



**PACE**

Child Development Projects

**California's Pioneering  
Training and Retention  
Initiatives for Early  
Childhood Educators:  
Lessons from  
San Francisco and  
Alameda Counties**

By Kyra Caspary

**Policy Brief 02-1**

This report is funded by the  
California Children and  
Families Commission

---

# POLICY BRIEF

---

MAY 2002

California's public investment in early care and education programs has quadrupled since 1996, rising to almost \$3.2 billion annually in the 2000 fiscal year. This sharp climb in political will to expand and improve the quality of child care has several explanations.

First, the steadily climbing employment rate for mothers with preschool-age children—rising from 15 percent in 1950 to over two-thirds in 1997 nationally—has sparked enormous demand for a variety of child-care providers and organizations.<sup>1</sup>

Second, federal and state governments, recognizing the potential influence of quality child-care programs in boosting child development and school readiness, have invested heavily in preschool and center-based programs over the past decade, moving beyond Washington's historical investment in Head Start.

Third, the implementation of welfare-to-work programs, and the public philosophy that single mothers must work if they are to remain eligible for public assistance, has further bolstered government investments to expand and improve public child care.

## **A Stable and Higher Quality Child-Care Workforce**

The local effectiveness of these policy initiatives—inside centers, family child-care homes, and preschools—rests on the assumption that a stable set of qualified teachers and staff is present to provide quality care and early education. Accumulating evidence on staff turnover, however, questions this assumption.

The authors of a 1999 report from the Center for the Child Care Workforce wrote, "Turnover is demoralizing. It can turn a child-care teacher's or director's job into a question of day-to-day survival, rather than a way of working toward high-quality care for children and families."<sup>2</sup>

The 1993 "Cost, Quality and Outcomes Report," conducted by researchers at four universities, found an annual staff turnover rate of 37 percent.<sup>3</sup> Another study conducted among 75 centers in northern California found that 76 percent of all of the staff members who worked in these centers in 1996 no longer worked there four years later, and that approximately half of these teachers and directors had left the child-care field altogether.<sup>4</sup>

While there may be a variety of reasons why child-care providers

leave their jobs, low pay is certainly high on the list. In 1999, the average wage for a child-care worker, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, was \$7.42 per hour. Those who define themselves as preschool teachers made about \$9.50 per hour, but that is still less than half of what kindergarten teachers earn.<sup>5</sup>

### Why Staff Retention Matters for Young Children

When young children have close and stable relationships with their child-care providers, they are more likely to feel happy and secure while their parents are working, according to researchers who study child-care quality. Frequent turnover of providers, however, can leave children acting aimless and withdrawn and can pull down the quality of the environment.

Staff stability and wages affect children's cognitive and social development through intertwined processes in centers and preschools. First, we know that center-based care of reasonable quality can boost young children's developmental trajectories. To date, the effects of quality are more robust and consistent for cognitive and language development, compared to social development.<sup>6</sup> We also know that stable relationships with well-educated adults, be it within the home or another child-care setting, can reliably predict children's early language and cognitive growth. These effects are most significant and consistent for children from low-income families.

More stable and better-educated center staff are more attentive and sensitive to young children in their classrooms and engage in more age-appropriate activities. The positive effects of high-quality center care, conducted through random-assignment experiments, have involved highly trained teachers who display very low turnover rates.<sup>7</sup> And other non-experimental studies have found that indicators of center quality, from the availability of learning materials to staff sensitivity and warmth, are closely associated with higher wages and lower turnover.<sup>8</sup> These positive effects also may occur within family child-care homes, but we have much less empirical evidence on this sector.

As a result, efforts to retain providers by boosting their income, as well as encouraging additional training and professional development, particularly for entry-level teachers, are becoming an important strategy in the drive to improve the quality and accessibility of child care.

### Innovative Approaches to Addressing Turnover

In 1999, both Alameda and San Francisco counties launched child-care provider retention incentive programs. These initiatives are designed to reduce turnover and encourage training and professional development among early care and education teachers and directors by providing monetary stipends to those who meet certain tenure and education requirements. Because of the pioneering nature of these two

programs, the California Children and Families Commission funded Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE), based at the University of California, Berkeley, to conduct a two-year preliminary evaluation. The PACE evaluation consists of both an outcome component focusing on program effects measured in terms of retention and professional development, and a qualitative study that examines how the programs have been implemented.

This policy brief synthesizes the findings from the Year 1 qualitative implementation studies of both counties' programs. Results of the quantitative study, such as retention and professional development rates for program participants, will be presented in a later report. This comparative qualitative report is divided into four sections:

1. Overview of program models
2. Program planning
3. Program implementation
4. Challenges and successes

## Overview of Program Models

### Program Scope and Structure

In the first year, the Alameda Child Development Corps was funded by the County Children and Families Commission, also known as the Proposition 10 Commission, while the SF CARES program was funded by the City and County of San Francisco through the county's general

## BOX 1

### History of the California CARES Initiative

Several child-care groups have advocated for higher wages over the past two decades, both in California and nationwide. In 1996, the California Department of Education contracted with the American Institutes for Research and the Center for the Child Care Workforce to complete a review of wages and benefits among child-care and preschool teachers and staff, revealing low pay for most, even among teaching staffs that displayed relatively strong education levels.

Aiming to coordinate a response to these data on wages, in 1997 the San Francisco Early Childhood Professional Development Institute (PDI) pulled together child-care leaders from around the state. This group of activists settled on a policy strategy that came to be known as CARES (Compensation and Retention Encourage Stability).<sup>1</sup> Originally developed by the Center for the Childcare Workforce, CARES provides monetary stipends to reward providers' professional development and training.

