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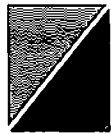
Leading the Way:

California's History in Child Care and Development

By Jack McCurdy







- Successful family reunification in abuse cases because programs like Protective Services was available.

“Leading the Way: California’s History In Child Care and Development”

**By
Jack McCurdy**

Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) is a university-based research center focusing on issues of state education policy and practice. PACE is located in the Schools of Education at the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford University. It is funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

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CALIFORNIA FILLS MATERIALS VOID

Another new curriculum manual is *Kids' Time: A School-Age Care Program Guide*, which grew out of discussions at a national conference on Block Grant funding about the lack of materials on school-age child care, an expanding field for latchkey youngsters. Other widely-recognized materials include *Just Kids: A Practical Guide for Working with Children Prenatally Substance-Exposed*, *Preparing for Mass Disasters* and *A Guide for Training and Recruiting Child Care Providers to Serve Young Children with Disabilities*.

Reducing Exceptional Stress and Trauma, a curriculum guide and training manual on coping with violence in everyday life, is scheduled for publication this year.

The benefits of this venerable child care system are embedded in the experiences of the millions of children and families whose lives have been enriched by child care. Here are some the consequences it continues to bestow:

- Fully-employed parents because child care was available during job training.
- Self-sufficient families because their child care was subsidized when their wages were low.
- Children who succeed in school because child care programs aided their development.



COMPONENTS OF TRAINING NETWORK

Other components of the training network include the High/Scope Training of Teacher Trainers at various locations throughout the state, regional institutes for program directors hosted by provider agencies and coordinated by the California Community Colleges Child Care Training Consortium, and the mentor teacher program at 20 community colleges. That program is designed to increase retention of outstanding teachers through enhanced leadership responsibilities and compensation. About 2,000 caregivers also attend educational sessions at the annual Child Development Conference sponsored by Child Development Division. In addition, a significant amount of staff and parent training is conducted in the use of materials by contractors who produce them.

California is the largest state publisher of child care and development training manuals, curriculum guides, parent handbooks and video tapes. About 56 items are currently available or in production, and in 1994 more than 14,000 copies were purchased for over \$400,000 in California, other states and around the world. Income from the sales defray all production costs to the state.

One of the newest is the multi-media Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, which was developed in conjunction with the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development and is the first comprehensive training system of its kind for the caregivers of children up to three years of age. Nationally acclaimed and used worldwide in English, Spanish and Chinese versions, the program consists of eight guides and 12 videotapes in four modules concerning aspects of infant care, which have been exhibited on national public television.

LEADING THE WAY:

CALIFORNIA'S HISTORY IN CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1973, California invented the Resource and Referral agency to provide better child care information to parents, document needs for care in communities, furnish technical assistance to providers and establish a link among caregivers in local areas.

It was conceived at a time when the demand for child care was starting to soar, and communities across the state were scrambling to respond to the changing needs of families. The R&R was a unique multi-purpose program that became what one observer described as "the missing piece to the whole child care puzzle." Funded by the state starting in 1976, R&Rs filled a void in the burgeoning field of child care by serving as mutual support and information systems for parents and providers alike.

But as remarkable as the invention of R&Rs was 20 years ago, it was not at all unusual for California—the state has traditionally been at the forefront of the national movement to achieve better and expanded child care services. To other states and federal agencies, R&Rs represent just one of many examples of



California's leadership in the field of child care over much of the 20th century.

CALIFORNIA AS INCUBATOR OF IDEAS

As child care programs have proliferated in scope, diversity and programmatic variety across the country, California has served as the incubator for many of the creative ideas, fresh initiatives and newly-targeted programs that have shaped the nation's \$2 billion system of today. Specifically, the state has been a leader in:

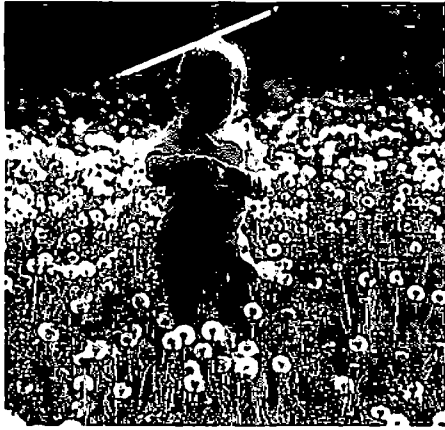
- State and private spending on subsidized child care.
- Licensing and regulation to enhance child welfare and safety.
- Establishing quality standards for providers.
- Developing targeted services to meet the changing needs of families.
- Delivering services through a variety of modes.
- Creating programs for diverse populations.
- Offering training opportunities for caregivers.
- Producing training materials for California providers and parents that are also purchased and distributed throughout the nation and the world.

