

Achieving a High-Quality Preschool Teacher Corps: A Focus on California*

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INTRODUCTION

Preschool education has emerged as a prominent issue among policy-makers, researchers, practitioners, and policy advocates throughout the nation. This discussion is especially important in California, which is home to more than one million preschool-aged children,¹

nearly half of whom are Latino,^{***} and 39% of whom are English language learners (ELLs).²

Recent developments point to the increased attention that preschool education is receiving in California. Children’s advocate Rob Reiner supported a ballot initiative designed to establish a voluntary, publicly-funded,

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***The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” are used interchangeably to identify persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish, and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race.

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universally-accessible preschool program in California.* In addition, two preschool bills were introduced in the most recent California legislative session, although neither bill was enacted. However, there is continued support for expanding preschool in California, and voters can expect to see a preschool measure on the ballot within the next two years, as well as legislation to implement a voluntary preschool for all program.

There is much support for preschool programs, particularly among Latinos. A recent poll by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) showed that 77% of Latinos believe that more funding should be spent on preschool, even if it means raising taxes.³ In addition, the movement to establish preschool for all enjoys broad support among California voters, overall, as demonstrated by a public opinion research poll that shows that 75% of voters in the state are in favor of California's government providing funding for preschool programs.⁴ Among Latino voters in California, support for a publicly-funded preschool program increases to an overwhelming 86%.⁵

Hispanic support for expanding access to preschool is not surprising, given the stakes involved. In California, in particular, Latino children are among those most likely to benefit from a preschool for all program. Nearly half

(46%) of all three- to five-year-old children in the state are Latino, yet they are currently only 37% of those enrolled in preschool.⁶

As part of its extensive research and program efforts to improve the educational status and outcomes of Latinos, NCLR, through its Sacramento, California office, is a partner in Preschool for All,** a statewide coalition of organizations committed to establishing a high-quality, voluntary, publicly-funded preschool for all program in California. A key element in defining preschool quality for Latinos includes a well-prepared preschool teacher corps. NCLR and its Preschool for All partners support efforts to establish preschool teacher requirements and recognize the importance of a highly-qualified preschool workforce that reflects the diversity of the child population of California.

To guide the thinking of policy-makers and advance efforts to achieve a high-quality preschool teacher corps, NCLR has prepared this brief. The discussion identifies the critical issues related to building a diverse teacher workforce, highlights promising efforts currently under way, and provides recommendations for achieving a highly-trained and diverse preschool workforce in California.***

* The ballot initiative was expected to appear on the November 2004 ballot, but was withdrawn, with the intention of generating greater support for a future ballot measure, particularly among Latinos.

**The Preschool for All partner organizations include: Child Care Law Center, Children Now, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance, Preschool California, and the Policy Analysis for California Education.

***This is one in a series of papers written by Preschool for All partner organizations. Future papers will address Family Involvement, Curriculum and Assessment of English Language Learners (ELLs), Facilities, Full-Day Preschool Programs, Data Collection, and Special Needs Students.

Table 1: Required Preschool Teacher Qualifications: Title 22 and Title 5, California Code of Regulations.

Position	Title 22	Title 5
Assistant Teacher	NA	6 units of college-level coursework in ECE/CD
Associate Teacher	NA	12 units of college-level coursework in ECE/CD, including designated core courses
Teacher	12 units of college-level coursework in ECE/CD	24 units of college-level coursework in ECE/CD, including designated core courses and 16 general education units
Master Teacher	Not specified	Same as teachers, plus 2 units of adult supervision and 6 specialization units

Title 22: Covers all for-profit and non-contracted nonprofit centers
 Title 5: Covers California Department of Education contracted providers
 ECE=Early Childhood Education; CD=Child Development

Source: Whitebook, M., D. Bellm, L. Sakai, F. Kipnis, I. Voisin, and M. Young, *Raising Teacher Education and Training Standards for Universal Preschool in California: Assessing the Size of the Task*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley, January 2004.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO PRESCHOOL TEACHER CORPS PREPARATION

The education qualifications of the early childhood workforce have emerged as an important measure of quality and effectiveness of preschool programs. In fact, the trend in the early childhood education (ECE) field has been toward increased education requirements for teachers. For example:

- ▶ In Head Start, our nation’s premier ECE program for low-income children, current law requires 50% of Head Start teachers to possess an associate’s degree. Moreover, federal lawmakers have signaled that the pending renewal of Head Start will seek to

establish a bachelor’s degree requirement for program teaching staff.

- ▶ In addition, 27 states now require bachelor’s degrees for preschool teachers working in state-financed preschool programs.⁷

These policy efforts are largely shaped by the mounting research demonstrating a link between the educational attainment of teachers and the quality of the environment and the academic gains of children.

In California, the issue of teacher education standards has been central to the preschool for all debate. The State of California remains one of the few states which publicly finances preschool, but does not require teachers to hold a college degree. In fact, California does not have a preschool teacher credential in place nor does the state delineate a core set of skills

and competencies for educators of young children.⁸ Currently, two sets of regulations (Title 5 and 22) establish qualifications for the early education workforce, but neither set requires teachers to complete a college degree.