Subsequently, a number of counties designed programs based on this model, fusing wage supplements to well-organized professional development activities that encouraged teachers and staff to move up the state's Child Development Permit ladder. The child-care community in Alameda County developed a strategy with rigorous continuing education requirements tied to significant wage supplements, while San Francisco's model provided similar stipend levels with fewer continuing requirements. But at its inception, the CARES model stemmed from earlier "living wage" and economic justice movements.

The first bill to support CARES retention incentives was introduced in 1998 by Dion Aroner, a state legislator from the Berkeley-Oakland area. While waiting for State funds, advocates in Alameda County and San Francisco convinced local political leaders to allocate funding for CARES incentives. In San Francisco, the city leaders designated \$1.15 million from the county's general fund and charged the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families (DCYF) to work with the community to establish the first retention-incentive initiative in the State. The Alameda County program secured funding soon thereafter, aided by new tobacco tax revenues flowing to California counties under state Proposition 10 that provided over \$700 million annually for early childhood programs beginning in 1999.

Over the next two years, the California Children and Families Commission (under Proposition 10) and Governor Gray Davis had agreed to fund efforts in over 42 California counties to experiment with wage incentives, variably coupled with continuing training requirements. The State Commission also is supporting evaluations of the original Alameda and San Francisco programs, and the new initiatives getting underway throughout California.

<sup>1</sup> Burton, Alice; Jessica Mihaly; Jennifer Kagiwada; and Marcy Whitebook. The CARES Initiative in California: Pursuing Public Policy to Build a Skilled and Stable Child Care Workforce, 1997-2000. Center for the Child-Care Workforce, 2000.

fund, as detailed in Table 1. These different funding sources had important implications for program design: Proposition 10 funds are restricted for services for children from birth to age 5, while San Francisco general fund money could be used for caregivers serving children of all ages. In addition, San Francisco had proportionally less funding than did Alameda County, even given the county's smaller population and size.

While it is difficult to estimate the number of providers in licensed child-care facilities in the two counties, the number of slots for children in licensed care gives a sense of the relative size of the provider population (Table 2). In 2000, Alameda had more than twice as many center-based slots as did San Francisco, and approximately three times as many family child-care slots. These supply numbers mirror the overall population of the two counties; according to the Census 2000, Alameda County has nearly two times as many residents as San Francisco, and three times as many children under the age of five.

In Alameda County, individuals were recruited from the local child-care community to serve as Corps Advisors, providing technical assistance to Corps applicants. These advisors met with applicants and reviewed their documentation to determine eligibility before submitting the applications to program staff at the local Children and Families Commission. When the number of eligible applicants proved

**TABLE 1 Alameda and San Francisco funding**

	Alameda	San Francisco
<b>Total Funding</b>	\$3.8 million budgeted, \$4.1 million actual	\$1.15 million
<b>Funding Sources</b>	Alameda County Children and Families Commission	San Francisco General Fund
<b>Age Restrictions</b>	Providers serving children ages 0-5	Providers serving children ages 0-5 and offering after-school care for school-age children

**TABLE 2 Child care supply in the two counties**

Child Care Supply	Alameda	San Francisco
<b>Slots in licensed centers</b>	34,170 (6% infant care)	14,873 (4% infant care)
<b>Slots in licensed FCC</b>	19,368	6,663
<b>Total slots in licensed care</b>	53,538	21,536

**TABLE 3 Applicants and recipients**

	Alameda	San Francisco
<b>Number of Applicants</b>	2,500	1,233
<b>Total Stipends Awarded</b>	2,411	436
<b>Total Funds Awarded</b>	\$4,093,917	\$822,500

higher than expected, the Commission reduced the stipend levels slightly from the advertised maximum rather than exclude any eligible providers. As a result, the number of applicants is approximately the same as the number of recipients in the county, as illustrated in Table 3, since very few

applications from ineligible providers were submitted to program staff.

In San Francisco, providers submitted their applications directly to Wu Yee Children’s Services, the administering agency, where they were screened for eligibility by Wu Yee

staff. Because of limited funds, staff then selected recipients from this pool of eligible applicants based on a number of priority factors, including wages and tenure in the field.

Base stipend amounts ranged from \$475 to \$5,100 in Alameda and \$500 to \$5000 in San Francisco, depending on level of education. Both programs offered additional stipends for providers who held a graduate degree or who spoke a language other than English.

The distribution of the stipend funds is illustrated in Tables 4a and 4b and Figures 1 and 2. These numbers reflect all stipends recipients in San Francisco; in Alameda, the analysis includes only those recipients who provided consent to have their information released for purposes of the evaluation. In both Alameda and San Francisco counties, the number of recipients was approximately evenly distributed between level I (assistant/associate teacher) and level II (teacher through directors). Overall, very few recipients qualified for graduate stipends, and almost all of those who did were the more educated Level II providers. However, a greater number of level I recipients than level II received language stipends in both San Francisco and Alameda.

As illustrated by Figure 1, a greater proportion of the funds went to level II recipients, who received larger stipends; however, in San Francisco a high proportion (63%) of level I recipients received a \$500 language stipend, augmenting the total funds received by these providers.

## Program Planning

### Advocacy and Funding

Both counties benefited from a history of child-care and workforce advocacy in the Bay Area, as well as a model for a retention incentive program that had been developed and debated on the state level that they could draw on in designing a local program. In addition, the ability to build consensus among different children’s advocacy groups in support of the programs was key to securing program funding.

