Santa Cruz County

ASAP:

All Succeed with Access to Preschool

Michael C. Watkins, Superintendent

Nicole M. Young, MSW • Optimal Solutions Consulting
Dr. Angela Irvine • Ceres Policy Research
June 30, 2009
FOREWORD:

It is my great pleasure to present the Santa Cruz County *All Succeed with Access to Preschool (ASAP) Plan*. This blueprint represents the work of over 100 early educators, teachers, school administrators, service providers and other community members. Their dedication to participating in the process developed this plan for expanding access to high-quality preschool for children in Santa Cruz County. We are grateful to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for providing the resources that enabled our community to conduct the research and hold the critical discussions that were necessary to produce a meaningful and comprehensive document.

Although there is still work to be done to turn our vision of high-quality preschool for all children into a reality, this plan positions us to make strategic use of our existing resources and take action as new resources become available. Significant progress is being made in raising public awareness about the benefits of high-quality preschool programs for children, families and communities. The scientific evidence that the early years of a child’s life set the stage for future success has never been more compelling. This plan is a testament to our commitment to provide quality early learning environments for the children of Santa Cruz County.

My deepest appreciation goes to the Child Care Planning Council and First 5 Santa Cruz County for their time, expertise and continued dedication so that all children have an opportunity to succeed in school.

As Superintendent, I remain steadfast in my commitment to work together to ensure that all children receive a quality early education that prepares them to succeed in school and life.

Sincerely,

Michael Watkins
Santa Cruz County Superintendent of Schools
# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

- Executive Summary .................................................. 7
- Introduction ............................................................ 7, 14
- The Planning Process .................................................. 8, 16
- Using Data to Inform Decisions ..................................... 9, 20
- What We Learned ...................................................... 10, 23
- Countywide Test Scores ............................................. 10, 23
- Family Survey .......................................................... 10, 24
- Early Educator Survey ............................................... 10, 28
- Demographics .......................................................... 28
- Compensation ........................................................... 29
- Workforce Size .......................................................... 30
- Education ................................................................. 31
- Comparing Results Across the Early Educator Survey and Family Survey ........................................... 32
- Implications and Recommendations ............................. 11, 36
- Overarching Themes ................................................... 36
- Summary of Work Group Recommendations .................. 12, 37
- Raising the Quality of Preschool Programs ..................... 38
- Supporting the Educational Advancement of Early Educators ......................................................... 40
- Ensuring Choices for Families ...................................... 43
- Reaching Out to Families in the High-Priority Population ......................................................... 44
- Involving Families as Partners in Preparing Children ....... 45
- Preparing Children for the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten ............................................ 46
- Understanding the Need for Quality Preschool .............. 13, 48
- Identifying and Monitoring Funding Sources .................. 51
- Improving and Expanding Facilities ............................... 52
- Financing Models ....................................................... 52
- Funding Through Community Hubs ............................... 53
- Conclusion ............................................................... 54
- Prioritizing Next Steps ............................................... 55
- Going Forward .......................................................... 57
- Appendices .................................................................. 58
- References ................................................................. 60
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The early years of a child’s life are truly a window of opportunity to chart a course for a lifetime of learning.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY— INTRODUCTION

Children are born learners. A young child’s brain is most flexible and impressionable during the first five years of life when brain cells are forming the connections that shape thinking, feeling and behavior. The growth in connections and organization of the brain structure in these early years creates the foundation for future development and how an individual will think, learn and function throughout life. In this sense, the early years of a child’s life are truly a window of opportunity to chart a course for a lifetime of learning.

All children — regardless of race or ethnicity, gender or income have the potential to learn, yet not all children experience success once they are in school. The drop out rate of high school students in California is high, and more severe among students of color. Many second and third-grade students are below grade-level proficiency in English-language arts and math, and the percentages of students who did not achieve grade level proficiency was even higher for certain groups of students such as Latinos, African Americans, English learners, children of parents with low education levels and children in families with low incomes. Recent reports in the RAND Corporation’s California Preschool Study (2009) state that the variances between certain groups of students can be traced back to achievement differences that are apparent in kindergarten and first-grade and to readiness gaps that exist at the start of kindergarten.

While educational achievement is influenced by the interaction of multiple factors that exist in individuals, families, schools and communities, research shows that children who attend high-quality preschools enter kindergarten with the social and academic skills that prepare them to succeed in school and beyond.
However, it’s not just the availability of preschool programs that leads to positive outcomes in school and life, but it’s the quality of the preschool programs that makes the difference. Unfortunately, not everyone has the opportunity to attend the type of quality preschool associated with positive outcomes. According to the California Preschool Study, children from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic groups are the least likely to attend quality preschool programs.

These findings highlight the gap in opportunities to attend quality preschool programs, which contributes to the readiness and achievement gaps that begin to manifest as early as kindergarten. This points to the need to simultaneously work toward raising the quality of programs across all dimensions on a universal basis i.e., in all programs and settings, while also targeting efforts to expand access to quality preschool for the groups of children who need it most.

The Planning Process

In spring 2008, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation awarded a grant to the Santa Cruz County Office of Education (SCCOE) to develop a plan to expand voluntary preschool for children in the last two years before kindergarten. This grant was implemented in partnership with the Child Care Planning Council (CCPC) and First 5 Santa Cruz County (First 5) and provided the opportunity to build upon prior work in the community on universal preschool and to reengage key stakeholders in a planning process.

The planning process involved a large and varied group of stakeholders. Planning discussions and decisions occurred in the Steering Committee, Advisory Committee and Work Group meetings. Five Work Groups researched key issues related to expanding access to quality preschool and developed recommendations regarding:

- Articulation and Transition— how to create a seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten for children and their families.
- Data and Priorities— how to utilize local data and survey findings to develop recommendations.
- Families and Diverse Delivery Systems— how to address families’ needs and other factors that impact their choices about preschool.
- Finance and Facilities— how to estimate the preschool supply and demand and meet the demand through facilities development, funding and/or enhancing partnerships.
- Workforce and Quality— how to define quality preschool and support early childhood educators as they attain higher levels of education.
Using Data to Inform Decisions

Ceres Policy Research conducted a multi-method research project designed to answer the following questions:

- What factors impact families’ choices about whether to enroll their children in preschool?
- What challenges do families face when they want to send their children to preschool?
- What is the current status of our preschool workforce as it relates to quality indicators?
- How often do families and preschool teachers practice kindergarten readiness skills?
- How many preschool facilities would our county need to meet demand?

Data was collected using the following three methods:

STAR (Standardized Testing and Reporting) test scores and API (Academic Performance Index) scores were collected for students in 36 elementary schools. School averages were collected as well as the averages for identified subgroups of students: low-income students, mid-high income students, Latino students, Caucasian students, English learners and students who are fluent in English. This data was analyzed by calculating averages to measure the differences across subgroups.

In an effort to understand the perspective of families, a survey was administered to 1,000 families at 34 elementary schools across the county. Families of kindergarten students were surveyed in order to obtain a broad and representative sample that included families who both did and did not send their children to preschool.

A survey was administered by phone, mail and the internet to directors and supervisors of 79 family child care sites and 81 child care centers that serve 3 and 4-year olds. Information on demographics, education levels and California Child Development Teacher permits was collected for 461 early educators (122 from family child care sites, 339 from centers). In addition, the surveys contained a series of questions about the activities children did while in preschool. These questions mirrored ones in the family survey about activities children did at home.
What We Learned

Countywide Test Scores

Analysis of STAR test scores and school API scores shows that in Santa Cruz County, there are wide gaps in proficiency rates for English-language arts and math between 1) Caucasian students and Latino students, 2) English learners and students who are fluent in English, and 3) low-income students and mid-high income students by the second grade. These findings confirmed the ASAP planning participants’ decision to focus preschool expansion efforts on a high-priority population, namely, children and their families who are Latino, English learners and/or have lower incomes.

Family Survey

Seventy nine percent of respondents to the family survey had children that went to family child care sites or child care centers in the year prior to kindergarten. Seventy two percent of children in the high-priority population attended preschool compared with 88 percent of the rest of the population. Families in the high-priority population reported that when they chose preschools for their children, the five most influential factors were:

- The preschool was near home or work (57%).
- Preschool staff spoke the same language as the respondents (44%).
- The preschool was easy to get to (44%).
- The preschool was safe and clean (44%).
- There were available spaces (35%).

Forty four percent of families in the high-priority population said they would have enrolled their children in preschool if they had additional resources and/or support, as compared to 32 percent of families not in the high-priority population.

Early Educator Survey

Early educators in the 160 sites and centers that participated in the survey were primarily Caucasian (49%) or Latino (39%). Approximately half of the workforce represented in the survey (51%) was bilingual in English and Spanish, while a third of the workforce (34%) spoke only English and less than a quarter of the workforce spoke only Spanish (12%) or English and another language (3%). The median age ranged from 35 for preschool assistant teachers to 45 for preschool head teachers and family child care owners.
Most head teachers at preschool centers earned annual salaries ranging from $28,000 to $40,000 while family child care owners reported earning an average of $22,000 after expenses. Data from the survey can be used to estimate that there are a total of 975 early educators in the county (519 in family child care sites and 456 in child care centers). The same data can be used to estimate that approximately one-third of early educators have fewer than 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework (36%), and one-third has between 12-33 ECE units (35%). The remaining early educators have either an AA or AS degree (13%) or a Bachelors’ degree or higher (15%).

