

# **Preschool for All in Merced County:**

## **A Feasibility Study and Action Plan**



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# **Preschool for All in Merced County**

## **A Feasibility Study and Action Plan**

**January 2006**

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## **Acknowledgments**

Special thanks are due to the following people, without whom the creation of this report would have been impossible. Their names and job titles at the time of the project are listed below:

- Dr. Lee Anderson, County Superintendent
- Valerie Anthony, Former Executive Director, Children Services Network of Merced County
- Pat Braun, Former Director of Community Action Agency, Head Start
- Eva de Long, Preschool Program Director, Livingston Child Development Center
- Marissa Duran, Central California Child Development Services
- Tina Johns, Preschool Director, Merced City School District
- Jan Paystrup, Curriculum/Staff Development Specialist
- Alan Rasmussen, Merced City Superintendent
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## Section 1.

### Introduction

On behalf of the First 5 Merced Children and Families Commission, this study by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) analyzes the feasibility of making voluntary preschool programs available to all four-year-olds in Merced County and provides an action plan for accomplishing this goal within 10 years.

Building on the countywide network of school readiness programs that has resulted from the partnership between First 5 Merced and the Merced County Office of Education, the study provides a 10-year action plan for phasing in access to Preschool for All (PFA) countywide. Beginning in the first year by upgrading and/or establishing new preschool services in the “flagship” Merced City School District, as well as Winton, Livingston, Delhi, Planada, and El Nido districts, the phase-in then expands PFA to the remaining 12 school districts in the sixth year of implementation.

The study complements the work related to Merced’s selection by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation as a Preschool for All “flagship” site, and Merced’s participation in the Preschool for All Learning Community funded by the Packard Foundation and facilitated by the First 5 Association of County Commissions.

Finally, the study is designed to support First 5 Merced’s plan to apply to be one of First 5 California’s Preschool for All Demonstration sites. Included within the 10-year plan are suggestions for a proposed demonstration project that would make Preschool for All available to 1,687 four-year-olds in the fifth year.

### Planning Process

Beginning in May 2004, with the assistance of First 5 Merced and the Merced County Office of Education, AIR convened and hosted three on-site planning meetings with representatives of organizations with key data sources.

Crucial to the credibility of any feasibility or action plan for universally accessible preschool is the support of a local advisory group. AIR’s first task was, therefore, in conjunction with First 5 Merced and the Merced County Office of Education, to select and organize this Advisory Group.

The Advisory Group included the following:

- Local Child Care Planning Council representative;
- Merced Community College Child Development Center Director;
- Merced County Office of Education staff administering programs for children with special needs;

- School district representatives (invitees included superintendents and preschool coordinator/directors);
- Head Start director;
- Migrant Head Start Executive Director;
- Title 5 General Child Care and Development Center directors;
- Child Care Resource and Referral staff knowledgeable about the supply of private family child care and center care;
- Alternative Payment Program administrator; and
- First 5 Merced School Readiness Initiative coordinator.

The functions of the Advisory Group included:

- Determining the Key Program Elements, using the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant Criteria and the Preschool for All Toolkit as a starting point to discuss and select Merced County's goals (short-term and long-term) for teacher qualifications, staff-child ratios and group size, program settings, curriculum, inclusion of children with special needs, culturally and linguistically appropriate programming, and other program quality standards for Preschool for All.
- Reviewing additional recommendations for preschool quality standards developed in other counties, such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and San Mateo;
- Providing information on the status of the existing supply of early care and education in Merced County in various school districts;
- Providing budgets relevant to the existing supply of early care and education programs in Merced County in various school districts;
- Exploring potential local finance options for PFA; and
- Reviewing the cost estimates generated by AIR for Preschool for All in Merced County and various scenarios for phasing in the program.

AIR began with discussions with staff from First 5 Merced, Merced County Office of Education, and the Children's Services Network of Merced County, Inc. to acquire preliminary information and to help select the Advisory Group. AIR then organized and conducted the first two-day meeting to select the desired program elements, to obtain initial data on the supply of early care and education programs, and to collect budgets for existing State Preschool, Head Start, and Title 5 programs. Subsequent meetings were then conducted to review cost estimates, possible phase-in scenarios, and provide guidelines for the final report.

AIR staff also visited the Merced Community College Child Development Center, the agency then administering the Head Start program, migrant Head Start and child care programs, the Children's Services Network of Merced County, and the Merced County Office of Education.

Additional components of the planning process included:

- Extensive communication between AIR staff and First 5 Merced staff by telephone and e-mail;
- Data collection by AIR staff from the California Department of Education, the federal Administration of Children and Families, and many other sources;
- Three presentations to the First 5 Merced County Commission at various points in the conduct of the feasibility study and the development of the action plan; and
- A presentation to the First 5 Merced Early Childhood Summit that involved dialogue with local center-based and family child care providers on their thoughts about how workforce development could be structured to help them participate in PFA.

Finally, in an effort to assist First 5 Merced in publicizing its PFA planning efforts and to promote dialogue between First 5 Merced and other local First 5 commission leaders in the PFA movement, AIR proposed that First 5 Merced staff make a presentation on PFA planning at the First 5 California Commission meeting in January 2005. AIR also invited members of the First 5 Merced PFA Advisory Group to participate in a panel discussion on “PFA Successes and Challenges” at the First 5 California Summit in April 2005.

The study consists of the following sections:

- **Merced County and the Preschool for All Movement**
- **Desired Program Elements:** Identification of the key quality elements and attributes of Preschool for All Programs in Merced County, the research basis for the elements, the extent to which Merced’s preschool and early education programs are already aligned with these elements, and strategies for upgrading programs to meet the desired criteria. This section includes a comparison of the First 5 California Preschool for All Demonstration Grant Criteria with those proposed in the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative, and a plan for how Merced County might meet the First 5 California PFA application grant requirements.
- **Demand vs. Current Supply/ Enrollment in Preschool Services:** An estimate of the projected demand or participation rate in preschool services in Merced County; and an analysis of the existing capacity and enrollment in early care and education services for preschool age children, by school district. This section also includes an analysis of the key challenges facing Merced County as it expands preschool services. These include serving children who need full-day, full-year programs or easy access to wraparound care; improving the educational qualifications of preschool teachers while also recruiting and retaining staff who are bilingual; identifying more preschool children with special needs and serving them in mainstream settings; and making preschool services accessible to children in rural settings.
- **Estimated Cost of Preschool for All in Merced County:** An estimate of the per-child direct cost of upgrading existing services in Merced County to Preschool for All Quality standards, and the direct cost of establishing new Preschool for All spaces, with some preliminary estimates on the cost of infrastructure components, including facilities, workforce development, and administration. This section also includes a 10-year plan for upgrading existing preschool programs and expanding preschool services to make free, voluntary preschool services available to all, beginning in Merced City School District and extending countywide within 10 years.

- **Finance Options:** An analysis of the extent to which Merced County is already maximizing use of state and federal resources available to fund preschool services, and an exploration of possible additional local funding sources to help finance Preschool for All in Merced County. This section also includes an analysis of the potential savings Merced County might realize from investing in Preschool for All.

## **Merced County and The Preschool for All Movement**

Merced County is a prime location to phase in Preschool for All. The county has three key attributes that make it a promising site for PFA: demographic factors that make preschool an especially good investment, a foundation of early care and education programs upon which to build, and the public will and leadership to implement the program.

### **Demographics: The Potential to Make a Difference**

A growing body of research suggests that quality preschool is a good investment, and there is reason to believe that Merced County would obtain an especially high return on making preschool available to all four-year-olds.

#### ***Benefits for Disadvantaged Children***

A number of longitudinal studies have shown that disadvantaged children who attended quality preschool programs fare significantly better in school and life than their peers who did not attend preschool. An evaluation of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers (CPC), a half-day, publicly funded program with well-qualified teachers serving low-income minority children, found the following:

- Advantages in reading achievement scores as late as age 14
- Lower likelihood of retention in grade by age 15
- Lower incidence of child abuse and neglect from ages 4 to 17
- Reduced use of special education through age 18
- Lower likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system by age 18
- Greater likelihood of high school completion by age 20

As a result, the study estimated that for every \$1 invested in the CPC program, the public eventually saved \$7 because of reduced public expenditures for grade repetition, special education, welfare, and crime.

Similarly, by age 40, black children who attended the high-quality Perry Preschool program in Ypsilanti, Michigan, were more likely to:

- Have graduated from high school (65 percent vs. 45 percent)
- Be employed (76 percent vs. 62 percent)
- Own a home (37 percent vs. 28 percent)
- Have a savings account (76 percent vs. 36 percent)
- Have far fewer arrests

Based on this study, researchers estimated the economic return as \$17 for every \$1 invested in the preschool program.

### ***Benefits for More-Advantaged Children***

More recent studies show that quality preschool benefits also benefit more advantaged children.

In the National Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, preschool participants showed higher school readiness and kindergarten performance than non-participants, although the effects were more pronounced for the more disadvantaged children – whether defined by low maternal education, poverty status, single-parent status, or mothers who do not speak English.

In a study of the universal preschool program in Tulsa, Oklahoma (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips & Dawson, 2005), all socioeconomic groups were found to benefit.

- Children eligible for free lunch scored better on all three sections of the nationally-normed Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Test thought to be appropriate for young children.
- Children from more affluent families experienced statistically significant gains on two of the three sections, the Letter-Word Identification Test (which measures pre-reading skills) and the Spelling Test (which measures pre-writing skills).