In San Francisco, recruiting new providers was growing more difficult, and directors were watching staff members leave for higher-paying positions at other centers or leaving the field altogether. Advocates thought there was little awareness among the general public about the issue of turnover in child care. In response, advocates worked to build understanding of the problem among the general population, and also targeted the Mayor and key members of the Board of Supervisors to gain support for the initiative. The SF CARES initiative was the first

program in San Francisco to directly address the retention problem, but it is complemented by variety of other efforts to improve the quality of child care, including another workforce compensation program called Wages +.

In Alameda, where many in the field reported turnover had reached a crisis point—with directors concerned that they sometimes had to wait five weeks or more to fill positions—key players were poised to draw on a rich history of advocacy for the child-care workforce. Berkeley,

**TABLE 4a San Francisco CARES Program: Year 1 stipends, all participants**

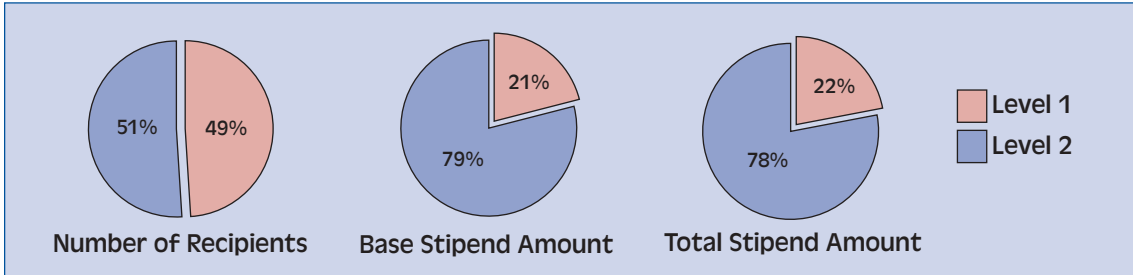
	Base Stipend		Language Stipend		Graduate Stipend		Total
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Amount
<b>Level I</b> (assistant through associate teacher)	212	\$101,500	135	\$64,750	3	\$1,500	\$167,750
<b>Level II</b> (teacher through director)	224	\$589,500	116	\$53,500	24	\$11,750	\$654,750
<b>Total</b>	436	\$691,000	251	\$118,250	27	\$13,250	\$822,500

**TABLE 4b Alameda Child Development Corps: Year 1 stipends, consenting participants only<sup>1</sup>**

	Base Stipend		Language Stipend		Graduate Stipend		Total
	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Number	Amount	Amount
<b>Level I</b> (assistant through associate teacher)	1046	\$717,392	341	\$102,300	15	\$4,875	\$824,567
<b>Level II</b> (teacher through director)	1101	\$2,751,250	267	\$80,100	149	\$48,425	\$2,879,775
<b>Total</b>	2147	\$3,468,642	608	\$182,400	164	\$53,300	\$3,704,342

<sup>1</sup> 2147 out of the total 2411 first year stipend recipients in Alameda County (89 percent) consented to have their information release to PACE for the evaluation. As a result, this analysis does not reflect all program funds disbursed.

**FIGURE 1 Alameda: Distribution of stipends by recipients and funds, consenting participants only**



located within Alameda County, is the birthplace of the Child Care Employee Project (later renamed the Center for the Child Care Workforce or CCW), and the city had previously implemented a small stipend-based retention program.

The Alameda County Child Care Planning Council was also seen as key to resolving a lot of the turf disputes that had existed among “various powerful child-care groups who operated independently,” one planner said. The council built consensus around the program within the child-care community and formed alliances across disciplines with the health services community. While some members of the health-care community were not originally interested in seeing local Children and Families

Commission dollars used for child care, consultants hired by the planners eventually struck a compromise and the Alameda Children and Families Commission initially allocated \$3.8 million for the first year of the Child Development Corps.

**Goals**

Planners and child-care advocates in both counties viewed linking professional growth and training to enhanced compensation as an initial way to address high turnover, low wages, and declining education levels in the child-care workforce, and improve the quality of care; however, program developers stressed that the programs were a first step towards improving compensation and retention for child-care providers, and noted that additional strategies were needed to

permanently raise at salaries in the field to a level commensurate with the education and training of the workforce.

In Alameda, focus group members asserted that wages still would need to be

increased before there would be any real improvement in retention. One provider who had received a stipend noted, “a stipend is good, but I don’t think it will stop someone from going into another field.”

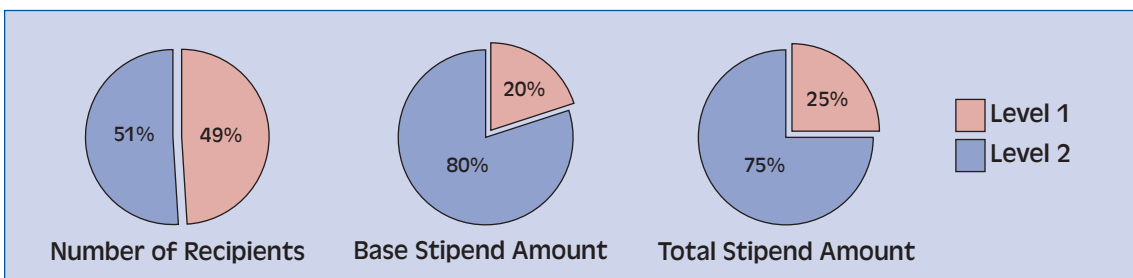
Many focus group participants had subsidiary goals for the programs as well, such as hoping the programs would help raise awareness of the importance of early care and education among the general public and motivate providers to advocate for higher wages. “As we go to college more and more,” one stipend recipient in Alameda County said, “no one will deny that we are professionals and we will get our recognition.”

