. It is therefore critical that PoP programs and services are culturally and linguistically appropriate and that staff have training and professional development opportunities related to children’s language development.

Examples of some of the most promising practices to promote outcomes for children, particularly children from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, are below:

#### ***Merced: Emphasis on bilingual staff and resources***

The Hispanic/Latino and Hmong populations and families in Merced County are geographically isolated and historically underserved. To increase outreach and services to Spanish and Hmong speaking families, First 5 Merced County requires funded programs to provide all printed materials in the families’ native language. Funded programs must also have bilingual translators for workshops and parenting classes when bilingual staff are not available.

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<sup>16</sup> California Department of Public Health, Birth Statistical Data

### ***San Francisco: Supporting professional development in dual language learning***

San Francisco has a sizeable English learner population at its PoP sites (26.5%) and it has responded to the challenges of training educators to meet the needs of this population. In FY 06/07, First 5 San Francisco sponsored an all-day conference at San Francisco State University on “The Power of Language and Relationships: Speaking to the Heart of a Child.” In addition, First 5 San Francisco requires all programs participating in PFA to ensure their staff receive up-to-date training on serving English learners and children with special needs. First 5 San Francisco requires that at least one teacher in every PFA classroom participate in at least one unit of coursework in literacy or language development and sponsors a class on early childhood dual language learning that is offered by City College of San Francisco.

### ***San Joaquin: Creating an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion in the classroom***

The percentage of English learners in San Joaquin County is 12.7 percent. PoP providers assign teachers and assistants to classrooms based on the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children. In addition, all PoP classrooms promote acceptance of diversity through inclusion of diversity in daily routines and play activities. For example, ethnic foods are a part of meals/snacks, and music, art, props, and pictures of different cultures are included in daily instruction. Also, some classrooms encourage parents to share family customs with children and many cultures are represented in holiday celebrations.

### ***Santa Clara: Teams of professionals manage diversity in education***

Seventy-two percent of children at Santa Clara PoP sites are English learners. First 5 Santa Clara has assembled a team known as the Quality Enhancement Support Team (QuEST), of early education professionals with extensive experience and expertise in developing, implementing, and managing diverse early education programs. In partnership with PoP teachers and administrators, QuEST members went into each PoP session to identify areas for improvement including inclusion practices. Santa Clara also offered three Teacher Institutes in FY 06/07 to support PoP teaching staff. Training topics included skills needed when working with EL children and families.

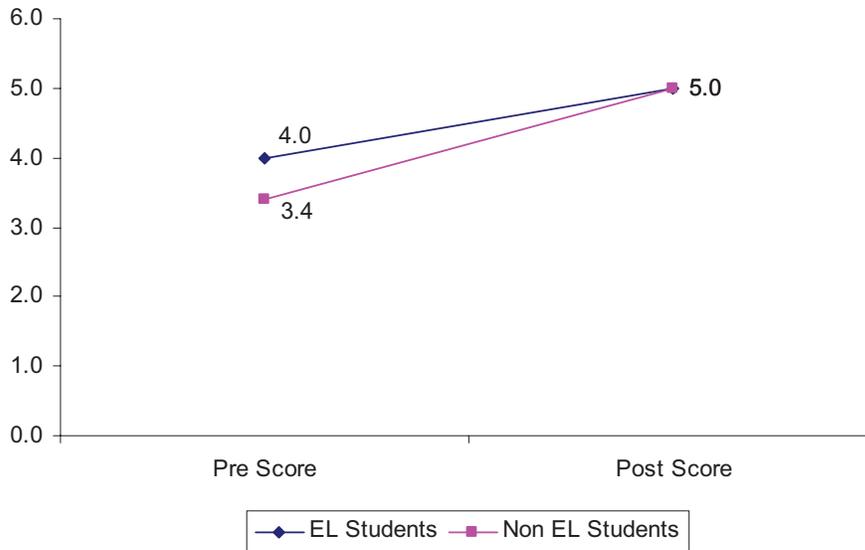
### ***Yolo: Improving outcomes for culturally diverse children***

To improve outcomes for culturally diverse children in Yolo County (37.9% of children at PoP sites are English learners), the PoP Director provided special trainings on two topics: English learners and Phonological Awareness. These trainings increased teacher awareness of EL issues. Gains in DRDP-R scores showed equivalent progress for both EL and non-EL students. Chart 11 clearly

displays that in FY 06/07 while EL students entered preschool with much lower letter and word knowledge than their English-speaking peers, they made dramatic increases as a result of the preschool intervention.

**Chart 11:**

**Measure 30-Letter and Word Knowledge**  
Child shows increasing awareness of symbols, letters, and words in the environments and their relationship to sound



#### **4: Which strategies and services most effectively promote positive outcomes for children with disabilities and other special needs?**

Most PoP sites supported the inclusion of children with special needs in settings with typically developing children. At the same time, they expressed a need for more training, support, and specialized staff to help serve children with special needs in their classrooms. Another common sentiment expressed across many of the PoP sites was that PoP reporting requirements relating to children with special needs are sometimes challenging and burdensome.

Programs provided mixed feedback on the use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). While they felt it was an effective tool, they indicated that they lacked adequate expertise in administration of the assessment. Many sites also stated that providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs was either a “moderate” or a “very big” challenge.

Despite some of the challenges associated with assessments, reporting requirements, and specialized training, many of the counties are developing innovative and successful strategies for targeting and integrating children with special needs within the PoP programs.

Some examples of the most promising practices to promote positive outcomes for children with disabilities and other special needs are provided below.

### ***Los Angeles: Creating standards for inclusion***

In order to define the requirements of a fully inclusive preschool site, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) completed a review of the literature on inclusion practices, wrote a LAUP provider inclusion manual, and is currently collaborating with stakeholders to coordinate the rollout of inclusion training for LAUP providers and coaches. In FY 07/08, LAUP offered four distinct trainings multiple times throughout the county on the following topics: (1) inclusion best practices using the LAUP manual, (2) behavior management, (3) speech and language, and (4) autism.

### ***Merced: Reaching out to families with children with special needs***

To serve children with special needs (4.5%), First 5 Merced County participates in the First 5 California Special Needs Demonstration Project. First 5 Merced collaborated with multiple community partners (and provides funding to five formal contractors) to assess, screen and identify children with special needs, and to link families to service providers that can provide early intervention and needed assistance.

### ***San Diego: Priority enrollment for children with special needs***

The most recent statewide data for San Diego sites reflect that PoP children with special needs currently comprise 9.3 percent of the total population. San Diego County PFA recently established a policy that requires preschool providers to give priority enrollment to families of children with special needs at a ratio of 10:1. As part of their written philosophy statement, providers must include an assurance that their practice is to include children who have special needs alongside typically developing children.

### ***San Francisco: Requiring coursework in special needs teaching***

According to their FY 07/08 evaluation report, 78 percent of responding programs in San Francisco either “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that children with special needs were effectively included in their PFA classrooms. A somewhat smaller proportion of programs, just over two-thirds, “agreed” (58%) or “strongly agreed” (6%) that teachers had the skills to meet the needs of children with special needs. Almost a third of the responding programs either “strongly disagreed” (6%) or “disagreed” (26%) that teachers had these necessary skills. First 5 San Francisco requires that at least one teacher in every PFA classroom participate in at least one unit of coursework in special needs or inclusion. To help programs meet these requirements, First 5 San Francisco sponsored two classes, through the City College of San Francisco: one on early childhood dual language learning and one on special needs. San Francisco did not collect data on its children with special

needs in FY 07/08 and therefore their statewide report shows no children with special needs. Collecting this information for the first time in FY 08/09, the data reflects that 10.2 percent of entering kindergarteners (from the San Francisco PFA sites) had special needs.

***San Joaquin: Providing early screening and increasing accessibility***

San Joaquin reports that 6.2 percent of its PFA children have special needs. During Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, families receive a preschool brochure and are encouraged to co-enroll their child in preschool. Ten percent of PFA spaces are reserved for children who have special needs. Staff completes an Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for every child within 60 days of the start of school. Children that score below the cutoff are referred for further assessment. In addition, the preschool works closely with the school district, parent, and service providers to promote inclusion and positive outcomes for children. PoP classrooms are easily accessible for all children, including children with disabilities. When needed, PoP classrooms provide adaptations or special equipment.

***San Mateo: An inclusion model for children with special needs***

Eight percent of the children in San Mateo's PFA program have special needs. The Roosevelt Child Development Center (Roosevelt CDC) serves as a model in responding to children with special needs in San Mateo County. Co-location of preschool and special education service facilitates strong collaborative relationships among PFA staff and school district personnel, in addition to close relationships with and involvement of families as partners. Based on feedback gathered from the PFA site supervisor and teachers, their program has been extremely successful in serving children with special needs and their families and their approach has benefited all children enrolled in the program. A teacher reflects on the experience: "It didn't happen overnight. It took a lot of work to make it what it is now. But we all enjoy it and are very proud of this program and proud of what PFA has done to support us." San Mateo PFA providers and staff believe that Parents Place is another resource, which supports children who may not receive services elsewhere. The evaluation report notes that children may not qualify for services through special education or the school district because they demonstrate a mixture of behaviors (e.g., aggressiveness, delays in social emotional development, lack of focus, problems with transitions) or lack a specific or diagnosed issue such as a speech or language delay. In other cases, families with language barriers are out of the special education system. PFA staff report that Parents Place fills a gap for children who would fall out of the special education system while simultaneously providing support for teachers.

### ***Santa Clara: Partnering with an inclusion specialist***

QuEST members observed each session using the ECERS-R scale to assess the classroom environment, including provisions for children with disabilities (4.7%). An inclusion specialist from QuEST supported the program by identifying and responding to the needs of children with disabilities. WestEd's E3 Institute (Advancing Excellence in Early Education or E3) also offered three Teacher Institutes in FY 06/07 to support PoP teaching staff. Topics of training included skills and tools for working with children with special needs.

### ***Yolo: Learning from on-site observations***

The percentage of children with special needs at Yolo County PoP sites is 5.5 percent. "Concerning children with disabilities and other special needs, the strategy that worked best in our PoP program was on-site observations for teaching staff support. When teaching staff requested observations, they were provided with additional support and resources. Families were connected with the Family Inclusion Specialist."

## **5: What are the most effective outreach strategies for parents?**

Effective outreach strategies included the use of flyers, the Internet, meetings, television, word-of-mouth, newspaper articles, siblings of PoP kids, targeting 0 to 3 programs, phone calls, and walk-ins. While there were individual variations from county to county, the most common outreach methods were word-of-mouth (35 % of Yolo's PoP spaces), walk-in's (common in Santa Clara), and recruiting the siblings of existing PoP enrollees.

A few examples of the most promising outreach practices for parents is below.

### ***Outreach in San Francisco:***

Wu Yee Children's Services, a San Francisco Resource & Referral Agency, is the enrollment and provider agency for PFA. The organization maintains a PFA phone line for the community, distributes information about PFA, and conducts outreach. Eligible parents seeking preschool services receive referrals to PFA sites or to other preschool options based on their needs. Parents then visit PFA providers and enroll in the program on-site. Wu Yee staff explained how they are revising the enrollment process for the next program year, by providing "enrollment packets" at each PFA site with all of the documents needed for family and children's files. Wu Yee works individually with each PFA site to provide assistance with enrollment as needed.

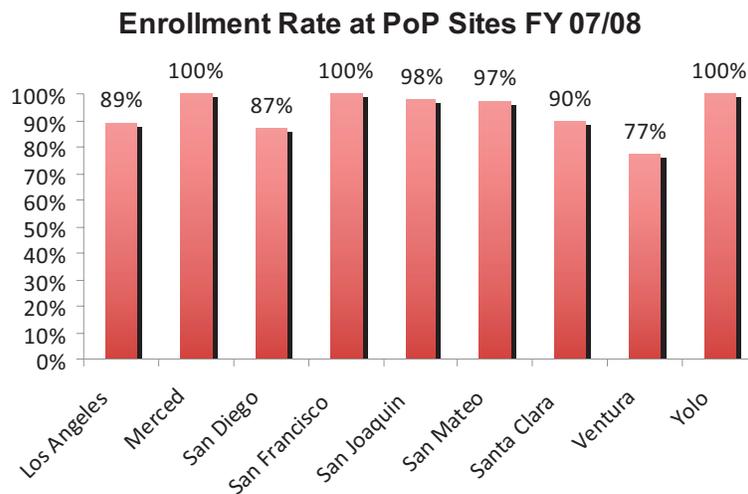
### ***Outreach in Los Angeles:***

LAUP employed various activities to reach out to families and increase enrollment in PoP communities. The call center received a total of 1,754 calls from listeners and readers in response to English and Spanish-language radio and print ads. LAUP

also provided English and Spanish marketing materials and assisted providers in developing their own marketing materials. Results from the 2008 Provider Survey revealed that over one third (37%) of directors felt that the general marketing support and advice they received was effective in improving their marketing and recruitment efforts.