During the 2003-2004 California legislative session, policy-makers acted on two legislative proposals that aimed to raise the bar on the required level of education for preschool teachers:

1. California lawmakers considered AB 56, a bill that followed the recommendations of the Master Plan for Education* and would have in its original form created a voluntary preschool program for all three- and four-year-old children. This bill would have required all teachers to possess a bachelor's degree within five years of the preschool program's inception and a bachelor's degree with 24 units of specialized training in preschool education within nine years of the program's start date. In addition, AB 56 sought to establish an associate's degree requirement for assistant teachers by the ninth year of program implementation.
2. The California legislature passed AB 712, a bill specific to preschool workforce issues. This legislation sought to establish a Workforce Development Blue Ribbon Committee charged with developing a plan for creating a well-compensated, highly-qualified bilingual and bicultural preschool

workforce, and advising on the costs of implementing such a plan. Despite Governor Schwarzenegger's veto of this legislation, the Governor's veto message states intent to work in this area, including supporting the efforts of the California First Five Commission, which recently voted to establish a Blue Ribbon Committee on the Preschool Workforce.⁹

While these legislative efforts were unsuccessful, the issue of preschool teacher education standards will continue to be a focus for California policy-makers and preschool advocates.

QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO RAISING PRESCHOOL TEACHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

While there is clear support for raising preschool teacher education standards, three large questions remain regarding how to achieve this goal. The following discussion outlines the most pressing challenges with respect to upgrading the education qualifications of preschool teachers. First, decisions must be made regarding the type of preparation needed and what constitutes an appropriate education standard. Second, from

* In 1999, the California legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 29, calling for the creation of a new Master Plan for Education. The California Master Plan is used by the legislature as a template for proposed education legislation from prekindergarten through postsecondary education.

a Latino perspective, the diversity that currently exists among this sector of educational professionals must be maintained or increased, especially in the context of demographic changes and the growing Latino population. Third, there are challenges related to how the current educational structure can be altered to facilitate these enhancements, given the enormity and complexity of the task.

1. PRESCHOOL TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS: HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RESEARCH ON APPROPRIATE EDUCATION STANDARDS

The literature on ECE staff preparation does not make a compelling case for one “silver bullet” approach to improving teacher effectiveness. While there is evidence showing that increasing teachers’ education levels will improve the quality of preschool services, other factors such as ECE training and coursework can also contribute to high-quality programs. Thus, achieving a well-prepared ECE workforce will require California policy-makers to consider a variety of approaches.

Studies looking at the relationship between formal education, program quality, and child outcomes have shown that ECE teachers with more formal education provide higher quality services than teachers with less education.¹⁰ For example, a review conducted by Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) reported that, across studies, center-based staff with at least an associate’s degree tend to provide higher quality care than center-based staff with less than an associate’s degree.¹¹ In addition, the National Institute for Early Education Research found that in studies that focused on the quality effects of a bachelor’s degree, a correlation exists between increased

quality and child outcomes and teachers with a bachelor’s degree.¹²

While the research generally concludes that “more education is better,” the research does not indicate *how much* formal education teachers should have in order to achieve a high-quality learning environment.¹³ Simply put, it remains unclear from the literature precisely what gains are acquired from a bachelor’s degree versus an associate’s degree.¹⁴

Similarly, the literature that examines the relationship between program quality and specialized ECE education and training suffers from the same limitations as the research on formal education. There are few studies looking at *how much* ECE training and education is needed to make gains in program quality.¹⁵ Notwithstanding this, the research generally concludes that specialized ECE training and education results in higher quality. For example, the National Academy of Sciences supports the importance of “education focused specifically on child development and early childhood education.”¹⁶ In addition, some studies looking at the effects of ECE coursework suggest that increased training in ECE increases program quality.¹⁷

Further, among child care quality studies seeking to determine whether formal education or specialized ECE training is a better predictor of quality, the findings to date remain inconclusive. The PACE review suggests that “both general educational status and specialized training in ECE appears to independently and additively predict quality of care. There is not consistent evidence to suggest that either general education or specialized training is more important.”¹⁸

In sum, the research to date does not decisively point to one specific path to achieving a well-prepared teacher corps. However, the literature generally concludes that raising the educational levels and training for preschool teachers, including holding a college degree, will add to program quality. In addition, the literature suggests that preschool teachers should have training and education specializing in ECE.

Thus, as researchers continue to seek answers to threshold questions regarding how much formal education and training is necessary to achieve quality, it is clear that California's children will benefit from policies aimed at increasing teachers' access to coursework and training in ECE, as well as hiring more teachers with college degrees.