**Theories of Action**

Planners in both counties saw the programs as a way to increase

retention and professional development of the child-care workforce, and to encourage child-care providers to stay in the field and advocate for improved compensation; however, the two counties used different

**FIGURE 2 San Francisco: Distribution of stipends by recipients and funds**



---

strategies to achieve this goal, reflecting their different funding levels. Alameda county chose to be more inclusive, hoping to create a unified advocacy Corps; San Francisco, without enough money to fund stipends for everyone, hoped that eligible applicants who were denied a stipend would join in the fight to increase funding.

Reactions to the two strategies were mixed. When the Alameda Children and Families Commission reduced the stipends for each level, bringing as many providers into the Corps as possible in Year 1, some providers expressed disappointment that the actual stipends were lower than advertised maximum; however, many directors reported that their staff members were generally pleased and were happy to have the recognition.

In contrast, because of limited funding in San Francisco, not all eligible providers received a stipend. Planners decided to target the lowest wage earners, designating them as Priority 1, and within this group prioritizing providers with the longest tenure. Assisted by timely matching funds from the state, the strategy worked; funding for SF CARES more than doubled for Year 2 with the addition of county and state Children and Families Commission monies.

This prioritization approach in San Francisco had its downsides; some first year applicants who were not awarded a stipend became frustrated. For example, the complicated point system used to prioritize eligible

applicants in San Francisco was cumbersome and may have alienated some providers who met the general eligibility criteria and did not understand why they did not receive a stipend. One member of the Advisory Work Group in San Francisco said there was much uncertainty among providers about who would be receiving stipends, since there was not enough money to fund all eligible applicants. “Maybe that’s why they’re not as interested and engaged in it as they could’ve been,” she said. As a result, in Year 2 SF CARES staff targeted outreach efforts to eligible applicants who had not been funded the previous year.

### **Stipend Eligibility**

Of all the program decisions, questions of eligibility, both for the program and for particular stipend levels, raised the most passionate feelings among program planners and recipients alike. Planners in both counties debated which factors, such as education, income level and experience in the field, should be considered in determining eligibility and stipend level. Describing the decision-making process in San Francisco, one program planner recalled, “We decided that we are rewarding retention, but that the wage issue is key and people who are making more should have second priority.”

### **Income**

One organizer explained that, “no one could decide whether CARES was a compensation program or a

professional development program.” In a compensation program, money would be directed to providers with the lowest incomes, while for a program aimed purely at increasing professional development and training, an applicant’s income would not factor into stipend eligibility or level. The final program designs reflect the philosophy and goals of the constituencies and individuals who shaped the programs.

Organizers in San Francisco and Alameda counties stressed the need to decrease turnover of highly-educated early care and education staff such as teachers and directors, and designed the programs to award larger stipends for more highly-educated providers. Some entry-level providers reflected that directors, whose salaries are already higher, did not need a stipend. However, when one director in Alameda suggested that directors be dropped from the program so staff could receive larger stipends, another countered that director turnover is also high and can destabilize a center, engendering high turnover among teachers and staff.

### **Tenure and Experience**

To be eligible for the program, at the time of application providers must have been employed at their current workplace for the previous nine months in Alameda and twelve months in San Francisco. The enforcement of these policies led some providers to voice concerns about coworkers who had taken temporary disability or maternity

leave and were therefore not eligible to receive a stipend. Based on this feedback, the programs in both program re-examined these policies in subsequent years; but in the first year program staff reported that they thought it was important to consistently implement program policies and not change the rules mid-course.

Other providers thought that years of experience, in addition to education credits, should factor into the determination of stipend level; however, in designing the program planners drew on research findings that indicate provider education level is a key indicator of quality care (see Box 2). As a result, both programs included a tenure requirement to determine basic eligibility for the program, but stipend level is based on the number of college units.

### *Education: The Child Development Permit Matrix*

Designers of the state CARES bill wanted to provide larger rewards for providers who had made greater investments in education and training. Because there was no uniformly adopted career ladder for early care and education professionals in California, they decided to base the program on the California Child Development Permit, the state's early education permit required for employment at some publicly-funded centers. This permit is issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the same agency that administers credentials for elementary and secondary school teachers,

but is only required of providers at a subset of state-funded centers. The Community Care Licensing standards that apply to providers at *all* licensed centers and family child-care homes have lower education requirements for child-care providers. In the state CARES design, on which both San Francisco and Alameda modeled their programs, recipients reaching different levels of the Child Development Permit would be rewarded with varying stipend amounts.

The local retention-incentive programs aimed to create an incentive for all providers to move onto and up the state permit ladder. In Alameda County, when there was a debate over whether license-exempt providers, who do not have to meet any requirements, should be eligible for the stipends, it was eventually decided that they too should be included because "it would be one more way of professionalizing the field." In contrast, the SF CARES program was open only to providers at licensed centers or family child-care homes.

By basing the qualifications for different stipend levels on the Child Development Permit matrix and requiring the recipient to apply for a permit to receive a stipend in Year 2, planners in Alameda strove to establish the permit as a credential for the field. One organizer in Alameda County noted, "We have a professional growth system that's been codified—let's go with it." They also hoped to mobilize the child-care workforce to advocate to make the

permit more relevant to the entire field, particularly to family child care.