Implications and Recommendations

As the Work Groups drafted their recommendations and shared their progress across committees, a number of central themes emerged, including:

- Families, preschool teachers and administrators, kindergarten teachers, school and district administrators, service providers, faith-based organizations and other community members are essential partners in preparing children to arrive ready to learn and succeed in school.

- The effectiveness of preschool expansion efforts will depend on the strength and quality of the communication and relationships among these partners.

- Specific, intentional and coordinated efforts are needed in order to foster positive communication and relationships among these partners.

The Work Groups identified “community hubs” as a promising model for developing and maintaining the communication and relationships that will be needed to implement the ASAP Plan successfully. According to this model, community hubs would be located on or near elementary schools throughout the county. Each hub would be operated by a school, a preschool program or a non-profit organization (depending on the needs of the specific community) and would serve as a central place for families, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers and other partners to gather and share information.

Adopting this type of community hub model across the county would ensure a level of consistency in implementing the recommendations in the ASAP Plan while allowing flexible implementation at the neighborhood level. Community hubs would not only provide a structure for allocating funding, but they would also provide a structure for developing and maintaining relationships between all the partners that play a role in preparing children to learn and succeed in school. Many of the following recommendations developed by the Work Groups would be supported by or implemented through the community hubs.
Summary of Work Group Recommendations

To increase the availability of quality preschool programs, the Workforce and Quality Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Institute a matrix of quality standards with three tiers of quality indicators (Entry, Advancing, and Program of Excellence) for seven components of quality:
  - Staff Qualifications
  - Group Size and Ratios
  - Staff Stability and Working Conditions
  - Ongoing Professional Development
  - Curriculum and Assessment
  - Learning Environment and Program
  - Screening and Referrals
- Allocate preschool funding in accordance with the tiers of quality in order to provide incentives for quality improvements.
- Increase or maintain support services for the early childhood education workforce to obtain higher levels of education.

To ensure that high-priority families are aware of the value of quality preschool and have access to quality programs that meet their needs, the Families and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Ensure that funded programs represent an array of options to meet families’ diverse needs.
- Implement outreach strategies to raise awareness about the importance of and availability of quality preschool.
- Ensure that funded programs are respectful of and responsive to families’ linguistic and cultural needs.

To ensure that children and families experience a seamless transition from quality preschool to quality kindergarten, the Articulation and Transition Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Organize articulation and transition efforts by neighborhood.
- Ensure that articulation and transition efforts include collaboration, continuity of services, preparation of children for kindergarten and parent involvement.

To ensure that there are enough quality preschool programs and slots to meet the demand and that those programs are adequately funded, the Finance and Facilities Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Continue to identify and monitor the current preschool funding sources.
- Develop a detailed plan to expand and upgrade facilities as funds become available.
- Structure future financing around “community hubs.”

— Detailed explanations about these recommendations are included in the full Plan.
Understanding the Need for Quality Preschool

Data from the family survey was linked with the early educator survey, making it possible to identify where high-priority children were during the year before kindergarten. When this data was analyzed in conjunction with education levels of current preschool teachers, it provided an estimate of how many children of families in the high-priority population already have access to preschool programs that meet one standard of quality on the matrix (staff qualifications). This data analysis indicates that:

Thirty four percent of high-priority children attend preschools that meet the minimum education requirement for entry level programs. Sixty six percent of high-priority children are in child care settings that do not meet the education requirement for entry level programs. This percentage equates to approximately 1,320 children in the county and includes children in:

- Preschool programs that do not meet the minimum education requirement (37%)
- Their own homes being cared for by a family member (24%)
- Unlicensed child care, also known as family, friend and neighbor care (5%)

Additional data from the California Department of Education was used to further refine the estimated number of high-priority children who need quality preschool by geographic area in the county. Data from the early educator survey was used to estimate the number of open slots in the same geographic areas. A comparison of these data highlights a need for additional quality preschool in Freedom and Watsonville (south Santa Cruz County) that is about 10 times greater than in any other geographic area. Approximately 800 children in the high-priority population need quality preschool in Freedom and Watsonville, while the next highest need is slots for 80 children in Live Oak (mid Santa Cruz County).

Conclusion

All children and families in Santa Cruz County, particularly those that are Latino, English learners and/or have lower incomes, will benefit from a coordinated effort to increase access to quality preschool. The ASAP Plan positions Santa Cruz County to pursue future funding opportunities and provides a blueprint for action to achieve our vision of quality preschool for all children. While this Plan will serve as a guide for the future, it's also important to recognize that there are several efforts and opportunities occurring at the federal, state and local levels that may impact the eventual implementation of this Plan.
INTRODUCTION

Children are born learners. The brain is the only organ that is not fully developed at birth, but by the time a child is 5-years old, 90 percent of the brain will have developed. A young child’s brain is most flexible and impressionable during this period when brain cells are forming the connections that shape thinking, feeling and behavior. Everything that happens to the child impacts the growth of these connections. In essence, the brain learns from the sights, sounds, smells, touches, environments and interactions a young child experiences, and then develops to reflect those experiences. The growth in connections and organization of the brain structure in these early years creates the foundation for healthy child development and influences how an individual will think, learn and function throughout life. In this sense, the early years of a child’s life are a window of opportunity to chart a course for a lifetime of learning.

All children—regardless of race or ethnicity, gender or income—have the potential to learn, yet not all children experience success once they are in school. In California, one in five students dropped out of high school last year. The frequency of dropouts was even more severe among students of color, with 35 percent of black students and 26 percent of Latino students leaving school before earning a diploma. The high rate of dropouts in California is cause for concern about the future health and well-being of children, their families and the communities they live in. A policy brief issued by Children Now (2009) reports that “on average, students who do not obtain a high school diploma earn lower incomes, face higher rates of unemployment… and are in worse health than students who complete high school.”

While the high dropout rates may raise questions about what is occurring during the later school years to create disparities in academic achievements, the reality is that a multitude of factors interact and influence students’ experiences in school. Such factors include, but are not limited to:

- Individual students’ skills and readiness for school
- Families’ financial resources and the education levels of children’s parents
- Teachers’ expectations of certain groups of students, particularly students of color and low-income students
- Schools’ level of readiness to provide high-quality instruction and appropriate learning environments for children with varying needs
- Communities that have disproportionate availability of resources to help prepare children for school
These factors begin to interact and appear as differences early on in students’ lives. James Heckman, the Nobel prize-winning economist, wrote about the achievement gaps between advantaged and other children that start before schooling even begins. He said, “Children who start ahead keep accelerating past their peers, widening the gap. Early advantages accumulate, so do early disadvantages. The best way to improve the schools is to improve the early environments of the children sent to them.”

This statement is supported by recent reports from the RAND Corporation’s California Preschool Study (2009), which found that:

- Over half of California’s second-graders (52%) and third-graders (63%) did not achieve grade-level proficiency in English-language arts in 2007.
- Approximately 40 percent of both second and third-graders did not achieve grade-level proficiency in mathematics in that same year.
- The percentages of students who did not achieve grade-level proficiency was even higher for certain groups of students such as Latinos, African Americans, English learners, children of parents with low education levels and children in families with low incomes.

- The variances between certain groups of students can be traced back to achievement differences that are apparent in kindergarten and first-grade and to readiness gaps that exist at the start of kindergarten.

Preschool represents a crucial opportunity to address the kindergarten readiness gap before it becomes the academic achievement gap in later years. Research shows that children who attend high-quality preschools enter kindergarten with social and academic skills that prepare them to learn and succeed in school. They are also more likely to complete higher levels of education, earn higher incomes and lead healthier lives. Since children’s brains develop most rapidly in the years before kindergarten, it makes academic, social and economic sense to invest in preschool programs that help children develop the knowledge and skills that prepare them to succeed in school and beyond.

However, merely investing in more preschool programs will not adequately address the readiness or achievement gaps. It’s not just the availability of preschool programs that is linked to positive outcomes in school and life, but the quality of the preschool programs that make the difference.
Unfortunately, not everyone has the opportunity to attend the type of quality preschool associated with positive outcomes. The RAND California Preschool Study found that:

- The quality of preschool programs varies according to which dimension of quality is being measured.
- Many center-based programs fall short on some quality benchmarks, particularly in the areas of promoting thinking and language skills.
- Children with the largest readiness and achievement gaps are the least likely to attend quality center-based preschool programs.
- Children from the most disadvantaged socioeconomic groups are the least likely to attend quality preschool programs.

These findings highlight the gap in opportunities to attend quality preschool programs, which contributes to the readiness and achievement gaps that start to manifest as early as kindergarten. This points to the need to simultaneously work toward raising the quality of programs across all dimensions on a universal basis (i.e. in all programs and settings), while also targeting efforts to expand access to quality preschool for the groups of children who need it most.

Santa Cruz County’s All Succeed with Access to Preschool (ASAP) Plan delves further into these and other critical issues that need to be addressed in order to ensure access to quality preschool. While this Plan is the culmination of our year-long planning process, it is by no means the end of our work together. Rather, the ASAP Plan positions Santa Cruz County to pursue future funding opportunities and provides a blueprint for action to achieve our vision of high-quality preschool for all children.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In 2005, child care stakeholders formed a Preschool For All (PFA) Committee to plan for universal preschool in the event that Proposition 82 would pass. The PFA Committee conducted input sessions to gather feedback from child care providers, reaching almost 300 early childhood educators at nine county locations. The PFA planning sessions resulted in the following Vision and Essential Principles for Preschool for All in Santa Cruz County:
Vision:

Every child has the opportunity to attend adequately-funded preschool programs that prepare children for success in school and life.