2. DIVERSITY AS A QUALITY INDICATOR

There is an underlying concern about the impact of proposed changes to preschool teacher preparation policies on the diversity of the ECE workforce. Currently, nearly one-third (30%) of children in Head Start are Hispanic and one-fourth (25%) of Head Start personnel are Hispanic.¹⁹ Thus, there is a significant number of Latino ECE personnel that could represent a large part of the future ECE workforce. However, there is some anecdotal evidence showing that Latino, limited-English-proficient (LEP), and African American ECE professionals, who bring important skills with them to the preschool setting, may face challenges in meeting increased formal education requirements and, as a result, leave the ECE field.²⁰ While much of these data are not yet available, the evidence is clear in showing that minority, low-income,

and language-minority men and women are less likely than their White and more affluent peers to have completed a bachelor's degree, and thus may be less likely to remain in the preschool teacher pool if degree requirements are put in place without considering their impact on the diversity of the ECE workforce.

NCLR believes that a workforce that reflects the culturally- and linguistically-diverse population of students is necessary for a preschool system to be effective. A diverse workforce will improve the quality of the preschool program and translate into better outcomes for children. For California, this means that the preschool workforce must include Latinos and teachers with expertise in serving ELLs.

The quality of instruction these children receive and their academic outcomes will determine whether or not preschool for all is successful, and this will in part be based on the availability of bicultural teachers and instruction in the student's home language. Indeed, recent studies underscore the importance of providing Latino and ELL children with access to bilingual teachers in order to enhance academic and school readiness outcomes. For example, a study that examined the transfer of language skills from English to Spanish among young ELLs supports "the practice of providing literacy instruction in Spanish to Spanish-speaking ELLs as a means of helping them acquire literacy skills in English."²¹ In addition, initial findings from the Early Childhood Study of Language and Literacy Development point to young ELLs' ability to apply early literacy skills such as phonological awareness across their two languages.²²

In addition to diversity in the teacher workforce, training in serving diverse children and families is critical for effective parental involvement, a key quality indicator for preschool programs. In order to achieve quality relationships with parents and promote parental involvement in a preschool program, it is important to have staff prepared to provide culturally- and linguistically-appropriate services to Latino and LEP parents. However, these types of relationships have been difficult to establish. For example, one survey of state administrators of early childhood programs found that, across all types of programs, administrators reported the lack of Latino or bilingual staff and the lack of sufficient preparation and training of preschool professionals as the most urgent challenges in serving these populations.²³

Thus, if California's children are going to have a successful preschool experience, teachers must be equipped to provide Latino and ELL children with appropriate services, including effective instruction. In addition, there must be enough teachers with the skills necessary to engage and build trust with parents and families of diverse cultural and language backgrounds.

3. ASSESSING THE SIZE OF THE TASK

Preparing a diverse, highly-qualified preschool workforce will be a significant task at both the state and national levels. According to the National Prekindergarten Center, "If the U.S. offered a universal voluntary preschool program to four-year-olds today, the country would need 200,556 teachers (assuming that 95% of the 3,610,000 four-year-olds were served in classes of 18)."²⁴ Moreover, Census projections indicate that the preschool system

would require an additional 43,888 teachers to serve 4.4 million four-year-olds by 2020.²⁵

Ensuring that a proportional share of these new teachers is Hispanic, relative to their presence in the overall population, will be challenging, particularly if these teachers are required to hold bachelor's degrees. Currently, Latino preschool teachers have lower rates of college educational attainment than the general population of teachers. Moreover, research shows stark differences between Latino and White ECE providers who have completed an associate's or higher college degree.²⁶ For example, a recent study of the California ECE workforce reported that, among the counties studied, all but one county had at least ten point spreads between the percentage of White providers with associate's degrees or higher and the percentage of Latino providers with associate's degrees or higher.²⁷ These data suggest that in order to maintain a commitment to diversity while also raising teacher degree requirements within the preschool workforce, policy-makers will have to significantly increase opportunities for Hispanic preschool teachers to obtain a bachelor's degree.

Unfortunately, the infrastructure for preparing a diverse preschool workforce is not in place. Very few degree-granting U.S. Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) offer degree programs in ECE. For example, 29% of the IHE system in the U.S. offers an associate's or bachelor's degree in ECE.²⁸ Moreover, fewer than half offer a BA degree in ECE.²⁹ An additional challenge is that some credits ECE teachers earn while obtaining associate's degrees are sometimes not accepted by bachelor's degree-granting institutions. This lack of "articulation" between two- and four-year institutions means

that ECE teachers often have to repeat coursework, which lengthens the amount of time for ECE teachers to obtain BA degrees in ECE and results in higher costs.³⁰

In California, community colleges are the institutions that prepare the bulk of the preschool workforce, largely because of accessibility (i.e., location and cost), and also because the classes required under Title 5 and Title 22 (the two regulations that establish preschool teacher education requirements) are largely contained within this system of colleges.³¹ This system currently has more capacity than do either of the two four-year college systems (the California State University system and the University of California system) to prepare preschool teachers. Unfortunately, the cumbersome articulation process between two- and four-year institutions means that the roadmap to a bachelor’s degree with an early childhood education focus is not readily

available throughout the state.³²

Ensuring that California’s preschool workforce is diverse, well-educated, and trained in early childhood education will require significant resources and policy changes across different sectors of the higher education community. In essence, it means developing a “pipeline” for teachers in the current workforce and for students obtaining specialized training in early childhood education to move toward a bachelor’s degree program.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE TEACHER QUALITY