Relying on the guidelines of the California Child Development Permit to determine stipend level resulted in some discontent. Many participants thought that the permit was not an appropriate yardstick for family child-care providers. Because state licensing does not require family child-care providers to have as much formal education as center-based providers, using the matrix potentially excludes many of them from receiving a stipend. Family child-care providers often do not receive units for the workshops and trainings they attend, so many of these providers do not have the units to qualify even at the lowest permit level. "We need to have our own matrix," noted a family child-care provider in San Francisco.

In addition, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing only recognizes academic units from units from schools accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) or its equivalent. Because both retention programs aligned their standards with those of the California Child Development Permit, some providers trained through alternative training programs were not eligible for a stipend that reflected their years of education. For example, many providers who had completed Montessori training found that their Montessori units did not count and that they qualified for a lower stipend than they had anticipated.



## Program Implementation

Based on the comments of program staff and planners in the two counties, certain themes emerged that point to elements of successful implementation.

### Home Agency

Planners and program staff in both counties stressed that the choice of home agency will depend on the needs and infrastructure of the local context. A community-based organization may have close ties to the child-care community. On the other hand, a county agency may be perceived as more neutral than a community organization, without the complication of potential conflicts of interest.

In San Francisco, where the administering agency was Wu Yee Children's Services—a children and family service agency that operates a resource and referral program and also runs child-care centers—some planners were concerned that providers would think the agency was “building its own empire.” The agency operates child-care centers and thus employs child-care providers who are potentially eligible to receive a stipend, leading to the possibility that the agency could be motivated to favor its own employees. However, members of the Advisory Work Group were confident that there were no improprieties; and in the second year, outside reviewers examined SF CARES applications from employees of Wu Yee.

### BOX 2

#### The Role of Provider Training in Child-Care Quality: Elements of Caregiver Training Raise Child Outcomes

In designing an initiative aimed at increasing quality by targeting early care and education professionals, the key question becomes: what measurable characteristics of caregivers are related to quality? Research suggests that a number of caregiver traits, including high levels of provider education, are associated with social, cognitive, and language development for children.

Researchers have found positive effects of high-quality center care through random-assignment experiments involving highly trained teachers who display very low turnover rates. More stable and better-educated center staff are more attentive and sensitive to young children in their classrooms and engage in more age-appropriate activities.

But how much education does it take to achieve the level of quality associated with improved outcomes for children? While research indicates that higher levels of providers training are associated with better quality care, such as greater sensitivity and more age-appropriate activities, there is evidence that good-quality care may be related to a bachelor's degree. One study of center-based providers found that although some specialized training in caring for children was associated with increased quality of care, providers with bachelor's degrees were linked to classrooms that were rated as good or better.<sup>1</sup> Another study of licensed family child-care providers found that levels of education below a B.A. were not associated providers with higher-quality settings.<sup>2</sup>

Based on this empirical evidence, a guide for Children and Family Commissions suggests that short-term (and relatively inexpensive) efforts to increase specialized provider training may be less effective than efforts to require higher levels of formal education and to improve compensation with the goal of retaining providers with college degrees.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Howes, C. Children's experiences in center-based child care as a function of teacher background and adult:child ratio. *Merrill Palmer Quarterly*, 43,404-426.

<sup>2</sup>Burchinal, M., Howes, C. and Kontos, S. (under review) Recommended child:adult ratios guidelines and child care quality in child care homes.

<sup>3</sup>Howes, C. and J. Brown, *Improving Child Care Quality: A Guide for Proposition 10 Commissions*, in N. Halfon, E. Shulman, M. Shannon and M. Hochstein eds., *Building Community Systems for Young Children*, UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities, 2000.

In Alameda, planners felt that no single community agency had the capacity to gear up quickly enough to implement such a large-scale and novel program. In addition, the County Commission provided a neutral home for the program without the complication of employing child-care providers who would be potential stipend recipients.

### Staffing

Program staff identified a variety of skills that were valuable in coordinating a retention-incentive program: background in child care, analytical skills, flexibility, sensitivity, public speaking skills, and the ability to track many tasks at the same time and to work with diverse communities. Some staff members also noted the need for computer and technical skills as well as fluency in a second language in addition to English. Finally, because the programs were new and viewed as pilot projects by some funders, one director noted how their implementation differed from running a typical center: “You have to have more staff who understand the community organizing and advocacy and...who understand the evaluation and research and the impact on public policy.”

Because work for the program comes in waves, with a particularly heavy workload during the application period, the eligibility determination process, and check distribution, staff also identified the need for flexible scheduling policies for staff, and to budget for consultants,

such as community college child development instructors, who can help to review applications for eligibility.

In Alameda, the program had three full-time staff in the first year, aided by Corps advisors who received a small stipend for guiding providers through the application and making an initial determination of eligibility. In San Francisco, Wu Yee hired a CARES coordinator but the program was largely implemented by Wu Yee staff pulled in from other parts of the agency. The SF CARES advisory work group members also played a central role in implementing the program, along with consultants from the child-care community who were available to answer applicants’ questions.

Without a core program staff, the application process can become fragmented and confusing for applicants. It may be difficult to be responsive to questions in a consistent way without a designated program staff. For example, in San Francisco, when applicants with questions about the program called the agency, they often reached an answering machine and never received a call back.

Staff members in Alameda, who were without administrative support in the first year, said that because they spent so much time handling tasks such as copying and collating, they lacked time to devote to other responsibilities.