Essential Principles:

- Early education programs must meet established quality standards.
- ECE professionals must be educated and compensated at levels aligned to the K-12 system.
- Programs must take place in a variety of settings, including public and private child care centers and family child care homes.
- Programs must be offered in culturally, linguistically appropriate settings and be inclusive of children with special needs.
- Program facilities must be available, accessible and high quality.
- New programs should enhance, not reduce, existing funding of programs for children ages O-5 and improve on existing early child care and education structures.
- Existing early care and education workforce members should be provided the time and resources to meet higher education requirements.
- Programs should serve all preschool age children regardless of income or special needs.
- The county plan should recognize that full-day child care programs can provide enriched preschool experiences.
- Programs should provide research-based developmental and culturally appropriate curriculum.
- Programs should support families by linking to full-day early care and education programs without disruption to the child’s day.
- Programs should be easy to access and respectful of and responsive to families’ diverse needs.

(Added at beginning of ASAP planning process)

While Proposition 82 did not pass in June 2006, the vision and principles for expanding access to quality preschool remained a priority in Santa Cruz County. When Assembly Bill 172 passed shortly afterward, the funding for state preschool programs in areas with low-performing schools doubled in Santa Cruz County. This influx of new funds enabled the Pajaro Valley Unified School District and Head Start to increase their enrollment of 4-year olds and provide family literacy services to help parents gain tools to help their children succeed in preschool and beyond.
The goals of the planning process were to:

- Present the mission and vision of county stakeholders for expanding preschool access.
- Quantify the supply and demand for quality preschool placements.
- Identify the workforce development issues inherent in expanding high-quality preschool slots.
- Articulate the essential elements of quality preschool.
- Address the funding streams needed to establish and sustain preschool options.
- Explore ways to expand access to preschool with current resources.
- Prioritize county neighborhoods to receive resources for preschool expansion as funding is identified from public and private sources.

The planning process was structured so that specific tasks, roles and decision-making points were handled at various levels. This made it easier to engage and communicate with a large group of stakeholders while remaining focused on content-specific issues regarding preschool expansion. The following planning structure was utilized:

- A **Steering Committee** provided guidance on the structure and timeline of the planning process and made final decisions on the content of presentations and the final report. The Steering Committee met monthly and consisted of representatives from the County Office of Education, Cabrillo College Early Childhood Education Department, First 5, and the Child Care Planning Council.

Five **Work Groups** researched key issues related to expanding access to quality preschool and developed recommendations regarding:

- **Articulation and Transition**— how to create a seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten for children and their families.
- **Data and Priorities**— how to utilize local data and survey findings to develop recommendations.
- **Families and Diverse Delivery Systems**— how to address families’ needs and other factors that impact their choices about preschool.
- **Finance and Facilities**— how to estimate the preschool supply and demand and meet the demand through facilities, funding and/or leveraging partnerships.
- **Workforce and Quality**— how to define quality preschool and support early childhood educators as they attain higher levels of education.
The Work Groups met monthly and consisted of members of the Child Care Planning Council, kindergarten teachers, school and district administrators, social service providers and other community stakeholders. Meeting agendas and minutes were posted on the Child Care Planning Council’s web site as a means to provide opportunities for cross-committee communication.

Chairs for the Work Groups were individuals with extensive experience and connections in the field of early childhood education. The Chairs planned and facilitated their Work Group meetings, leading their members through discussions to agreements on the recommendations included in this plan. The Chairs met monthly with each other to coordinate their work across committees and develop a cohesive set of recommendations.

An Advisory Committee provided feedback and additional guidance to the Work Groups as data was analyzed and preliminary recommendations were made. The Advisory Committee consisted of the Steering Committee, Work Groups and other community stakeholders. Advisory Committee members met in September 2008, February 2009 and May 2009. Each meeting was designed to keep members informed and obtain their input on the Work Groups’ recommendations. Products that were developed for, or as a result of, Advisory Committee meetings include the following:

- Overview of Santa Cruz County’s Preschool Planning Process
- Timeline for the Planning Process
- Key Terms, Meanings and Acronyms
- Preschool Logic Model
- Presentation of Data Findings

Staff from the Santa Cruz County Office of Education provided project oversight and coordination services. The communication and logistical arrangements that occurred between meetings helped ensure that all stakeholders had the opportunity to stay informed and participate according to their level of interest and availability.

A team of consultants worked closely with the SCCOE staff to provide research services and assistance with project management. Ceres Policy Research provided research services, chaired the Data Work Group and worked with the other Work Group Chairs to determine how to utilize the data when developing their recommendations. Optimal Solutions Consulting facilitated the Advisory Committee meetings and provided support with managing the planning process.
Using Data to Inform Decisions

Providing quality preschool for all children remains the long-term vision in Santa Cruz County. However, this planning process began when California’s economy was in a sharp decline and there were no, or very few, known prospects for new funding. Given that context, planning participants agreed that it was important to make data-informed decisions about where and how to most effectively expand access to quality preschool in the event that new funding became available.

Ceres Policy Research conducted a multi-method research project designed to answer the following questions:

- What factors impact families’ choices about whether to enroll their children in preschool?
- What challenges do families face when they want to send their children to preschool?
- What is the current status of our preschool workforce as it relates to quality indicators?
- How often do families and preschool teachers practice kindergarten readiness skills?
- How many preschool facilities would our county need to meet demand?

Three types of data were collected and analyzed, resulting in a set of localized data that had previously been unavailable in Santa Cruz County.

Countywide Test Scores

STAR test scores were collected for 2,878 students from 36 elementary schools in the county. API scores were collected for 11,365 students at the same schools. School averages were collected as well as the averages for identified subgroups of students: low-income students who are fluent in English.
This data was analyzed by calculating averages to measure the differences across subgroups.

It should be noted that while standardized tests are flawed measures of intelligence or ability (Hamp-Lyons and Davies 2008; Kim and Sunderman, 2005; Madhere 1995; Graves and Johnson, 1995), test scores nonetheless measure gaps in academic achievement between certain groups of students. For the purposes of this planning process, test score data was analyzed to determine whether and to what extent Santa Cruz County’s students mirror national and state statistics about school readiness and achievement gaps, particularly among certain groups of children.

Family Survey

In an effort to understand the perspective of families, a survey was administered to 1,000 families at 34 elementary schools across the county. The Data Work Group decided to survey families of kindergarten students, as this would provide a broad and representative sample that included families who did not send their children to preschool, as well as those families who did send their children to preschool.

The survey instrument consisted of 27 questions and sub-questions developed by the Articulation and Transition, Family and Diverse Delivery Systems and Facilities and Finance Work Groups. The survey questions were designed to obtain data about what factors impact families’ choices regarding preschool and what activities children did at home in the year prior to kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers were instrumental in obtaining completed surveys from families. Individual teachers who returned 75% of their class surveys to the Data Work Group were given $50 gift cards for their efforts.

Early Educator Survey

A survey was administered by phone, mail and the internet to directors and supervisors of 79 family child care sites and 81 child care centers that serve 3 and 4-year olds. For the purposes of this survey, child care centers were defined as the distinct sites where preschool services are provided (as opposed to the administrative agencies that may operate multiple centers).

Separate surveys were developed for center staff and family child care providers. The survey instrument consisted of 66 questions developed by the Workforce and Quality Work Group, Family and Diverse Delivery System Work Group, Finance and Facility Work Group and Articulation and Transition Work Groups.
Information on demographics, education levels and California Child Development Teacher permits was collected for 461 early educators (122 from family child care sites, 339 from centers). In addition, the surveys contained a series of questions about the activities they do with children in preschool. These questions were similar to the ones in the family survey about activities children did at home in the year prior to kindergarten.

All instruments were provided in English and Spanish, with bilingual and bicultural researchers contacting Spanish-speaking providers. The respondents taught in neighborhoods across the county and varied in languages spoken, racial and ethnic identities, and approaches to curriculum design and implementation in their early education setting.
WHAT WE LEARNED

Countywide Test Scores:

Analysis of Santa Cruz County’s STAR test scores and API scores reveal similar achievement gaps that are occurring at a national and statewide level. In particular, test scores on English-language arts and math reveal wide gaps in proficiency between 1) Caucasian students and Latino students, 2) English learners and students who are fluent in English, and 3) low-income students and mid-high income students by the second-grade. The chart below shows that countywide, the average English-language arts proficiency rate for Caucasian and mid-high income children in second-grade is 62 percent, which is at least three times higher than the average rates for Latino students (19 percent), low-income students (18 percent), and students learning English (12 percent).

English Proficiency Rates
Similarly, Caucasian and mid-high income children have average math proficiency rates of 73 percent as compared to 39 percent of Latino and low-income students and 35 percent of students learning English, as shown in the chart below.

These findings confirmed the ASAP planning participants’ decision to focus preschool expansion efforts on a high-priority population, namely, children and their families who are Latino, English learners and/or have lower incomes.

**Family Survey**

The family survey results provide insight into what factors impact choices about whether to enroll children in preschool. It should be noted that kindergarten teachers working in schools with high proportions of English learner, Latino, and low-income students returned a higher number of surveys.
As a result, the data findings reflect an overrepresentation of families who fall within the high-priority population. Of the 1,000 respondents that completed the family survey:

- 41 percent spoke only English at home; 37 percent spoke only Spanish at home; 19 percent spoke English and Spanish at home; 3 percent spoke another language.
- 58 percent identified themselves as Latino, Hispanic, Mexican, or Mexican-American; 34 percent identified as Caucasian or European American; 3 percent identified as Japanese, Chinese, Filipino or other Asian or Pacific Islander identity; 1 percent identified as African-American; 4 percent identified themselves as another ethnic or racial identity.
- 43 percent earned $0-25,000 per year, 24 percent earned $25,000-50,000 per year; 17 percent earned $50,000-100,000 per year; 16 percent earned over $100,000 per year.
- 79 percent had children that went to family child care sites or child care centers in the year prior to kindergarten.
- Looking at differences across subpopulations, 72 percent of children in the high-priority population attended preschool compared with 88 percent of the rest of the population.