There is tremendous variation in the number of children enrolled in PoP programs, ranging from 177 in Ventura County to 5,703 in Los Angeles County. The following chart displays the enrollment rate or percentage of enrolled spaces for all PoP counties. Chart 12 illustrates that enrollment rates remain quite high across all counties, with a low of 77 percent in Ventura County and a 100 percent enrollment rate in Merced, San Francisco, and Yolo counties for FY 07/08.

**Chart 12:**



Overall, enrollment rates are stable with waiting lists at several PoP sites. Most parents appear satisfied with the range of outreach strategies and word-of-mouth remains one of the most likely sources of enrollment.

### **6: Are parents who have children in PoP increasing their involvement in their child's learning through contact with the schools?**

Since the preschool setting as well as the home environment influence child development and school readiness, the PoP preschool approach emphasizes parental involvement in the learning process. Funding requirements in many PoP counties (e.g., San Francisco and San Mateo) require that PFA providers engage parents and families in their children's preschool experiences.

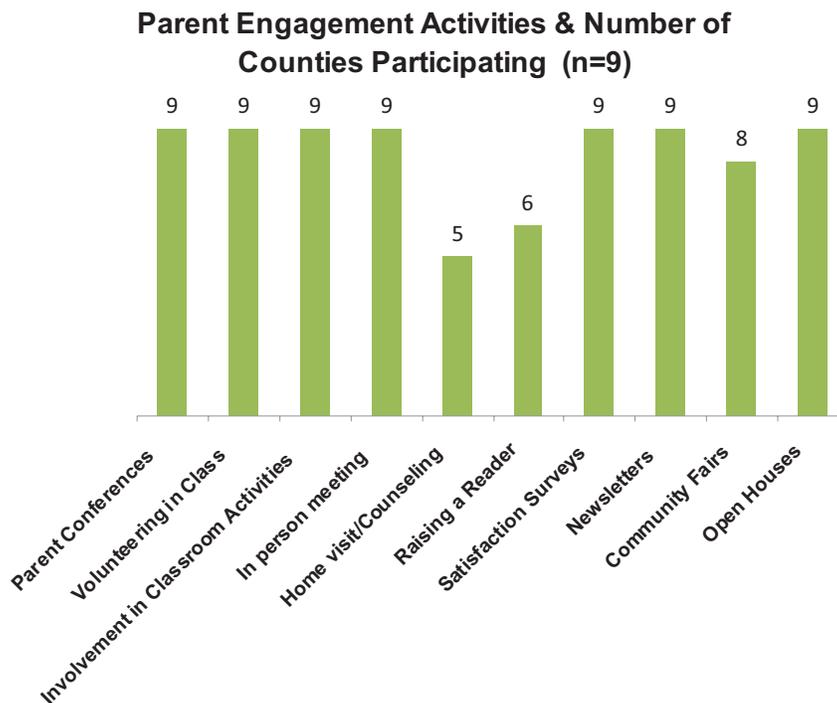
Many PoP providers used teacher surveys to describe how the program shaped the strategies they use. Some counties (such as San Francisco and San Mateo)

reported (in FY 06/07) that they did not make any dramatic changes in order to engage parents and continued to do what they had always done. Others used a range of strategies including:

- parent meetings,
- communication with parents about their child’s progress,
- connecting parents/families with education opportunities,
- providing verbal and written information to assist families in their efforts at home,
- welcoming family input in all aspects of the program including curriculum and evaluation,
- promoting shared decision-making, and
- providing individual conferences with parents each year to discuss their child’s progress.

In addition, many PoP demonstration counties used parent surveys to capture the perspectives of parents and family members and to learn more about the nature and extent of their involvement in the learning process. The combined feedback from teachers and parents provides a good measure of parent engagement levels within the PoP programs. Some selected results (based on both teacher surveys and parent surveys) are presented below.

**Chart 13:**



### San Diego

The most common parent involvement activities reported were periodic such as volunteering in the classroom (97.3%), as well as more in-depth activities such as participating in classroom learning/play activities (94.5%). Fifty-five percent of parents who responded to the parenting survey reported participation in at least one parenting activity. Ninety-four percent of parents reported participating in parent/teacher meetings, which is the least intensive parenting activity measured. Approximately the same number of parents volunteered in the classroom as participated in classroom activities, 60 percent and 59 percent of parents, respectively, while 41 percent of parents attended parent education classes.

### San Francisco

All of the PFA sites reported that they meaningfully engage parents and other family members. In terms of family partnerships, approximately three-quarters of programs consider “parents as true partners with program staff in supporting their children’s development.” A more formal system of parent conferencing within the San Francisco PFA program increased family involvement and understanding of the process. One of the San Francisco sites shared the value and impact of parents attending Tree Frog Treks activities in the classroom. “It gives parents some thought about what is happening. It gives them a sense of what the kids are doing. It boosts the parents that want to come and participate.” A San Francisco PFA teacher pointed out, “Parents always saw the kids playing with blocks, bicycles — but not really structured — some of the classrooms were doing it but others were not. So finally because we have developed these areas and we have the materials, the parents have noticed it and the parent support has increased because we explain to them why we made the changes.”

### San Joaquin

The vast majority of respondents reported participating in at least one of the school involvement activities listed (96.4%) and appear to be closely involved in their child’s learning. Parents were active in a range of activities with the most frequently identified activities including meeting their child’s preschool teacher (91.4%), talking to the child’s teacher about development or behavior (84.4%), and attending parent-teacher conferences (78.2%).

### **San Mateo**

Staff in the San Mateo PFA program administered the ASQ (with parents present) at the beginning of the program year. They described the process as providing a valuable opportunity to build relationships with families and learn about the children at the start of the school year.

### **7: Are parents doing more home educational activities with their children that foster their school readiness skills?**

Every county reported an increase in parenting skills and knowledge as well as parent behaviors relating to home educational activities. As a result, parents were reading to their children, telling them stories, playing counting games, and singing to them.

### **Merced**

On average parents served by selected funded providers read picture books, told stories, and sang songs to their child 3 to 6 times each week — a substantial achievement considering the age, poverty, and education level of the county's overall population.

### **San Diego**

After being involved in the PFA, parents rated themselves higher on all 12 items on the Parenting Survey, an instrument modified from the "Survey of Parenting Practice" developed by the University of Idaho, with the increases being statistically significant for all items ( $p < .001$ ). Parents noted the most improvement in the knowledge statement: "My knowledge of how my child is growing and developing." The behavior statement where parents showed the most improvement was "The amount I read to my child."

Chart 14 displays the outcomes for a parenting survey conducted at San Diego PFA sites during the FY 06/07 school year.

**Chart 14:**

Survey item	Mean “Then” (Before PFA)	Mean “Now” (After PFA)	Mean Difference	Number*
My knowledge of how my child is growing and developing.	4.25	5.20	.96*	778
My knowledge of what behavior is typical at this age.	4.15	5.02	.87*	770
My knowledge of how my child’s brain is growing and developing.	4.15	5.06	.91*	767
My confidence in myself as a parent.	4.54	5.26	.72*	769
My confidence in setting limits for my child.	4.37	5.15	.78*	761
My confidence that I can help my child learn at this age.	4.51	5.36	.85*	772
My ability to identify what my child needs.	4.46	5.30	.84*	772
My ability to respond effectively when my child is upset.	4.40	5.12	.72*	769
My ability to keep my child safe and healthy.	5.04	5.63	.59*	773
The amount of activities my child and I do together.	4.39	5.05	.66*	767
The amount I read to my child.	3.94	4.74	.80*	770
My connection with other families with children.	4.07	4.75	.68*	771

\*Statistically significant at  $p < .001$  with alpha set at .05 and .004 (Bonferroni’s Correction.)

### San Joaquin

Parents reported participating in a variety of activities with their children at least three times in the week immediately prior to completing the survey. Many parents reported playing with toys with their children (87.4%), helping with letters/numbers/words (82.2%), reading books (72.8%), playing outdoors (69.9%), doing household chores (68.2%), playing counting games (68.1%), singing songs (63.1%), telling stories (60.2%), and watching children’s movies (55.2%).

### **Santa Clara**

In FY 06/07, parent workshops provided education on a range of topics (e.g., challenges of first 5 years, children with special needs, etc.) to 2,742 parents and family members. Of these participants, approximately 86 percent were Latino, nine percent Asian, and five percent White. Preliminary satisfaction data collected by one agency indicated that all respondents rated the parent workshops highly and believed the workshops provided useful information, were delivered with cultural proficiency (including content that was respectful of their culture, was accessible, and was delivered by a teacher who could relate to their life experiences), and would have an impact on their family.

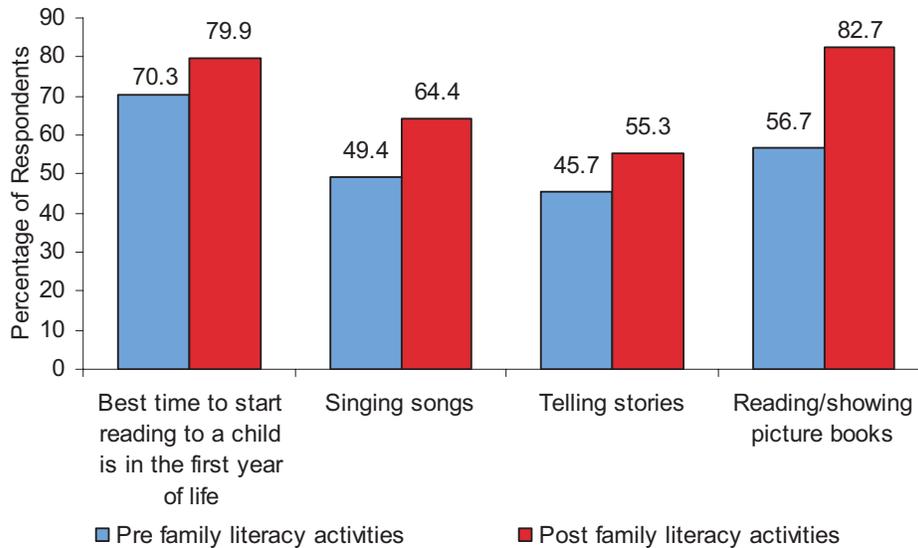
A Parenting Skills Survey (administered to 18 parents who completed one of the parent workshops) asked participants to assess their progress in improving their parenting skills as a result of their attendance. Parents reported that they increased their frequency of using positive parenting techniques, such as praising (39 percent increased), reading with their child (72% increased), talking with their child (72% increased), and showing affection (39% increased). The respondents also indicated that the workshop influenced their decreasing use of aversive discipline, such as spanking (72% decreased) or scolding (72% decreased). Overall, 94 percent of the respondents felt more informed about how to be a better parent, and 100 percent believed they had a better understanding of child development as a result of the workshop. All providers of parent workshops will be administering this survey in the future; therefore, additional outcome data will be available for FY 07/08.

### **Ventura**

On average, families are engaging in family literacy activities four to five days a week after receiving program services. In FY 05/06 as well as FY 06/07, a vast majority of family members (93.5% or more) “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that the program improved their reading ability. Chart 15 illustrates the increase in family literacy activities and knowledge in Ventura County in FY 06/07. Statistical tests conducted with matched data demonstrated significant increases in the percent of Ventura County respondents who engaged in literacy activity at least 4 days a week.

**Chart 15:**

**Ventura County Family Literacy Activities & Knowledge FY 06/07**



As the Ventura annual report notes, the questionnaire used may not be sensitive enough to measure change. This might be particularly true among parents who read to their children often (and did so even before entering the program). For this group, the number of days they are reading to their children may not change but the total minutes might be considerably higher. Analyses of data from 630 family members for whom there were matched pre-service and post-service measures, helped explain changes in literacy activities and knowledge in response to literacy services.