Of particular interest to Merced County, where 62 percent of the four-year-old children are Latino, it was the Latino children who benefited the most from the Tulsa Pre-K program. Latino children showed striking gains:

- 79 percent increase in pre-reading scores
- 39 percent increase in pre-writing scores
- 54 percent increase in pre-math scores

### ***California-Specific and Projected Merced-Specific Benefits***

Taking into account that a universal preschool program will include many more-advantaged children, for whom the benefits from preschool have been found to be less pronounced, the Rand Corporation conservatively estimated that a one-year high-quality universal preschool program in California will result in long-term savings of \$2.62 for every \$1 based on long-term savings in reduction of grade retention, reduction in use of special education, increase in high school graduation, reduction in child maltreatment, and reduction in juvenile crime. Estimated savings resulting from lower intangible losses from reduced reliance on public welfare programs, improved labor market outcomes for parents of preschoolers, or improved health and well-being of preschool participants.

In Merced County, Preschool for All is likely to result in savings closer at least in the mid-range of the projected \$2.62-\$17 per dollar invested for three reasons:

- High rate of poverty (30 percent for children birth to four, fourth highest rate in the state, and 72 percent eligible for free- and reduced-price lunch, as compared to 56 percent statewide);
- 45 percent English Language Learners, and 62 percent Latino; and
- Low rate of high school completion among the parents of preschool children (38 percent have not completed high school, as compared to 23 percent statewide).

## **Section 2. Desired Program Elements**

**Table 2-1: Elements of Quality: What the Research Says**

Program Element	Research Findings
<b>Teacher Qualifications</b>	<p>Teacher qualifications are a key determinant of preschool quality &amp; child outcomes. In the Georgia Pre-K program, 80% of teachers have a BA or higher, and high quality of program was primary factor that gave Pre-K children a boost (Henry, 2003).</p> <p>Teacher characteristics most highly related to various measures of process quality are teacher education level &amp; length of time since the teacher received the highest degree, with teachers who had been out of school longer being associated with lower overall quality (Henry, 2003).</p> <p>The higher the teacher's educational level, the better the observed classroom quality (Zill et al., 2001).</p> <p>Caregiver with BA or CDA promoted better language development (Howes, 1997).</p> <p>Staff education &amp; training associated with better child language scores, controlling for family income &amp; education (NICHD Early Childhood Research Network, 2000)</p> <p>Education &amp; training specifically related to early childhood improves interactions between teachers &amp; children (Bowman, et al., 2001; Howes, 1997).</p>
<b>Teacher Compensation</b>	<p>Staff wages are the strongest predictor of ECE quality (Whitebook et al., 1998; Whitebook, Phillips, &amp; Howes, 1993).</p> <p>A study of 75 child care centers in California found that child care wages predicted a center's ability to maintain quality over time, with higher wages related to better long-term quality (Whitebook &amp; Sakai, 2003).</p> <p>Teachers' wages, education levels &amp; specialized training are the most important determinants in identifying poor, mediocre, &amp; good quality centers (Helburn et al., 1995).</p> <p>Preschool teachers are poorly paid by any standard. Median salary of preschool teachers is \$21,332, less than half the median kindergarten teacher salary of \$43,152 (Barnett, 2003).</p> <p>Low teacher salaries linked to higher levels of staff turnover in child care &amp; preschool (Helburn &amp; Bergmann, 2002).</p>
<b>Staff/Child Ratios; Group Size; Class Size</b>	<p>Lower staff/child ratios (fewer children per adult) promote more sensitive &amp; stimulating care (Vandell &amp; Wolfe, 2000; Whitebook et al., 1990).</p> <p>Child care settings with lower staff-child ratios score higher on overall measures of quality on ECERS &amp; ITERS scales (Ibid.)</p> <p>Chicago Parent-Child Centers have 17-2 child-to-teacher ratio (Reynolds, 2001).</p> <p>Georgia Pre-K adult-child ratio is 1:10, with observed ratio of 1:9.6 (Reynolds, 2001). Observed class size was 18.</p>
<b>Length of Day/Year</b>	<p>Mixed findings: Black children who attended Oklahoma pre-K program showed sharp gains on language and cognitive test scores, especially when they attended full-day (six hours per day) programs. In contrast, white children showed gains in language skills only when they were enrolled part-day (Gormley &amp; Phillips, 2003).</p> <p>Chicago Parent-Child Centers – which showed positive results in 15-year-follow-up study – operate part-day (Reynolds, 2001). Georgia Pre-K Program operates 6 hours (full-school-day).</p> <p>Children who attend full-school-day rather than half-day <i>kindergarten</i> do better academically and socially during the primary grades (Gullo, 2000; Wang &amp; Johnstone, 1999).</p> <p>Length of year is important to children's school readiness. When preschool is in recess during the summer months, children tend to lose a portion of what they have learned (Henry, 2003).</p>

Program Element	Research Findings
<b>Program Settings</b>	<p>Chicago Parent-Child Centers serve 100-150 3-5-year-olds in separate facilities or in wings of neighborhood schools (Reynolds, 2001).</p> <p>30% of Georgia Pre-K programs are located in schools; classes located within schools tended to score higher on measures of process quality (Henry, 2003). However, since almost all of the preschool classes in schools were Georgia Pre-K classes, research could not determine whether it was the school environment per se that has a positive influence on quality or whether the positive influence on quality was related to other aspects of the Georgia Pre-K program, such as technical assistance and monitoring.</p> <p>Trend is to include settings that are not exclusively school-based (child care centers, Head Start &amp; nursery schools) (Mitchell, July 2001).</p>
<b>Program Environment</b>	<p>Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised (ECERS-R) includes characteristics of appropriate space and furnishing (Harms, Clifford &amp; Cryer, 1998):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ample indoor space</li> <li>• Good ventilation that can be controlled</li> <li>• Space is accessible to children and adults with disabilities</li> <li>• Natural light can be controlled</li> <li>• Furniture is the right size for the age group</li> <li>• Furnishings for relaxation and comfort</li> <li>• Child-related display – where individual children’s work predominates</li> <li>• Convenient space for gross motor play</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum/ Content Standards</b>	<p>National Research Council found that “while no single curriculum or pedagogical approach can be identified as best, children who attend well-planned, high-quality early childhood programs in which curriculum aims are specified &amp; integrated across domains tend to learn more &amp; are better prepared” for school (Bowman et al., 2001).</p> <p>Children in programs that follow developmentally appropriate curriculum practices had more positive attitudes toward school and sustained their academic gains better compared with children in other programs (Helburn 1995, Whitebook et al., 1997).</p> <p>According to Head Start FACES study, Head Start had a meaningful impact on children’s immediate intellectual development, social skills and health, but did not advance their knowledge of book and print conventions or letter-word identification, leading to recommendation that Head Start programs need to provide creative and developmentally appropriate initiatives to promote emergent literacy (Zill et al., 2001).</p> <p>The strongest predictor of first grade reading, of all traditional factors related to school readiness, is a child’s alphabet knowledge (Committee on Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, 1998).</p> <p>Phonological awareness appears to predict future reading ability (Ibid.).</p>

Program Element	Research Findings
<b>Accreditation, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, &amp; Other Program Standards/Benchmarks</b>	<p>National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation criteria closely match aspects of child care that have been shown to predict better language skills &amp; cognitive development, as well as behavioral &amp; emotional adjustment in children (McCartney, 1984; Effect of quality of day care environment on children's language development. <i>Developmental Psychology</i>, 20, 244-260; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network. (2000)</p> <p>In a northern California study, NAEYC accredited centers were much more likely to provide high-quality care than were the non-NAEYC-accredited centers, but almost 40 percent of all accredited centers were still mediocre in quality (Whitebook et al., 1997). In addition, a follow-up study indicated that accredited centers with a higher percentage of well-trained staff were most likely to sustain quality over a period of four years (Whitebook, Sakai, Howes, &amp; Gerber, 2001).</p> <p>The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- Revised defines environment broadly to include spatial, programmatic and interpersonal features that directly affect the children and adults in an early childhood setting. The seven subscales are: Space and Furnishing, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure and Parents and Staff. An ECERS-R score of 5 or more indicates that the quality of the preschool classroom is between "good" &amp; "excellent". More than 1/3 of Georgia Pre-k classes &amp; about ¼ of Head Start classes achieved this standard, while 1 in 30 private preschool classrooms not participating in Georgia Pre-K Program achieved this rating (Henry, 2003).</p> <p>Based on Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS), Georgia Pre-K teachers were significantly more sensitive in their relationships with children than were teachers in Head Start or in private preschools not participating in Georgia Pre-K Program (Henry, 2003).</p>
<b>Child Assessment</b>	<p>School readiness requires cognitive skills, social-emotional behavior, communication &amp; language skills, and good health. Assessing the readiness of young children for school requires multiple indicators (Henry, 2003; Peisner-Feinberg et al., 2000; Schweinhart &amp; Weikart, 1997).</p> <p>There are multiple purposes of child assessment – developmental screening to identify children in need of further assessment for possible identification of special needs, developmental profiles for purposes of improving instruction, and measurement of child outcomes for purposes of program evaluation. So single assessment instrument will satisfy all three purposes (Meisels &amp; Atkins-Burnett, 2000; Shepard, Kagan &amp; Wurtz, 2001; Muenchow 2003).</p>
<b>Inclusion of Children with Special Needs</b>	<p>Early care and education benefits children with special needs in many of the same ways it benefits other children (Guralnick, 1976).</p> <p>However, children with special needs are less likely to be in early care and education &amp; begin it at older ages (Warfield &amp; Hauser-Cram, 1996).</p> <p>Specialized instruction is an important component of inclusion (Odom, 2003)</p> <p>Inclusive preschool programs can benefit children with and without disabilities (Odom, 2003); families of children with disabilities and those of typically developing children felt that one of the greatest benefits was exposing children to the "real" world and acceptance of children with disabilities (Bailey &amp; Winton, 1987).</p> <p>Inclusive programs do not cost more than traditional, non-inclusive special education programs (Odom, 2003)</p>
<b>Culturally &amp; Linguistically Appropriate</b>	<p>There is evidence from preschool programs suggesting that the use of the child's native language in preschool settings does not impede the acquisition of English, but more studies are needed to understand the effects of the linguistic environments of institutional settings that serve as the primary base for acquisition of English (August &amp; Hakuta, 1997).</p> <p>English language learners in Head Start show gains in school readiness &amp; in their knowledge of English by the end of the Head Start year (Zill et al., 2001).</p>