The families whose children attended preschool were asked to identify the reasons that they chose their particular preschools. Families in the high-priority population reported that the five most influential factors were:

- The preschool was near home or work (57%).
- Preschool staff spoke the same language as the respondents (44%).
- The preschool was easy to get to (44%).
- The preschool was safe and clean (44%).
- There were available spaces (35%).

Other important reasons for choosing preschools were that staff had degrees in early childhood education (33%), staff respected their culture (30%), and the preschool was open during the hours they worked (30%). Table 1 compares responses of families in the high-priority population whose children attended preschool (n= 440) to responses of other families who were not in the high-priority population. There were statistically significant differences regarding the influence of:

- Preschool staff that spoke the same language as the respondents (44% of high-priority families selected this as a reason for choosing a preschool vs 13% of other families)
- Staff that respected the family’s culture (30% vs 22%)
- The preschool met the special education needs of children (18% vs 10%).
Table 1: Factors that Impacted Families’ Choices About Preschool (Families that enrolled their children in preschool)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents in High-Priority Population (Latino, English learners and/or Low-Income Families)</th>
<th>Percent of Other Respondents (Caucasian, Bilingual/English-Only, Mid-High Income Families)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program was near home or work</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program was easy to get to</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff spoke respondent’s language</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program was safe and clean</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No waiting list</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff with ECE degrees</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program open during respondent’s work hours</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for culture</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program met child’s special needs</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for family composition</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program was on school campus</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received scholarship or subsidy</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 2 shows that families need additional support to access preschool. Of the respondents that did not send their children to preschool, a higher percentage of families in the high-priority population said they would have enrolled their children in preschool if they had additional resources and/or support (44%), as compared to other families not in the high-priority population (32%). While this difference is statistically significant, there were even larger differences in responses about individual types of resources and support. Families in the high-priority population and other families both indicated that receiving scholarships or subsidies would have encouraged preschool enrollment, but families in the high-priority population reported that they needed a wider range of resources and support in order to send their children to preschool. This data indicates that Santa Cruz County must invest in a wide range of resources and supports in order to ensure that quality preschool is truly accessible for families in the high-priority population.

### Table 2: Factors That Would Have Changed Families’ Choices About Preschool (Families that DID NOT enroll their children in preschool)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Percent of Respondents in High-Priority Population (Latino, English learners and/or Low-Income Families)</th>
<th>Percent of Other Respondents (Caucasian, Bilingual/English-Only Mid-High Income Families)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation to/from program</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program near home or work</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidy or scholarship</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program open during respondent’s work hours</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No waiting list</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program on school campus</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff speak respondent’s language</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff with ECE degrees</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect for culture</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program is safe and clean</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for family composition</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program meets special needs</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Early Educator Survey

Demographics

The results of the early educator survey provide a snapshot of the current status of the workforce in the 160 centers and family child care sites that participated in the survey. Close to 50 percent of the workforce represented in the survey was Caucasian, while 39 percent was Latino and 11 percent had other ethnic and racial identities. Of the 11 percent, most teachers were multi-ethnic. Less than 1 percent of the workforce was African American and less than 1 percent was Asian.

With regard to language, 88 percent of the workforce represented in the survey reported that they spoke English, 53 percent spoke Spanish and 3 percent spoke another language (examples included Chinese, German, and Tagalog). When placed into mutually exclusive categories, 51 percent of the workforce represented in the survey spoke both English and Spanish, 34 percent spoke only English, 12 percent spoke only Spanish and 3 percent spoke English and another language (see Chart 3 below).

Languages spoken by Santa Cruz County Preschool teachers

- **51%** English and Spanish
- **34%** English Only
- **12%** Spanish Only
- **3%** English and another language
The chart below shows that the median age for preschool head teachers and family child care owners represented in the early educator survey was 45. The median age for preschool classroom teachers was 40, and the median age for preschool assistant teachers was 35. Data from several universities and colleges indicates that the average age of reentry students is 30, which means that most of the preschool teachers represented in the early educator survey would be older than their peers if they chose to return to school.

In addition, since most of the early educators represented in the survey fall within the ages of 35-50, they may have their own family or financial responsibilities that create barriers to pursuing higher education. The rewards for returning to school also diminish, as older preschool teachers will not benefit long-term from any increases to their incomes that are associated with higher degrees.

**Compensation**

One of the largest barriers to the improvement of the preschool workforce is that most preschool teachers do not earn comparable salaries compared with K-12 teachers*. In Santa Cruz County, many K-12 teachers begin with an annual salary of $36,000, and teachers with 25 years of experience often earn as much as $75,000 each year. All teachers receive paid vacation and preparation time as well as full health benefits.

*Refers to teachers in the public school system.
By contrast, most head teachers at preschool centers earn less, with annual salaries ranging from $28,000 to $40,000 per year. Family child care owners earn the least amount of money, averaging $22,000 after expenses. These disparities widen once benefits are taken into consideration. Only 80 percent of preschool staff receive medical insurance as a benefit and only 13 percent of family child care staff receive medical insurance as an employment benefit.

Workforce size

Data from the survey can be used to estimate the size of the entire preschool workforce in Santa Cruz County. The 74 percent response rate to the survey allows for results to be generalized to all of the family child care sites and child care centers in the county. In addition, an informal analysis of family child care sites and child care centers that didn’t respond to the survey revealed no major differences in demographics or characteristics when compared to those sites and centers that did respond.

It is possible that the actual workforce size may vary considerably from this estimate, particularly in centers, depending on variables such as the number of classrooms and class sizes. Additional data would need to be collected and analyzed in order to confirm the accuracy of this estimate. However, the estimated workforce size is useful for making preliminary inferences about program quality indicators such as staff qualifications.

Table 3 shows that 79 family child care sites provided data on 122 early educators, while 81 child care centers provided data on 339 early educators. In order to generalize these figures to the preschool workforce at large, the number of early educators represented in the survey was multiplied by a factor of 4.25 for family child care (FCC) sites (factor calculated by dividing 336 FCC sites in Santa Cruz County by 79 FCC sites surveyed) and 1.35 for child care centers (109 centers in Santa Cruz County divided by 81 centers surveyed). Based on these calculations, it is estimated that there are 519 early educators working in family child care sites and 456 early educators working in child care centers, bringing the estimated size of the total preschool workforce to 975.
Education

The same multipliers for family child care sites (4.25) and child care centers (1.35) can be applied to data from the early educator survey to estimate the education levels of the preschool workforce. Table 4 shows that according to these calculations, approximately one-third of early educators have fewer than 12 units of Early Childhood Education (ECE) coursework (36%) and one-third have between 12 and 33 ECE units (35%). The remaining early educators have either an AA or AS degree in ECE (13%), a Bachelor’s degree in ECE or Child Development (CD), or a Bachelor’s with 24 units of ECE coursework (15%). The data in each column is mutually exclusive and represents the highest level of education attained.

Table 3: Estimated Size of Preschool Workforce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of FCC Sites and Centers Surveyed</th>
<th>Total FCC Sites and Centers in County*</th>
<th>Number of Early Educators in Survey</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Early Educators in County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family Child Care Sites</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Centers</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>456</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*May include centers located in Monterey County that serve children in Pajaro Valley Unified School District.
Comparing Results Across the Early Educator Survey and Family Survey

Families and early educators were asked similar questions about how often they engaged children in activities that promote some of the skills associated with kindergarten readiness. Such skills include the ability to:

- Ask adults for help
- Follow simple rules and routines
- Solve problems or conflicts
- Use large and fine motor skills
- Listen to stories with curiosity, focus and comprehension
- Recognize the names and sounds of letters
- Recognize numbers and their value
- Play and get along with children of the same age

### Table 4: Estimated Levels of Education in ECE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Early Educator</th>
<th>Fewer than 12 ECE Units</th>
<th>12-33 ECE Units</th>
<th>AA/AS in ECE</th>
<th>BA or Higher (in ECE/CD or BA with 24 ECE units)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FCC Assistants</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCC Owners/Teachers</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Assistants</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center Head</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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32
The self-reported data from these questions represents one method of measuring children’s opportunities to develop skills that help prepare them for kindergarten. The data is not intended to serve as a measurement of program quality or imply that these are the only skills associated with kindergarten readiness. However, the responses provide estimates about whether and how often children are practicing certain skills at home and/or in preschool prior to entering kindergarten.

Research shows that the educational attainment of preschool teachers is linked to the quality of preschool programs. Teachers who have at least a Bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education have more knowledge and skills regarding the environments and experiences that young children need in order to learn (Barnett, 2004). Results from the early educator survey indicate that preschool teachers who have Bachelor’s degrees are more likely to practice skills associated with kindergarten readiness with their students. The largest differences were in the frequency of practicing recognition of letters and their names and recognition of numbers and their value. Since low-income children, Latino children, and children learning English are less likely to have a preschool teacher who has earned a Bachelor’s degree, this data indicates that children from the high-priority populations are not practicing kindergarten readiness skills as often when they are at preschool.