**8: Are there common challenges experienced by counties? How have counties addressed these challenges?**

Common challenges expressed by PoP programs include issues that arise from working with large immigrant populations. In particular, there are challenges associated with language barriers, children with special needs, and difficulty adjusting to documentation, screening, data collection, and reporting requirements. There is also a need for greater parent engagement and better kindergarten transition strategies. While many of these challenges exist statewide, counties often developed their own strategies for dealing with them.

***Diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children***

**San Francisco:** A dual-language Bachelor of Arts cohort program within San Francisco State’s Child & Adolescent program hopes to develop a culturally and linguistically competent workforce. The program uses the Soy Bilingue Adult Dual Language Model with half of the instruction in English and half in Spanish.

**Ventura:** Parents bring artifacts from their culture into the classroom to share and teach children about different customs and celebrations. Most PFA teachers are bilingual and receive training in strategies for facilitating English language acquisition while still supporting the learner’s home language. Dual language learning support is in Ventura PFA classrooms with a minimum of one teacher speaking only English while the other teachers speak Spanish to the children.

**Yolo:** Special English learner and phonological awareness trainings were provided to teachers. At the end of the year, DRDP-R scores showed equivalent gains for both EL and non-EL students.

### ***Working with children with special needs***

**San Diego:** San Diego County PFA (SDCPFA) requires that families of children with special needs receive priority enrollment at a ratio of 10:1. SDCPFA then provides reimbursement at the *highest* level of funding for two years of preschool for these children.

**San Francisco:** At least one teacher in every PFA classroom must participate in at least a one-unit course in special needs and/or inclusion. In addition, all PFA programs must provide annual, in-service professional development on special needs. Seventy-eight percent of PFA directors/managers in San Francisco “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that children with special needs were effectively included in classrooms.

**San Mateo:** While San Mateo is implementing many best practices relating to the early identification and treatment of children with special needs, many challenges still exist. Based on special needs case studies conducted in FY 07/08, findings reveal concerns about how to address the needs of children who score close to the cut-off on developmental screenings. While teachers informally observed these children, this subsequent observation did not appear to rely on a formal screening but rather the informal judgment of teachers. Since research shows that informal observations cannot accurately identify children at-risk for special needs, this suggests the need for clear guidelines and training on how to work with these children.

**Santa Clara:** The E3 Institute created QuEST, a team of professionals with expertise in early education programs. A QuEST inclusion specialist then identified enhancement areas to respond better to children with special needs.

**Ventura:** PFA teachers and administrators received training on effective strategies for children with special needs, including providing early intervention training in the classroom whenever possible.

**Yolo:** Strategies used to support children with special needs were:

- On-site observations (and related resources) to support teaching staff
- Family inclusion specialist to support families

### **Support network for providers**

San Mateo providers discussed the importance of supporting teachers through a time of change. One director commented, “Staff need more time to get oriented to PFA. Maybe some time to observe others’ classrooms. I would love to have some stellar models for people to observe classroom practices. . .” Another program director recommended bringing together PFA providers from across the county. Taking this one-step further, it might be very helpful to create a forum for PoP providers statewide to come together, collaborate, network, and share challenges and lessons learned.

### **Burden of PoP reporting requirements**

San Mateo programs provided mixed feedback on their experience using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). Almost half of the programs stated that the tool was an effective strategy to partner with families. ASQ training, as well as allocation of time for administering the ASQ, appears to be challenging. Approximately 44 percent of San Mateo respondents reported that teachers were inadequately trained to use the ASQ, and 81 percent of programs reported that “providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs” is either a “moderate” or a “very big” challenge.

While reporting requirements are burdensome, most counties created training modules to help their staff through the process. There remains, however, tremendous variation in procedures and personnel involved in conducting these assessments. For example, in some counties teachers administer the ASQ, in others parents, and in the rest it is administered by some combination of teachers and parents. Similarly, a site administrator may administer the DRDP-R or teachers may administer it as self-assessment. In a few cases, outside consultants administered the DRDP-R. The administration of the ECERS-R environmental assessments on classrooms is also not always consistent. Counties vary in their use of outside consultants, independent observers, and internal assessors to administer the ECERS-R.

### **Need for kindergarten transition strategies**

The San Joaquin evaluation report suggests that schools and school districts can play a role by promoting articulation between preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers. San Joaquin providers expressed a need for better kindergarten transition activities, such as field trips to visit kindergarten classrooms, and opportunities for

parents of preschoolers to meet kindergarten teachers. San Diego PFA providers echoed this concern. Teachers' identified preparing their students for the transition to kindergarten as an area of weakness at San Diego PFA sites. While 86.1 percent of San Diego PFA teachers had met with parents to prepare them for the transition, only 37.5 percent said they attended meetings with kindergarten teachers, and even fewer (20.3%) said they attended trainings with kindergarten teachers. The evaluation report notes that this may in part be due to limited access to kindergarten teachers. While most teachers talked to parents about the transition to kindergarten and prepared kindergarten transition files, they were not able to communicate directly with kindergarten teachers, which may have better facilitated the transition for some children.

In San Francisco, only a third of PFA programs employ strategies that involve collaboration with public schools (e.g., 38% of programs facilitate kindergarten visits for children, 34% facilitate kindergarten tours for parents, and 13% of programs participate in joint professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers regarding transition issues). San Francisco school district PFA sites reported using a greater variety of kindergarten transition strategies. One PFA site in San Francisco suggested that the SF Unified School District implement a system whereby all PFA programs would have a "buddy" school that they could visit or call for information on kindergarten transition and standards. San Mateo parents said that preschool staff was very helpful in assisting them to find and enroll their children in a kindergarten program. The parents felt they knew what to expect when their children go on to this next level of education. One San Mateo parent said, "[The preschool teachers] gave us information about applying to kindergarten, and helped us get [my son] into the program. Everything is ready for my child to go."

The Ventura PoP programs were highly successful in transitioning their preschoolers into kindergarten. The Ventura PoP programs enjoyed a high level of parent satisfaction with their kindergarten transition strategies. In FY 06/07, 257 family members who received services to help their child transition to kindergarten turned-in post-service surveys. Overall, a vast majority of respondents agreed that the program helped with a number of common kindergarten transition issues in FY 06/07. Two-thirds reported that the program provided them with more than they needed to help prepare themselves and their child for kindergarten, and only 3.3 percent stated that they received less than needed. When asked how hard it was to start kindergarten, 18.7 percent reported it was "somewhat hard" or "very hard" even after receiving kindergarten transition services.

### **Issues related to knowledge, availability, and convenience of professional development**

According to the San Joaquin teacher survey, 62 percent of preschool teachers reported being actively involved in teacher-related training and development. In San Francisco, the PFA staff expressed concern about the difficulties of working full-time while pursuing higher education. “When you are expected to work eight hours and a lot of the classes at San Francisco State only operate during daylight hours, [it is] hard to be able to go to school and work at the same time.” A common theme across many PFA sites is the need for site-specific training.

### **Recruitment and retention of qualified staff**

San Mateo reported that recruiting qualified PFA staff and preventing teacher burnout are “very big challenges” among three of the programs. Four of the five programs reported that providing time for staff to complete the DRDP-Rs and ASQs is either a “moderate” or a “very big” challenge. Renovating existing classrooms and facilities for PFA, meeting ECERS-R criteria, and providing services for children with special needs are “moderate” or “very big” challenges for three of the programs. The recruiting, training, and maintaining of a high-quality workforce is a challenge that several PoP counties are facing. Complicating the issue is the integration of newly trained but relatively inexperienced BA-level teachers with highly experienced teachers without BA degrees. The more experienced teachers might be required to take on a supportive teaching role within the PoP classroom and this sometimes creates an environment fraught with tension.

## **9: Within these themes, are there differences in counties’ approaches, and what can we learn from those differences?**

### **Los Angeles**

LAUP uses an innovative coaching approach to share knowledge and resources across PoP providers. The model consists of three interrelated prongs: Starting Points Coaching (SP), Quality Support Coaching (QS) and Fiscal Coaching (FC). LAUP coaches work closely with providers to promote collaboration and to help them to develop site-specific continuous quality improvement plans. Another unique program is the foster or relative care initiative that targets foster and relative care children in LAUP preschools and connects them with appropriate resources. LAUP is also developing standards on inclusion services for children with special needs by creating accessible materials. In order to define the requirements of a fully inclusive preschool site, LAUP has: completed a review of the literature on inclusion practices, written an LAUP provider inclusion manual, and is currently collaborating with stakeholders to coordinate the rollout of inclusion training for LAUP providers and coaches. In FY 07/08, LAUP offered four distinct trainings multiple times throughout the county, which included the following topics: (1) inclusion best

practices using the LAUP manual, (2) behavior management, (3) speech and language, and (4) autism.

### **San Diego**

Eligible preschool teachers, instructional assistants, and site supervisors received stipends from SDCPFA. Stipend eligibility was the highest level of education and quality score on the ECERS/FCCERS for classroom staff and the Program Administrator's Scale (PAS) for site supervisors. Staff members reported that the stipends were an extremely motivating factor and that they encouraged them to strive for quality and continue their education.

### **San Francisco**

First 5 San Francisco sponsored a series of PFA staff "Learning Circles" or quarterly meetings throughout the year, including language development, parent engagement, and observation and assessment. The Learning Circles provide an opportunity for teachers to come together, hear from early childhood experts and share knowledge and experiences with other teachers. One teacher enjoyed the networking aspect of the Learning Circles. "What I also like about the Learning Circle meetings is that you can compare site by site. You can hear problems other sites are facing and give ideas to each other. The strongest impact of PFA, according to program reports, is in the area of science instruction – 42 percent of programs reported that PFA has had a "strong positive impact" or a "very strong and significant positive impact" in this area.

### **San Joaquin**

There is a strong emphasis on early literacy with 73 percent of parents reading to their children most days of the week. Within the classroom, PFA has improved teaching practices and increased access to a range of high-quality learning materials and supplies. Focus group participants commented: "We have more things now. If you want to talk about a subject, we have a box of supplies for it. For example, in the science area we have a microscope. For the art stuff we have more paper and other things that the kids can use." Another teacher added, "We have more items to increase diversity of the classroom such as books, posters, pictures, and kits that enhance children's playing experience."

### **San Mateo**

In San Mateo, staff emphasized the value of the mental health services for staff and families provided by Parents Place, a full service family resource center for families with children of all ages, managed by Jewish Family and Children's Services (JFCS). Parents Place provides consultation, staff training, prevention, and early intervention services to licensed, early childhood programs that serve low-income children and families. In San Mateo, Parents Place works with PFA sites to provide

mental health consultation to staff to promote optimal relationships. Parents Place supports “anything within the realm of relationships – parent to staff – staff to staff – staff to child – parent to child” to help improve the quality of services. In FY 06/07, mental health consultation services were available at ten sites, compared to four sites in FY 05/06. According to the San Mateo evaluation report, teachers “feel supported” and “their sense of efficacy is supported and enhanced . . . they are given the tools and they develop in themselves that sense that they can manage these complicated behaviors [among children], and manage complicated relationships with parents.” In addition, teachers “feel like they have a place to share their experience and to feel supported through those difficulties.”

### **Santa Clara**

There is an ongoing emphasis on collaboration and partnerships to build a powerful PoP program. There is also a focus on content development; more than 65 ECE providers attended Santa Clara’s teacher institutes and trainings. Santa Clara provided scholarships to 40 ECE professionals (of which 11 were PoP educators) to participate in the annual Conference of the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC). WestEd’s E3 Institute developed strategic partnerships with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, with community agencies (i.e., Go Kids, P-TRAC, Kidango, and The Provider Connection), and with every community college and university in the county that offers early childhood education and child development courses. (i.e., DeAnza, Foothill, Gavilan, Mission, San Jose City/ Evergreen Valley, San Jose State University, National Hispanic University, and West Valley).

### **Ventura**

The Ventura PoP programs had a high level of parent satisfaction with their kindergarten transition strategies. Overall, a vast majority of families stated that the program helped with a number of common kindergarten transition issues in FY 06/07.

