



Workforce Development

OVERVIEW

Families, schools and policymakers expect a lot from preschool teachers. The successful preschool teacher plays multiple professional roles—educator, psychologist, and nurse. A typical job description for a preschool teacher includes the following high-level tasks:

Preschool Teacher – Job Description*

Establish clear objectives for all lessons, units, and projects, and communicate those objectives to children.

Organize and lead activities designed to promote physical, mental and social development, such as games, arts and crafts, music, storytelling, and field trips.

Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and work time that provides children with opportunities to observe, question, and investigate.

Teach basic skills such as color, shape, number and letter recognition, personal hygiene, and social skills, following approved curricula.

Read books to large and small groups of children.

Adapt teaching methods and instructional materials to meet children's varying needs and interests.

Arrange indoor and outdoor space to facilitate creative play, motor-skill activities, and safety.

Observe and evaluate children's performance, behavior, social development, and physical health. Identify children showing signs of emotional, developmental, or health-related problems, and discuss them with supervisors, parents or guardians, and child development specialists.

Maintain accurate and complete student records as required by laws, district policies, and administrative regulations, and prepare reports on children and activities as required.

Meet with other professionals to discuss individual students' needs and progress.

Meet with parents and guardians to discuss their children's progress and needs, determine their priorities for their children, and suggest ways that they can promote learning and development.

Supervise, evaluate, and plan assignments for teacher assistants and volunteers.

Attend professional meetings, educational conferences, and teacher training workshops in order to maintain and improve professional competence.

*Excerpted from Job Tasks for: Preschool Teachers, Except Special Education at <http://www.careerplanner.com>



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Current Status of Workforce

While expectations of preschool teachers as a profession are rising, workforce compensation is not keeping pace. Among early care and education center staff (Whitebook, Sakai, Kipnes, Lee, Bellm, Speiglman, et al., 2006), wages are low and turnover is high. Even preschool teachers who have BA or higher degrees earn nearly \$16,000 less than the average California public school kindergarten teacher, who typically works a shorter year and earns better benefits. Annual turnover is twice that of public K-12 teachers in California.

Workforce requirements are also far below those of other professional occupations. Based on the 2005 State Preschool Yearbook by National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER, 2005), California is one of the nine states that do not require any state pre-kindergarten teachers to have a bachelor's degree. Currently, the highest requirement for a teacher in a State Preschool classroom is a Master Teacher Permit, which requires 24 units in early childhood education or child development and 16 units in general education, considerably short of an AA degree.

Given the status of program requirements and the low rate of compensation, perhaps it is surprising that as many as one-quarter of the teachers in licensed child care centers in California do have BA degrees (Whitebook et al., 2006). Estimates of the percentage of teachers with BA degrees in the publicly funded State Preschool program are higher, ranging from 28 to 49 percent (Whitebook, et al., 2006; Gilliam & Marchesseault, 2004) However, it is important to note that the preschool teachers who have BA degrees in California are more likely than others in the field to be over age 50, and they are not being replaced by younger people with equivalent qualifications.

In addition to a mismatch between the skills required to be a preschool teacher and the compensation provided, California faces additional challenges. First, preschool teaching in this state frequently requires the ability to relate to children from diverse cultures and whose home language is not English. Second, the sheer number of preschool teachers needed is daunting. In California, an ECE workforce of approximately 130,000 people currently cares for approximately 750,000 children statewide. With the state's child population projected to grow at a rate of 55 percent by the year 2025, compared to a nationwide projection of only 14 percent (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000), the questions about who will prepare California's children for success in their school years become extremely pressing. Given that California has 50 percent more children than the nearest populous state (Texas), the crisis in education here really is a threat to the productivity of the state and nation, and the competence of our society.

Desired Workforce Qualifications

Given the importance of the teacher to the child's success in school, teacher qualifications have assumed center stage in the policy discussions regarding state and federal preschool initiatives. According to W. Steven Barnett, economist and director of the National Institute for Early Education Research, "the *only* programs that have been shown to produce large gains in school readiness and long-term gains that benefit taxpayers and their children more than the programs' cost have been programs with college-educated teachers with specialized training who were paid decent (not high) salaries" (Barnett, 2002). Preschool programs relying on teachers with weaker qualifications, he adds, have been found to produce minimal gains in school readiness, at best.