In addition, families in the high-priority population reported practicing kindergarten readiness skills less often prior to kindergarten. There were small differences in the frequency of practicing social skills such as communicating with others, solving conflicts, and playing with children of the same age. Larger differences existed in the frequency with which families reported practicing recognition of letters and their names and recognition of numbers and their values.
The chart below reports differences in the frequency of skill practice based on ethnicity. In the chart, a “3” means the survey respondent reported practicing the skill *Daily*, a “2” means *Often*, a “1” means *Sometimes* and a “0” means *Never*. This chart shows that Caucasian families reported that they practiced following directions, listening to a story, and asking questions almost *Daily*, while Latino families practiced the same skills *Often*. While this is a statistically significant difference, all families reported practicing these skills frequently. In contrast, all families are less likely to practice letter recognition. Though, again, White families reported that they practiced *Often* while Latino families reported that they practiced somewhere between *Often* and *Sometimes*.

![Ethnic Differences in Frequency of Skill Practice](chart.png)
Similarly, the chart below shows that families who only speak English reported that they practiced following directions, listening to a story, and asking questions almost *Daily* while Spanish-speaking families reported that they practiced these skills *Often*. Families that only speak English and Spanish-speaking families both reported that they practiced letter recognition less often than the other skills.

**Frequency of Skills Practiced by Language(s) Spoken at Home**

- **Letters**: English (2.5), Spanish (3)
- **Directions**: English (2), Spanish (3)
- **Listen to a story**: English (2), Spanish (3)
- **Ask questions**: English (2), Spanish (3)

Taken together, this data suggests that the high-priority populations are practicing most kindergarten readiness skills frequently. They are nonetheless practicing essential literacy and numeracy skills less often than Caucasian families, mid-high income families, and families that only speak English. The following recommendations provide a guideline for community-based plans to prepare all children for kindergarten and build a foundation for long-term academic achievement for the high-priority populations.
Community members and agencies are essential partners in preparing children to arrive ready to learn and succeed in school.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Overarching Themes**

As the Work Groups drafted their recommendations and shared their progress across committees, a number of central themes emerged, including:

- Families, preschool teachers and administrators, kindergarten teachers, school and district administrators, non-profit agencies, faith-based organizations and other community members and agencies are essential partners in preparing children to arrive ready to learn and succeed in school.

- The effectiveness of preschool expansion efforts will depend on the strength and quality of the communication and relationships among these partners.

- Specific, intentional and coordinated efforts are needed in order to foster positive communication and relationships among these partners.

The Work Groups identified “community hubs” as a promising model for developing and maintaining the communication and relationships that will be needed to implement the *ASAP Plan* successfully. According to this model, community hubs would be located on or near elementary schools throughout the county. Each hub would be operated by a school, a preschool program or a non-profit organization (depending on the needs of the specific community) and would serve as a central place for families, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers and other partners to gather and share information. Given the transportation needs of high-priority families, the “walkability” of the neighborhood hub should be determined (www.walkscore.org) and taken into consideration when selecting the location of the hub.
Adopting this type of community hub model across the county would ensure a level of consistency in implementing the recommendations in the ASAP Plan while allowing flexible implementation at the neighborhood level. Community hubs would not only provide a structure for allocating funding, but would also provide a structure for developing and maintaining relationships among the partners that play a role in preparing children to learn and succeed in school. Many of the following recommendations developed by the Work Groups would be supported by or implemented through the community hub model.

Summary of Work Group Recommendations

To increase the availability of quality preschool programs, the Workforce and Quality Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Institute a matrix of quality standards with three tiers of quality indicators (Entry, Advancing, and Program of Excellence).
- Allocate preschool funding in accordance with the tiers of quality in order to provide incentives for quality improvements.
- Increase or maintain support services for the early childhood education workforce to obtain higher levels of education.

To ensure that high-priority families are aware of the value of quality preschool and have access to quality programs that meet their needs, the Families and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Ensure that funded programs represent an array of options to meet families’ diverse needs.
- Implement outreach strategies to raise awareness about the importance of and availability of quality preschool.
- Ensure that funded programs are respectful of and responsive to families’ linguistic and cultural needs.

To ensure that children and families experience a seamless transition from quality preschool to quality kindergarten, the Articulation and Transition Work Group recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP:

- Organize articulation and transition efforts by neighborhood.
- Ensure that articulation and transition efforts include collaboration, continuity of services, preparation of children for kindergarten and parent involvement.
To ensure that there are enough quality preschool programs and slots to meet the demand and that those programs are adequately funded, the **Facilities and Finance Work Group** recommends that **Santa Cruz County ASAP**:

- Continue to identify and monitor the current preschool funding sources.
- Develop a detailed plan to expand and upgrade facilities as funds become available.
- Structure future financing around “community hubs.”

Detailed explanations about these recommendations are provided below.

**Raising the Quality of Preschool Programs**

Research and other child development literature recognize that there are multiple dimensions of quality that are usually categorized as either:

- **Structural Quality** (e.g. group size, child-staff or child-adult ratios, teacher training and education, curriculum, health and safety practices)
- **Process Quality** (e.g. classroom environment and activities, the nature of teacher-child and peer relationships, teachers’ approaches to fostering learning and healthy development)

The **Workforce and Quality Work Group** developed a matrix that captures seven essential components of preschool quality. Some of these recommendations may be superseded in the future by the state’s Early Learning Quality Improvement System. The matrix is organized into three tiers of quality: **Entry, Advancing and Program of Excellence**. The Work Group recommends that levels of funding correspond to the tiers, thereby providing incentives for quality improvement. Programs could use funds to implement quality improvement plans, which might include increased staff compensation. Site visits would be used to document ongoing adherence to quality standards and to provide technical assistance in developing quality improvement plans.

Each tier in the matrix encompasses seven components of quality. The measures for quality are largely the same for family child care sites and child care centers. These measures are summarized below, while detailed explanations of each indicator can be found in the matrix of quality standards (Appendix 4).

**Staff qualifications**

The matrix specifies the minimum education and experience requirements of center staff and administrators and family child care providers. The required qualifications increase at each tier in the matrix. Programs funded at the Entry level will have one teacher in each group that holds a California Child Development Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year of experience in the field of Early Care and Education (ECE).
Although requirements for center staff and family child care providers are substantially the same, the matrix specifies an alternative Entry level qualification for family child care providers, as there are many existing providers for whom degree-applicable English courses present a barrier to obtaining a CD Teacher Permit.

**Group size and ratios**

For all tier levels, family child care sites will comply with licensing regulations on group size and adult/child ratios. Groups in preschool centers will not exceed 24 children, with one adult for every 8 children. Other instructional staff in each group will meet the minimum staff qualifications.

**Staff stability and working conditions**

For all tier levels, preschool centers will offer paid time off, paid preparation and planning time, and annual staff evaluations with goals for the coming year. Each center or agency will have a plan for ongoing staff development.

**Ongoing professional development**

All preschools (both family child care sites and centers) will provide at least 15 hours of documented staff professional development annually. Each instructional staff person must have a Professional Growth Advisor and a plan for professional development.

**Curriculum and assessment**

All preschools (both family child care sites and centers) will post daily schedules, activity plans, and a written program philosophy statement. Assessments of children’s developmental progress will be completed twice a year, with curriculum tied to assessment results.

**Learning environment and program**

All preschools will measure their learning environment and program using the ECERS-R or FCCERS-R. In order to be considered for Entry level on the matrix, programs will have an average score of 4.5 on all subscales. Advancing level preschools will have an average score of 5 on all subscales and Programs of Excellence will have an average score of 6 on all subscales. Programs must have no item rated lower than a 3, and Entry and Advancing level programs must have a written plan for improvement.

**Screening and referrals**

Preschools (both family child care sites and centers) will institute a way to identify the health and social service needs of children and their families and make referrals to appropriate agencies in the community. They must have follow-up procedures with families to ensure that needs have been addressed.
Supporting the Educational Advancement of Early Educators

The education level of preschool teachers is just one of many indicators of quality and is not the sole predictor of preschool effectiveness. However, it is an important indicator of quality that is relatively easy to measure. The data from the early educator survey becomes particularly meaningful when it is used to estimate the number of individual teachers who do not meet the recommended staff qualifications for Entry level programs. As stated earlier, programs funded at the Entry level will have one teacher in each group or classroom that holds a California Child Development Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year of experience in the field of Early Care and Education (ECE). Family child care providers will also be required to hold Teacher Permits, although the alternative Entry level qualification would allow them to have Associate Teacher permits with an additional 12 units of ECE and 16 units of general education.