Planners learned that reliance on volunteers for program implementation, without adequate support from program staff, is not sustainable. As one person in San Francisco said, “Passion is not sufficient to sustain a long-term movement.” On the other hand, organizers learned that if they are properly supported, members of advisory groups, volunteers, and support staff can develop into leaders within the child-care field.

### Outreach

Both counties received more applications from providers than they had anticipated. While providers were eager to receive a stipend, conveying the goals of the program proved more difficult, both within and beyond the two counties’ child-care communities. For example, in San Francisco some providers who met the basic eligibility requirements were angry that they did not receive any funds. Defining a vision for the program early, articulating it clearly, and reiterating this message in many forums is essential to developing understanding of the program goals and fostering support for the program from applicants, recipients, and the general public.

Outreach strategies used in both counties included posters, brochures, and mailings to all licensed family child-care homes and centers. Focus group participants also suggested presenting information on the program at local meetings of child-care providers. Organizers also learned that reaching family

---

child-care providers, who tend to be more isolated, requires more extensive and targeted outreach efforts.

In both Alameda and San Francisco, consultants were recruited from the child-care community and paid a small stipend to help providers through the application process.<sup>9</sup> Program participants viewed this strategy as very effective because of the consultants' willingness to accommodate the individual needs of applicants. Some suggested, however, that it would be more equitable to pay these consultants based on the number of applicants they assist rather than a standard sum, because the distribution of work varied greatly. Consultants listed at the top of a list attached to the program application received many more calls than those lower down on the list. One consultant suggested having a central number that would route applicant calls in a more equitable manner.

From the point of view of program staff, this peer outreach strategy relieved some of the burden of reviewing application documents and answering applicant questions, allowing the Alameda Child Development Corps to provide individualized technical assistance to approximately 2500 applicants with core staff of only three full-time employees. Alameda staff noted, however, that this approach meant they had less control over the information given to recipients, as the volunteer Corps advisors were not as knowledgeable as program staff about the details of Corps eligibility.

Even with these various communication strategies, there was still some misunderstanding about the purpose of the program. In San Francisco, program staff and advisory group members were concerned that some providers viewed the program as an entitlement guaranteed for all eligible providers rather than a retention, professional development, and quality initiative. As a result, some providers who did not receive a stipend were angry, believing that they were entitled to receive a portion of the funds because they met the basic eligibility criteria.

## Challenges and Successes

While the incentives and professional development certainly generated a lot of enthusiasm among child-care providers in the two counties, those who organized and operated the programs also have faced a number of obstacles. What they are learning could help others launching similar retention incentive efforts.

### Application Process

The process of verifying applicants' coursework and units was more time-consuming than program staff in either county had anticipated. This was especially the case when applicants had transcripts from foreign countries or out of state and from applicants who completed their education before there was a specialty in early childhood education or child development. Program staff in San Francisco recommended budgeting

for consultants who are familiar with the community college system to help with the transcript review process.

### Language Stipend

While many participants valued the language stipend as a way of rewarding the ability to meet the needs of parents and children from diverse backgrounds, this stipend was controversial because it is difficult to verify the use and proficiency of a second language. The issue is likely to be the subject of ongoing debate.

“To be able to communicate to parents and children in their home language is critical to the quality of care,” said one focus group member in San Francisco who was supportive of the stipend. But others thought it wasn't fair, especially to African-American providers who are less likely to speak a foreign language than those from other minority groups. Another provider in Alameda noted that just because a provider greets children in their home language every morning doesn't mean she is really using it to communicate beyond that.

### Stipend Awards

Taxes were not withheld from the stipends in either county. Despite multiple efforts to remind recipients that they would need to pay taxes on the stipends, many providers did not understand that they needed to set aside a part of their stipend and were confused and dismayed when they started to fill out their tax forms. Clear information about how the stipend should be reported for tax

purposes, as well as reminders to set aside a portion of the stipend for taxes, may help mitigate some of the confusion; however, unless taxes can be withheld some recipients are likely to be surprised and upset when they go to file their taxes.

**Continuing Eligibility Requirements**

Continuing eligibility requirements have the potential to motivate recipients to continue their professional development. In the first year of implementation in Alameda County, applications for Child Development Permits increased 237% (Table 5), and enrollment in community college child development courses increased 18% over the previous year (Table 6). While there is no way to know how much of this increase can be directly attributed to the Corps, it is unlikely to be due to random variation.<sup>10</sup>

**TABLE 5 Child Development Permit Applications processed by the Child Development Training Consortium**

	FY 1999-2000	FY 2000-2001	Percent Change
Alameda	283	953	+237
San Francisco	108	148	+37
Statewide	4,065	5,035	+24

Source: Child Development Training Consortium

Course offerings in the early childhood education departments of Alameda County’s four community colleges also increased, with more sections offered and the addition of evening, weekend, and classes convened in community-based settings. One college added a bilingual introductory early care and education course offered in Spanish and English. These changes may have been driven both by the increased in demand for courses and the work of the professional development

coordinators funded by the Corps and located at each of the colleges to make courses more accessible to providers working in the field.

Some Corps members in Alameda mentioned that the stipend program had created “positive jealousy” among co-workers. Those who were not eligible in the first year were inspired to complete the requirements so they would be ready for the next year. One participant said, “Everybody’s going to school so we can all be part of the program, even the directors.”