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In *A Vision for Universal Preschool Education*, Edward Zigler, one of the founders of Head Start, and researchers Walter Gilliam and Stephanie Jones, recommend that the qualifications for prekindergarten teachers include a BA degree and certification in early childhood education, with assistant teachers having as a minimum an AA or CDA credential, with specific training in early childhood development (Zigler, Gilliam, & Jones, 2006). While some recent research studies have indicated that there may not be sufficient proof that the BA is necessary, or that the BA degree alone may not be enough to improve classroom quality, even the authors of these studies recommend that states establish the BA in early childhood education as the minimum standard (Maxwell & Clifford, 2006). The BA degree is important to provide teachers with a solid foundation in both theory and practice. An increase in compensation commensurate with these educational requirements, accompanied by a substantial investment in teacher training, is vital to the recruitment and retention of a quality preschool workforce.

In summary, some broad goals to increase the supply of early educators qualified to work in preschool programs include:

1. Develop a system of supports that encourages ECE staff to successfully participate and benefit from professional development opportunities.
2. Upgrade and align professional education and certification requirements for preschool instructional staff across roles.
3. Develop a system of compensation and benefits to increase retention of experienced staff, provide incentives for staff to upgrade their skills, and attract younger workers to the field.
4. Recruit/develop a preschool workforce that is culturally and linguistically diverse and that reflects the communities served by the preschool system.
5. Improve links to institutions of higher education and increase financial support for teachers to continue their education and development.
6. Develop alternative pathways to early childhood education credentials that are less cumbersome than the route to K-12 certification.

Relevant Preschool California Principles:

Early Childhood Educators Will Be Well Educated, Fairly Compensated and Culturally, Ethnically and Linguistically Reflective of the Children Served

As a part of fostering a seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten, a goal will be set for preschool teachers to be educated and compensated at levels comparable to teachers in California's K-12 system. Early education professionals will have access to and engage in ongoing professional development. They will reflect the cultural, ethnic and linguistic diversity of California's children.



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SAMPLE APPROACHES

California Approaches:

A central feature of the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and the First 5 California Power of Preschool (PoP) projects is to gradually upgrade teacher qualifications and commensurate compensation. Both programs are based on a tiered reimbursement system in which the highest rates are awarded to those programs that have classrooms with BA teachers. Both initiatives allow time (at least five years) for existing preschool teachers to obtain the required BA degree for teachers and the AA degree for assistant teachers

Teacher Qualifications and Tiered Reimbursement

<i>Los Angeles Universal Preschool</i>	<i>First 5 Power of Preschool</i>
3 Star Level requires that there be at least one teacher in every classroom who holds or qualifies for a Child Development Teacher Permit (24 units ECE/CD and 16 units GE) and that all other teachers hold or qualify at minimum for Child Development Assistant Teacher Permit (6 units of ECE/CD)	Entry Level requires that there be at least one teacher in every classroom with at least 24 units in ECE and 16 units in General Education, and an assistant teacher with at least 6 units of college-level work in ECE
4 Star Level requires that there be at least one teacher in every classroom who holds or qualifies for a Child Development Master Teacher Permit (24 units ECE/CD plus 16 GE units and 6 specialization units; plus 2 units adult supervision) or an AA degree; and that all other teachers hold or qualify for an Associate Permit (12 units ECE/CD including core courses)	Advancing Level requires that there be at least one teacher in every classroom with 60 units of college-level work (or AA) with 24 units of college-level work in ECE and an assistant teacher with at least 12 units of college level work in ECE.
5 Star Level requires that there be at least one teacher per classroom with a BA/BS degree and 24 units in ECE/CD including core courses listed under the Child Development Permit Matrix and at least one year teaching experience, and that all other teachers have at least a Teacher Permit (24 units ECE/CD plus 16 GE units)	Power of Preschool Level of Quality requires that there be at least one teacher in every classroom with a BA degree and 24 units of ECE, or Multiple Subject teaching credential, or Child Development Permit Matrix Program Director (BA with 24 units ECE/CD including core courses plus 6 units administration; plus 2 units adult supervision) and assistant teacher with an AA degree with appropriate ECE units (recommend 24 units).

Local preschool initiatives also feature some innovative approaches to providing support for preschool teachers to attain higher degrees. The following is a sampling of approaches to workforce development:

- In an activity that helps support the **First 5 San Mateo Power of Preschool Project**, San Francisco State University currently offers a bachelor's degree in Child and Adolescent Development (CAD) on site at the Cañada Community College Campus in Redwood City.



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Conversations are underway with San Francisco State about the possibility of supporting a formal cohort of AA level students to complete their BA degrees in the CAD program.