Data from the early educator survey indicates that if the quality matrix were instituted immediately, 35 percent of child care centers and 58 percent of family child care sites would not meet the Entry level staff qualifications. Table 5 reports that these percentages equate to 46 family child care sites and 25 child care centers. Applying the same multipliers calculated previously produces estimates of 195 family child care sites and 34 child care centers in the county that do not meet the proposed minimum staff qualifications. It is estimated that each of these family child care sites has one group or classroom, while each of the child care centers has two groups or classrooms. These figures can be used to project that at least 263 early educators (195 family child care providers and 68 center-based teachers) would need additional education in order for the sites and centers to meet the Entry level staff requirements.
The estimated number of early educators who would need additional education is large and is likely a conservative number. Meeting the educational needs for this many teachers poses a challenge in and of itself. In addition to this challenge, the Workforce and Quality Work Group identified five other systemic challenges to workforce improvement:

- A lack of articulation between the community college and California State University (CSU) system
- A scarcity of Bachelor’s (BA) programs or specializations in Early Childhood and Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD) in California
- Limited access to BA programs in Santa Cruz County
- Limited financing for higher education students in Santa Cruz County.
- The difficulty in getting recognition of foreign degree equivalency by U.S. community college and university programs, as well as the California Department of Education, Child Development Division

**This is an average number of classrooms for centers reporting that they do not meet the minimum staff requirement. State and federally-funded centers that are presumed to meet the Entry level staff qualifications were not included when calculating this average.
In order to overcome these challenges, the **Workforce and Quality Work Group** recommends the following actions to support Early Childhood Education students as they work toward higher levels of education:

- Support a statewide articulation system between community college ECE programs and CSU/UC BA programs in ECE/CD.
- Support the institution of a California teaching credential in ECE that incorporates the current California Child Development Permit (CCD Permit) into the BA and provides for specialized ECE training for current K-12 credential holders.
- Support the development of a simplified and strengthened California Child Development Permit matrix.
- Provide support for advisors and early educators to have foreign degrees analyzed for equivalency to U.S. degrees, and to have coursework analyzed for equivalency for CA Child Development Permit course requirements.
- Increase or maintain support for early educators to meet staff qualification for Entry level funded programs.
- Increase or maintain supports for teaching staff to advance to higher education levels to meet qualifications for Advancing programs and Programs of Excellence. These supports include:

**Targeted delivery**

- Create cohorts in the Cabrillo College ECE Department for students who intend to transfer to a BA program in ECE/CD.
- Support Cabrillo College ECE/CD students to connect with cohorts of ECE/CD students in BA programs.
- Maintain or increase classes for English learners at Cabrillo College, including entry level English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

**Advising and counseling**

- Fund Cabrillo College ECE Department staff to advise all ECE students, including English learners.
- Ensure that Cabrillo College counselors have information about the California Child Development Permit matrix, the requirements for the Associate Degree in Science (AS) in ECE, and about transferring to BA programs in CD/ECE.
- Ensure that all preschool teachers with CCD Permits, in funded programs, have a Professional Growth Advisor.
- Provide a workshop at the Central Coast ECE Conference, produced by the Santa Cruz County Child Care Planning Council, on options for pursuing a BA in ECE/CD.
Financial Support

- Provide financial incentives to increase staff qualifications through a tiered reimbursement scale for funded programs.
- Ensure that Cabrillo ECE students receive information about available loans, grants, and scholarships from ECE Department advisors and Cabrillo counselors.
- Enhance assistance for ECE students applying for financial aid.
- Identify new sources of funding for scholarships for ECE students.

Skill-based Support

- Ensure that all Cabrillo College ECE students are offered academic and technological supports.

Access-based Support

- Support the Cabrillo College ECE Department in continuing to offer classes during nights and weekends and at the Watsonville campus.
- Provide information through the ECE Department advisors and Cabrillo College counselors about Cabrillo’s Spanish to English program and San Jose State University’s (SJSU) night and weekend course offerings.
- Provide information about San Jose State University’s (SJSU) courses in Child Development.
- Encourage four-year institutions to offer BA classes in the fields of ECE and CD in Santa Cruz County.
- Provide information on distance learning degree-applicable classes.

Ensuring Choices for Families

The Family and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group recognized that the quality of a program is one of many factors that families take into consideration when they decide whether and where to enroll their children in preschool. In some cases, families may need additional information about the definition and benefits of quality preschool and the options available to them. In other cases, families may need additional resources and support, as indicated in the family survey, in order to gain access to the quality preschool programs that their children need. In the latter case, increasing access to quality preschool includes ensuring that families have an array of choices of preschool programs that will meet their needs.
Based on this context, the Family and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group recommends that ASAP funding for preschool goes to quality programs that:

- Are close to families’ homes, schools or work (e.g. families have an array of quality programs to choose from that meet their need for proximity to home, school or work)
- Are safe and clean
- Respect families’ home languages, cultures and religions
- Support all family structures (e.g. single parents, same-gender marriages, etc.)
- Support families and children with special needs
- Provide financial support to low-income families
- Utilize enrollment processes that are accessible and that respect and protect the privacy of families

Reaching Out to Families in the High-Priority Population

Although not all children in the high-priority population are Latino, the demographics and school test data in Santa Cruz County make it more likely that a large number of children in the high-priority population are Latino. In a 2006 report on “Pre-K and Latinos: The Foundation for America’s Future,” Eugene Garcia and Danielle Gonzales emphasize that effective preschool programs “should be structured to build upon the existing strengths within Latino communities, including strong family bonds, a high value on education achievement, and widespread support for public education and social systems.”

This statement challenges the common misconception that Latino families do not send their children to preschool because they don’t understand the value of education. Instead, Garcia and Gonzales recognize that certain aspects of the early childhood education system may create barriers for Latino children to participate in preschool. Examples range from the lack of high-quality preschool programs located in Latino communities to the lack of bilingual early educators that can communicate with Spanish-speaking families. Garcia and Gonzales also believe that increasing Latinos’ access to and participation in preschool requires conducting specific outreach that meets the needs of Latino families.

While their report addresses the specific needs and barriers regarding access to preschool for Latino families, the underlying concepts they address are applicable to any of the families in the high-priority population, as well as other families that traditionally have a harder time accessing quality preschool. That is, outreach efforts must be tailored to reflect the diverse needs of families in order to be effective.
The Family and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group identified a number of local organizations and programs that utilize effective outreach strategies, including: The City of Watsonville’s Neighborhood Services Division, the Cabrillo Advancement Program, the Educational Partnership Center at UCSC, Go Kids, Inc., Health Care Outreach Coalition, the Child Development Resource Center and First 5 Santa Cruz County. These programs have found that outreach to families is most effective when they:

- Hire bilingual and bicultural staff in order to communicate effectively with families.
- Hold meetings in Spanish to accommodate parents who speak Spanish.
- Hold meetings in the evening to accommodate parents who have long work hours or cannot leave work during the day.
- Provide information at community events and locations where families naturally spend their time. Examples include faith-based organizations, health agencies, public events, grocery stores and farmer’s markets.
- Conduct door-to-door outreach and education about the benefits and availability of preschool and other support services.
- Train other service providers that families trust (e.g., pediatricians, family resource center staff) to provide information about child development, education and social services.

Based on these findings, the Family and Diverse Delivery Systems Work Group recommends that the above strategies be incorporated into a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan designed to raise families’ awareness about the benefits of quality preschool and how to enroll their children. Public service announcements, informational meetings and outreach materials in multiple languages are additional strategies that would be included in the plan. While it’s recommended that a countywide outreach plan be adopted, individual strategies may be tailored to reflect the needs of specific neighborhoods or geographic areas. The hub model would provide the ideal structure for organizing community-specific outreach efforts.

Involving Families as Partners in Preparing Children to Learn

Additional outreach, resources and supports may lead more families to enroll their children in preschool, and yet there will always be some who choose alternative types of care. Either way, families play a vital role in preparing their children to learn and succeed in school.
The everyday interactions and activities that occur in the home are opportunities for families and other caregivers to expose children to sounds, sights, words, ideas and experiences that stimulate their curiosity and interest in learning. These “teachable moments” can help establish a connection and continuity between the learning that takes place at home, in preschool and in kindergarten.

While some families may understand how to recognize and use these teachable moments, other families may need information and resources to help them understand what they can do at home to prepare their children to learn in school. Local programs such as Raising a Reader, Migrant Head Start’s Parent Education Program, Together in the Park, Growing, Learning and Caring and other parent education programs offered through family resource centers are, or could become, avenues to provide this type of support to families.

Preparing Children for the Transition from Preschool to Kindergarten

The transition from preschool to kindergarten is a critical period in children’s education. Leaving the familiarity of preschool for the unknown world of kindergarten can generate a range of feelings and hopes for both children and their families. Transition processes that build on the social, emotional and academic skills developed in preschool can give children the continuity and confidence that will help them enter kindergarten ready to continue learning. This type of positive, seamless transition for children requires mutual respect, ongoing communication, and relationship-building among families, early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers.

The Articulation and Transition Work Group identified five areas of focus, with corresponding subsets of recommendations to create seamless transitions that enable each child in Santa Cruz County to be successful on the first day of kindergarten.

Construct respectful and professional partnerships between preschool and K-12 educators.

Implement the following actions to formalize and institutionalize communication between formal and informal preschool providers and elementary schools:

- Establish a preschool to kindergarten Transition Advisory Team for Santa Cruz County that would coordinate the efforts of the preschool and kindergarten professional communities as well as advocate for salary parity between preschool and elementary school teachers, mentor preschool teacher assistants, sponsor transition workshops, ensure equitable representation, and commit to a shared governance model.
- Develop a transition handbook with program plans, policies, roles, relationships, and responsibilities clearly defined.
- Develop a mission statement for preschool to kindergarten transitions in Santa Cruz County.
Coordinate agency services.

A wide range of agencies are responsible for services that serve children and their families. Examples include First 5 Santa Cruz County, school districts and SELPA (Special Education Local Planning Agency). West Ed, community colleges and the Child Development Resource Center also provide data and professional support services. A coherent network of services for preschool and K-12 educators engaged in the school transition should be established to:

- Develop transition tools.
- Provide job-embedded professional growth and development opportunities.
- Coordinate preschool and elementary school special education services.
- Design a user-friendly and secure preschool transition website that would integrate information from the Child Development Resource Center, school districts, preschools, the Child Care Planning Council and other relevant agencies and entities.

Create community hubs for families transitioning into kindergarten.