Achieving a high-quality preschool teacher corps in California will require raising the bar on training and formal education requirements for preschool teachers as well as employing staff with the cultural and language skills to serve the state’s diverse child population. To

Table 2: Percentage of Family Child Care Providers with an Associate’s Degree or Higher, by Race and Ethnicity and Selected California Counties

	All Providers	White Providers	Latino Providers
Alameda	26%	22%	9%
Kern	13%	16%	4%
Monterey	7%	11%	3%
San Benito	11%	17%	8%
San Francisco	29%	55%	8%
San Mateo	31%	30%	16%
Santa Clara	27%	26%	17%
Santa Cruz	19%	26%	6%

Source: Whitebook, M., D. Bellm, L. Sakai, F. Kipnis, I. Voisin, and M. Young, *Raising Teacher Education and Training Standards for Universal Preschool in California: Assessing the Size of the Task*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, University of California at Berkeley, January 2004.

this end, California lawmakers must weigh efforts to increase education or training requirements against the unintended consequences of these policies in reducing workforce diversity and quality for Latino and ELL children and families.

At both the federal and state level, there have been several recent efforts to increase the quality of the preschool workforce by increasing teacher education requirements. However, little is known about how these efforts have affected the quality of services for diverse children and their families. For example, the Head Start program has been largely successful in meeting a mandate that 50% of all Head Start teachers nationwide achieve an associate's degree by 2003. In its 2003 report to Congress, the Head Start Bureau showed that 52% of the program's teachers nationwide had at least an associate's degree in early childhood education or a related field at the end of the 2002 program year.³³ This figure marks a 14% increase of Head Start teachers with associate degrees since 1999.³⁴

The report, however, did not indicate whether the ethnic makeup of preschool teachers had changed during this same period of time, or whether teachers of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds had achieved the new education requirements at similar rates of progress. Moreover, the Head Start Bureau does not routinely collect data on the education qualifications of staff by race, ethnicity, or language. Thus, there is not a system in place to track changes in workforce diversity resulting from increased formal education requirements. In addition, anecdotal reports from NCLR's network of Latino-serving community-based providers show there is a cause for concern regarding workforce diversity. These providers have indicated that few LEP staff employed by Head Start are able to complete a college degree, and as a result remain in the program as teachers' assistants rather than as lead classroom teachers.

In 1998, the State of New Jersey established a universally-accessible preschool program in targeted school districts known as the *Abbott*

As part of a 1998 New Jersey Supreme Court ruling in the case *Abbott v. Burke*, the state was required to provide full-day, high-quality preschool programs for all three- and four-year-olds in targeted school districts known as *Abbott* districts. In 2000, the Court clarified standards for high-quality programs to include requirements for teachers to hold a bachelor's degree and preschool through third grade certification by 2006. While the state has documented the success of *Abbott* preschools in meeting this mandate, the state has failed to collect data on the ethnic or racial backgrounds of the teachers who have successfully acquired a bachelor's degree as a result of *Abbott* legislation. Given that the *Abbott* ruling seeks to remedy decades of inequity within the public education system and that, historically, inequities have often been associated with a person's race or ethnicity, data should be collected on the racial and ethnic composition of the *Abbott* preschool workforce.

Source: National Black Child Development Institute, "Universal Prekindergarten in New Jersey: Teacher Preparation and Professional Development in New Jersey's *Abbott* Districts Policy Brief." Washington, DC: July 2004

districts.* The *Abbott* preschool programs, both school- and community-based programs, require all teachers to have a bachelor's degree and P-3 (preschool-through-third grade) certification by 2006. Currently, New Jersey is very close to meeting the *Abbott* teacher qualifications mandate. According to a recent report funded by the Trust for Early Education and the Schuman Fund, in 2003, 80% of *Abbott* teachers in community-based programs had acquired a bachelor's degree, up from 35% in 1999.³⁵ Due to this success, the *Abbott* mandate is widely cited as evidence that a workforce of bachelor's-level preschool teachers can be achieved in a relatively short period of time.

While these results are promising, New Jersey's data collection efforts suffer from limitations similar to those of the Head Start program. According to the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), there is an absence of data on the ethnic and racial backgrounds of teachers who successfully acquired a bachelor's degree as a result of the *Abbott* legislation. Moreover, New Jersey has failed to collect reliable data on the percentages of African American and Latino individuals who have taken advantage of state scholarships designated for preschool teachers seeking to obtain a bachelor's degree.³⁶

In addition, NBCDI notes some challenges to maintaining a diverse preschool teacher corps in the *Abbott* programs. For example, the teacher education requirements may have led seasoned lead teachers who did not believe they could meet that state's education mandates to

leave teaching or to accept demotions to assistant teachers.³⁷ Moreover, NBCDI asserts that personal discussions with directors and administrators in the early care and education field in New Jersey suggest that there exists a "revolving door" of teachers in some *Abbott* preschool programs. According to these discussions, diverse teachers are leaving the *Abbott* programs because of terminations due to a lack of a bachelor's degree, certification requirements, and other reasons.³⁸

Thus, there is some emerging evidence showing that efforts to raise preschool teacher education standards may result in a loss of workforce diversity. A plan for a highly-qualified preschool workforce for California should ensure that the concerns raised in Head Start and New Jersey as a result of the *Abbott* legislation and implementation are not replicated in California.