Program Element	Research Findings
<b>Comprehensive Services</b>	Featured program in longitudinal study – the Chicago Parent-Child Centers-- includes a parent-resource teacher to coordinate family-support services, and a multi-faceted parent program that includes educational workshops, parent resource room, opportunities to complete high school, home visitation, and child health services, including health screening, speech therapy. Important to note that program was targeted to children from low-income families in a high-poverty neighborhood (Reynolds et al., 2001)
<b>Family Involvement</b>	Parent agreement to participate was a condition of Chicago Parent-Child Center (Reynolds, 2001). Children whose parents were more involved in their preschool in the Georgia Pre-K program scored higher on all assessments of pre-math problem solving, letter-word recognition, vocabulary, story & print comprehension, & basic skills mastery (Henry, 2003).
<b>Infrastructure</b>	In recommendations in <i>Not By Chance</i> for creating an early care and education system, Kagan & Cohen (1997) recommend that at least 10 percent of all public early care & education funds should be invested directly in “infrastructure/quality enhancement,” including support for parent involvement, data collection, evaluation, governance, professional development, licensing, accreditation, and development of innovative approaches for facilities. However, it is not clear whether this percentage would be sufficient to support as strong an emphasis on workforce development as is now envisioned to provide one teacher with a bachelor’s degree in early care and education or child development for every 20 preschool children. See also below.
<b>Workforce Development</b>	States cite T.E.A.C.H. initiative as their number one accomplishment in career development in ECE (Wheelock College Institute for Leadership & Career Initiatives, 2002).  Level of education of ECE workforce in 8 California counties similar to that of respective population in county, ranging from 43% in San Francisco to 8% in Kern County (Whitebook, Kipnis, Sakai, Voisin & Young, 2004).  While 30% of California’s State Preschool staff in public school settings had earned a BA, only 8 percent of their counterparts in privately operated State Preschools had done so (Bellm et al, 2002). Need to address parity with public school benefits as well as salaries.  Challenges in California include the following: There is no centralized registry of early care and education teachers, no ongoing collection of administrative data, and no universal certification system that would lead to accurate assessments of the size of the workforce (Bellm & Whitebook, 2003). In addition, higher education capacity to meet increased professional development needs varies widely.

**Table 2-2: Existing Publicly Funded Early Care and Education Programs**

	<b>State Preschool</b>	<b>General Child Care &amp; Development Programs</b>	<b>Head Start</b>	<b>Alternative Payment Program</b>	<b>CalWORKS Child Care Stage 2 and 3</b>
<b>General Description</b>	Usually a part-day, part-year program that emphasizes basic preschool education and parent education with health, nutrition, and social services.	Typically a year-round program for up to 10 hours per day. Educational program plus nutrition, parent education, and referrals for social services.	Typically a part-day, part-year program. Educational, health, medical, dental, nutritional and mental health services.	Child care vouchers to help parents work and accommodate the individual needs of family.	Child care arrangements to help CalWORKS recipients engage in work and/or work preparation activities.
<b>Administrative mechanism/ Program Settings</b>	CDE contracts with local educational agencies, colleges, community action agencies and private non-profit agencies	CDE contracts with centers and family child care home networks, administered by either public or private agencies and local educational agencies.	Federal Administration for Children and Families contracts with grantees that either directly operate or contract with delegate agencies to operate programs. Use both centers and family child care settings.	AP vouchers to help pay for child care selected by family.	R&R program helps Stage 2 CalWORKS families identify provider. AP program typically pays provider.
<b>Standards*</b>	Title 5	Title 5 and Title 22 Licensing Regulations	Head Start Performance Standards	Title 22 if licensed	Title 22 if licensed
<b>Age Group</b>	Preschool children ages 3-5 First priority to child protective services children Then priority to eligible 4-year-olds.	Infants to 12	Preschool children ages 3-5, with priority to 4-year-olds.  (Early Head Start serves infants and toddlers in some communities.)	Infants to 12	Infants to 12
<b>Income &amp; Other Requirements</b>	Families with incomes up to 60% of State Median Income (SMI),  Up to 10% of participants can qualify up to 75% of SMI.  Families with lowest adjusted monthly income shall be admitted first.	Families with incomes up to 75% SMI & demonstrated need.	Families with incomes up to 100% of poverty.  All CalWORKS & Supplemental Services Insurance (S.S.I.) are automatically eligible.	Families with incomes up to 75% of SMI and with demonstrated need.  CalWORKS participants and up to 75% SMI with demonstrated need.	Stage 2: Limited to first 2 years after the family stops receiving CalWORKS.  Stage 3: Families remain eligible for as long as they meet income requirements and demonstrated need for other child care programs.

\*See Table 2-3 for the content of the various sets of standards.

Table 2-3: Existing Early Care and Education Program Standards

	California Program Standards for Contract Providers (Title 5)	Federal Head Start Performance Standards	California Child Care Licensing Requirements (Title 22)
<b>Programs Subject to Standards</b>	State Preschool Contracted General Child Care & Development Programs	Head Start; Early Head Start	Child Care Centers Family Child Care Homes (Includes non-exempt providers receiving Alternative Payment and CalWORKS funds)
<b>Minimum Teacher Qualifications</b>	24 units of Early Childhood Education or Child Development and 16 general education units	50% of Head Start teachers must have AA or higher in Early Childhood Education or related field by September 2003; otherwise a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a state-awarded certificate for preschool teachers that meets or exceeds requirements for CDA  Head Start Reauthorization Act passed by House requires that 50% of teachers have BA by 2008	12 units of Early Childhood Education or Child Development or CDA for teachers in center-based programs.  No ECE requirements for family child care; providers are required to take health and safety training. Also, family child care providers who take appropriate courses and meet other requirements are eligible to obtain Child Care Permits (e.g., teacher, master teacher, etc.)
<b>Staff/Child Ratios; Group Size; Class Size</b>	1:8 for 3-5 year-olds Maximum group Size of 24  1:4 for Toddlers Maximum group Size of 16  1:3 for Infants Maximum group size of 18	1:10 for 4- and 5-year-olds Maximum group size of 20  2:17 for 3-year-olds Maximum class size of 17	<b>Centers:</b> 1:12 for 2-5 year-olds 1:6 for toddlers (option) 1:4 for infants  <b>Small Family Child Care Homes:</b> Maximum # of children is 6-8 under age 10, depending upon age of child, including provider's own children.  <b>Large family child care home:</b> Maximum # of children is 12-14, depending upon age of the child and including providers' own children, with 2 adults
<b>Curriculum</b>	No set curriculum; <i>Pre-kindergarten Learning &amp; Development Guidelines</i> provide guidance on curriculum on various developmental domains.	No set curriculum; Head Start programs must implement a curriculum that supports cognitive development, age appropriate literacy, numeracy, social and emotional development and other skills that form the foundation for school readiness; must integrate all educational aspects of health, nutrition, mental health services into program activities.	No set curriculum; <i>Prekindergarten Guidelines</i> provide guidance on curriculum on various developmental domains.
<b>Monitoring &amp; Technical Assistance</b>	Monitoring conducted at contract agency level every 3 years. Annual self-study plan using Coordinated Compliance/Contract Monitoring Review with ITERS and ECERS rating scales.	Technical assistance and monitoring based on Head Start Performance Standards; in-depth monitoring every 3 years.	Annual site visits for center compliance with licensing standards conducted by Department of Social Services. Site visits every 5 years for family child care to ensure compliance with licensing standards; more frequent for "high risk" homes.
<b>Comprehensive Services</b>	Health & social service component that identifies needs of child & family for health or social services makes referrals & includes follow-up and nutrition component.	Federal Head Start Performance Standards provide a range of services to address nutritional, health, and mental health needs: provide opportunities to include parents; and provide medical, dental, nutrition & mental health programs.	Comprehensive services not required.