Many experts believe that this vast array of programs and services represents a larger and longer commitment to child care services than all other states combined. In fact, it

edge and skills of practitioners in the field and to encourage local caregivers to assume greater responsibility for the quality of the programs they run. With 50 consortia now functioning, California is breaking new ground in the review process, while most other states have yet to develop basic quality standards for their child care systems.

Under terms of the Block Grant funding, states also were required to obtain public input in deciding how to spend monies for quality improvement. But California was the only state to create child care and development planning councils to involve local communities in a broad-scale, in-depth way. The councils' task is to identify needs and set priorities for spending of Block Grant child care funds. Under a format established by the state, boards of supervisors and county superintendents of schools have appointed councils in all counties, and operational funding began in 1994-95. The council brings together thousands of parents, providers, program directors, employers, community groups, school districts, community colleges, and city and county officials in an unprecedented statewide child care planning process.

California over the years also has built an unparalleled network of training programs for both subsidized and non-subsidized providers to maintain the state's high level of quality in child care and development. In addition, Block Grant as well as state funds have been used to expand training opportunities to try to keep up with the growing need for qualified staff in child care programs. Most staff are trained at 71 campuses of the California Community Colleges, which enroll about 6,000 providers a year in early childhood courses. More than 28,000 class credits were awarded in 1994 to providers, who completed early childhood course work at a 97 percent rate.



state began building in the mid-1970s and which go beyond minimum licensing requirements. Developed by the Child Development Division of the state Department of Education, they are now called Exemplary Program Standards and are the basis for external reviews for subsidized program improvement. Exemplary

standards components consist of environment, program content, site personnel, parent/site personnel relationship and administration, which are reflected in 45 indicators on the quality review instrument used in the process. They also include recognition of cultural and limited-English proficiency differences among children as standards for quality programs.

Exemplary standards reviews were conducted by the professional staff of the Child Development Division until the division began phasing in a new peer review process in 1992. Since then, local program improvement consortia have been organized among program operators and agencies in local communities to train providers in conducting reviews and also to teach them how to engage in the new concept of self-managed program improvement and staff development.

PEER PROCESS BREAKS NEW GROUND

The goals of the peer process are to maintain high-quality reviews of programs in view of limited numbers of Child Development Division staff resources, to develop the knowl-

surpasses the efforts of many industrial nations and has for many years been an international model.

CALIFORNIA SPENDS THE MOST

California spends more than any other state on child care and early childhood services. In 1994, California's total state expenditure was \$541 million. A 1992 report of the Children's Defense Fund ranked the state sixth in funding per child. A table in the report comparing state expenditures showed that California spent \$200 million a year on child care and development centers and family day care homes alone, which was more than any other state allocated in total on child care, except one (New York).

California also is one of the few states to set aside funds for capital outlay for child care and development facilities. As early as 1968, the Legislature appropriated money to build new centers or to refurbish old buildings. Approximately \$50 million has been allocated by the state for the housing of child care programs.

California's population of more than six million children is by far the largest among the states and the most ethnically and linguistically diverse. None of its five major ethnic groups is in a majority among children under age 14. It also is one of the poorest populations of children under age six, with 19 percent below the poverty level. The number, diversity and indigence of many of its youth underscore California's chal-



lence in providing children's services and its achievements in child care.

FLEXIBILITY AS KEY

Perhaps California's most important contribution to child care policy has been the state's willingness to acknowledge the variety of families that need care and the different ways those needs should be met. The design of the state's flexible subsidized child care system is a key to the success of its 19 programs in addressing those needs.

Here is the way that California's extraordinary child care system has been characterized:

"California provides more state support for child care and funds a richer variety of programs than any other state in the nation...California seems to have a 'model' child care policy (relatively generous with state funding, creative in its development of alternative programs and serious in its effort to improve existing programs)."

— W. Norton Grubb of the University of California at Berkeley.

"Where child care policy is concerned, California has always tended to be an anomaly."

— James A. Levine of the Families and Work Institute in New York City.

"Historically, California has been recognized throughout the country for its model child care sys-

Risk Child Care for families at risk of going on welfare, the GAIN program for families on welfare who are engaged in training programs, Non-Gain Education and Training for welfare parents enrolled in county-approved education and training, AFDC Income Disregard and Supplemental Child Care for employed, low-income welfare parents and the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant, which was implemented by the state in 1991.