PROMISING PRACTICES FOR BUILDING HIGHLY-QUALIFIED, DIVERSE TEACHERS

As previously noted, the challenge for policy-makers is to set higher preschool teacher education standards while maintaining diversity in the preschool teacher pool. As these issues unfold, California policy-makers can look to the following three efforts under way that successfully address these challenges.

* *Abbott* school districts refer to New Jersey's top 30 school districts with the highest poverty rates, in which nearly half (40%) of students qualify for free and reduced price lunch.

- California.** In California, Cabrillo Community College has initiated a Spanish/English Early Childhood Teaching Skills Certificate program in partnership with a local Head Start agency. This program helps Spanish-speaking staff meet California requirements for credentials and licenses to work with young children, including working toward an associate's degree in ECE. The program offers LEP teachers bilingual ECE courses, paid internships for Spanish-speaking staff, tutoring, and a spring academy which allows students to complete a semester's worth of coursework in a ten- to eleven-week period. According to a program staff member, students move through the program at their own pace, and on average it takes LEP students four to seven years to complete an associate's degree in ECE.
- North Carolina.** Another promising model, T.E.A.C.H., which originated in North Carolina but has been expanded to 21 other states, has demonstrated much success in increasing the education and training levels of ECE professionals while maintaining a commitment to diversity. T.E.A.C.H. offers better compensation for ECE providers receiving additional education and training, and provides financial supports for ECE staff to obtain college credit at participating institutions of higher education. In order for a state to participate in the T.E.A.C.H. program, the state must agree to assess itself against measures of diversity. This is done to ensure that states are reaching diverse populations. According to the president of the Child Care Services Association, which oversees T.E.A.C.H., in most states where the program is offered statewide, the

The *Un Puente al Futuro: Educating Head Start Teachers and Staff of Latino Children* project is a partnership between a local Migrant and Seasonal Head Start agency and Portland Community College (PCC) in Portland, Oregon. The goal of the program is to assist Latino teachers in obtaining an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE). PCC offers ECE classes at various language levels for limited-English-proficient (LEP) individuals. Four beginning classes are offered in Spanish so students working toward associate degrees in ECE can begin learning ECE content while they simultaneously begin to learn English. Additional classes are offered bilingually with simultaneous translation. This allows students to complete their homework in their first language and also allows Spanish-speaking and English-speaking students to communicate more fully with others in class. Advanced classes are offered only in English but with simultaneous English-language support. In addition, students receive mentoring and tutoring support and assistance with tuition and books. Upon completion of the program, LEP students have developed English-language skills that allow them to pursue additional degrees and continue their education.

Source: *Grant Evaluation Report, Un Puente al Futuro: Educating Head Start Teachers and Staff of Latino Children*, Technical Assistance for Community Services, Portland, Oregon: August 2003. Additional Citation: Conversation with Amy J. Potter, Hispanic Head Start Project Coordinator, Portland Community College, July 2003.

T.E.A.C.H. population looks as diverse as the population of individuals working in child care settings.

- ▶ **Oregon.** In 1999, the Head Start Bureau launched the Head Start-Higher Education Hispanic/Latino Service Partnerships program to support the development of education and training models between institutions of higher education and Head Start agencies. In Oregon, these funds have supported *Un Puente al Futuro: Educating Head Start Teachers and Staff of Latino Children*, a project which assists Head Start Latino and LEP teachers in acquiring an associate's degree in ECE. According to a recent evaluation, teachers participating in the project have been successful in completing an associate's degree in ECE.³⁹ In addition, the project coordinator notes that LEP staff needed more time to complete their degree than what was mandated by Head Start. For example, while Congress established a five-year time frame for Head Start to meet an associate's degree mandate, on average LEP teachers took six to seven years to obtain an associate's degree in ECE.⁴⁰

These promising practices illustrate that financial and institutional supports can work to maintain diversity in the ECE workforce while increasing teachers' education and training levels. In addition, these examples shed light on the importance of setting appropriate time frames for Latino and LEP teachers to complete their degrees. Lastly, it is evident that the community college system is a key component of a professional development system for ECE

teachers, particularly for Latino and LEP teachers.

ACHIEVING A HIGH-QUALITY TEACHER CORPS: ADDITIONAL ISSUES FOR LATINOS

As the discussion above argued, it is critically important to Latinos and ELLs that policies seeking to establish preschool for all programs ensure that teachers will provide high-quality services and maintain a workforce prepared to address the needs of culturally- and linguistically-diverse preschool students and their families. While there have been attempts to raise the quality of care provided to preschool children by raising teacher education standards, issues of workforce diversity have not been adequately addressed at the state or national levels; the *Abbott* legislation and the most recent Head Start reauthorization provide recent examples. This is of concern given that the research demonstrates that California's children will benefit from preschool teachers with higher levels of formal education and teachers with the skills to serve a diverse child population.