### **Yolo**

Yolo implemented special trainings to improve outcomes for culturally diverse children. The PoP Director focused on two very specific topics: English learners and Phonological Awareness. These trainings increased awareness of the issues among teachers and resulted in gains in DRDP-R scores that showed equivalent progress for both EL and non-EL students. (See section on outreach to diverse student populations). The gains in DRDP-R scores for Yolo are higher than the other counties on every subscale. It is possible, however, that differing teacher methodologies account for some of the differences in DRDP-R scores.

While the DRDP-R is usually completed over a two-week period, teachers and caregivers record observations and gather evidence on an ongoing basis. The child's primary teacher or caregiver is responsible for completing the profile. In addition, comments and anecdotal observations by teacher aides or parents may inform the teacher's ratings. It is also essential that the staff person completing the profile be able to understand the child's language (or use an interpreter). In order to document the child's mastery level, the teacher must reference the child's portfolio or summarize other evidence that supports the rating. Yolo provided aggregate data, but was not required to provide any supporting evidence or anecdotal support for its ratings. Based on the ratings as reported, Yolo appears to have made significant strides from the beginning to the end of the pre-K year.

### **STATEWIDE**

All of the PoP counties have innovative and appropriate programs and solutions that are responsive to the particular demographics and needs of their program participants and families. Some focus on workforce development issues, such as coaching, teacher stipends, and learning circles. Others are concerned with mental health services, kindergarten transition strategies, and improved inclusion practices. There are some gaps and recurring themes, however, such as the need to collaborate and network across PoP sites (both countywide and statewide), the need for further training relating to data tracking and reporting, and the need for greater parent engagement.

### 10: Are the counties meeting the quality standards of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)?

NIEER has promulgated a set of quality benchmarks for preschools that cover areas such as learning standards, teacher degree and training, class size, staff to child ratio, provision of meals, and regular site monitoring. The NIEER benchmarks (Table 2) closely parallel the criteria for a high-quality PoP program, and Tables 3 through 12 below display a side-by-side comparison of PoP criteria to the NIEER benchmarks.

**Table 2:**

National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) Quality Standards	
POLICY	STATE PRE-K REQUIREMENT
Early learning standards	National Education Goals Panel (NEGP)* content areas covered by state learning standards for preschool-age children must be comprehensive
Teacher degree	Lead teacher must have a BA, at minimum
Teacher specialized training	Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area
Assistant teacher degree	Assistant teacher must have a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or equivalent, at minimum
Teacher in-service	Teacher must receive at least 15 hours/year of in-service professional development and training
Maximum class size (3- and 4- year olds)	Maximum number of children per classroom must be 20 or lower
Staff-child ratio (3- and 4-year olds)	Lowest acceptable ratio of staff to children in classroom (e.g., maximum number of students per teacher) must be 1:10 or better
Screening/referral and support service	Screenings and referrals for vision, hearing, and health are required; at least one additional support service must be provided to families
Meals	At least one meal must be provided daily
Monitoring	Site visits must demonstrate ongoing adherence to state program standards
* National Education Goals — 5 Dimensions — Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Language Development, and Cognition and General Knowledge	

**Table 3:**

NIEER Standards and PoP Criteria Comparison	
<b>NIEER Quality Benchmark</b>	<p><b>Comprehensive early learning standards —</b> National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) content areas covered by state learning standards for preschool-age children must be comprehensive.</p> <p>The NEGP has five dimensions: Physical Well-Being and Motor Development, Social and Emotional Development, Approaches Toward Learning, Language Development, and Cognition and General Knowledge</p>
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p><b>First 5 California adopted the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) definition.</b> School readiness consists of three interconnected areas: (1) children’s readiness for school, (2) schools’ readiness for children, and (3) family and community supports and services.</p> <p><b>Children’s readiness for school as defined by First 5 and measured by the DRDP-R <i>includes</i> the five NEGP dimensions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; physical development</li> <li>• Emotional well-being &amp; social competence</li> <li>• Approaches to learning</li> <li>• Communicative skills</li> <li>• Cognition &amp; general knowledge</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>All nine counties displayed strong school readiness levels as measured by the increase in the percentage of children at the “Building” or “Integrating” levels from the beginning of the pre-K year to the end of the pre-K year (averaged across all DRDP-R subscales).</p> <p>Pre- and post-program data in FY 07/08 show the number of PoP children statewide at the “Building” or “Integrating” level increased by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 286 percent for Effective Learners</li> <li>• 242 percent for Personally and Socially Competent</li> <li>• 164 percent for Physical and Motor Competence</li> <li>• 219 percent for Safe and Healthy</li> </ul>	

Table 4:

NIEER Teacher Degree: BA and PoP Criteria Comparison									
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Teacher degree: BA								
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p>To ensure PoP provides a high-quality preschool experience, First 5 California follows a unique state funding system that reimburses based on the education level of the teachers.</p> <p>PoP sites must commit to building a qualified, diverse workforce within a 5-10 year timeframe to reach quality standards. <b>Within 5 years, master teachers must have a Bachelor's degree</b> with 24 ECE credits, and assistant teachers must have an Associate's degree with appropriate ECE units.</p> <p>Within 10 years, master teachers must have a Bachelor's degree with ECE credential. The PoP Data Collection Form for FY 07/08 (page 11) requires counties to input data relating to teacher degree, level, and permit.</p>								
<b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b> The percent and numbers of lead teachers, by degree and by county:									
	Los Angeles	Merced	San Diego	San Francisco	San Joaquin	San Mateo	Santa Clara	Ventura	Yolo
Lead teachers	374	38	137	138	25	24	33	7	13
BA	36% (136)	45% (17)	37% (51)	59% (82)	44% (11)	71% (17)	36% (12)	86% (6)	23% (3)
MA	3% (10)	3% (1)	2% (3)	-	-	13% (3)	9% (3)	-	23% (3)
AA	25% (95)	53% (20)	41% (56)	-	52% (13)	17% (4)	27% (9)	14% (1)	31% (4)
Other	3% (13)	-	-	41% (56)	4% (1)	-	-	-	-
None or unknown	32% (120)	-	20% (27)	-	-	-	27% (9)	-	-
Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.									

**Notes:** BA=Bachelor of Art degree, MA=Master of Art degree, AA=Associate of Art degree, ECE=Early Childhood Education

Table 5:

NIEER and PoP Training Criteria Comparison	
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Lead teacher must have specialized training in a pre-K area
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p>There is no question in the PoP Data Collection Form that directly asks for this information. Some counties, however, volunteered data in the “changes in teacher quality” section.</p> <p>Another way to gather this data is by analyzing the teacher qualifications section of the PoP Data Collection Form.</p> <p><b>Teacher qualifications are determined by the number of college units, including early childhood education (ECE) units, which fall into a three-tiered career ladder:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Entry Level</b> – 24 ECE units for the teacher and 6 ECE units for the assistant teacher.</li> <li>• <b>Advancing Level</b> – 60 units of college level work with 24 units in ECE for the teacher and 12 ECE units for the assistant teacher.</li> <li>• <b>Quality Level</b> – BA degree that includes at least 24 ECE units for the teacher and an AA degree that includes at least 24 ECE units for the assistant teacher.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>Over 92 percent of teachers (lead and assistant) were of “advancing” or “quality” level. This means that the vast majority of lead teachers have at least 60 units of college level work with at least 24 units in ECE.</p> <p><b>Additional Information:</b></p> <p><b>San Diego</b> – 53 out of 234 instructional staff earned or upgraded their ECE permits in FY 07/08.</p> <p><b>San Francisco</b> – A number of providers are unable to advance beyond the Associate Teacher permit level because they are immigrants/ELs who have taken extensive ECE coursework in their native language but lack English proficiency and/or academic preparation to place into or successfully complete general education courses.</p> <p><b>Ventura</b> – Four out of 20 staff earned 27 units in Child Development.</p>	

**Notes:** BA=Bachelor of Art degree, AA=Associate of Art degree

Table 6:

NIEER Assistant Teacher and PoP Criteria Comparison									
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Assistant teacher with CDA								
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	The PoP Data Collection Form for FY 07/08 requires counties to input data relating to teacher degree, level, and permit. Counties reported that all of their assistant teachers had education beyond a CDA, detailing other degree levels (AA, BA, MA, Other, None) instead. (Further information on CDA requirements is available in the Abbreviations and Definitions table at the end of this report.)								
<b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b>									
<b>The percent and number of assistant teachers, by degree and by county:</b>									
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	<b>Merced</b>	<b>San Diego</b>	<b>San Francisco</b>	<b>San Joaquin</b>	<b>San Mateo</b>	<b>Santa Clara</b>	<b>Ventura</b>	<b>Yolo</b>
<b>Assistant Teachers</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>BA</b>	5% (24)	17% (6)	14% (14)	11% (30)	14% (5)	12% (2)	17% (4)	38% (5)	45% (5)
<b>MA</b>	<1% (2)	-	-	-	-	-	4% (1)	-	-
<b>AA</b>	18% (90)	60% (21)	39% (38)	-	35% (13)	24% (4)	17% (4)	54% (7)	36% (4)
<b>Other</b>	-	14% (5)	-	89% (246)	51% (19)	-	-	-	-
<b>None or unknown</b>	77% (383)	9% (3)	46% (45)	-	-	65% (11)	61% (14)	8% (1)	18% (2)
<b>Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.</b>									

**Table 7:**

<b>NIEER Teacher In-service Training and PoP Criteria Comparison</b>	
<b>NIEER Quality Benchmark</b>	<b>Teacher in-service training: at least 15 hours per year</b>
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p><b>PoP programs reported staff participating in an extensive array of professional development opportunities and collaborating with institutions of higher education.</b></p> <p>While they have shared information relating to the types of professional development that their teachers and other staff members received, counties have not reported the actual number of hours spent in training, including whether it was at least 15 hours per year.</p>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>All counties had strong ECERS-R scores on the Parents &amp; Staff subscale, which includes Measure 43 or “Opportunities for Professional Growth.” To score above a “5” on this measure, classroom staff is required to attend in-service training at least two times a year, either on-site or in community workshops.</p> <p>The First 5 California CARES (Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards) initiative and programs promote a highly qualified child development workforce.</p>	

**Table 8:**

<b>NIEER Class Size and PoP Criteria Comparison</b>	
<b>NIEER Quality Benchmark</b>	<b>Maximum class size: 20</b>
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p>First 5 California approved quality criteria that would allow for a group size sufficient to prepare children for kindergarten. The PoP Demonstration Grant Criteria specify a group size of 20 for four-year-olds, or 24 (depending on the staff to child ratio).</p>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>The PoP Master Plan for Education states that class size for four-year-olds must be no more than 20.</p>	

Table 9:

NIEER Staff to Child Ratio and PoP Criteria Comparison	
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Staff-child ratio – 1:10 or better
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p>The First 5 California standard for appropriate staff to child and teacher to child ratios is 3 staff to 24 children, or 2 teachers to 20 children. According to the PoP Progress Report (9/08), “<b>a majority of sessions used a staff-to-child ratio of 3 to 24</b>” (page 11, referring to PoP preschool sessions statewide). <b>A 3 to 24 ratio fulfills the NIEER standard.</b></p>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p><b>Yolo</b> — Child to teacher ratio of no more than 3 teachers to 24 children.</p> <p><b>San Joaquin</b> — Seven classes at 2:20, twenty-five classes at 3:24, two classes at 1:10, two classes at 2:16, one class at 4:31, and one class at 4:30.</p> <p>Other counties did not provide specific data relating to staff to child ratios.</p>	