**TABLE 6 Alameda County Community College Early Childhood Education courses**

	Enrollment			Sections		
	1999-2000	2000-2001	Percent change	1999-2000	2000-2001	Percent change
Chabot	1889	2432	+28	62	70	+13
Las Positas <sup>1</sup>	759	943	+24	30	35	+17
Merritt	2601	2980	+15	75	100	+33
Ohlone	1054	1161	+10	50	52	+4
Total	6313	7516	+19	217	257	+18

<sup>1</sup> Does not include summer session.

Notes: 1999-2000 includes three semesters: summer 1999, fall 1999, and spring 2000. 2000-2001 includes three semesters: summer 2000, fall 2000, spring 2001

Source: Alameda County community colleges

Enrollment in early childhood education courses at City College of San Francisco, the city's largest child development training site, decreased 9 percent from 2000 to 2001 (Table 7). Instructors attributed this trend to "the economy and the fact that people are moving out of San Francisco." San Francisco CARES had less than a quarter the number of stipend recipients as Alameda in the first year. In addition, staff in San Francisco emphasized the need to publicize and reiterate the requirements throughout the year for the program to serve as an effective incentive for continued professional development. Because the program was understaffed in the first year, there was no time to focus on educating recipients about the requirements for the next year.

Career advising and planning could prevent recipients from taking courses indiscriminately to fulfill program requirements rather than seeking out career-relevant coursework. For example, one participant in the program in Alameda County reported taking a course on working with adolescents because it was the only one available—even though it would not enhance her skills in the early-childhood education field.

Requiring a quality assessment may help teachers reflect on the care they provide, and provide a common language to discuss quality. To be eligible for a stipend in subsequent years, Alameda recipients were required to learn how to conduct the Harms-Clifford Environmental Rating

### BOX 3

#### Comments on the Programs from Participants and Others

The comments of the teachers and directors participating in the San Francisco CARES program and the Alameda Child Development Corps give a sense of how the programs have affected the professional lives of these caregivers.

**San Francisco Center Director:** "I was just as tired as anybody else. It was really hard being with the staff, experiencing what they were experiencing...it made all the difference in the world to me, just in terms of my hope that I have something to offer the center."

**San Francisco Teacher:** "The stability of having a single provider over a long period of time is conveyed to the child. Who we are, we pass on to the children."

**San Francisco Teacher:** "If you've got all your teachers going back to school then... it's a much more professional setting."

**Alameda Teacher:** "Nothing makes you feel better than for someone to recognize the work you are doing...that's why I wear my Corps T-shirt so proudly every Friday."

**Alameda Teacher:** "Being in the Corps made me feel good about my work. I've been working with children for more than thirty years and until now never got even a piece of paper saying 'we appreciate your service.' The appreciation is more important than the money."

**Alameda Teacher:** "I have become more involved professionally; I'm out there more and more aware of what's happening in the field."

**Alameda Director:** "I seek out trainings and try to go to as many as I can because I know my staff is going to ask me questions. I've been helping them apply for their permits."

**Alameda Planner:** "For the first time we've brought so many people in Alameda County into the state permit structure . . .that, in my mind, adds another dimension to the people seeing themselves as professional, as part of a professional licensing system that is comparable to teachers and nurses."

**TABLE 7 City College of San Francisco: Early Childhood Education courses**

	Enrollment			Sections		
	1999-2000	2000-2001	Percent change	1999-2000	2000-2001	Percent change
<b>City College</b>	4928	4485	-9%	181	192	6%

Source: City College of San Francisco

Scale, a measure of child-care quality developed by child development researchers, and assess their classroom using the appropriate family child-care, infant/toddler or center-based care scale. Center directors were enthusiastic about the requirement, noting that it lent credibility and prompted acceptance of a research-based definition of quality.

### Conclusions

Anecdotally, there are reports that the stipends have reduced turnover at some sites in both counties. Some focus group participants said that they had been reevaluating their own situations and would be more likely to stay in their positions.

Directors and providers stated that it's too soon to determine whether the stipends are helping to improve the quality of care. One participant, however, stressed that these initiatives are certainly one approach that, when combined with other resources, can help providers focus on quality. "You've got to have all those pieces," she said, "because you can't expect people with nothing to fix their own problems."

### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Hofferth, S. (1999). Child care, maternal employment, and public policy. In S. Helburn (Ed.), *The Silent Crisis in U.S. Child Care: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 563, 20-38; Hofferth, S. (1999). Changes in American children's time. *Childnews* (bulletin of the American Sociological Association), pp. 1-4.
- <sup>2</sup> Whitebook, M., and Dan Bellm. (1999) *Taking on Turnover*.
- <sup>3</sup> Helburn, S., & C. Howes. (1996) Child care cost and quality. *Future of Children*, 6:62-78.
- <sup>4</sup> Whitebook, M., L Sakai, E. Gerber, & C. Howes (2001) *Then and Now: Change in Child Care Staffing, 1994-2000*.
- <sup>5</sup> Data reported by the Center for the Child Care Workforce (2001) and derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics current population surveys conducted in 2000.
- <sup>6</sup> Barnett, W.S. (1995) Long-term effects of early childhood programs on cognitive and school outcomes. *The Future of Children*, 5, 25-50; Broberg, A., Wessels, H., Lamb, M., & Hwang, C. (1997). Effects of day care on the development of cognitive abilities in 8 year-olds: A longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 33, 62-69; Burchinal, M. (1999). Child care experiences and developmental outcomes. In S. Helburn (Ed.), *The Silent Crisis in U.S. Child Care: Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 563, 73-97; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network (2000) The relation of child care to cognitive and language development. *Child Development*, 71, 958-978.
- <sup>7</sup> Shonkoff, J. & Phillips, D. (2000) (Eds.). *From neurons to neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development*. Washington DC: National Academy Press.