**Table 2-4: Preschool for All Program Elements Worksheet**

Core Criteria	Expanded Criteria for PFA Demonstration Project	Merced
<p><b>1. Offer Universal, Voluntary, and Free Preschool Programs</b></p>	<p><b>Preschool will be free to all and voluntary. Preschool will be offered for at least one-half day during the regular school year. The PFA Demonstration Projects will receive funding based on the State Preschool time base of a 3 hours per day program operating for a 175-day school year (or an equivalent plan that provides 525 hours over a full year, e.g., 2 ½ hours per day for 210 days). Preschool will build on programs provided through a variety of public and private settings that meet quality standards.</b></p> <p>Establish a 5-7-year roll-out timeframe for providing preschool services that meet quality standards and criteria for all 4yos in the identified district(s) or city (with at least 1000 4yos) or countywide, and plan for long-term sustainability. Agree to, and explain roll-out process and timeframe, for PFA Demonstration Projects 'Expanded Criteria for First 5 PFA Programs, including connection with the SR Programs, SN Projects, CARES programs, and others as available and appropriate.</p>	<p><b>1. Offer Universal, Voluntary and Free Preschool Programs.</b></p> <p>First 5 Merced County Children and Families Commission has spearheaded a plan to make voluntary, free preschool available to 82 percent of all four-year-olds by 2015.</p> <p>Within this plan, First 5 Merced proposes a First 5 California PFA Demonstration Project that would make at least a 3-hour per day, 175-day-per year quality preschool program free and available to all four-year-olds in six of Merced's 18 school districts. By 2010, 83 percent of the 1,280 four year-olds in Merced's largest school district, Merced City, and at least 75 percent of the four-year-olds in five other districts (Delhi, El Nido, Livingston, Planada, and Winton) would have access to free preschool programs upgraded to PFA quality. Seventy-four to 99 percent of the children in these districts qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch, and 19 of the 21 schools in the six districts have low API scores 1-5. By the fifth year, the percentage of four-year-olds enrolled in formal early care and education would increase from 39 to 83 percent in Delhi Unified, from 63 to 76 percent in Livingston, from 52 to 85 percent in Winton, from 4 to 75 percent in El Nido, and from 57 to 85 percent in Planada school districts. Furthermore, the percentage of children receiving PFA Full Quality Level preschool would increase from approximately 17 percent to a minimum of 70 percent in the six districts by the end of the fifth year. In five of the six districts proposed for the demonstration project, more than 60 percent of the children are English Language Learners.</p>
<p><b>2. Coordinate Accessible and High Quality Facilities through expansion and upgrades so all 4 year olds in the designated district(s), city, or county have access to preschool</b></p>	<p><b>Preschools will be provided in appropriate facilities that are clean, safe, accessible, inclusive, licensed, meet regulatory quality standards, and are well-equipped with sufficient, appropriate materials and toys. The facilities are licensed (Title 22) and meet regulatory quality standards for the State Preschool Program (Title 5). Programs will use accepted external review instruments such as, Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale- ECERS or Family Day Care Rating Scale – FDCRS (acceptable scores of '5' or better). Facilities and playgrounds shall meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the California Building Standards Code, and address best practices for accessible facilities.</b></p> <p>Assess, analyze, and develop plans that maximize unused capacity within current public and private preschool programs/facilities district or citywide or countywide; and coordinate planning for the development, upgrading, and expansion of preschool facilities, using bond measures, the ABCD/Packard Partnership, LEA and Head Start and other ECE funding for facilities, local funds, and other opportunities.</p>	<p><b>2. Coordinate Accessible and High Quality Facilities through expansion and upgrades so all 4 year-olds in the designated district(s), city, or county have access to preschool.</b></p> <p><u>Facilities that Meet Regulatory Standards</u> Fifty percent of the four-year-olds in Merced County currently are enrolled in some type of formal, licensed early care and education. However, the distribution is uneven across the proposed districts for the demonstration project, and the quality varies even within Merced City Elementary, where the largest proportion of four-year-olds is enrolled. Eighty-eight percent of the center- and school-based programs either meet Title 5 or Head Start Performance Standards. Very few center- or school-based programs in Merced County – including Merced City – are nationally accredited.</p> <p>Many programs that may be potential participants in PFA have never, or not recently, been scored using the ECERS or FDCRS.</p> <p><u>ECERS/FDCRS Assessment</u> Merced PFA, therefore, will take the following approach within its proposed PFA demonstration project districts to ensuring a threshold of quality facilities:</p>

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		<p><b>Merced</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the first year, limit PFA upgrades and expansion to facilities already under Title 5 contract as State Preschool or General Child Care (either school-or center-based, or family child care that are part of networks), to Head Start, or to private centers or family child care homes that are nationally accredited and otherwise meet the entry-level requirements for PFA.</li> <li>• At the same time, during the first six months of the PFA program, Merced will establish a countywide team to assess facilities using the ECERS and FDCRS under the leadership of Jan Paystrup, curriculum/staff specialist for the MCOE. The team will assess all programs selected to be in the first year of PFA by December 2005, with the goal of providing feedback and technical assistance on how to achieve a score of 5 or better by June 2006 in order to be eligible for First 5 California PFA reimbursement.</li> <li>• During the spring and summer of 2006, the team will also assess all new facilities applying to participate in PFA. It is likely that only those programs already obtaining a 5 or deemed likely to be able to obtain a 5 within six months will be chosen to participate in PFA. A score of 5 may be difficult to obtain. According to San Francisco, a lot depends on whether one uses the abbreviated version of ECERS that CDE employs – this does not have a health and sanitation component, which is often a stumbling block for programs.</li> <li>• Merced County is fortunate to have the Merced Community College Child Development Center located on the Merced College Campus. This not-for-profit center, with two preschool classrooms as well a Title 5 contract for the provision of General Child Care, recently received a score of 6 on ECERS, with a 7 in some areas, and could serve as a model site for showing how to operate a high quality program.</li> </ul> <p><u>ADA Accessibility</u> Head Start, Title 5, and licensed Title 22 programs might already be required to meet ADA and California Building Standards Code and to address best practices for accessible facilities.</p> <p><u>Maximizing Unused Capacity</u> Look to school districts with declining enrollment. Kindergarten enrollment declined 20 percent in Ballico-Cressey Elementary; 7 percent in Delhi Unified, 22 percent in Gustine Unified, 27 percent in McSwain Union Elementary; 1 percent in Merced City Elementary; 100 percent in Plainsburg; and 44 percent in Snelling-Merced Falls Union between SY2003-04 and 2004-05.</p> <p><u>Other Opportunities for Expansion/Upgrading of Facilities</u> Merced is a participant in the ABCD/Packard Partnership. Other possibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School districts could include preschool in an upcoming bond measure.</li> <li>• Developer's fees.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>3. Plan to Start in Underserved and High Priority Communities</b></p>	<p><b>Include a mix of achievement levels in participating district(s), city, or county. Begin implementation by focusing on developing PFA in underserved and high-priority communities, including schools with an Academic Performance Index score in deciles 1-5.</b></p> <p>Achieve a 'systems' level for testing a variety of PFA configurations by selecting districts to participate that include a mix of achievement levels (including high-priority schools API 1-5) and use a school district-level approach for implementation (e.g., a medium sized district or consortium of several small districts), or a city or county-level approach. Begin implementation by focusing on developing PFA in underserved and high-priority communities as part of 'system' of PFA Project (beginning with implementation in high-priority schools API 1-5). Additionally commit to giving priority to low-income communities with a very low supply of preschools (i.e., limited capacity). As PFA is school-based or school-linked, strong evidence of commitment and partnership with local education agencies is necessary. This partnership structure will further the ultimate goal of public education funding, including parity in teachers' salaries.</p>	<p><b>3. Plan to Start in Underserved and High Priority Communities.</b>                      Merced County has a high proportion of schools with low API scores. All or the vast majority of the children in the six school districts proposed for participation in the demonstration project attend schools with API scores 1-5, and 19 of the 21 participating schools have low API scores. Five of the proposed demonstration districts are underserved, with 4 to 63 percent of four-year-olds enrolled in ECE. Other demographic factors underlining the need for preschool expansion to prepare children for school in Merced County include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30 percent of birth-to-four-year-olds live in poverty, according to the 2000 Census, the fourth highest rate in the state.</li> <li>• More than 45 percent of children live in a household where English is a second language, according to the 2000 Census. By 2004, according to the Department of Finance, 62 percent of the four-year-olds are Latino. In the proposed demonstration project, 32 to 95 percent of the children are English Language Learners.</li> <li>• More than 1/3 of the adults living in Merced County are high school graduates, compared to only 1/4 statewide.</li> </ul> <p>In Merced City Elementary School District, by virtue of its leadership role in the School Readiness Initiative, 89 percent of four year-olds are currently enrolled in some type of early care and education. However, half of the teachers in the flagship State Preschool Program do not yet have Bachelor's degrees, and only 17 percent of the programs in the demonstration grant area are estimated to meet PFA Full Quality Level standards.</p>
<p><b>4. Serve Diverse Populations, including children with disabilities/special needs and children who are English language learners</b></p>	<p><b>Preschools will appropriately serve children with diverse languages and cultures, as well as provide affirmative inclusion for children with disabilities and other special needs. Provide periodic developmental assessments and screenings, including appropriate identification, treatment (intervention), and supportive services.</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Using the First 5 Special Needs Project's definition, all children with disabilities or other special needs will be served. This definition states:</p> <p><i>The target population is children birth to five years of age who live in communities served by the School Readiness Initiative and who are: 1. Protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); or 2. Have or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who require developmental, health, mental health, and related services and/or supports of a type or amount beyond that usually required." (Special Needs Project RFA, Section I.C. page 4)</i></p> </div> <p>Evidence of how programs serve this population includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each PFA Demonstration Project will use available local data to estimate a targeted number (or percentage) of children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Serve Diverse Populations, including children with disabilities/special needs and children who are English language learners.</b></p> <p><u>Children with Special Needs:</u>                      Merced County is making strides toward the inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs in mainstream early care and education settings. Many preschool children with disabilities and other special needs in Merced County are already in inclusive settings. However, there is a need to identify children with special needs earlier, especially including the broader definition in the First 5 Special Needs Project, and to expand efforts to train both early care and education staff and special education staff on the benefits of inclusive settings.</p> <p><u>Inclusive Services:</u>                      Many preschool children with identified disabilities and other special needs in Merced County are already in inclusive settings, especially in Head Start, family child care, or in the Merced College Child Development Center. According to the project's stakeholders, 10 percent of the county's children have special needs, but 80 percent of the children identified have mild to moderate disabilities and may be already enrolled in typical early childhood settings.</p>