Transition activities within each community would be coordinated using the hub model. Ideally each community would:

- Establish a transition coordinator for each school.
- Maximize kindergarten “round-ups”.
- Provide parent education workshops and school events for preschool families.
- Provide opportunities for preschool children to visit kindergarten school sites.
- Invite preschool parents to school events (back to school night, open house night).
- Continue Summer Migrant Bilingual Preschool and other prekindergarten summer school programs.
- Encourage kindergarten teachers to visit preschool programs to discuss kindergarten expectations with families.

Promote collaboration between ECE and elementary school professionals.

Each community would also ideally reinforce positive relationships between preschool and elementary school teachers. The recommendations are:

- Continue First 5 Santa Cruz County funding for a School Readiness Director.
- Promote collaboration between preschool and elementary school teachers through transition meetings, curriculum articulation, program development, data base planning, and professional advocacy.
- Provide ongoing and joint professional development on curriculum articulation, early care and education research and professional advocacy.
- Bring preschool transition issues to Kindergarten Job Alike meetings; sponsor administration and community leader education events.
Maximize family involvement through the preschool to kindergarten transition.

Families play an essential role in assisting their children’s learning. The Articulation and Transition Work Group aims to encourage the active participation of families in preschool and the early years of elementary school. This participation includes the classroom as well as school decision-making and advisory committees. This participation can only happen if families feel comfortable in the school setting. The Articulation and Transition Work Group recommends that:

- Schools assign family mentors to help new families feel comfortable while encouraging leadership and involvement in preschool and elementary schools.

Understanding the Need for Quality Preschool

Before developing a detailed plan for increasing preschool programs or available slots, it is important to develop a more accurate projection of the need for quality preschools that serve families in the high-priority population. Data from the family survey was linked with the early educator survey, making it possible to identify where high-priority children were during the year before kindergarten. This data, when analyzed in conjunction with the minimum education requirement for Entry level programs, provides an estimate of high-priority children who already have access to preschool programs that meet one standard of quality. Based on this data, the chart on the next page shows that:

- Thirty four percent of high-priority children are in child care settings that meet the minimum education requirement for Entry level programs.
- Sixty six percent of high-priority children are in child care settings that do not meet the education requirement for Entry level programs.

This percentage equates to approximately 1,320 children in the county and includes children in:
- Preschool programs that do not meet the minimum education requirement (37%)
- Their own homes being cared for by a family member (24%)
- Unlicensed child care, also known as family, friend and neighbor care (5%)
Data from the California Department of Education can be used to further refine the estimated number of high-priority children who need quality preschool by geographic area in the county. Data from the early educator survey can be used to estimate the number of open slots in the same geographic areas. The chart on the following page reports both the number of high-priority children who need preschool and the number of preschool slots that are open to meet the demand for preschool. The geographic areas represented on the chart, from left to right, are San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley, West Santa Cruz, Beach Flats, East Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Davenport, Soquel, Aptos and Rio Del Mar, and Freedom and Watsonville.
The blue represent the number of 4-year olds from the priority population that need preschool and the green represent the number of available preschool slots. This chart shows that the largest unmet need is in Freedom and Watsonville. The need in Freedom and Watsonville is about ten times greater than any other geographic area, with approximately 800 children needing quality preschool.

Since differences in the other areas are dwarfed by the need in Freedom and Watsonville, the chart on the following page presents more detailed information on the other geographic areas. The geographic areas represented on the chart, from left to right, are San Lorenzo Valley, Scotts Valley, West Santa Cruz, Beach Flats, East Santa Cruz, Live Oak, Davenport, Soquel, and Aptos and Rio Del Mar. In this chart, the gradated red bars represent the number of 4-year old children in the high-priority population who need quality preschool. The grey bars represent the number of preschool slots available in each geographic area. This chart shows that there is an unmet need for approximately 15 children in San Lorenzo Valley, 20 children in Scotts Valley, 65 children in Beach Flats, 20 children in East Santa Cruz, 80 children in Live Oak, 3 children in Davenport, 40 children in Soquel, and 40 children in Aptos and Rio Del Mar.
It is important to note that these charts only reflect the number of high-priority children needing preschool as compared to available slots in existing programs. That is, they do not reflect whether the available slots are in preschools that meet the proposed standards in the quality matrix. If the quality matrix is instituted and preschool programs are identified as Entry, Advancing or Programs of Excellence, then the unmet need for quality preschool could be projected with greater accuracy.

**Identifying and Monitoring Funding Sources**

There are multiple funding streams for preschool at the federal, state and local levels. The funding requirements are often complex and restrictive, which can create confusion for preschool programs and unnecessary barriers to providing quality preschool to families. In addition, federal stimulus dollars for early childhood education are becoming available and require a rapid response to requests for proposals. The **Finance and Facilities Work Group** recommends that Santa Cruz County ASAP continues to identify and monitor funding sources so that preschool providers are prepared to respond as new funding becomes available.
Improving and Expanding Facilities

There are no easy solutions to the problem of limited facilities, as land is expensive in Santa Cruz County and there are not many tracts available for building new preschool sites. In addition, development of new sites is cost-prohibitive in most cases. For these reasons, the **Finance and Facilities Work Group** developed a list of recommendations to guide *Santa Cruz County ASAP* through a public process of streamlining site development requirements to expand and upgrade existing facilities. These recommendations include:

- Working with the cities and county to simplify the permit process.
- Working with the cities and county to lower fees.
- Providing incentives for the renovation of facilities.
- Expanding and enhancing the Child Care Facilities Revolving Fund to go beyond the purchase of relocatable buildings on public property, utilizing the County Developer Fee Loans to expand and maintain quality preschool slots in centers and family child care sites serving families in the high-priority population.
- Modifying the Education Code so that school districts are not penalized for using school facilities for preschool age children.
- Meeting with local Fire Inspectors to standardize the facility inspection process.
- Meeting with Community Care Licensing to more easily permit sharing of playgrounds and other facilities between preschool and K-3 classrooms.
- Adding a local Licensing Advocate who focuses specifically on facilities contracting with the Low Income Investment Fund as they provide loans, grants, and technical assistance to form or strengthen collaboratives of community development and child care representatives, utilizing the expertise of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to secure leverage of funding to pay for the development of new facilities.
- Utilizing the SBDC staff expertise to create business plans that would maximize the potential for these preschool programs to succeed.
- Promoting “green” facility development (including remodeling) in order to protect children’s health and limit their exposure to harmful chemicals and toxins frequently found in building materials.

**Financing Models**

While the above recommendations streamline the process of improving existing facilities, the **Finance and Facilities Work Group** recommends that funding for facilities be addressed in three different ways:

- Renovate to improve the quality and health and safety of a particular program to reduce vacancies caused by inadequate facilities.
- Renovate to expand the capacity of an existing program.
- Build new facilities from the ground up, either on or off school sites, or locate portable buildings where zoning allows (highest cost).

Funding Through Community Hubs

The **Finance and Facilities Work Groups** recommends that financing for preschool programs be organized using the community hub model. The primary responsibilities of the hub would be to:

- Utilize existing data and collect additional data to determine the true supply and demand for quality preschool slots, particularly for children in the high-priority population.
- Recruit existing preschool providers to participate in the hub by offering incentives such as training or subsidies. This will help create a partnership between providers and the schools.
- Recruit families to enroll their children in preschools funded by ASAP by offering training and access to subsidized care. Door-to-door outreach in the neighborhood could be conducted to canvass and survey families about their needs.
- Offer families training on topics such as child development and parenting skills.
- Establish a “substitute pool” for preschool providers in the school attendance area.

Funding through community hubs would help promote ongoing collaboration and relationships. In order for that collaboration to be effective, the process of defining and establishing the hubs must include community leaders that represent families, preschool educators, K-12 educators and administrators, businesses, civic organizations, social service agencies, government agencies, elected officials and other community members.

Partners in each community hub would need to address issues such as:

- Joint Powers of Agreement and/or Memorandums of Understanding between partners in the hub
- The possibility of combining small schools into a larger attendance area to more efficiently operate the hub
- How to include faith-based preschool programs in the hub
- An inventory of existing buildings on school sites noting which schools already have preschools on site
- The quality of preschool programs participating in the hub
- A process for bringing competing agencies and providers together to work toward a common goal

Solutions to these and other issues could be developed and tested on a small scale by piloting the community hub model in South County and in North County. To support the creation of effective community hubs, the **Finance and Facilities Work Group** has developed a “tool box” with professional templates for a business plan, budgets, a Memorandum of Understanding and other related resources.
CONCLUSION

All children and families in Santa Cruz County, particularly those that are Latino, English learners and/or have lower incomes, will benefit from a coordinated effort to increase access to quality preschool. Participants in the ASAP planning process believe this can be accomplished if the following recommendations are implemented effectively:

- Increase the quality of preschool programs.
- Institute a matrix of quality standards with three tiers of quality indicators (Entry, Advancing, and Program of Excellence).
- Allocate preschool funding in accordance with the tiers of quality in order to provide incentives for quality improvements.
- Increase or maintain support services for the early childhood education workforce to obtain higher levels of education.

Ensure that high-priority families are aware of the value of quality preschool and have access to quality programs that meet their needs.

- Fund programs that represent an array of options to meet families’ diverse needs.
- Implement outreach strategies to raise awareness about the importance of and availability of quality preschool.
- Fund programs that are respectful of and responsive to families’ linguistic and cultural needs.
Ensure that children and families experience a seamless transition from quality preschool to quality kindergarten.