STATE RECOGNIZED FOR IMAGINATION

California is recognized for the imaginative uses its agencies have made of the new federal Child Care and Development Block Grant funding, a major source of additional support for child care. Besides providing additional subsidized child care and R&R services, the Block Grant program authorizes the expenditure of a portion of the funds for quality improvement activities, which also receive state support. In California, the improvement activities include provider training and assistance, recruitment and retention of child care staff and educational materials and supplies—all areas in which the state has long excelled and welcomed new funding to meet expanding needs.

One main focus of the improvement effort is in the area of quality standards for providers and programs, which the



In the 1990s, California initiated these new programs: California Alternative Assistance, which provides child care to welfare-eligible recipients who choose not to receive aid; Cal Learn, which offers child care to teenage parents on welfare so they can complete high school and TrustLine, the system for conducting background checks. TrustLine is administered by the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network under contract with the state Department of Education and is operated by R&Rs throughout the state.

NEW STATE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

One of the newest state child care programs is Cal Learn, which was authorized in 1988 and became fully operational in all counties in 1995. Its unique feature is the case management model, called the Adolescent Family Life program. While Cal Learn requires mandatory enrollment to receive welfare aid, the Adolescent Family Life program is voluntary. The program develops and maintains a network of community services and resources for youths who are pregnant or parents, and case managers assist them in gaining access to needed educational, health, medical and other services.

An evaluation of the program found that the greatest unmet need for services by these adolescents was child care, and the lack of child care was the main reason they do not remain in school. It received the 1989 American Medical Association's National Congress on Adolescent Health Award for Excellence in Intervention involving teen pregnancy.

Because of its comprehensive child care system and the size and diversity of its population, California participates on a larger scale than other states in qualifying for funding and in matching funds for federal child care programs. These include Transitional Child Care for families leaving welfare status, At

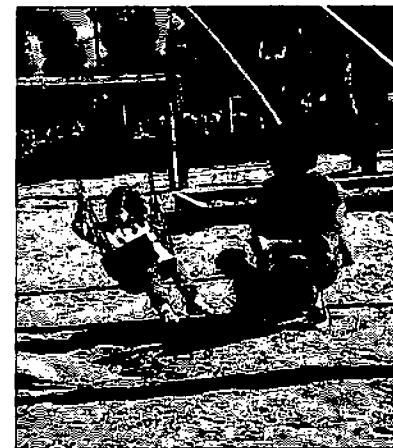
tem...the state's standards and services continue to be better than those found in many states."

— Carollee Howes of UCLA and Marcy Whitebook of the Child Care Employee Project.

CALIFORNIA RANKED IN TOP TEN

For three consecutive years, California has been ranked by Working Mother magazine as one of the 10 best states in providing child care. Quality, safety, commitment and availability of child care to families were the criteria used in making the selections. In picking California, the magazine cited as outstanding features the California Child Care Initiative, the public-private partnership that is dedicated to increasing the supply and training of providers; the state's R&R Network, which consists of 65 local member agencies that help parents find child care, and TrustLine, a statewide registry which allows parents to check the background of providers for disqualifying information.

"But," the magazine said in making its 1993 award, "this state offers more than just help finding child care. California is often cited as a yardstick for other states: it funds a richer variety of child care programs than any other, and it contributes to a public-private partner-



ship to expand the supply and quality of child care. This deep commitment has a long history.”

Working Mother also said that California and the other nine best states share a “strong and vocal child care community and a statewide network of advocacy groups that mobilize parents to support child care legislation.” On this count, California has been the leader for at least 50 years.

CALIFORNIA REPLACES LOST FEDERAL FUNDS

The federal government poured over \$50 million into California during World War II to fund child care and enable thousands of mothers to work in the war industries. In 1946, after the war had ended, Congress terminated all funding of child care. California was the only state to keep the wartime child care centers operating with state funds.

This landmark development took place in large part through the early work of advocacy groups, which the magazine noted still represent a major strength of California’s child care system. The state Legislature kept California’s child care programs going in 1946 because a broad coalition of working women, child care advocates and business leaders saw the need for women to participate in the labor force, and



innovations in the form of specialized programs to serve the diverging needs of parents and families.

FAMILY DAY CARE NETWORKS ESTABLISHED

The 1970s saw the establishment of family day care networks that acted as satellites to a host of programs: center-based, the Campus Child Care and Development program for the children of students enrolled in colleges and universities, the Migrant Child Care Program for children of migrating farm workers, the School-Age Parenting and Infant Development program for children of adolescent parents attending high schools, and the Alternative Payment program, which provides voucher payments for child care in a variety of settings selected by families. Also launched in the 1970s were R&Rs and the State Preschool Incentive Grant, which supports inservice training for staff in State Preschool programs who are seeking to build careers as child care professionals.