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	<p>and other special needs to be served. The number of children served who have a disability or other special need should be consistent with, and advance, current federal regulations, such as Head Start. This target number will be part of the PFA Plans being developed and will be a criterion for PFA Demonstration Project funding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence in agreements with Local Education Agency (LEA = County Office of Education or School District), Regional Center (RC), and County Commission that cover implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act including search and serve, referral process, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Program Plan (IPP) process and provision of special education and related services when appropriate.</li> <li>• Evaluation, including self-assessment and data collection, by PFA Demonstration Projects working with partners including the LEA or the RC. Data to be collected may include the IEP (LEA) or IPP (RC) information systems to ensure programs are meeting requirements and providing effective early intervention.</li> <li>• Training for providers to ensure full inclusion/neverstreaming.</li> <li>• All facilities are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.</li> <li>• Coordination and expansion of services with partners (e.g., Head Start).</li> <li>• Use products to be developed by the SN Projects such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>–Definition of disability categories</li> <li>–Evidence-based screening tools and protocol</li> <li>–Assessment and referral protocol</li> <li>–Effective family outreach</li> <li>–Teacher/staff training.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>The severely disabled, however, have traditionally been served by the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) in sites co-located with regular preschool sites, but not actually in the same program. The county is taking several steps to ensure full inclusion throughout the county. According to stakeholders, the MCOE's special education department "is making a big shift towards no more isolated slots. At a minimum, children will be co-located," with any new facility money for special needs preschool to be invested in inclusive settings. Efforts have also been made to establish a center at the new UC Merced campus in partnership with MCOE, and that would serve typically developing as well as special needs children, but this plan has recently run into difficulty. In another effort, Marilyn Scorby, director of the Merced College Child Development Center, wrote a grant to bring children that are already in special education to the center.</p> <p>A teacher and two aides are required for eight to ten children with severe disabilities, with an "embedded" instructional person from special education. However, if these children were embedded into other mainstream programs, the staff could follow them, thereby assuring full inclusion and a partnership between mainstream and special education. There are other plans for full inclusion planned as well. For example, in Merced City Elementary School District, one of the speech pathologists will increase from two days a week to five days a week in the 2004-05 school year. Winton School District is in the planning process for a fully inclusive elementary school in 2006-07, and Atwater School District is considering steps towards full inclusion.</p> <p>Merced has also received local gifts (approximately \$75,000) from philanthropic organizations to expand preschool play areas and include equipment for preschool children with handicaps and other special needs.</p> <p><u>Need for Outreach/Early Identification:</u> Despite these many advances in the provision of preschool for children with special needs, it appears that Merced County, like the rest of California, faces the challenge of identifying more preschool children with special needs so that they can receive early intervention when it will be most effective.</p> <p>Statewide, 10.5 percent of children in kindergarten through grade 12 receive IDEA-supported services. Based on data obtained from the California Department of Education (Drovin, 2005), in December 2004, only 4.66 percent of the four-year-olds in that year had IEPs. Of these, 73.4 percent have speech or language impairments or specific learning disabilities, and 26.6 percent have more severe disabilities.</p> <p>In Merced County, according to the California Department of Education, 122 four-year-olds were enrolled in special education. When compared against DOF estimates of the number of four-year-olds as of 2004, this number represents 3.22 percent of the four-year-old population.</p>

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		<p>Thus, it is likely that there are more preschool children eligible for IDEA-supported services in Merced County than have yet been identified if one uses the expanded definition of special needs in the First 5 Special Needs Project that suggests that approximately 18% “have or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who require developmental, health, mental health, and related services and/or supports of a type or amount not usually required” (Newacheck et al, 1998).</p> <p>A key goal of Merced’s PFA Plan is therefore to implement screening programs in early childhood settings that may identify children in need of further assessment to determine if they have special needs. While many of these children may already be enrolled in preschool programs, it is unlikely that they are receiving all of the early intervention services to which they may be entitled.</p> <p>Merced’s plans include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to increase the percentage or number of 4-year-olds with disabilities or other special needs identified as IDEA eligible and the percentage of those identified at risk but not eligible for IEP or IDEA and enrolled in mainstream preschool programs in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration sites from approximately 2 to 10.5 percent.</li> <li>• Establish agreements between the Merced County Office of Education, the Regional Center, and the First 5 Merced Children and Families Commission that they will work together to ensure that proper implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, including search and serve, referral process, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Program plan (IPP) process and provision of special education and related services when appropriate.</li> <li>• Agree to have Merced PFA programs, in conjunction with MCOE and the RC, participate in an evaluation that may include collecting the IEPs or IPPs of participating children to ensure that the children are receiving appropriate early intervention services.</li> <li>• Expand the 6-week training on inclusive child care previously offered to family child care providers in MCSD to providers in other districts.</li> <li>• Provide training for special education teachers participating in PFA programs on the benefits of inclusive classrooms.</li> <li>• Incorporate the materials related to the definition of disability categories, evidence-based screening tools and protocol, assessment and referral protocol, effective family outreach, and teacher/staff training developed by Merced’s Special Needs Project, once they are available.</li> </ul> <p><u>English Language Learners</u> Merced City School District has a bilingual curriculum in English and Spanish and they are preparing one for Hmong and Thai.</p>

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		Livingston has a curriculum for Punjabi. Head Start offers some activities/curriculum in Spanish, but Hmong families prefer communication in English.
<p><b>5. Develop Preschool Programs that meet First 5 PFA standards:</b></p> <p><b>a. Provide periodic health/developmental screenings,</b> assessments, follow up</p> <p><b>b. Provide Preschool equivalent to 3 Hours/Day for the School Year in a variety of Public and Private Settings that meet quality standards</b></p> <p><b>c. Use Content, Performance, and Program Standards</b> aligned with CDE "Desired Results System for Children and Families" including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preschool early learning standards and Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (when available) that are articulated with California's Kindergarten through third grade standards.</li> <li>• Staff to child and teacher to child ratios meet, or improve upon, State Preschool requirements (3:24) or a research-based alternative (e.g., 2:20).</li> <li>• Groups need to be of sufficient size to prepare children for</li> </ul>	<p><b>Preschool will reflect research-based, high quality standards. Implementation of First 5 PFA Demonstration Projects will be based on the existing State Preschool Program, with appropriate modifications and incremental improvements, supported by the California Department of Education (CDE)/Child Development Division (CDD) "Desired Results System for Children and Families." The Desired Results System includes establishing content, performance and program standards; completion of the child's developmental profile and family survey; and on-site program review processes. The quality characteristics for the PFA Demonstration Projects will include the following criteria:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are positive relationships between teachers and children, and teachers use strategies to bolster emotional wellness. Communication occurs throughout the day with mutual listening, talking-responding, and encouragement to use reasoning and problem-solving.</li> <li>• The CDE/CDD early learning standards and Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (when available) are aligned and articulated with California's Kindergarten through third grade standards.</li> <li>• The CDE/CDD early learning standards and Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (when available) are used in the design of curriculum and learning activities. Opportunities are provided daily for early literacy, visual and performing arts, science, math, physical activity, health/nutrition, social skills/relationship building, and group activities.</li> <li>• Provide developmentally and experientially appropriate activities that develop and support children's social-emotional, linguistic, cognitive, and physical (gross and fine motor) skills. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Accommodating the many individual learning styles and abilities of children by providing appropriate content that offers interesting and meaningful choices and experiences.</li> <li>– Involving children regularly in initiating, planning, and implementing activities and then reflect on what they have learned.</li> <li>– Creating a developmentally appropriate classroom-like setting for children in large enough peer group size that prepares them socially and educationally for kindergarten. Groups need to be of sufficient size to promote socialization skills and prepare children for experiences in Kindergarten classrooms.</li> <li>– Establishing appropriate blocks of time throughout the day that allow teacher-group (large and small) instruction, individual child-teacher interaction, child-initiated experiences, leisurely exploration of activities, and alternating periods of active and quiet activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Nutritious meals and snack are provided daily using USDA Childcare Food Program standards and reimbursement (whenever possible).</li> <li>• There are materials and activities to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity by children, families, and staff. The First 5</li> </ul>	<p><b>5. The Merced Preschool for All Program will meet First 5 PFA Standards based on the existing State Preschool Program, with incremental improvements in teacher qualifications and compensation as well as appropriate modifications in the content and curriculum, supported by the California Department of Education/ Child Development Division.</b></p> <p>Merced PFA programs will provide periodic health/developmental screenings, assessment and follow-up.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merced will use the Desired Results Developmental Profile for the first tier of child assessment. The Desired Results Profiles are an observational tool to assess children's progress across a wide range of developmental domains, including social, emotional and physical as well as language and cognitive development.</li> <li>• If the Desired Results Profile indicates that the child may need further screening, Merced will use a reliable, validated screening instrument such as the ESI-P to identify children in need of further assessment.</li> <li>• Finally, if the results of the ESI-K indicate that the child may need further assessment for possible disabilities or other special needs, the child will be referred to the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) Assessment Subcommittee for formal evaluation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Merced PFA will provide a minimum of 3 hours per day for 175 days in a variety of public and private settings that meet quality standards.</b> Quality is the key. There will be a mosaic of programs, so long as they meet PFA standards. Settings may include State Preschool, Head Start, Migrant Head Start, and private center-based programs and family child care homes that meet PFA standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School District-administered State Preschool programs in Merced County already operate at least 3 hours per day for 179-180 days. The schedule is aligned with school transportation. Dos Palos provides transportation.</li> <li>• Head Start has typically operated 3.18 hours for 165 days; part of the PFA enhancement of this program will require providing for the additional days of service.</li> <li>• Migrant Head Start operates 260 days per year. The program is only closed for holidays. General Child Care programs typically operate 247 days per year. In upgrading both of these programs, Merced PFA will either (1) upgrade the PFA portion of the program – 525 hours – to PFA standards, staffing that portion of the day with BA-level lead teachers, and the remaining hours with staff who have Title V lead teacher permits, OR: (2) combine PFA funds with Head Start or local funds to create a full-day, full-year program that meets PFA standards.</li> </ul>

