

Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards First 5 CARES

Goal of CARES

To ensure quality child care and early learning programs for all families and children birth to five, regardless of setting, by increasing the education, professional development, and retention of the early learning workforce.

Background

Research shows a link between the quality of children's experiences in early learning programs and the compensation, stability and training of early learning teachers and providers. Research also demonstrates that teachers with bachelor's degrees and specialized training in child development provide young children with the best preparation to succeed in kindergarten.

Investments

\$155.2-million funding partnership with First 5 County Commissions that began in 2000 and continued its pilot phase through June 30, 2005.

Outcomes/Results

- Nearly 50,000 stipends or benefits issued in the first four years
- 52 percent of participants attended one or more trainings on caring for children with disabilities and other special needs
- 96 percent of participants still worked in the field a year after joining the program and 93 percent remained 18 months later
- Among those remaining in the field, participants were more than twice as likely to remain in the same center over a two-year period as were non-participants
- Supported by the Child Development Permit Project, participants receiving a new or higher permit almost doubled over three years
- Participants exceeded program requirements. The average participant completed two courses
- Participants stated that the program provided encouragement and was crucial for professional morale
- Consistently reported feeling energized and inspired to renew their education and update their knowledge of child development, teaching curricula, and other important areas
- New collaborations were formed with community colleges to address barriers to the attainment of ECE units

Next Steps/Timing

- Fourth round covers the time period from 7/1/05 – 12/31/08
- Program modifications made:
 1. Place increased emphasis on professional development and education while still requiring retention
 2. Delineate five tracks to encourage programs to provide training and supports to caregivers along the entire continuum of care:

FFN Track - Entry Track - Permit Track - Degree Track - Professional Track

- 44 counties participating and all are required to have FFN, Entry level and Permit Tracks (I-III)
 - Additionally:
 - 25 counties have both a Degree and Professional Track (Tracks I-V)
 - 35 counties have a Degree Track
 - 27 counties have a Professional Track
 - 9 counties will only have Tracks I-III (no Degree or Professional Track)
- Training and technical assistance contract with the Child Development Training Consortium (CDTC) and Working for Quality Child Care (W4QCC).