- Organize articulation and transition efforts by neighborhood.
- Address articulation and transition through collaboration, continuity of services, preparation of children for kindergarten and family involvement.

Ensure that there are enough quality preschool programs and slots to meet the demand and that those programs are adequately funded.

- Continue to identify and monitor the current preschool funding sources.
- Develop a detailed plan to expand and upgrade facilities as funds become available.
- Structure future financing around “community hubs.”

Prioritizing Next Steps

Although the economy is still in a precarious situation and the ultimate effect on funding early childhood education is still unknown, Santa Cruz County cannot afford to wait to implement the ASAP Plan. While some of the recommendations in this plan will require substantial and long-term funding, other recommendations can be implemented with little or no funding. With this in mind, each Work Group prioritized its recommendations according to the level of importance and/or anticipated level of funding that would be required to implement each recommendation. The recommendations have been categorized in Table 6 according to whether they are items that Santa Cruz County should “Do First”, “Do Soon” or “Do as Funding Allows.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Group</th>
<th>Do First</th>
<th>Do Soon</th>
<th>Do As Funding Allows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workforce and Quality</td>
<td>Develop a systematic way to disseminate information on AS, BA and Masters’ requirements and program opportunities.</td>
<td>Develop workshops and seminars on professional development planning, AS and BA requirements and CA Child Development Permit requirements (through the Child Development Resource Center, the Central Coast Early Care and education Conference, etc.).</td>
<td>Institute the recommended three-tier quality matrix. Tie future ASAP funding of preschools to this three-tier matrix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Diverse Systems</td>
<td>Implement a community and outreach plan that helps families understand the value of preschool in terms of children’s preparation for success in school and life.</td>
<td>Work with communities to update and expand preschool capacity.</td>
<td>Fund preschools that meet diverse needs (e.g. culture, language, location, hours, special needs, etc.) and the quality standards presented in this Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articulation and Transition</td>
<td>Encourage participation in Spring Kinder Round Up. Encourage PreK visits to Kindergarten classrooms. Conduct orientations for parents before first day of school. Fund Site Coordinator. Prepare children. Increase understanding of self in relation to school.</td>
<td>Enhance efforts to implement all recommendations in “Do First” column. Provide parent workshops that address the “whole child” in context of school community.</td>
<td>Continue developing programs (support core practices and innovation) Professional development for ECE and Kinder/ Elementary teachers that directly reflects the needs of children in programs. Prioritize and provide funding through longterm partnerships between sites, districts, communities, state, federal and private sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities and Finance</td>
<td>Secure grants. Access federal stimulus money. Prepare toolkit of resources on CD, including templates for financing, budgets, business planning, MOUs. Work to have child care incorporated in city and county general plans Lobby CA Department of Education to allocate money on a multi-year basis, to use ADA money on facilities.</td>
<td>Use voucher model to disburse monies to clients efficiently. Develop a pilot program at one school to implement the hub concept. Promote green facility development distributing informational material. Hire an expert to track incoming dollars and assist in facility development.</td>
<td>Use state revolving loan money to build new facilities (AB 932). Use federal facilities monies to expand capacity (HR 1685). Access “Promise Neighborhoods” grant to develop comprehensive neighborhood programs for children and youth from birth through college.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Going Forward

The ASAP Plan positions Santa Cruz County to pursue future funding opportunities and provides a blueprint for action to achieve our vision of quality preschool for all children. While this Plan will serve as a guide for the future, it’s also important to recognize that there are several efforts and opportunities occurring at the federal, state and local levels that may impact the eventual implementation of this Plan. For example, allocation of the federal stimulus dollars and the adoption of a statewide Early Learning Quality Improvement System in California may alter specific details of the Work Groups’ recommendations or their prioritization for implementation.

In order to maintain the enthusiasm and commitment to this vision that was generated during the past year and to ensure that Santa Cruz County is ready to adapt this Plan as circumstances change, it is recommend that the Child Care Planning Council, Santa Cruz County Office of Education and First 5 continue to take a leadership role in advancing efforts to expand access to quality preschool. This may be accomplished through a combination of work conducted at the Child Care Planning Council’s monthly meetings and in subcommittees. In addition, it would be beneficial for the Steering Committee and Advisory Committee to meet periodically to assess opportunities and progress toward implementing recommendations in the ASAP Plan.

For more information

For a complete summary of all documentation used in preparing this report, please contact Carole Mulford, Department Manager, Child Development Programs, Santa Cruz County Office of Education at: 831-466-5821 or visit: www.childcareplanning.org
APPENDICES / Appendix 1: Quality Standards Matrix

Proposed Quality Standards: CCPC Workforce Quality Workgroup

Quality indicators that are not divided into tiers apply to all programs. Except where noted, standards apply to both centers and Family Child Care Homes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Tier 1: Entry</th>
<th>Tier 2: Advancing</th>
<th>Tier 3: Program of Excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Compliance History</td>
<td>Holds family child care or child care facility license. Is compliant with State child care licensing regulations. Not on probation. FCCH: record of annual Health and Fire inspections (no hearings due to failure to correct deficiencies).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening/referral and support services</td>
<td>Needs of the child and the family for health or social services are identified. Referrals are made to appropriate agencies in the community based on identified needs. Follow-up procedures with the family to ensure that the needs have been addressed are conducted.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning environment and program</td>
<td>Average score of 4.5 or more on all subscales of ECERS-R or FCCERS-R (no item less than 3) plus a written plan for improvement</td>
<td>Average score of 5 or more on all subscales of ECERS-R or FCCERS-R (no item less than 3) plus a written plan for improvement</td>
<td>Average score of 6 or more on all subscales of ECERS-R or FCCERS-R (no item less than 3) plus a written plan for improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional development</td>
<td>At least 15 hours of documented staff professional development annually. Each instructional staff person must have a Professional Growth Advisor and plan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff stability and working conditions</td>
<td>Paid time off. Paid preparation and planning time daily. Annual staff evaluations, including goals for coming year. Center/agency plan for ongoing staff development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers: Staff meetings</td>
<td>6 staff meetings/year minimum</td>
<td>9 staff meetings a year minimum</td>
<td>12 staff meetings a year minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centers: Group size/ratios *</td>
<td>Group size: 24 maximum Ratios: 1 adult per 8 children, at least 1 qualified teacher (see staff qualifications below)</td>
<td>Group size: 24 maximum Ratios: 1 adult per 8 children, at least 1 qualified teacher (see staff qualifications below)</td>
<td>Group size: 24 maximum Ratios: 1 adult per 8 children, at least 1 BA teacher. If center is NAEYC-accredited, may have ratio of 1:10 and group size of 20.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCCHs: Group size/ratios</td>
<td>Compliance with Licensing regulations on group size and adult/child ratios</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Except as otherwise provided in the California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Community Care Licensing Standards, the program may exceed teacher-child and adult-child ratios by fifteen percent (15%) for a period of time not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) minutes in any one day.
**APPENDICES / Appendix 1:**

**Quality Standards Matrix**

Proposed Quality Standards: CCPC Workforce Quality Workgroup

Quality indicators that are not divided into tiers apply to all programs. Except where noted, standards apply to both centers and Family Child Care Homes.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centers:</strong></td>
<td>Each classroom or group staffed by at least one teacher who holds a CA Child Development Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year experience. All other instructional staff hold at least a CD Assistant Teacher Permit.</td>
<td>Each classroom or group staffed by at least one teacher who holds CA Child Development Master Teacher Permit OR a CA CD Site Supervisor Permit with at least 24 units in ECE including core courses and has a minimum of one year experience. At least one other teacher holds CD Associate Teacher Permit.</td>
<td>Each classroom or group is staffed by at least one teacher who holds a BA degree in ECE/CD and has a minimum of one year experience. Alternative qualification: BA plus either 1) a CA CD Site Supervisor Permit with at least 24 units in ECE including core courses OR 2) a CA Child Development Master Teacher Permit. At least one other teacher holds a CD Teacher permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>Director holds Site Supervisor Permit plus BA.</td>
<td>Director holds Site Supervisor Permit plus BA.</td>
<td>Director holds Program Director Permit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Centers:</strong></td>
<td>Teacher/provider holds a CA Child Development Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year experience. Alternative qualification: Associate Teacher Permit with 24 units ECE and 16 units General Education as defined on the CD Permit Matrix. Non-degree applicable ESL course may be substituted for degree-applicable English course. Minimum of 5 years of experience. Assistant holds a CA CD Assistant Teacher Permit.</td>
<td>Teacher/provider holds a CA Child Development Master Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year experience. Assistant holds a CA Child Development Assistant Teacher Permit with 6 units core courses.</td>
<td>Teacher/provider holds a BA degree in ECE/CD and has a minimum of one year experience. Alternative qualification: BA plus either 1) a CA CD Site Supervisor Permit with at least 24 units in ECE including core courses OR 2) a CA Child Development Master Teacher permit. Assistant holds a CA Child Development Assistant Teacher Permit with 6 units core courses.</td>
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<td><strong>Administrator Qualifications</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FCCHs:</strong></td>
<td>Teacher/provider holds a CA Child Development Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year experience. Assistant holds a CA CD Assistant Teacher Permit.</td>
<td>Teacher/provider holds a CA Child Development Master Teacher Permit and has a minimum of one year experience. Assistant holds a CA Child Development Assistant Teacher Permit with 6 units core courses.</td>
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REFERENCES:


Karoly, L., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., Zellman, G., Perlman, M. and Fernyhough, L. “Room for Improvement in the Use of High-Quality Preschool Programs for California’s Children.”