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<p>experiences in Kindergarten classrooms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutritious meals and snacks.</li> <li><b>Provide Transition Support</b> for children entering the preschool programs and for preschoolers entering Kindergarten.</li> </ul>	<p>CCFC 'Equity Principles' are implemented and assessed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff to child and teacher to child ratios do not exceed State Preschool requirements (3:24) or a research-based alternative (e.g., 2:20 with a master teacher who has a bachelor's degree in an ECE-related field and credential, a teacher with an associate degree, and additional staff and volunteers including parents to lower the adult to child ratios). Group sizes implement the 'school readiness' recommendations of the CA's Master Plan for Education (2002) and the Universal Preschool Task Force Report (1998).</li> <li>Preschools will provide for transitions for children entering the preschool programs and for preschoolers entering Kindergarten. Preschools will be part of an integrated infrastructure (workforce, facilities, etc.) spanning birth through school-age programs, which is part of California's free public education system in order to implement the PFA recommendations of California's Master Plan for Education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is important for family child care to be part of the system. Family child care will be a critical resource in the most rural areas of Merced County where distances may make transporting children to school- or center-based programs impractical. Family child care may be included in several ways. Large family child care homes or small homes that are part of networks and that have a substantial number of preschool children, a curriculum, and a provider with a BA would be candidates to provide PFA directly. Other family child care homes may participate as providers of wraparound care linked to center-based programs, such as State Preschool or Head Start. Child Care Resource and Referral, now administered by the Merced County Office of Education, will take the lead in organizing these clusters. See Section 3 for more detail on the inclusion of family child care.</li> <li>Applications will be circulated during the spring of 2006 to select the private centers and homes participating to determine whether they meet at least the entry level for PFA participation. After an initial screening of written applications, PFA program staff will visit the programs to conduct ECERS assessments and otherwise determine if the programs meet PFA standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>Merced PFA will use Content, Performance, and Program Standards aligned with the CDE "Desired Results System for Children and Families" and the CDE/CDD Early Learning Standards and Pre-Kindergarten Early Learning Guide, when available, in the design and/or selection of curriculum and learning activities.</b></p> <p><u>Content and Performance Standards:</u>                      Merced PFA will use the CDE/CDD Early Learning Standards and the Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guide to design and/or select curriculum and learning activities. These standards and the guide will be used to ensure that PFA programs provide opportunities daily for early literacy, visual and performing arts, science, math, physical activity, health/nutrition, social skills/relationship building, and group activities.</p> <p>Social and emotional development – such as the ability to listen to and respect others – is recognized as the foundation of all other learning. At the same time, early childhood programs must also focus on developmentally appropriate approaches to encouraging emerging literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>The CDE/CDD early learning standards will be designed to help children develop the pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills they will need when they enter kindergarten. For example, in pre-literacy activities, the preschooler will learn how to handle a book; to recognize letters, words, and sounds; to rhyme words; and, perhaps most important, to enjoy listening to stories. In pre-math activities, the preschooler will learn concepts such as number and quantity; sorting and classifying objects; and measuring and comparing objects.</p> <p>Some sites already use the Scholastic Early Childhood Curriculum. The</p>

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		<p><b>Merced</b></p> <p>Scholastic Early Childhood Program is a comprehensive, year-long curriculum that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides explicit instruction in early language, reading, and math skills.</li> <li>• Combines teacher-directed instruction with child-centered explorations.</li> <li>• Has a flexible, easy-to-use curriculum that fosters children's cognitive and social/emotional development.</li> <li>• Brings together the PreKindergarten Curriculum Guidelines and Early Reading First federal legislation.</li> <li>• Includes rich English and Spanish resources that capitalize on young children's capacity for language learning.</li> </ul> <p>The Head Start program in Merced has used either the High/Scope or Creative Curriculum while the Migrant Head Start program has used the Creative Curriculum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The High/Scope curriculum is based on the fundamental premise that children are active learners in classrooms arranged with well-equipped interest areas, and that children learn best from activities that they plan, carry out, and reflect on. Key experiences are grouped into 10 categories: creative representation, language and literacy, initiative and social relations, movement, music, classification, seriation, number, space and time. The daily routine also includes time for small and large group experiences and time for outside play.</li> <li>• <i>The Creative Curriculum</i> is a research-based preschool curriculum model that utilizes Jean Piaget's theories of how children think, learn and develop physically as a philosophical foundation. Classrooms typically are arranged into 11 interest areas to support age appropriate instructional practice and social competence.</li> </ul> <p>The curriculum review committee's charge will also involve ensuring that Merced's approved curricula:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide activities that accommodate individual learning styles;</li> <li>• Involve children regularly in initiating, planning, and implementing activities and then reflecting on what they have learned;</li> <li>• Ensure that there are blocks of time for both large- and small-group interaction; and</li> <li>• Create a developmentally appropriate classroom-like setting for children in a large enough peer group size that prepares them for experiences in kindergarten classroom. This will require developing special instructions for PFA programs operating in large family child care homes or in center-based settings that serve children in mixed age groups.</li> </ul> <p>As indicated in the brief review of curricula already in use in Merced County, taken as a group, existing curricula already contain many of the elements likely to be recommended by the CDE Early Learning Standards and Prekindergarten Curriculum Guide. The charge may well be how to enhance or adapt existing curricula to better align with the new</p>

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		<p>standards.</p> <p><u>Program Standards:</u>                      Nutritious meals and snacks will be provided daily using the USDA Childcare Food Program standards and reimbursement whenever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merced's State Preschool, Head Start and Migrant Head Start programs already use the Childcare Food Program.</li> <li>• Some family child care homes and private centers in Merced County claim reimbursement from the Childcare Food Program.</li> <li>• Merced Child Care Resource and Referral, under the new auspices of the Merced County Office of Education, will host a meeting on how to qualify for the USDA Childcare Food Program. All PFA providers will be trained on how to participate.</li> </ul> <p>There will be materials and activities to promote understanding and acceptance of diversity by children, families, and staff. The First 5 CCFC 'Equity Principles' will be implemented and assessed.</p> <p><b>Staff-to-child and teacher-to-child ratios do not exceed State Preschool requirements (3:24) or a research-based alternative (e.g., 2:20 with a master teacher who has a bachelor's degree in an ECE-related field and credential, a teacher with an associate degree, and additional staff and volunteers including parents to lower the adult-to-child ratios.) Group sizes implement the 'school readiness' recommendations of California's Master Plan for Education (2002) and the Universal Preschool Task Force Report (1998).</b></p> <p>Merced PFA will incrementally move toward the research-based alternative of 2:20. A review of state preschool programs serving four-year-olds suggests that the typical adult-to-child ratio is 1:9 to 1:10 in those states where at least one teacher in the classroom is required to have a Bachelor's degree, with a maximum class size of 18-20. More protective ratios may be required in classrooms including three-year-olds and/or children with special needs.</p> <p>In the short term, Merced PFA will allow both the 3:24 (or 1:8) and the 2:20 (or 1:10) ratios. The 2:20 ratio assumes that the lead or master teacher has a BA in an ECE-related field and that the assistant teacher has an AA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merced's existing State Preschool programs participating in PFA will apply for a waiver to operate on a 2:20 as opposed to the currently required 3:24 ratio. Currently, some State Preschool programs meet the 1:8 ratio only by recruiting parents or other volunteers to be the third adult in the classroom, and this practice could be encouraged to augment the 1:10 ratio.</li> <li>• Federal Head Start Performance Standards usually require a 2:17 ratio for preschool age children, but may allow a class size of as large as 20 with two teachers with four-year-olds only.</li> <li>• Similarly, in the Migrant Head Start program, required ratios and class</li> </ul>

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		<p>size depend upon the mix of age groups in a classroom. No more than 20 four-year-olds are allowed, and no more than 17 three-year-olds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For privately operated centers, Merced PFA will require the 2:20 (1:10) ratio. This should be simpler to implement than in the existing publicly funded programs because the only regulations that currently apply are state licensing requirements, which are more lenient, requiring a maximum class size of 24 and a maximum staff-child ratio of 1:12 for preschool children.</li> <li>Finally, in family child care homes, Merced PFA will require that there be at least two adults in large family child care homes serving a group of 12-14 children, and that at least half of the children be ages 3-5, thereby allowing for a preschool group during the PFA-funded portion of the day. For small family child care homes, the home must participate in a hub or network that allows children to participate in a more classroom-like setting with a larger group of preschool children at least once a week.</li> </ul> <p><b>Preschools will provide for transitions for children entering the preschool programs and for preschoolers entering Kindergarten.</b></p>
<p><b>6. Commit to a Qualified, Diverse Workforce with a 5-10 Year Timeframe to Reach Quality Standards.</b> Preschool teachers and staff will <b>be</b> qualified and compensated using, as a minimum, State Preschool Program standards and rates in the area, and moving to parity with K/Elementary teacher salaries when qualifications are met. Within 5 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master teachers - Bachelor's degree with 24 ECE credits, with the goal of all preschool master teachers having a Bachelor's degree and an Early Education Credential (proposed new credential) or Multiple Subject Elementary School Credential within 10 years.</li> <li>Assistant teachers - Associate's degree with appropriate ECE credits.</li> </ul>	<p>Teachers and staff are qualified and compensated accordingly. State Preschool Program Title 5 standards and rates in the area are used as a minimum, and rates move to parity with K/Elementary teachers when qualifications are achieved (i.e., salary/benefits schedule). There is a plan for all preschool lead/master teachers to have a Bachelor's degree with 24 credits in early childhood education/child development using criteria listed in the Universal Preschool Task Force Report (1998) within 5 years, with the goal of all preschool master teachers having a Bachelor's degree and an Early Education credential (new) or Multiple Subject elementary school credential within 10 years. There is a plan for assistant teachers to have an Associate's degree with appropriate credits in early childhood education/child development within 5 years. All staff are supervised and evaluated, and have opportunities for professional development as demonstrated by documented progress on the Child Development Permit Matrix as required by the State Preschool Program. There are focused recruitment and education supports (including tutoring, linked ESL and ECE classes, tuition and book reimbursements, etc.) to sustain and enhance the diversity of ECE teachers, staff, and administrators.</p>	<p><b>6. Commit to a Qualified, Diverse Workforce with a 5-10 Year Timeframe to Reach Quality Standards. Preschool teachers will be qualified and compensated using, as a minimum, State Preschool Program Title V standards and rates in the area, and moving to parity with K/Elementary teacher salaries when qualifications are met.</b></p> <p><u>Qualifications:</u> Merced's PFA Plan is that, within 5 years, in every PFA classroom there will be a Master Teacher with a Bachelor's degree with 24 credits in early childhood education/child development, and that within 10 years, each Master Teacher in PFA will also have an Early Education credential (new) or Multiple Subject elementary school credential. In addition, Merced's PFA Plan is that there will be within 5 years in every PFA class an assistant teacher with an Associate's degree with appropriate credits in early childhood education/child development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, an estimated 17 percent of the preschool programs in demonstration grant have lead teachers with BA degrees. In Merced City, 50 percent of the lead teachers have BA degrees, and all newly hired teachers are required to have them.</li> <li>Currently, an estimated 52 percent of the lead teachers are estimated to have AA degrees.</li> <li>Although there is not yet a federal mandate that each Head Start class have a teacher with a BA, this was originally projected for 2009. It is not clear that the Reauthorization will include a BA requirement or the support to finance it.</li> <li>In private center-based care, an estimated 11 percent of the teachers have BA degrees.</li> <li>To help providers advance toward AA and BA degrees, it will be vital</li> </ul>