The 1980s brought forth another cluster of innovative programs, including Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN), the prototype for the federal JOBS program. GAIN provides subsidized child care to welfare recipients seeking to become economically self-sufficient through education and job skills training. In addition, the state added Child Care and Development Services for Children with Special Needs, the Protective Services Program for children from families in short-term crisis situations and the School-Age Community Child Care Services Program to provide care for “latchkey” youngsters before and after normal school hours and during school vacations.



care is an example of a newly-discovered need, he said. Ten years ago, parents left young children by themselves or made ad hoc arrangements for supervision by older children or at recreational facilities. Then it was recognized that "latchkey" children may suffer both emotional and physical harm unless some type of care is provided. In a similar way, a premium has been placed on child care by families and the public through heightened awareness of the needs of disabled children, abused and neglected children, sick children and children whose parents have unconventional work schedules, Grubb said.

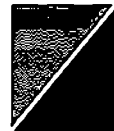
More than any other state, California has responded to those needs through the efforts of elected officials, public



agencies, private supporters, advocates, families and the public at large. The backbone of California's system was laid out with the start of general child care services through centers and private agencies,

programs for the children of migrant workers and centers for mentally retarded and physically handicapped youngsters in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s.

It was transformed into a multi-faceted system in the 1970s, resulting from the rapid growth in the demand for child care as a new surge in working women swept the state and nation. California responded with a series of often unique



they envisioned the essential role of subsidized child care toward that end.

From this historic accomplishment has evolved one of the most committed and broad-based child care constituencies in the country, composed of the parents of children in programs, staff members, directors and other providers and supporters associated chiefly with centers, family care homes and local agencies. The advent of R&Rs made possible the expanded development of grassroots networks that collaborate in assessing the availability of child care, the need for additional services and program quality. California can claim more than 7,000 child care advocates in at least 13 major groups, one of the largest forces of its kind among the states.

ADVOCATES PROVIDE ENERGY

Much of the vigor behind state child care initiatives and legislation emanated from local advocacy efforts. A prime example was the campaign assisted by the Child Care Law Center to deal with local zoning laws that had made it difficult, expensive or impossible to establish legal family care programs. As a result, the Legislature in 1979 passed the first statewide family child care zoning preemption statute, which eliminated or lessened very restrictive local zoning ordinances covering family care. At least 17 other states have adopted similar laws since then.

Local governments in California also have been among the first to respond to child care advocacy. Several cities have adopted ordinances requiring developers of office buildings to set aside space for child care or contribute to funding of alternatives. San Francisco and Los Angeles have established child care units in their mayor's offices to serve as advocates for

programs. Child care local planning councils have been established in all 58 counties.

Government involvement in child care came early in California, for the purpose of ensuring the health and safety of children. When charitable and religious groups began founding day nurseries around the turn of the 20th century to care for the growing number of children of working women, California in 1913 was among the first states to require licensing and inspection of facilities. Since then, California has enacted some of the highest regulatory standards, which often have been emulated by other states.

CALIFORNIA'S FAR-FLUNG LICENSING SYSTEM

The California Department of Social Services' Community Care Licensing Division now licenses 40,465 family day care homes and 12,551 child care centers, which provide spaces for 913,447 children in the numerous programs under which they operate. Under the department's regulatory enforcement program, family homes are visited once every three years and centers are visited annually to make sure they are in compliance with state licensing regulations. Separately, the California Department of Education contracts with more than 700 public and private agencies to provide child care and development services, which are reviewed periodically for contract compliance.

California also is widely admired for its long and substantial direct funding of child care and development centers at school sites. The state Department of Education introduced the first state-funded child care services in 1929 when the Parent Participation "Co-Op" Pre-School Program was start-

ed. This close association with schools is often considered to be a positive factor in generating respect for and interest in education by low-income students and their parents. In addition, the exposure of providers to school teachers may help encourage caregivers to pursue further training opportunities and develop higher career expectations in child care and education.

California also has pioneered the provision of subsidized child care in a different way: to enhance opportunities for unemployed parents on welfare to find work through job training. It was one of the first states to experiment with vouchers to pay vendors for child care as a component of job training, and for the last 10 years parents in the state's job training program have been provided subsidized care through voucher payments. Vouchers also have been used since 1976 as part of other state subsidized programs to provide greater flexibility and wider care options for families.

VARIETY IS HALLMARK OF SYSTEM

One of the hallmarks of California's child care system is its wide variety of programs that are designed to meet the disparate needs of families in a more complex and changing society. As Grubb has noted, the "social conceptions of child care needs are constantly expanding." School-age child