In addition to issues of overall quality and workforce diversity, for Latino families and their children, several other issues are important to consider in the debate regarding preschool programs and raising education standards for preschool teachers:

- ▶ **Length of time for teachers to meet requirements.** Policy-makers should guard against establishing "gatekeeper"

mandates that limit opportunities for diverse individuals to work in the field. In the case of New Jersey, mandates for teachers to hold a bachelor's degree in a relatively short period of time may have significantly altered the diversity of the workforce. As noted by NBCDI, while an average full-time student may take five years to complete a bachelor's degree, *Abbott* teachers must maintain full-time employment, balance family life, and complete a bachelor's degree and certification within a six-year period.⁴¹ Moreover, there is anecdotal information from the Oregon and California examples suggesting that minority teachers require more time than average to complete their associate's degrees.

- ▶ **Alternate points of entry for meeting requirements.** Setting a high bar for gaining entry into the ECE field may also limit opportunities for diverse individuals to work as ECE teachers. Recent policy discussions looking to require teachers to possess a bachelor's degree and assistant teachers to hold an associate's degree present challenges for Latino and LEP staff. As previously noted, there are large disparities between the educational background of Latino and White teachers working in the field. To remedy this, research should be conducted on the role of credential programs, such as the Child Development Associate (CDA), utilized in Head Start to serve as a bridge to the formal education system and an entry point to the field. Many parents and persons of

diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds utilize the credential program requirements as their first professional milestone in the field.⁴² For example, in 2000, 30% of individuals earning a CDA were former Head Start parents, and 12% of all ECE educators with CDAs were Hispanic.⁴³ Thus, while it is important to raise standards for ECE teachers as a means to increasing the quality of services, policies for achieving this should not close doors to minority educators who can make up a large proportion of the future ECE workforce. On the contrary, given that there will be a great need for highly-qualified teachers from diverse backgrounds, policies should take advantage of current entry points for these teachers.

- ▶ **Steady supply of well-prepared, diverse teachers.** The preschool-aged child population is increasingly linguistically and culturally diverse. In California, along with the growing number of Latinos and ELLs, approximately one in two preschool-aged children has at least one parent who is non-native to this country.⁴⁴ While the current pool of ECE teachers largely reflects this diversity, policy-makers must work to ensure that the ECE workforce continues to reflect the changing demographics of the child population. Moreover, these demographics suggest that California will need to significantly increase the pool of well-prepared, diverse teachers in the future. Thus, policies should be put in place that

guarantee the availability of well-prepared teachers from diverse backgrounds.

- ▶ **Community engagement.** Another important consideration relates to involving Latino parents and the broader Latino community in the design of a preschool for all system. In fact, it can be stated that the success of the preschool program in California largely depends on whether or not it meets the needs of Latino and ELL children. Indeed, the preschool system must provide culturally- and linguistically-appropriate services in order to be effective at closing student achievement gaps and reversing negative education trends. Thus, policy-makers should put in place mechanisms for leveraging the knowledge and skills of Latino-serving community-based organizations (CBOs). These organizations can also serve as important “brokers” to the Latino community. In addition, efforts must be made to ensure that Latino parents are informed about opportunities to support and participate in preschool programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NCLR recommends that policies seeking to achieve a high-quality and diverse workforce should leverage the skills of the current workforce, create an infrastructure to train the next generation of teachers, include a significant outreach and recruitment component in Latino communities, and collect critical data on the workforce.

1. BUILD ON THE SKILLS OF THE CURRENT DIVERSE ECE WORKFORCE.

- ▶ **Build a bilingual teachers “career ladder” program for non-degreed teachers which includes financial and academic supports.** The state should provide financial and academic support (including tutoring and special advising) for bilingual or LEP teachers seeking to comply with the most recent Head Start degree requirements. The program would allow teachers with the skills to serve ELLs to remain in the workforce while they move toward bachelor’s degrees. In addition, the bilingual “career ladder” should be integrated into the California Child Development Permit and other state programs that provide pathways for ECE professionals to increase education and training levels. These include: the Child Development Training Consortium, Career Incentive Program, Training TANF Recipients as Child Care Teachers, and Child Development Permit Matrix Professional Growth Advisors.
- ▶ **Build an incentive structure that provides higher salaries for teachers with degrees.** The state should expand the county-based CARES program, which offers stipends to teachers and providers for furthering their training and education. More specifically, the incentive structure should include benchmarks of attainment toward the degree that will

qualify the teacher for an incrementally higher salary until the degree is completed.

2. BUILD AN EDUCATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET THESE NEW GOALS.

► **Provide grants to IHEs to prepare teachers to meet new demand.**

The state should provide grants to IHEs to create ECE degree programs within the community college system, and four-year bachelor's-granting institutions in California must develop a bachelor's program in early childhood education. In addition, IHEs should use these funds to implement articulation agreements so that there is not replication of coursework, and so that students have the opportunity to make a smooth transition from an associate's degree to a bachelor's degree program in ECE.