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff will participate in professional development to educate children with varied languages and cultures, and children with disabilities and other special needs</li> </ul>		<p>to have more teachers who are bilingual at the Merced Community College. The program already offers courses nights and weekends to accommodate the schedules of providers who are adding school to work. However, it has been difficult to find bilingual teachers who meet the community college system requirements of having at least a masters' degree to teach more than one course.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will also be a need to offer more distance-learning alternatives because it is difficult for people to drive to classes in addition to working full-time.</li> <li>Because the proposed Preschool for All Ballot initiative only requires 48 units in early childhood education/child development for the second teacher, an instructional aide, in the preschool class, Merced may request a change in this aspect of its plan if the initiative passes in June 2006. Merced's concern is that in addition to improving the educational qualifications, the county also wants to retain and recruit bilingual staff. In some cases, having an assistant teacher who is bilingual may take precedence over having a second teacher with an AA, so long as the individual has obtained the 48 units.</li> </ul> <p>Entry level staff qualifications for participation in Merced PFA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each classroom must have a lead/master teacher with a Master Teacher Permit and a second teacher with an Assistant (or Associate?) Teacher Permit.</li> <li>Each family child care home provider must have a Master Teacher Permit and participate in a network with regular mentorship/supervision from teachers meeting full PFA standards.</li> </ul> <p>Advancing level staff qualifications for participation in Merced PFA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each classroom must have a lead/master teacher with an AA level teacher with at least 24 credits in early childhood education/child development and a second teacher with appropriate credits in early childhood education/child development.</li> <li>Each family child care home provider must have an AA degree with at least 24 credits in early childhood education/child development and participate in a network with regular mentorship/supervision from teachers meeting full PFA standards.</li> </ul> <p>Full PFA level staff quality qualifications for participation in Merced PFA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each classroom must have a lead/master teacher with a BA degree with at least 24 credits in early childhood education/child development and a plan to obtain a multi-subject or early childhood (when available) credential by 2015, and a second teacher with an AA degree and appropriate credits in early childhood education/child development OR a second teacher who is bilingual and has appropriate credits in ECE/CD.</li> <li>Each family child care home provider must have a BA degree with at least 24 credits in early childhood education/child development and participate in a network with regular mentorship/supervision from</li> </ul>

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		<p>credentialed teachers meeting full PFA standards.</p> <p>The above phase-in approach to advancing the preschool workforce is essential. The greatest challenge will be to attain sufficient <i>credentialed</i> preschool teachers. Currently, more than 12% of the 2,570 teachers in K-12 classrooms in Merced County have emergency permits or waivers. In three of the six school districts proposed for participation in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Project, there is an even greater shortage of credentialed teachers. For example, in Dos Palos, 12.8% of the teachers have emergency permits, and an additional 3.8% have waivers. (NOTE: this is 2000-2001 data from the California Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Division, as reported by Harder and Company Community Research in January 2003 in their Merced County Children and Families Commission Secondary Data Report.)</p> <p><u>Compensation:</u>                      Merced County's goal is to have teachers who have BA degrees, at least 24 units of credit in early childhood education/child development, and credentials (a credential in early childhood/child development, if developed, would be preferred, although a multi-subject credential would be accepted) reach parity with the compensation of K/Elementary Teachers. Meanwhile, Merced's goal is to have assistant teachers or instructional aides working as the second teacher in PFA classrooms receive comparable benefits and 80% of the salary of BA-level teachers.</p> <p>There are several challenges to meeting this goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within public school-based preschool programs, some preschool teachers already meet full PFA qualifications and are close to parity with K/Elementary teachers. However, public school elementary salaries rise rapidly over time, and it will be a challenge to keep up with these increases in salary and benefit packages without a dedicated source of new statewide revenue.</li> <li>• Within privately operated preschool programs, whether center-based or in family child care networks, it will be difficult to provide benefits comparable to those of public school teachers. In particular, privately based teachers would not have access to retirement benefits through the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS).</li> <li>• Within both publicly and privately operated programs, there may be equity issues created by providing benefits to one group of teachers working with four-year-olds when similar benefits are not available to other teachers who meet the same educational qualifications but are not eligible to participate in PFA because they either work with younger age groups or are not yet working in a neighborhood where PFA has been phased in.</li> </ul> <p>Recognizing those challenges, Merced proposes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt a salary schedule for staff meeting Entry Level qualifications that matches the current salaries in State Preschool, for Advancing Level that represents at least 80 percent of the full PFA Quality Level,</li> </ul>

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		<p>for Full PFA Quality Level minus the credential of the same rate as for teachers working on a provisional basis without credentials, and for Full PFA Quality the salary for beginning credentialed teachers. If equity issues with teacher unions in any of the six districts proposed for participation in the First 5 PFA Demonstration Grant arise, Merced PFA will provide stipends equivalent to the combined salary/benefit package described above.</p> <p><u>Focused Recruitment and Education Supports</u> See #7 below.</p>
<p><b>7. Implement Strategies to Recruit, Support, and Train a Diverse and Qualified Workforce with local colleges and universities</b></p>	<p>Expand planning and implementation of workforce development strategies to: a) increase the number of qualified early childhood educators, as stated in the 'Expanded Criteria for PFA Programs, b) provide outreach/retention of a diverse workforce that reflects the language and cultural diversity of California's children, and c) enhances training for full inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs. Teacher training for preschool will be integrated with the college and university systems for high quality teacher training and include community-based training venues. Workforce development strategies are coordinated with CARES programs and related efforts.</p>	<p><b>7. Implement Strategies to Recruit, Support, and Train a Diverse and Qualified Workforce with local colleges and universities.</b></p> <p><u>Increase the number of qualified early educators</u> In the existing supply of ECE teachers working with four-year-olds, Merced currently has an estimated 17 percent of the preschool/ECE teachers needed with BA degrees in order to provide one lead/master teacher for every class (or 40 children, assuming double sessions).</p> <p>In addition, to meet the expansion goals for the program within the proposed Demonstration Project school districts, Merced PFA will need to recruit new teachers with appropriate credentials to staff new PFA programs.</p> <p><u>Provide outreach/retention of a diverse workforce that reflects the language and cultural diversity of California's children</u> As stated above, 45% of Merced's children are English language learners, and, within the proposed six PFA Demonstration Grant school districts, the percentage ranges from 31 to 75 percent. Overall, 62% of the four-year-olds are Hispanic, and an even higher proportion of the preschool children in the demonstration area are Hispanic. Merced County also has a significant Hmong population.</p> <p>For Merced County, 76 percent of the child care centers in the county have at least one Spanish-speaking staff member, while only 28% of licensed family child care homes have a Spanish-speaking staff member (Policy Analysis for California Education, 1998). However, this data may be somewhat misleading because it is not clear what percentage of the center staff actually speak Spanish, whereas if a single provider in a family child care home speaks Spanish, that person is presumably available to all of the children enrolled in the home.</p> <p>Merced has several strategies to retain and recruit additional preschool teachers who reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children they serve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hire bilingual teachers at Merced Community College. This will require one of the following: Recruiting and hiring a bilingual teacher with a master's degree in early childhood education/child development who can teach multiple courses, and an additional cadre of bilingual teachers with bachelor's degrees who each one course.</li> </ul>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish articulation agreements between Merced Community College and University of California at Merced to facilitate a smooth transition between AA and BA degrees at the two campuses.</li> <li>• Reach out to licensed family child care providers, and to exempt care providers who reflect the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the children. Offer classes in Spanish and Hmong for the providers to obtain their Child Development Permits and AA degrees. Recruit those who already have BA or AA degrees to serve as PFA providers, especially in rural areas where there is a shortage of facilities, and offer training to those with Permits to provide wraparound care.</li> <li>• Build upon the satellite broadcasts related to professional development that are available from Merced City School District to the School Readiness Initiative sites. Make these broadcasts available at a minimum to all family child care and center-based providers in Merced City School District. Explore feasibility of expanding to other school districts within Merced’s proposed PFA Demonstration Grant.</li> </ul> <p><u>Enhance training for full inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs</u>                      Training is needed to help Merced’s early childhood workforce work with children with special needs; it is equally needed to help special educators see the value in inclusive instruction for the severely disabled.</p> <p>In 2005, 24 family child care providers completed training with Challenge Family R.S., SB 1703 (Early Start), in a 6-week training on working with children with special needs.</p> <p><u>Coordinate with CARES program</u></p>
<p><b>8. Show Evidence of Policy Commitments by First 5 County Commission and partners, including the Equity Principles and connecting with other First 5 Programs</b></p>	<p>Formally approved by the First 5 County Commission with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evidence of significant policy commitments by First 5 County Commission and/or LEA (County Office of Education or School District School Board and/or Superintendent) and/or Elected Governance Body (County Board of Supervisors, City Council/Mayor) through letter of commitment or MOU, resolution/actions, Ballot measures, Strategic Plan - County Commission and others.</li> <li>b. Agreement to implement PFA models that build a statewide system of PFA in accord with California’s Master Plan for Education.</li> </ol> <p>Commit to full implementation of the First 5 Equity Principles.</p>	<p><b>8. Show Evidence of Policy Commitments by First 5 County Commission and partners, including the Equity Principles and connecting with other First 5 programs.</b></p>