**Table 10:**

NIEER Support Service and PoP Criteria Comparison	
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Vision, hearing, health screening/referral and support service
<b>First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria</b>	<p><b>PoP sites must perform periodic health and developmental screenings, assessments and follow-ups.</b> The PoP Data Collection Form for FY 07/08 requires counties to input data relating to screening and assessments. Counties typically provide data in this section relating to developmental screenings such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ.)</p>
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>DRDP-R screening is used for all children in all PoP Counties.</p> <p>PoP site staff have built and maintained community partnerships with a variety of agencies to ensure that children most in need have universal access to high-quality health screenings.</p> <p><b>Other screening tools:</b></p> <p><b>Los Angeles</b> — Parents completed the screening tool, the LAUP Child Enrollment form. The 3,437 forms completed constitute 60 percent of the LA PoP children enrolled.</p> <p><b>San Diego</b> — Three different screening tools, PEDS, ASQ, and Accuscreen, were used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PED was used to screen 1624 children (75.4%) as the 1st stage-screening tool. PEDS was parent administered between early fall and early spring and the results were discussed with the teacher, and/or parents.</li> <li>• Accuscreen and ASQ were parent-administered for 274 children as a 2<sup>nd</sup> stage-screening tool only when there was a concern with PEDS results.</li> </ul> <p><b>San Francisco</b> — All children received developmental screening within 60 days of enrollment, (80 percent with ASQ and 20 percent with a tool other than ASQ).</p> <p><b>San Joaquin</b> — Teachers and parents administer the ASQ within the first 60 days of enrollment.</p> <p><b>San Mateo</b> — With parents present, teachers screened all students using the ASQ tool within 30 days of enrollment.</p> <p><b>Santa Clara</b> — With teacher support, families administered the ASQ to about two-thirds of the children within 45 days of enrollment. The statewide report notes that since some PoP children were not screened with the ASQ, children with special needs were underreported for the year.</p> <p><b>Ventura</b> — Teachers administer screenings to children in participating Head Start programs (about one-third of the total children) using the ASQ within 45 days of enrollment and the Brigance tool within 40 days of enrollment.</p> <p><b>Yolo</b> — Developmental delay screening for all children using the ASQ instrument.</p>	

Table 11:

NIEER Meal and PoP Criteria Comparison	
NIEER Quality Benchmark	At least one meal per day
First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria	PoP demonstration projects are required to provide nutritious meals and snacks.
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p>First 5 California does not require PoP sites to report data regarding meals. As of March 2008, however, seven of the nine PoP counties reported their programs were participating in the United States Department of Agriculture nutrition programs.</p>	

Table 12:

NIEER Site Visits and PoP Criteria Comparison	
NIEER Quality Benchmark	Site visits conducted
First 5 Power of Preschool (PoP) Criteria	As required by CDE Desired Results System for CDE-contracted programs, participating school-based and center-based programs must receive an acceptable score on ECERS as verified by an external monitor. Participating family child care homes that are part of contracted networks must have acceptable scores on FDCRS/FCCERS as verified by an external monitor.
<p><b>Other Information &amp; Comments</b></p> <p><b>All PoP sites received good-to-excellent scores on ECERS-R as verified by external monitors.</b></p> <p>The average global ECERS-R scores were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Los Angeles – 5.6</li> <li>• Merced – 5.5</li> <li>• San Diego – 6.1</li> <li>• San Francisco – 5.1</li> <li>• San Joaquin – 5.7</li> <li>• San Mateo – 5.1</li> <li>• Santa Clara – 6.0</li> <li>• Ventura – 5.6</li> <li>• Yolo – 5.0</li> </ul>	

Based on the data and information provided, the nine PoP demonstration counties appear to meet most, if not all, of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) quality benchmarks since these standards are in the PoP program quality criteria. The PoP county local evaluation reports do not provide detail on compliance with the NIEER standards. Therefore, the evaluator used information from a range of sources including local evaluation reports, statewide evaluation data, anecdotal data, a statewide PoP progress report, and PoP program quality criteria to determine conformity with the NIEER standards.

While there might be incomplete data relating to one or two of the NIEER benchmarks, the PoP counties meet or exceed most of the criteria based on available data. For example, one of the NIEER quality benchmarks is to provide at least one nutritious meal each day. First 5 California also requires PoP sites to provide nutritious snacks and meals on a daily basis. Even though there is not much data on snacks or lunches at the sites, there is some evidence to indicate that PoP sites are complying with this requirement.

## VI. Criteria for High-Quality Programs

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As part of the meta-analysis of PoP demonstration counties, and in an effort to isolate the most critical factors that influence preschool quality and outcomes, this document lists 11 recommended criteria that could be used to design and evaluate a high-quality preschool program. The list of recommended criteria draws from research, local evaluation reports, statewide data, and other published information relating to the performance of the PoP demonstration counties across California.

### Criterion 1

Strong outreach using multiple strategies to reach a wide range of populations, particularly EL and children with special needs (who are often disadvantaged and who are likely to benefit most), and to ensure that there are no inequities in access to the program.

### Criterion 2

Well-trained, well-paid (by local standards), and high-quality teachers who receive incentives and support for supervision, coaching and professional development.

### Criterion 3

Specialized training and ongoing support in instruction of EL students and children with special needs to create a more culturally responsive and inclusive school environment.

### Criterion 4

Attention to *structural quality* and minimum program standards such as teacher to child ratios, teacher education and training, health and safety practices, and class sizes as specified by NIEER, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and First 5 California.

### Criterion 5

Emphasis on *process quality* and rich classroom environments that represent the cultural diversity of the children and families, and includes high levels of interaction (teacher-students, peer-to-peer, small/large group activities) to develop social, emotional and language skills.

### Criterion 6

Partnerships with local entities in community such as government and/or nonprofit agencies, businesses, research organizations, community colleges, and universities.

**Criterion 7**

Continuous improvement cycle with regular data collection and reporting, technical support for staff on administration and use of assessments, and modifications to programs based on results.

**Criterion 8**

Create opportunities for meaningful parent partnerships in school and provide regular staff training on how to facilitate and improve parent engagement.

**Criterion 9**

Encourage parents to promote their children's development at home through reading, storytelling and other learning activities, and offer families literacy programs and other educational services to improve their own abilities.

**Criterion 10**

Partnerships with elementary schools and collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers to support the smooth and seamless transition of children and families into the K-12 system.

**Criterion 11**

Improvement in school readiness levels, including among disadvantaged populations who are most in need of high-quality early childhood programs.

## VII. Application of Program Criteria

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This section highlights county strategies and approaches that fulfill the 11 program criteria. All of the counties have valuable and innovative programs that should be recognized and replicated and are included in this comparative analysis. As previously stated, five counties have met most of the aforementioned criteria (at least 7 out of 11): San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura.

### **1. Strong outreach using multiple strategies to reach a wide range of populations, particularly EL and children with special needs (who are often disadvantaged and who are likely to benefit most), and to ensure that there are no inequities in access to the program.**

In FY 07/08, more than 7,700 (66%) of PoP children statewide were reported as Hispanic/Latino, about 5,417 (45%) were English learners (EL), and 826 (7%) had special needs.<sup>17</sup> PoP sites report using a range of strategies including: recruitment flyers, banners, meetings, Web sites, phone calls, radio advertisements, and partner agencies to convey the message that English learners and children of all abilities are welcome.

Some counties have been particularly responsive to the needs of EL, special needs, and/or disadvantaged children. For example, both Merced and Yolo counties used multilingual program materials to reach a wide range of populations. The Hispanic/Latino and Hmong families in Merced County are geographically isolated and historically underserved and both groups have encountered cultural and linguistic barriers. In an effort to ensure equitable access, First 5 Merced County required that funded programs provide all printed materials in the families' native language (Spanish, Hmong). Yolo has program brochures in English, Spanish, and Russian but is limiting its outreach at this point since enrollment is at 100 percent capacity with long waiting lists. As is the case with several other counties, Yolo prioritizes 10 percent of enrollment for children with special needs. San Diego conducted outreach programs and developed a new policy to waive residency criteria for the FY 08/09 program year to encourage a greater number of children with special needs to access SDCPFA-funded preschool programs. SDCPFA also established a policy that requires preschool providers to give priority enrollment to families of children with special needs at a ratio of 10:1.

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<sup>17</sup> The percentage of children with special needs might be underestimated because San Francisco did not report for this category in FY 07/08.

**2. Well-trained, well-paid (by local standards), and high-quality teachers who receive incentives and support for supervision, coaching and professional development.**

A hallmark of the PoP funding system is that it pays providers based on teacher education level. This criterion examines teacher permit and quality levels (entry, advancing, quality), degrees (AA, BA, MA), experience (lead, assistant), incentivized compensation plans, and opportunities for ongoing professional development.

As stated previously, the PoP program teacher qualifications are the number of college units the teaching staff has achieved. Table 13 displays the educational requirements of quality levels for PoP teachers.

**Table 13:**

Teacher qualifications	Lead teacher units	Assistant teacher units
Entry	24 ECE	6 ECE
Advancing	60 (24 in ECE)	60 (12 in ECE)
Quality	BA degree (24 in ECE)	AA degree (24 in ECE)

Counties report 1,797 total teachers across the nine PoP programs as of July 2008. Overall, combined lead and assistant teacher quality is high with about 42 percent statewide classified as PoP “quality” teachers, 45 percent as “advancing” and 13 percent as “entry” level teachers. Of all the teachers statewide, there are:

- 789 lead teachers –
  - 14 percent (107) entry
  - 41 percent (323) advancing
  - 46 percent (359) quality
- 1,008 assistant teachers –
  - 13 percent (133) entry
  - 48 percent (478) advancing
  - 39 percent (397) quality

There is tremendous variation across counties; San Joaquin County has less than 18 percent of all its teachers at the First 5 quality levels and Ventura County has 90 percent of its teachers at the First 5 quality level.

As shown in Table 14 below, there is also significant variation between lead and assistant teachers. Table 14 shows the percent and number of PoP county of lead and assistant teachers quality levels.

**Table 14:**

	Lead teachers (789)			Assistant teachers (1,008)		
	Entry	Advancing	Quality	Entry	Advancing	Quality
Los Angeles	17% (62)	41% (155)	42% (157)	16% (78)	39% (195)	45% (226)
Merced	11% (4)	47% (18)	42% (16)	9% (3)	40% (14)	51% (18)
San Diego	12% (17)	50% (69)	37% (51)	8% (8)	24% (23)	68% (66)
San Francisco	14% (20)	25% (34)	61% (84)	14% (40)	69% (191)	16% (45)
San Joaquin	0% (0)	76% (19)	24% (6)	0% (0)	86% (32)	14% (5)
San Mateo	0% (0)	25% (6)	75% (18)	12% (2)	65% (11)	24% (4)
Santa Clara	12% (4)	52% (17)	36% (12)	9% (2)	17% (4)	74% (17)
Ventura	0% (0)	14% (1)	86% (6)	0% (0)	8% (1)	92% (12)
Yolo	0% (0)	31% (4)	69% (9)	0% (0)	64% (7)	36% (4)

With respect to PoP programwide data on both lead and assistant teacher degrees combined: 21 percent of teachers had AA degrees, 24 percent had BA degrees, slightly over 1 percent had MA degrees, 19 percent reported “other,” and just over 34 percent reported having no degree or unknown. Of all the teachers statewide, there are:

- 789 lead teachers —
  - 26 percent (202) AA
  - 43 percent (338) BA
  - 3 percent (23) MA
  - 9 percent (70) other
  - 20 percent (156) none or unknown

- 1,008 assistant teachers —
  - 18 percent (181) AA
  - 10 percent (95) BA
  - <1 percent (3) MA
  - 27 percent (270) other
  - 46 percent (459) none or unknown

Ventura reported the highest percentage of lead and assistant teachers with BA degrees (55%) and San Joaquin reported the lowest (26%). San Francisco's data shows 27 percent of its lead and assistant teachers have BA degrees, none have AA or MA degrees, but 73 percent are in the "other" category. Santa Clara reports that 41 percent of its teachers have no degree, with San Mateo and San Diego also reporting high percentages of teachers with no degree (about 31 percent for San Diego and about 27 percent for San Mateo). Refer to Tables 4-6 for additional details regarding degree levels for lead and/or assistant teachers.

Staff in both San Francisco and San Mateo report that higher levels of teacher compensation have resulted in attracting a quality workforce. As part of its strategic plan for PFA, First 5 San Francisco set a goal to have a lead teacher with a bachelor's degree and specialized early childhood training in every PFA classroom by 2010. To support achievement of this goal, First 5 San Francisco made a number of investments in workforce development. In FY 06/07, classrooms headed by teachers with a teacher permit (the minimum) received up to \$4,125 per child, while classrooms headed by teachers with a program director permit (the maximum) received up to \$5,025 per child. These rates increased for FY 07/08.