<sup>8</sup> Phillips, D., Mekos, D., Scarr, S., McCartney, K. & Abbot-Shinn, M. (2001). Within and beyond the classroom door: Assessing quality in child care centers. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 15 (4), 475-496.

<sup>9</sup> In San Francisco, these advisors provided technical assistance over the phone and at meetings. In Alameda, they reviewed the verification documentation and made an initial determination of eligibility and stipend level, screening out applicants who did not meet the minimum eligibility requirements.

<sup>10</sup> The increase in number of permit applications from Alameda County is statistically significant at less than a .05 level compared to the application levels from other California counties during the same time period.

### Appendix A:

Methodology for the Year 1 Qualitative Implementation Study of the SF CARES Program and Alameda Child Development Corps

#### Sources

The final report of the qualitative study draws on three sources of information: focus groups, interviews, and background materials.

**Focus Groups:** Between December 2000 and April 2001, PACE conducted eleven focus groups with individuals who have been involved in the SF CARES program and the Alameda Child Development Corps,

listed in Table 8. PACE conducted two separate focus groups with community stakeholders in San Francisco, and three focus groups with stipend recipients: level 1 recipients, level 2 recipients, and family child-care providers.

**Interviews:** PACE conducted follow-up interviews to gather information not covered in the focus groups, and/or to capture perspectives of individuals who could not attend the focus groups.

**Background materials:** PACE also relied on program materials, such as the application, outreach materials and meeting minutes that provide valuable background about the

program. PACE obtained enrollment numbers from staff at the community colleges.

### Confidentiality

PACE assures confidentiality to all study participants and gained written informed consent from all focus group and interview participants.

### Generalizability

Statements of focus group participants may reflect an individual, rather than a more widely-held, perspective. PACE has made an effort to highlight those perspectives that came up more than once, voiced by more than one participant and in more than one focus group.

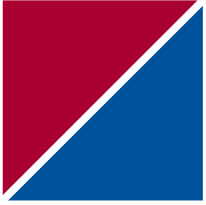
## Special Thanks

*Special thanks to Linda Jacobson, a Los Angeles-based writer who has been covering education for eleven years, for her editorial assistance. Also, this report would not have been possible without the assistance of Marianna Giokas, Muriel Hamilton, and Janice Chen.*

*Case studies with more information about the first year of implementation of the Alameda Child Development Corps and the San Francisco CARES Program are available on the PACE website at <http://pace.berkeley.edu>.*

**TABLE 8 Year 1 Focus Groups**

<b>Planners</b>	Key players involved with developing the program design and identifying program funding
<b>Community Stakeholders</b>	Representatives from local Resource and Referral agencies (R&Rs), school districts and other local government and child-care agencies
<b>Outreach Participants</b>	Individuals who were not on the program’s payroll who assisted with recruitment and provided support to applicants
<b>Program Staff</b>	Staff responsible for implementing the program
<b>Program Participants</b>	Stipend recipients, grouped by level and/or licensing type (center, FCC, exempt)
<b>Advisory Group</b>	Members of the program’s advisory group
<b>Center Directors</b>	Directors of local centers (subsidized, non-profit, and for-profit, all sizes) who have staff participating in the program and can discuss both the application process and the effect of the program at the center level
<b>Educators/Trainers</b>	Instructors and administrators at local community colleges, training coordinators at local R&Rs, and representatives from other professional development institutions who can discuss training needs and their perceptions of program effect



**PACE** POLICY BRIEF  
Child Development Projects

University of California  
Graduate School of Education  
3653 Tolman Hall  
Berkeley, CA 94720-1670

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

---

## RELATED PACE PUBLICATIONS

---

- Kyra Caspary, Elizabeth Gilman, Muriel Hamilton. *Alameda Child Development Corps: Year 1 Qualitative Implementation Study Report*. PACE Child Development Projects, Web Series 02-W01, February 2002. Available on our website
- Kyra Caspary, Marianna Giokas, Holly Veldhuis. *San Francisco Child Development Corps: Year 1 Qualitative Implementation Study Report*. PACE Child Development Projects, Web Series 02-W02, February 2001. Available on our website
- Judith Carroll. *How to Pay for Child Care? Local Innovations Help Working Families*. Policy Brief Series 01-1, Spring 2001. (From the *Growing Up in Poverty Project*.) Available on our website, or may be ordered for \$10.
- *Remember the Children: Mothers Balance Work and Child Care under Welfare Reform*. 2000. (From the *Growing Up in Poverty Project*.) May be ordered for \$25.
- James F. Mensing, Desiree French, Bruce Fuller, and Sharon Lynn Kagan. *Child Care Selection under Welfare Reform: How Mothers Balance Work Requirements and Parenting*. August 2000. Available on our website.
- Bruce Fuller, Yueh-Wen Chang, Sawako Suzuki, and Sharon Lynn Kagan. *Child-Care Aid and Quality for California Families: Special Focus on San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties*. Working Paper Series 01-2, Spring 2001. (A product of the *Growing Up in Poverty Project*.) May be ordered for \$10.
- Susanna Loeb, Bruce Fuller, Diane Hirshberg. *Estimating Unmet Need for Child Care and Preschool: Alternative Definitions and Analytic Tools*. June 2002.

To obtain copies please send a check payable to UC Regents to PACE. Publications order form is also available on the PACE website: <http://pace.berkeley.edu>.