► **Provide grants to IHEs to develop and expand diverse faculty.** The state should provide grants to IHEs to develop master's and Ph.D. programs in ECE, including specializations in bilingual education and English-language development. In addition, the funds should be used to support students in pursuing advanced degrees in these areas.

► **Establish a joint bachelor's degree in ECE and bilingual education.** The state should establish a commission to develop standards for a joint degree in ECE and teaching of young ELLs. In addition, the commission should look at the feasibility of designing an articulated program that supports transitions from two- to four-year institutions for individuals pursuing this joint degree.

The State of Texas requires bilingual certification in addition to early childhood certification for educators working with young English language learners (ELLs) in the state preschool program. The certification outlines a clear set of skills and competencies for teachers of young ELLs. The standards are as follows:

- Communicate competency and academic language proficiency in the first language (L1) and in the second language (L2).
- Knowledge of the foundations of bilingual education and the concepts of bilingualism and biculturalism.
- Knowledge of the process of first- and second-language acquisition and development.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the development and assessment of literacy in the primary language.
- Comprehensive knowledge of the development and assessment of biliteracy.
- Comprehensive knowledge of content-area instruction in L1 and L2.

Source: Bilingual Education Standards EC-4, State Board for Educator Certification website: <http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/standtest/standards/ec4biling.pdf>

- Invest in ongoing credit-bearing professional development.** The state should provide grants to IHEs, local education agencies, and CBOs to develop ongoing professional development opportunities to prepare current preschool teachers to meet the needs of California’s linguistically- and culturally-diverse child population. These training opportunities should be credit-bearing, integrated into a degree-track curriculum, and part of a teacher continuing education program.
- Create a pathway for a career in ECE at the high school level.** The state should partner with school districts and IHEs to offer an ECE certificate program in high school Regional Occupational Programs.
- Establish a bilingual certification for teachers of young ELLs.** The state should revise the Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (CLAD) Certificate and the Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Certificates to include teachers providing instruction to preschool-aged ELLs.
- Ensure the participation of the community college system.** Evidence from this report suggests that the community college system is an important component of a professional development system for the ECE workforce, particularly for Latino and

LEP staff. The state should ensure that the community college system is a partner in efforts to increase the training and education levels of preschool teachers.

3. DEVELOP AN AGGRESSIVE OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT STRATEGY.

- Invest in linguistically- and culturally-appropriate outreach and recruitment strategies.** The state should provide grants to IHEs, local education agencies, and CBOs to conduct outreach and recruit groups underrepresented in the teacher corps.
- Convene a group of minority ECE professionals to share best practices and models for increasing the number of minority teachers.** The state should establish an advisory committee of minority ECE professionals to advise on effective strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse pool of preschool teachers.
- Recruit individuals with ECE training and education acquired in countries outside of the U.S.** Informal surveys of ECE professionals suggest that many individuals possess ECE training and credentials from other countries. Unfortunately, these individuals face barriers in having their skills and education recognized in the U.S. The state should establish a system for recruiting them to work in

preschool programs. In addition, the state should facilitate this by evaluating and recognizing comparable ECE education and training earned outside of the U.S.

4. ESTABLISH DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH GUIDELINES.

● **Collect data on the workforce.**

The state should collect data on the education levels of the preschool workforce disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and language status.

● **Fund research on teacher quality.**

The state should fund and develop a program of research on the critical teaching skills and competencies of preschool teachers. This research could assist in the development of benchmarks that are tied to wages and financial incentives for preschool teachers to increase education and training levels.

● **Invest in online teacher training programs.** The state should provide funds for a pilot program to explore the feasibility of bilingual online courses supported by an instructor in a community-based setting.

● **Develop a research plan for teacher diversity.** The state should fund and develop a research plan that examines issues related to promoting a workforce with the skills to serve California's diverse children. These issues include but are not limited to:

appropriate time frames for teachers of diverse racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds to complete degrees, costs of various financial and institutional supports to assist teachers of diverse backgrounds in successfully completing their degrees, and revising professional development competencies and standards to include content related to serving culturally- and linguistically-diverse children and their families.

5. BUILD A BASE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENTS.

● **Include Latino representation on a Workforce Blue Ribbon Committee.**

Given that a large share of the ECE workforce in California must include Latino and ELL teachers in order to be effective, the state should ensure that Latinos and individuals with expertise in services to ELLs are adequately represented in policy and key decision-making efforts related to ECE workforce issues.

● **Consult with Latino- and ELL-serving providers.** The state should establish mechanisms for meaningfully engaging Latino-serving CBOs in the design and implementation of preschool for all. These organizations have significant expertise in providing culturally- and linguistically-appropriate services, which is important for the design of an effective preschool system.

- ▶ **Ensure effective outreach to Latino families.** The state should ensure that a preschool for all program provides ongoing professional development for teachers on effective parental engagement and outreach with Latino, ELL, and immigrant communities.