In March 2007, First 5 San Francisco also allocated \$1 million for a new compensation initiative to attract and retain highly qualified teachers (particularly with bachelor's degrees). The new program provides a bonus of up to \$5,000 annually to teachers, assistant teachers, and site supervisors with at least a bachelor's degree and 24 units of ECE training who teach children at PFA sites. In addition, First 5 San Francisco provided funding for a dual-language BA cohort program within San Francisco State University's (SFSU) Child and Adolescent Development program. Approximately half the 76 participants are Spanish dominant, and half are English dominant. All are working ECE teachers who are returning to school to complete their bachelor's degrees, so the program adopted a cohort approach to support them within a flexible format of weeklong seminars and weekend classes.

Staff, management, and teachers across the three San Mateo programs commented that PFA impacted how they view themselves as professionals. A program director reported, “The staff who are doing a wonderful job are feeling very professional about their role as a PFA teacher. I think that is one of the big benefits.”

Several of the counties integrate their PoP programs with CARES, and draw upon the resources that CARES offers in working with diverse workforces to support professional development and educational attainment. For example, Yolo County distributed a total of \$200,000 in stipends in FY 07/08 based on education and training completed, with amounts ranging from \$150 to \$2,300. Participants who provided care to children with special needs, and those working with English learners received bonuses. Similarly, in Santa Clara, CARES has engaged 80 percent of the county’s early educators working in licensed programs by promoting, rewarding, and supporting educational attainment.

### **3. Specialized training and ongoing support in instruction of EL and children with special needs to create a more culturally responsive and inclusive school environment.**

In order to improve outcomes for EL and special needs populations and reduce the achievement gap, teachers need specialized training in supporting their students’ unique needs. The ECERS-R Program Structure subscale measures several areas including provision of services for children with special needs. Program Structure scores were high for every county, with a mean score of 6.0 and a range of about 5.3 to 6.8. All counties report scores in the good to excellent range. Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Santa Clara, however, took it one step further. By creating robust and targeted training on teaching EL and children with special needs, and requiring teachers to take coursework or attend trainings in these specialized areas, they are creating a workforce that promotes cultural sensitivity, linguistic competence, and an inclusive classroom environment.

LAUP is in the process of creating standards for inclusion in PoP preschool classrooms. LAUP completed a review of the literature on inclusion practices, wrote a LAUP provider inclusion manual, and is currently collaborating with stakeholders to coordinate the rollout of inclusion training for LAUP providers and coaches. In FY 07/08, LAUP offered four distinct trainings multiple times throughout the county, which included the following topics: (1) inclusion best practices using the LAUP manual, (2) behavior management, (3) speech and language, and (4) autism.

First 5 San Francisco requires that at least one teacher in every PFA classroom participate in at least one unit of coursework in literacy or language development and sponsors a class on early childhood dual language learning that is offered by

City College of San Francisco. First 5 San Francisco also requires that at least one teacher in every PFA classroom participate in at least one unit of coursework in special needs or inclusion provided by City College of San Francisco.

In San Mateo, the Roosevelt CDC serves as a model program for serving children with special needs. The inclusion model at Roosevelt CDC includes the co-location of preschool and special education services and strong collaborative relationships among PFA staff and school district personnel, in addition to close relationships with and involvement of families as partners. Based on feedback gathered from the PFA site supervisor and teachers, their program has been extremely successful in serving children with special needs and their families and their approach has helped all children enrolled in the program.

In Santa Clara, QuEST members observed sessions using the ECERS and identified potential improvement areas to make the program structure more inclusive for children with disabilities. In parallel, the WestEd E3 Institute offered training for staff members that work closely with families and children with special needs, or are English learners as 84 percent of PoP children in Santa Clara are Latino and 72 percent are English learners. Using a customized and context-specific approach to professional development, teachers access learning modules that are highly relevant and responsive to their particular classroom environments.

PFA providers in San Diego are required to include, as part of their written philosophy statement, an assurance that they include children with special needs alongside typically developing children in their program. SDCPFA provides reimbursement at the highest level of funding for two years of preschool for these children. A full time countywide inclusion specialist coordinates a series of activities with the child, the parents, and the preschool staff in order to establish the ideal preschool placement and plan for full inclusion of the child within the typically developing program.

**4. Attention to structural quality and minimum program standards such as teacher-child ratios, teacher education and training, health and safety practices, and class sizes as specified by NIEER, NAEYC and First 5 California.**

First 5 California has specified minimum program standards for PoP sites (closely related to the NIEER and NAEYC standards) and they are listed in the First 5 Preschool Demonstration Project Request for Application (November 2005) as follows:

- Clean, safe, accessible, and inclusive facilities that are well-equipped with sufficient, appropriate materials and toys

- Periodic health and developmental screenings
- Performance and program standards that articulate with K-3 standards
- Environmental rating scales to determine quality of space and furnishings, personal care routines, language and reasoning opportunities, developmental learning activities, teacher/parent/child interactions, and program structure. At point of entry, a provider must at least achieve a score of '4' out of '7', which is obtained by averaging 43 indicators on the ECERS-R and 40 indicators on the FCCERS-R. Within a period of 24 months, providers must at least receive an overall score of '5' out of '7', obtained by averaging the indicators. At entry-level and throughout their participation, providers must receive, at a minimum, an average of '3' on each of the sub-scales for the applicable environmental rating scale.
- Appropriate staff to child and teacher to child ratios (e.g., 3 staff to 24 children, or 2 teachers to 20 children)
- Group size sufficient to prepare children for kindergarten
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Transition support for children entering preschool and preschoolers entering kindergarten

The size of the classroom group and the ratio of children to staff or adults are important minimum standards in determining structural quality. As specified above, typical ratios for high-quality programs are 3 staff to 24 children or 2 teachers to 20 children. The nine counties combined reported a total of 1,797 teaching staff participating in PoP programs with about 87 percent of teachers (lead and assistant) satisfying the quality or advancing level requirements. The nine counties also report a total of 14,329 children enrolled in PoP programs. Most importantly, all nine PoP counties had strong ECERS-R scores, indicating that they paid close attention to structural quality and a high-quality learning environment. The PoP tiered reimbursement system provides financial support to providers who raise their program quality. Characteristics such as higher educated teaching staff, higher ECERS-R scores and lower staff-child ratios yield better compensation rates.

Program Structure scores on the ECERS-R were high for every county, with a mean score of 6.0 and a range of about 5.3 to 6.8. This subscale measures the balance between indoor and outdoor activities, cooperation among staff members, and provision for children with special needs. All counties report scores in the good to excellent range. The mean score for Space and Furnishing was 5.5 with a range of about 4.8 to 5.9. This subscale addresses whether classroom size is large enough to accommodate children without hampering their free movement. Both the classroom space and any furniture within it should be accessible to disabled

children as well as convenient and easy to use (i.e., easy to clean floor, low and open shelves, etc.). Other considerations include lighting, soft spaces, private spaces, and play spaces. All PoP counties, with the exception of San Francisco (score of 4.8), reported scores in the good to excellent range.

The one area that appears to need improvement (and this is commonly the case among preschools) is Personal Care routines. Seven counties report scores below five on this subscale with a mean of 4.3. Personal care routines include behaviors and practices that relate to greeting/departing, meals/snacks, naps/rest, toileting/diapering, health practices, and safety practices. Quality indicators relating to personal care routines need improvement at most of the PoP sites. For example, greeting children when they arrive or leave the site should be a warm and welcoming routine. Children can set the table at mealtimes, feed themselves and eat at small tables with an adult to encourage greater self-care and more social interaction. Children and adults should follow basic sanitation guidelines (i.e., clean food surfaces, wash hands before eating, after using the toilet).

An important part of the personal care subscale is safety-related practices such as playground safety checks, availability of first aid kits, and access to and knowledge of emergency procedures. An annual fire inspection and monthly fire drills are required and it is recommended that all staff complete First Aid/C.P.R. training and at least one First Aid/C.P.R. — certified staff member must be present at all times. According to a recently released RAND Corporation report, both San Mateo and San Francisco outperform classrooms statewide on all measures of quality assessed on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), as well as classrooms assessed as part of the Tulsa, Oklahoma, universal preschool. The CLASS looks in-depth at teacher-child interactions across four domains: emotional support, classroom management, instructional support, and student engagement, as highly accurate, and in-depth measures of teacher-child interactions.

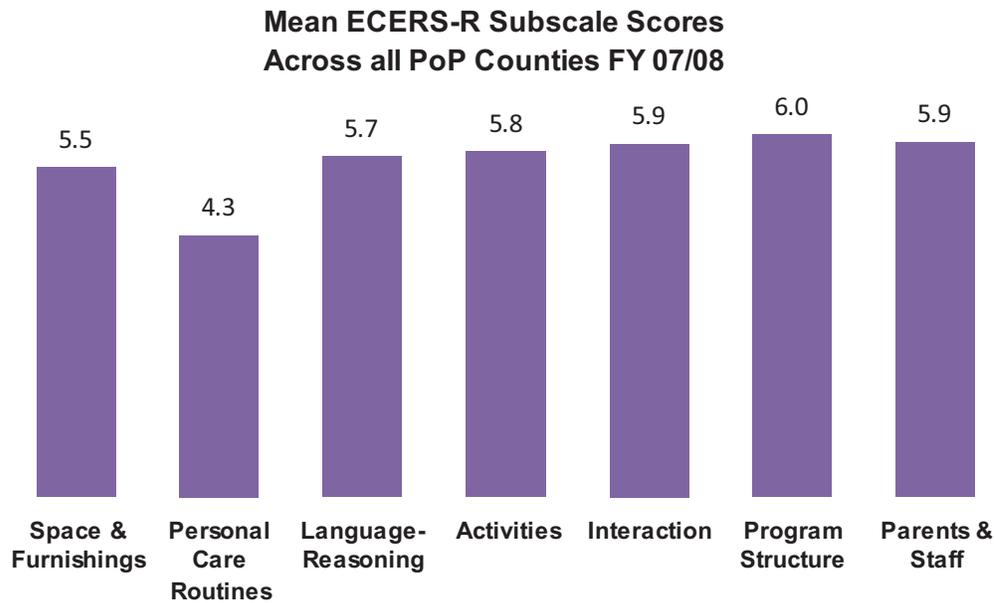
**5. Emphasis on process quality and rich classroom environments that represent the cultural diversity of the children and families, and includes high levels of interaction (teacher-students, peer-to-peer, small/large group activities) to develop social, emotional, and language skills.**

Process quality refers to the types of experiences that children have within the classroom. Higher levels of interaction (with peers as well as adults) allow them to develop their social, language, and cognitive abilities. Statewide data and local evaluation reports from PoP counties demonstrate that a range of developmentally appropriate activities is taking place on a regular basis in the classroom. In addition, most counties report that they are training their staff to be more responsive to English learners and children with disabilities. All nine counties were in the good to

excellent range on the ECERS-R subscales. The mean score for Interaction was 5.9 and the mean score for Activities was 5.8. Since the main measure of a rich classroom environment (and process quality) is the ECERS-R, an analysis of some of the statewide data is below. Again, all counties are meeting this criterion.

Chart 16 below shows that the ECERS-R mean subscale scores indicate strong classroom quality in FY 07/08, except for the area of personal care routines.

**Chart 16:**



**Note:** The mean score for Parents & Staff includes seven of the nine counties.

Personal Care Routines is the subscale with the weakest scores; seven of the nine counties report scores of less than five. The mean is 4.3, ranging between 2.8 and 6. In the area of Language and Reasoning, the mean score was 5.7 with a range of 4.6 to 6. This subscale measures whether children have access to materials and experiences to help them develop their language and stimulate their reasoning. The classroom should provide children with books, size and shape toys, and number games, and teachers should ask questions that help children compare and contrast objects and notice trends and differences among them. With the exception of Yolo (score of 4.6), all PoP counties were in the good to excellent range on this subscale.

The mean score for Activities was 5.8, ranging between 4.9 and 6.2. Quality indicators for Learning Activities include eye-hand coordination, active physical play, and art. To score higher on this subscale, programs must have teachers who help children develop their hand-eye coordination skills, rotate materials to create new

challenges, talk to children about their activities, and participate with them in their play. Again, with the exception of Yolo (score of 4.9), all PoP counties scored within the good to excellent range.