- Santa Clara County CARES will provide the foundation for workforce development and early educator preparation for the **First 5 Santa Clara Power of Preschool Initiative**. PoP funds will be used to augment CARES funds to provide stipends and support in the zip codes with the highest need for preschool services and the lowest API scores in the county.
- **Ventura's Power of Preschool** project will offer training at both traditional college sites (community and four-year institutions) and through contracted, unit-bearing coursework with professional trainers. Courses will be offered at a variety of times (days, evenings, and weekends).
- The **Rural California Early Childhood Education Professional Development Program (CAL-NET)**, a federal early literacy grant scheduled to end in 2006, is a partnership of nine rural northern California counties that has provided professional development to more than 500 early childhood educators in 250 early childhood programs serving low-income children, many of whom are English learners and/or have identified disabilities. CAL-NET has six main components:
 - (1) accredited online courses focusing on early childhood education pedagogy, curriculum development, early reading, and numeracy;
 - (2) ongoing, intensive monitoring systems including peer-coaching and classroom practicum's;
 - (3) a comprehensive electronic teacher portfolio system, *ClipBoard*;
 - (4) an early reading and numeracy program, linked to California's preschool content standards;
 - (5) an innovative, online child profile system, *SchoolGate*; and
 - (6) a home-based early reading program, *Libros y Mas* (Books and More).

On-line coursework with unit-bearing credit has been provided through the University of Pacific and College of the Siskiyou, and several online ECE courses through Shasta College were also developed with CARES sponsorship.

- **Trinity County** has been facilitating on-line classes. A recent group of students included nine people in eight different sites. The program, which has been funded by CAL-NET, includes a staff person who conducts visits in the field and coaches students.
- **First 5 San Joaquin** has approved a stipend program for providers to obtain the BA in the Early Care and Education Field. The local PoP project is coordinated with the local CARES program (CCPGP). On the degree track, priority will be given to early educators providing care to children within the two school districts, Lincoln and Manteca, which are part of the San Joaquin Power of Preschool Project.
- **San Francisco's PFA** program has set aside funding to support the San Francisco State University/San Francisco Head Start Dual-Language Teacher Cohort project, which includes



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weekend classes, seminars and coaching for preschool teachers to obtain a BA in ECE within three years.

Many of the above innovations build upon the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program, which provides stipends to qualified child care providers to assist in furthering their educational goals, advancement on the Child Development Permit Matrix, and degree attainment.

Approaches from Other States:

In New Jersey, where a 1998 Supreme Court decision on school finance equity led to the provision of free preschool services to all 3- and 4-year-olds who live in 30 high-poverty school districts, the *Abbott* program requires all preschool teachers to have a BA degree. Those who did not have the degree when the program was implemented were given four years to obtain a BA degree plus certification in early childhood education, and were given financial support to meet the higher qualification standards. They were further encouraged by the higher compensation they received with the higher teacher qualification requirements. As of 2005, only 1.5 percent of the teachers in the Abbott School district had not completed their BA degree.

BASIC ISSUES AND INSTRUCTIONS

As your county considers ways to develop and implement or expand a preschool system for young children many issues emerge with regard to the workforce development. Who will the preschool educators be? How many are needed? How will your county help to recruit, train, compensate and retain them? To what extent will the system build on the current early care and education workforce? Below are some of the basic issues that your county needs to address in your plan.

1. What workforce requirements will your county promote?
2. How will you communicate the county requirements to the existing early care and education workforce and include them in opportunities to advance their skills?
3. How will you promote changes in institutions of higher education that will support the development of more qualified preschool teachers and administrators in the county?
4. How will you promote innovative methods to make classes available on-line or in community-based settings during non-traditional hours in order to make classes accessible to the ECE workforce? If applicable, how will your county make classes accessible in rural areas?
5. How will your country address the compensation gap between preschool teachers and teachers in the K-12 system with comparable education and experience?
6. How will your county address the possibility that existing K-3 teachers may be drawn to preschool jobs, once compensation is improved?
7. How will your county address high turnover rates among teachers?



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TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

- Guideline to Workforce Assessment (forthcoming)

OTHER RESOURCES

Included in This Section

- California Early Care and Education Workforce Study Presentation (CSCCE)
- Statewide and County-specific Highlights of the Statewide Workforce Study (CSCCE)
- Early Childhood Educator Professional Development Program
- Notes from Teleconference on Preschool Planning in Rural Areas (AIR)

Additional Resources

There are many useful and informative articles regarding workforce development available on the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (CSCCE) at <http://www.iir.berkeley.edu/cscce/> including some of the following:

- The California Early Care and Education Statewide Workforce Study (Full Report)
- Time to Revamp and Expand: Early Childhood Teacher Preparation Programs in California's Institutions of Higher Education
- Lessons from CARES and Other Early Care and Education Workforce Initiatives in California, 1999-2004: A Review of Evaluations
- By a Thread: How Child Care Centers Hold On to Teachers, How Teachers Build Lasting Careers



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