CONCLUSION

Latinos are major stakeholders in the development of preschool for all in California. One in two children born in the state is Latino. Until now, however, the needs of Latino children and families have not been part of the

debate on what universal preschool should look like. As California policy-makers develop proposals for preparing the preschool workforce to provide high-quality services, they should include strategies for achieving a diverse workforce of teachers to provide this care to California's culturally- and linguistically-diverse students. It is important that California develop a specific plan that outlines key research needs, recommends policies that build on the existing diversity of the preschool workforce, and ensures its diversity into the future. Implementing this plan will be an enormous task; however, it is one that is worthwhile and necessary in order for a preschool for all program to succeed.

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The author and NCLR alone are responsible for content and any errors of fact or logic that remain.

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This brief explores the issues involved in current proposals to restrict immigrant access to driver's licenses, arguments in favor of increased accessibility, and steps that can be taken to ensure that driver's licenses remain authentic and prevent unauthorized drivers from making U.S. roads less safe. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 6**

INCREASING HISPANIC HOMEOWNERSHIP: STRATEGIES FOR PROGRAMS AND PUBLIC POLICY

Reviews the most recent data on homeownership and analyzes the factors associated with the low homeownership rate of Latinos. The brief also proposes specific recommendations and lays out a strategy for the private sector, community-based programs, and public policy to increase the number of Hispanic homeowners by two million over the next two decades. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 7**

THE NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND ACT: IMPLICATIONS FOR LOCAL EDUCATORS AND ADVOCATES FOR LATINO STUDENTS, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES

This issue brief examines how the No Child Left Behind Act may impact Latino students, families, and communities. It paints a broad picture of what state and local educators must consider as they attempt to implement this legislation. Specifically, this paper provides a short, recent history of the standards movement in Congress, discusses challenges in implementing these reforms as they relate to Hispanic students, and provides recommendations for state and local policymakers. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 8**

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT BY LOCAL POLICE: THE IMPACT ON THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF LATINOS

Enforcement of immigration laws has always been the responsibility of the federal government. However, following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Department of Justice initiated new counterterrorism policies, one of which has been to enlist state and local law enforcement officers in antiterrorist activities. While the safety and security of the United States is a priority, this document points out how new policies that would allow local police departments to enforce federal immigration law may actually hinder terrorist and other criminal investigations and is likely to have a serious negative impact on Latino communities. The report also documents how involving local police officers in federal immigration enforcement contradicts decades of federal case law and policy, and how delegation of immigration authority is likely to result in racial profiling, police misconduct, and civil rights violations. The publication also points out that such efforts erode trust between local police and the communities they serve and protect. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 9**

COUNTERTERRORISM AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY SINCE SEPTEMBER 11

Immigration and national security have become intermingled in the U.S. in unprecedented ways since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. This Issue Brief documents the impact of counterterrorism measures and policies implemented since September 11 on the Latino population. First, it provides background on the post-September 11 environment. Second, it examines the new anti-terrorist policies that have had harmful consequences for U.S. Latinos. Third, it looks at other new immigration enforcement activities that have had a negative impact on the Latino community. Fourth, it focuses on the need to return to the affirmative immigration reform agenda. Finally, it offers conclusions and recommendations about the future of U.S. immigration policy.

ISSUE BRIEF No. 10

PENSION COVERAGE: A MISSING STEP IN THE WEALTH-BUILDING LADDER FOR LATINOS

Employer-provided pension plans and retirement savings products have emerged as a particularly important means of building financial wealth and security for American workers and families. Yet, Hispanic workers remain the least likely of all Americans to have access to – or participate in – employer-provided pension plans. This issue brief presents data and summarizes research on pension coverage and participation issues for Latino workers, reviews national trends in coverage and the current public policy debate, and highlights promising strategies or measures that could narrow the pension coverage and wealth gaps between Latino and other American workers considerably over the next decade. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 11**

TANF IMPLEMENTATION IN PUERTO RICO: A SUMMARY OF DATA ON LEAVERS

This update summarizes the most recent data regarding TANF implementation in Puerto Rico, reviews data on the economic status of former TANF recipients, and examines new demographic data on former TANF participants. It also provides a description of the current status of TANF and a short analysis of the data, and identifies areas relevant for Puerto Rico for researchers and policymakers to consider within the context of the reauthorization of TANF. **ISSUE BRIEF No. 12**

IMMIGRATION REFORM: COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS FOR COMPLEX PROBLEMS

In 2004 the national debate on immigration reform was reignited as President Bush and several members of Congress of both political parties introduced immigration reform proposals. While the specific content from the proposals varies, nearly everyone from all sides of the immigration debate agrees that the current system is not functioning well, is not in the best interests of the U.S., and needs to be reformed. While the current immigration system appears generous and reasonable on paper, it is not in tune with current economic or social realities. Many immigrants who have no legal channels to arrive and work in the U.S. are forced to risk their lives and enter without proper authorization, putting both migrants and U.S. workers at risk. This Issue Brief outlines the current immigration system, explains why the current system is inadequate and needs to be overhauled, and lays out NCLR's principles for comprehensive immigration reform.

ISSUE BRIEF No. 13

Act

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Vote

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