The mean score for Interaction was 5.9, ranging between 5.2 and 6.7. Teacher-child interaction centers on trust and relationship building. At the same time, children must learn about acceptable behavior, rules, cooperation, conflict resolution, and discipline. An important part of staff interaction is to be clear and positive and to provide a caring place for children to ask questions and work together in small groups.

Finally, the Parents and Staff subscale measures the level of parent involvement, staff interaction and collaborative planning, supervision, and evaluation. With the exception of Los Angeles and Merced (which did not report any data for this category), all other PoP counties were in the good to excellent range. Parents and Staff scores were high with a mean score of 5.9 and ranging between 5.2 and 6.4 for the counties reporting on this measure.

#### **6. Partnerships with local entities in the community, such as government and/or nonprofit agencies, businesses, research organizations, community colleges, and universities.**

While the PoP demonstration counties recognize the value of active partnerships between families, service providers, educational organizations, civic leaders, local business, and the community at-large, many of them are still working to develop these alliances. All nine PoP counties built some partnerships with local entities, most often working closely with government agencies and community colleges.

In FY 06/07, the Santa Clara CARES program awarded more than 1,300 financial stipends to early educators based on their educational attainment, certification, and longevity in the field. The WestEd E3 Institute also developed an innovative yet practical relationship with local community colleges and universities to offer child care providers early childhood education and basic skills courses. Additionally, E3 provided individualized technical assistance to early educators, such as reviewing and helping to route foreign transcripts in the certification process.

#### **7. Continuous improvement cycle with regular data collection and reporting, technical support for staff on administration and use of assessments, and modifications to county PoP programs based on results.**

The development of continuous improvement processes is necessary to ensure ongoing program effectiveness and stability. Such processes include careful monitoring and evaluation of PoP programs and modifications of these programs as

needed. It also allows PoP demonstration counties to highlight their own strengths, share lessons learned, and build upon the successes of others. The commitment to a continuous improvement cycle requires that PoP programs provide technical support and training for their staff on the proper use of assessments and tools for data collection, monitoring, and evaluation.

Santa Clara successfully deployed early education consultants (QuEST and E3) to design and implement data collection systems and to provide technical guidance to PoP staff on how to use self-assessment measures and quality enhancement plans to improve program effectiveness. For example, QuEST and E3 worked closely with PoP classroom teachers on their ECERS self-assessments, combined with QuEST classroom observations, to document areas for enhancement through the Quality Enhancement Plans (QEP). The QEPs are stored and accessed through a Web-based QuEST Tracker database that allows cross-year analysis to identify trends, etc. E3 also launched a beta version of its PoP database to allow for verification of PoP teacher qualifications (directly linked to PoP reimbursement rates). The Santa Clara PoP database model helped inform database efforts in other counties. Both San Francisco and San Mateo worked with the same contractor as Santa Clara to implement comprehensive databases for their PoP programs.

First 5 Ventura County successfully implemented its data collection system software *Grant Evaluation and Management Solution (GEMS)*, which organizes data on participants, services, and outcomes to support program-level contract monitoring and countywide evaluation. Funded partners collect and enter data in GEMS, tracking the performance of their programs. Collected quantitative data and information includes participant socio-demographic data, services data, and outcomes data at individual and group levels. A key feature of the data collection system is that it allows for *process evaluation* as well as *outcome evaluation* to examine the quantity and quality of services, and to explore trends over time.

#### **8. Create opportunities for meaningful parent partnerships in school and provide regular staff training on how to facilitate and improve parent engagement.**

Every county found ways to involve parents in their children's preschool program. These opportunities included open houses, newsletters, mentoring/counseling, community fairs, parent satisfaction surveys, volunteer opportunities in class and outside class, social gatherings, Raising a Reader book bag program, and family literacy activities. Such strategies shift the role of the parent from participating and learning to *engagement* as a true *partner* with a sense of *ownership* and decision making within the school.

**9. Encourage parents to promote their child’s development at home through reading, storytelling and other learning activities, and offer families literacy programs and other educational services to improve their own abilities.**

Every PoP county reported an increase in parenting skills and knowledge as well as parent behaviors relating to home educational activities. Most commonly, parents were reading to their children, telling them stories, playing counting games, and singing to them. In Merced, parents served by PoP providers read picture books, told stories, and sang songs to their child 3 to 6 times each week – a substantial achievement considering the age, poverty level, and education of the county’s overall population.

Parents in San Diego rated themselves higher on all 12 Parenting Survey items, with the increases being statistically significant for all items ( $p < .001$ ). The survey is a modified version of the “Survey of Parenting Practice” developed by the University of Idaho. Parents self-reported the most improvement in the knowledge statement: “My knowledge of how my child is growing and developing.” The behavior statement where parents showed the most improvement was “The amount I read to my child.”

In San Joaquin, there is a strong emphasis on early literacy with a majority of parents (73%) reading to their children on most days of the week. In addition, in Santa Clara, parents and family members participated in Parent Workshops on a range of topics, such as challenges of first 5 years, children with special needs, etc.

**10. Partnerships with elementary schools and collaboration between preschool and kindergarten teachers support the smooth and seamless transition of children and families into the K-12 system.**

Several counties reported that transition to kindergarten was an area needing further development. The Ventura PoP programs enjoyed a high level of parent satisfaction with their kindergarten transition strategies. In FY 06/07, 257 family members who received services related to helping their child transition to kindergarten completed post-service surveys. Overall, a vast majority of respondents agreed that the program helped with a number of common kindergarten transition challenges. In FY 06/07, two-thirds reported that the program provided them with more than they needed to help prepare themselves and their children for kindergarten, and only 3.3 percent stated that they received less than needed. When asked how hard it was to start kindergarten, 18.7 percent reported it was somewhat hard or very hard even after receiving kindergarten transition services.

**11. Improvement in school readiness levels, including among disadvantaged populations who are most in need of high-quality early childhood programs.**

Statewide data indicate that all PoP counties satisfied this criterion and experienced an improvement in school readiness levels from the beginning to the end of the preschool year, as measured by the DRDP-R. Note, however, that DRDP-R data in the statewide reports have not been broken out by race/ethnicity, for ELs or children with special needs.<sup>18</sup> As a result, while all PoP counties are experiencing gains in school readiness there is insufficient information about DRDP-R subgroup differences, and whether PoP programs are narrowing the achievement gap. Reporting of subgroups is optional for PoP counties and this information was not available for FY 07/08.

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<sup>18</sup> Some counties have provided these data in a narrative attached to the DRDP-R data or in their local evaluation reports. For example, Yolo reports that gains in DRDP scores showed equivalent progress for both EL and non-EL students.

## VIII. Highlighting Notable Programs and Areas for Improvement

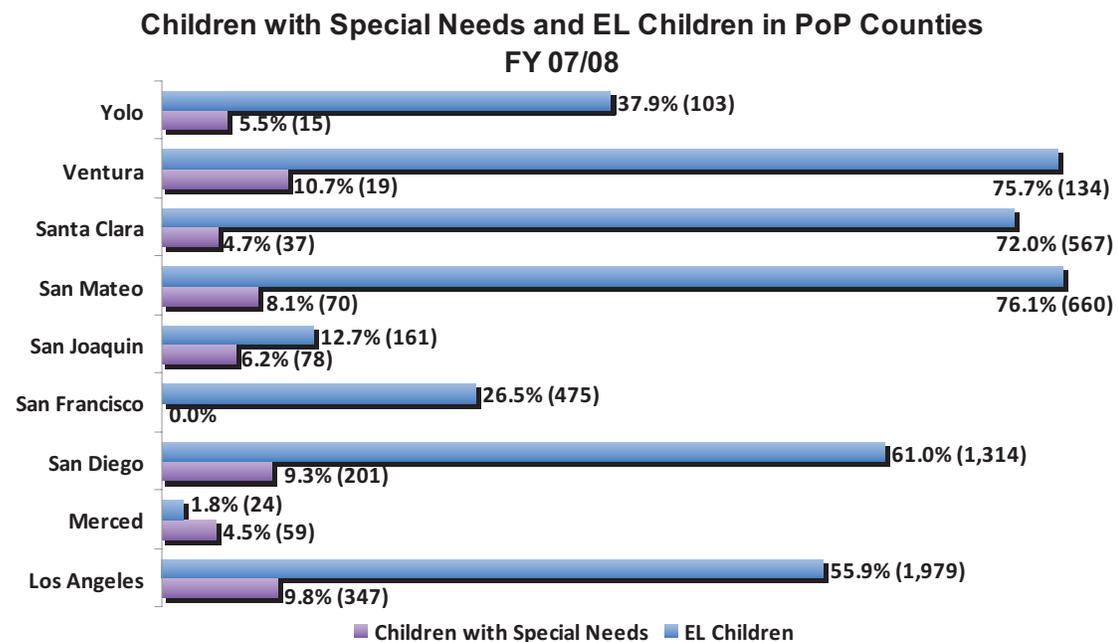
All PoP programs show success; however, several PoP demonstration counties stand out for their ability to fulfill most of the 11 recommended criteria for high-quality programs presented earlier: San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura. Profiled in this section are certain common features that might play a role in the success of their programs. Also identified are certain elements that are weak or missing and suggestions for enhanced program focus.

### Common Characteristics

#### *High percentage of English Learners (ELs)*

Four of these high-performing counties (San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Ventura); have EL counts that exceed 50 percent. San Francisco is the exception (at 26.5%) but the others range from 61 percent to 76 percent. This is an important characteristic since EL children are an important target population for the PoP programs. Enrollment of children with special needs in these counties, excluding San Francisco, ranges from 4.7 percent in Santa Clara to 10.7 percent in Ventura. Chart 17 shows the percent and number of both English learners and children with special needs within each PoP county program.

**Chart 17:**



**Notes:** San Francisco did not collect special needs data for FY 07/08 but reported that of the entering kindergarteners (from San Francisco PoP sites) approximately 10 percent of children have special needs.

In the FY 08/09 ASQ screening of over 700 Santa Clara PoP children, over 30 percent of children showed areas of concern on the ASQ and/or parent or teacher concerns. As the follow-up process with these children and their families continues, it is anticipated that more than 4.7 percent are children with special needs.

### ***Ongoing support for professional development of preschool teachers***

PoP sites within all five counties are recruiting highly qualified teachers and then continuing to train and educate them through partnerships with community colleges and four-year universities. They established solid relationships with higher education institutions and are collaborating with them on a regular basis.

### ***Facilities and environment are of the highest quality***

While ECERS-R scores are strong for PoP programs statewide, they range from 5.2 (San Francisco) to 6.2 (San Diego) among these five counties. ECERS-R scores range on a scale of one to seven, with five and above being in the “good to excellent” range.

### ***Streamlined data collection and continuous improvement processes***

The commitment to a continuous improvement cycle requires that PoP programs provide technical support and training for their staff on the proper use of assessments and tools for data collection, monitoring, and evaluation. Santa Clara took the lead in this area, tapping into the expertise of early education consultants at E3, QuEST, and SRI, to document areas of improvement and then launch a data collection platform. In FY 06/07, San Mateo implemented a comprehensive database for tracking child, family, teacher, and classroom data, and in FY 08/09, San Francisco also implemented a comprehensive database system. Ventura successfully implemented its own data collection system, GEMS, which organizes countywide participants, services and outcomes for ongoing data monitoring.

## **Individual County Notable Program Profiles**

### ***San Diego***

- Larger percentage of children with special needs (9.3%)
- High EL population (61%)
- ECERS-R scores are highest of all nine counties. Average global ECERS-R score of 6.1 on scale of 1 to 7.
- School readiness levels improved. Average DRDP-R scores increased from 42 percent of PoP participants scoring in the top two levels to 85.7 percent.
- Continual improvement process is in place to impact teacher quality through training and education.

### San Francisco

- PoP graduates entering kindergarten with special needs comprised 10 percent of county PoP participants (data not collected at PoP sites for FY 07/08)
- ECERS-R scores are strong. Average global ECERS-R score of 5.1 on scale of 1 to 7.
- School readiness levels improved. Average DRDP-R scores increased from 46.3 percent of PoP participants scoring in the top two levels to 73.1 percent.
- Continual improvement process is in place to train teachers helping them advance to higher quality levels. Currently 85.5 percent of San Francisco county PoP teachers are at the advancing level.

### San Mateo

- Medium to high percentage of children with special needs (8.1%)
- Very high EL population (76.1%)
- ECERS-R scores are strong. Average global ECERS-R score of 5.1 on scale of 1 to 7.
- School readiness levels improved. Average DRDP-R scores increased from 54.2 percent of PoP participants scoring in the top two levels to 85.4 percent.
- Continual improvement process is in place to impact teacher quality through training and education.

### Santa Clara

- High EL population (72%)
- ECERS-R scores are very strong. Average global ECERS-R score of 6.0 on scale of 1 to 7.
- School readiness levels improved. Average DRDP-R scores increased from 17 percent of PoP participants scoring in the top two levels to 77 percent. The post-program scores are among the highest of all PoP counties.
- Continual improvement process is in place to impact teacher quality through training and education.

### Ventura

- Highest percentage of children with special needs (10.7%)
- Very high EL population (75.7%)
- ECERS-R scores are strong. Average global ECERS-R score of 5.6 on scale of 1 to 7.

- School readiness levels improved. Average DRDP-R scores increased from 21 percent of PoP participants scoring in the top two levels to 64.5 percent.
- Teacher quality is high (100% are advancing or First 5 quality).

## Areas for Improvement

### *Improve outreach to children with special needs*

While most PoP counties developed a range of strategies to reach EL children, they do not report specific outreach strategies for children with special needs. San Diego has shown initiative in this area by conducting outreach meetings in Spring 2008 with early intervention programs in SDCPFA target communities serving children ages 0 to 3. SDCPFA also developed a policy of waiving residency criteria in FY 08/09 to encourage a greater number of children with special needs to access SDCPFA-funded preschool programs. The impact of this targeted outreach will become clear at the end of FY 08/09.

### *Parent involvement in school*

The PoP counties have implemented various outreach and involvement strategies to more effectively engage families. There is growing evidence that connections between school, family, and community can dramatically impact student achievement. In a recent report, Henderson & Mapp (2002) synthesized over 50 research studies that examine the role that parent involvement plays on academic achievement of children, from early childhood through high school. Henderson & Mapp (2002) reflect that, while all ethnic and cultural groups are engaged in supporting their children's learning at home, white, middle-class families tend to be more involved at school. Therefore, they surmise, supporting more involvement at school from *all parents* may be an important strategy for addressing the achievement gap. While it is true that better educated families are generally more involved in schools, families with less education and lower incomes do become involved *if schools have effective programs to engage them*. (Epstein & Sanders, 2000).

### *Collaboration and partnerships to support seamless kindergarten transition*

Many PoP sites (and parents) identified kindergarten transition as an area that needed further attention. For example, San Joaquin providers expressed a need for better kindergarten transition activities, such as field trips to visit kindergarten classrooms, and opportunities for parents of preschoolers to meet kindergarten teachers. San Diego PFA providers echoed this concern. Teachers' self-identified area of weakness in San Diego PFA sites was the ability to fully prepare their students for the transition to kindergarten. While most San Diego PFA teachers (86.1%) met with parents to prepare them for the transition, only 37.5 percent said

they attended meetings with kindergarten teachers, and even fewer (20.3%) said they attended trainings with kindergarten teachers. In San Francisco, only a third of PFA programs employ strategies that involve collaboration with public schools (e.g., 38% of programs facilitate kindergarten visits for children, 34% facilitate kindergarten tours for parents, and 13% of programs participate in joint professional development for preschool and kindergarten teachers regarding transition issues).

Elementary schools often have very little knowledge of the programs and services offered to preschool children in their neighborhoods. PoP sites should develop transition plans that are flexible and responsive to the needs of parents and providers. Specific transition strategies could include encouraging preschool and kindergarten teachers to visit each other's classrooms, to attend common workshops and professional development sessions, and to collaborate with each other on continuity in teaching strategies and methods. A kindergarten transition conference at the beginning of the school year would create another opportunity for preschool and kindergarten teachers to come together and dialogue with each other. Finally, a school visitation program would allow preschool children and their families to visit their new school before starting kindergarten.

It is through the exchange of information, resources, and ideas between preschool and kindergarten teachers that the transition will become smoother and easier for young children. The Ventura PoP programs enjoyed a high level of parent satisfaction with their kindergarten transition strategies.

### ***Partnerships and commitments with local agencies, businesses, and other resources***

The PoP model encourages a rich, multi-dimensional, and comprehensive approach to build relationships among providers and community stakeholders. Santa Clara stands out in this area, and is one of the few to provide data on the topic. Their partnerships with local entities are a notable practice.

In Santa Clara, there is an ongoing emphasis on collaboration and partnerships to build a powerful PoP program. WestEd's E3 Institute developed strategic partnerships with the Santa Clara County Office of Education, with community agencies, and with every community college and university in the county that offers early childhood education and child development courses.

While some PoP counties collaborated with colleges and universities to create early childhood learning programs, and others are in the process of forging similar relationships with local agencies and businesses (such as educational, health and social service agencies), this is an area that could be developed further. PoP sites could actively seek out businesses in their communities to make donations

and/or invest in programs that support the PoP vision. For example, the business community could assist with college tuition and fees for parents of PoP children seeking higher education. Alternatively, they could help pay for childcare expenses if parents pursuing further education or training have other children who are not already part of a PoP or other preschool. In addition, they could provide free books and other materials needed at PoP sites.

## **Other Recommendations**

### ***Improve DRDP-R Reporting***

Teachers repeatedly mentioned the importance of allotting more time for completion of the DRDP-R. They also noted that they currently work on the DRDP-R at home on their own time, without overtime compensation. Another concern is that schools and teachers may have collected the DRDP-R data differently. Finally, on the DRDP-R statewide data reporting form, it might be helpful to break down the data by specific sub-groups to compare changes in school readiness levels among different sub-groups. Although the statewide form requests that counties report subgroup data on the statewide form, they are not required to do so.

Careful interpretation of the results of the DRDP-R assessment as evidence of developmental progress is vital. There is tremendous variation in the population of children served by PoP programs, as well as in the facilities, supplies, and staffing resources available to these programs. In addition, counties experienced challenges administering the DRDP-R. Several PoP counties questioned whether use of the DRDP-R tool was appropriate. Future evaluation efforts might focus on the appropriate use of the DRDP-R as well as customized training on its proper use in the PoP context.

### ***Encourage Collaboration Across PoP Sites and Statewide***

PoP demonstration counties are developing unique and innovative programs and services and it is highly beneficial for them to continue to collaborate and network with each other to raise questions, identify common challenges, share lessons learned, and build a knowledge base.

## IX. Conclusion

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All nine PoP counties displayed strong school readiness levels and high-quality learning environments based upon self-reported DRDP-R scores and ECERS-R scores for FY 07/08. Teacher quality was high and there was an ongoing commitment to professional development in all counties. There was also substantial attainment of NIEER benchmarks and compliance with PoP program quality standards.

Common challenges expressed by PoP programs include issues that arise from working with large immigrant populations. In particular, there are challenges associated with language barriers, children with special needs, and difficulty adjusting to documentation, screening, data collection, and reporting requirements. While many of these challenges exist statewide, counties developed their own unique strategies for dealing with them.

All PoP demonstration counties fulfilled most of the criteria for high-quality programs. A few of the PoP demonstration counties stand out for their ongoing support of professional development, high-quality facilities and classrooms, streamlined data collection, and continuous improvement processes. Each of the five counties that met most of the criteria for high-quality, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Ventura, could serve as a blueprint for a high-quality program.

There are specific recommendations for change that could be implemented across all PoP counties, and these areas of improvement include parent engagement, kindergarten transition planning, partnerships with local agencies and/or businesses, outreach to children with special needs, and greater consistency in DRDP-R reporting.

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## XI. Abbreviations and Definitions

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- E3**            **Advancing Excellence in Early Education**  
The purpose of WestEd’s E3 Institute: Advancing Excellence in Early Education is to support and strengthen early childhood professional development through education, recruitment, and financial incentives.
- ASQ**            **Ages and Stages Questionnaire**  
A tool designed to screen children for developmental delays in the first five years of life.
- CDE**            **California Department of Education**  
A state of California department with the core purpose of leading and supporting the continuous improvement of student achievement and education, with a specific focus on closing achievement gaps. CDE is the state administering agency for most of California’s subsidized early care and education programs.
- CDA**            **Child Development Associate**  
A child development credential with specific requirements including fulfillment of formal education in early childhood and child care. Candidates applying for CDA assessment must meet specific eligibility requirements:
- Be 18 years of age or older
  - Hold a high school diploma or GED
  - Have 480 hours of experience working with children within the past five years
  - Have 120 clock hours of formal child care education within the past five years
- Further information about the CDA credential is available at [http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda\\_obt.htm](http://www.cdacouncil.org/cda_obt.htm).
- CDC**            **Child Development Center**  
A child development center is a licensed child care facility with a professional staff.
- CLASS**        **Classroom Assessment Scoring System**  
CLASS is a system for observing and assessing the quality of instructional and social interactions between teachers and students in classrooms.

- CARES**      **Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards**  
CARES is a program in 44 California counties that rewards early learning teachers and family child care providers for educational attainment and professional development.
- DRDP-R**      **Desired Results Developmental Profile — Revised**  
The California Department of Education developed the DRDP-R consistent with California learning standards to measure developmental levels of children. The preschool tool includes 39 items or measures that assess development in the following domains: social-emotional, language, cognitive (including literacy and mathematics), and physical (gross and fine motor, health and safety). Each item includes a rubric with a description and exemplars for each of four ratings: exploring, developing, building, and integrating. Based on documented classroom observations, the teacher determines the level at which a child easily, confidently, and consistently demonstrates these four behaviors over time and in different settings.
- ECE**      **Early Childhood Education**  
An area of study emphasizing programs that help ensure young children are successful in school and are able to enhance their quality of life.
- ECERS-R**      **Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale — Revised**  
The ECERS-R is an assessment tool with a 43-item rating scale covering seven broad categories: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interactions, Program Structure, and Parents & Staff. Subscales are measured using a seven-point rating scale ranging from inadequate to excellent. The ECERS-R is administered by trained and independent observers.
- EL**      **English Learners**  
Students with a limited English vocabulary or are non-English speaking.
- FCCERS-R**      **Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale — Revised**  
The FCCERS-R is a tool designed to assess family child care programs for children from infancy through school-age.
- LAUP**      **Los Angeles Universal Preschool**  
LAUP is an independent public benefit corporation funded by First 5 Los Angeles — the commission established by Proposition 10. LAUP’s goal is to make voluntary, high-quality preschool available to every four-year old child in Los Angeles County, regardless of their family’s income, by 2014.

- NAEYC**      **National Association for the Education of Young Children**  
NAEYC is a national organization that works to improve the well-being of all young children, with a focus on the quality of educational and developmental services for all children from birth through age eight.
- NIEER**      **National Institute for Early Education Research**  
NIEER is a unit of the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey that supports early childhood education initiatives by providing objective, nonpartisan information based on research.
- PoP**      **Power of Preschool**  
PoP is a high-quality, free, voluntary, part-day preschool program for all of California’s 4-year olds (or 3- and 4-year olds) funded by First 5 California that assists children in becoming personally, socially, and physically competent, effective learners, and ready to transition into kindergarten. This First 5 initiative has pilot programs in Los Angeles, Merced, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Ventura, and Yolo.
- PFA**      **Preschool for All**  
PFA is a preschool program that aims to provide a strong foundation of learning to prepare all four-year olds for success in school and life. (The original title of the Power of Preschool program was Preschool for All. First 5 California changed the program name to PoP but some counties continue to use the “PFA” acronym.)
- QuEST**      **Quality Enhancement Support Team**  
A subsidiary of WestEd, consisting of a team of early education professionals with extensive experience and expertise in developing, implementing, and managing diverse early education programs.
- SDCPFA**      **San Diego County Preschool for All**  
In partnership with the County Office of Education, First 5 San Diego’s Preschool for All program provides free, quality, half-day preschool programs to families in San Diego county.
- SR**      **School Readiness**  
Children enter school physically and emotionally healthy, and ready to succeed.

## SN

### Special Needs

First 5 California defines children with special needs as having one of the following:

- Children with identified disability, health, or mental health conditions requiring early intervention, special education services, or other specialized services and supports; or
- Children without identified conditions, but requiring specialized services, supports, or monitoring.

## NOTES

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