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<p><b>9. Commit to Participate in First 5 CCFC Process and Outcome Evaluation</b></p>	<p>Commitment to participate in First 5 PFA statewide process and outcome evaluation. Preschools will fully participate in First 5 statewide evaluation processes in order to demonstrate benefits to young children that are measurable across the 5 domains (National Education Goals Panel) of children’s learning and development through the early elementary grades. Results will include: high quality preschool services available to all 4-year-olds (or 3- and 4-year-olds); demonstrated progress for participating 4-year-olds (or 3- and 4-year-olds); improved school readiness success indicators (Kindergarten measures); and school success continuing through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Initial priority for enrollment of children in a PFA program shall be given to children four years of age. During phase-in of the program, children three years of age may participate to meet an enrollment target or fill a PFA classroom.</p>	<p><b>9. Commit to Participate in First 5 CCFC Process and Outcome Evaluation.</b></p> <p>First 5 Merced will require that preschool programs, in order to participate in the proposed PFA Demonstration Project, agree to participate in the First 5 PFA statewide process and outcome evaluation.</p> <p>The first priority will be to ensure that PFA programs are being implemented properly. Merced will hire an external evaluator to track the progress in expanding and upgrading programs, particularly the progress toward having BA and AA level teachers and staff that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children enrolled, and that have the training to work with children with special needs in inclusive settings.</p> <p>In addition, Merced PFA will assess child outcomes resulting from the First 5 PFA Demonstration projects. This will include use of Kindergarten measures such as the Kindergarten Entry Profile to determine the extent of improved school readiness indicators, and measures of school success continuing through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.</p> <p>Merced will follow First 5 California instructions on how best to follow child outcomes through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Merced proposes to use STARS scores (as opposed to API) in second grade as the first opportunity to get longitudinal data.</p>
<p><b>10. Develop a Diverse Preschool Provider System</b></p>	<p>For Family Child Care Homes (FCCHs), participation will be based on large FCCHs where the majority of children are preschool age, in small FCCHs that are part of a network, or in another experimental model approved on a case-by-case basis. In all FCCHs there is a qualified teacher (same qualifications required for PFA staff in a center- or school-based program) available exclusively to the preschool children during the core preschool program. The group of preschool children served needs to be of sufficient size to prepare children socially and educationally for a classroom experience in kindergarten.</p> <p><b>Provide preschool services through formal agreements between local education agencies and a variety of public and private providers that meet required quality standards and include strong evidence of commitment and partnership with local education agencies. Demonstrate integration with available preschool programs and related services and local partnerships for PFA. Fund preschool services through First 5 County Commission contracts with local education agencies that function as the fiscal agent (e.g., funds flow from County Commissions to local education agencies via contracts; or funds flow from the County Commission to the county office of education to a countywide agency); or fund preschool services through County Commission contracts with a city, county, or nonprofit organization in partnership with, and with the approval of, a local education agency or agencies (The public agency</b></p>	<p><b>10. Develop a Diverse Preschool Provider System.</b></p> <p><u>Provisions for Diversity</u> Merced PFA will develop a diverse preschool provider system, including existing publicly supported programs, (State Preschool, General Child Care, Head Start, and Migrant Head Start and Child Care Programs); and a range of programs that are privately supported (private center-based programs, faith-based programs, and family child care homes.</p> <p>All programs will be required to meet at least Entry Level (Title 5) standards in the first year of the program, with a plan to meet full PFA quality standards by the 10<sup>th</sup> year.</p> <p>For the first year of the proposed PFA Demonstration project, the First 5 Merced PFA Leadership Team will select the programs to participate in PFA. In the second year, First 5 Merced in conjunction with MCOE will develop an application and selection process for providers wishing to become PFA providers. By the third year, it is envisioned that MCOE will administer this application and selection process.</p> <p>Family child care providers must meet the same qualifications as center- or school-based staff in order to be a full participant in PFA. In addition, in order to provide a socialization experience that prepares children for kindergarten, a majority of the children enrolled in large family child care</p>

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	<p><b>or local education agency partners acts as the fiscal agent - public agency means a county board of supervisors or city council when the city is incorporated or has a charter.); or other option to be determined when there is demonstrated commitment to change as necessary to become part of California’s public education system.</b></p>	<p>homes must be of preschool age. Small family child care homes must participate in a network with regular mentorship/supervision from teachers meeting full PFA standards. In order to provide a socialization experience that prepares children for kindergarten, small family child care homes will participate at least one day a week and possibly during the summer in a larger setting where a total of at least 20 preschool children will have the opportunity to participate in group activities for a half day.</p> <p>As another experimental model of the proposed First 5 PFA Demonstration Project, Merced PFA will pilot a program where school district teachers with BA degrees visit family child care homes for at least 525 hours over the school and summer year. If this model proves affordable and feasible, Merced may disseminate this model more widely.</p> <p><u>Provisions for Governance/Administration</u> Over the long term, in accordance with the California’s Master Plan for Education and with the recently filed Preschool for All Ballot Initiative, preschool programs in Merced County will be under the auspices of an LEA, the Merced County Office of Education in partnership with other LEAs.</p> <p>For at least the first two years of the proposed First 5 Merced Demonstration Project, however, First 5 Merced will serve as the fiscal agent to administer the program. First 5 Merced will gradually turn over the administrative responsibilities to MCOE.</p> <p>Within the last year MCOE has assumed several major new responsibilities – administering the county’s Child Care Resource and Referral Program, Alternative Payment Program, and Head Start program. Once MCOE has achieved a comfort level with these new responsibilities, First 5 Merced proposes to transfer the fiscal agent and other PFA administrative responsibilities to MCOE.</p>
<p><b>11. Show Evidence of Fiscal Commitments and Provide 5-Year Budgets that identify: a) the funds and funding source(s), b) the number of new and of improved preschool spaces for each community. Based on these numbers, First 5 CCFC funds will: 1) contribute to funding preschool spaces when PFA quality standards are met; and 2) contribute to spaces that meet entry-</b></p>	<p>Evidence of significant current and future financial commitments from First 5 County commission and other partner(s) (e.g., Commission Budgets, Partner Budgets, PFA Budget with Multiple Sources, projected/actual revenues from taxes, fees, bonds, etc.) to develop and sustain the PFA Demonstration Project.</p> <p>Provide annual budgets for at least 5 years that identify: a) the funds and funding source(s), b) the number of new preschool spaces and the number of enhanced preschool spaces for each community in the PFA Demonstration Projects. First 5 CCFC funds will: 1) contribute to funding preschool spaces when PFA quality standards are met; and 2) contribute to spaces that meet entry-level standards by funding incremental levels of quality improvements that advance towards PFA quality standards (e.g., salary/benefit schedule).</p> <p>Plan to serve at least 1,000 4-year-olds by identifying the school district(s)</p>	<p><b>11. Show Evidence of Fiscal Commitments and Provide 5-Year Budgets that identify: a) the funds and funding sources (s), (b) the number of new and of improved preschool spaces for each community.</b></p>

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<p><b>level standards by funding incremental levels of quality improvements that advance towards PFA quality standards</b></p>	<p>or city, or identify the number to be served in a countywide PFA Demonstration Project. The goal is to expand preschool spaces (approximately 10,000 spaces/year) and improve preschool quality (approximately 20,000 spaces/year) using First 5 CCFC contributions of \$12M/year for new preschool spaces and \$7M/year for improved quality. The First 5 CCFC will support local quality improvements from an agreed-upon “menu” of quality enhancements such as higher teacher salaries when qualifications are achieved.</p> <p>Preschool rates will increase incrementally based on improvements in teacher education (and compensation) to reach parity with Kindergarten revenue limits and teacher compensation levels (average revenue limit or annual amount paid per student). The County Commission plan needs to demonstrate local capacity to approach the stretch goal of increasing both the number and quality of preschool spaces. The First 5 CA level of support provides an average of \$350/child/year to improve the quality of currently licensed spaces, and \$1200/child/year to add new high quality preschool spaces. This level of First 5 CCFC support is intended to encourage local efforts to build and sustain preschool services after the one-time investment of First 5 CCFC funds.</p>	
<p><b>12. Implement Family Outreach and Involvement</b></p>	<p>Preschools will invite and support parent and family partnership and involvement in all aspects of the program, including leadership in program design, implementation, and evaluation. Parent advisory groups will include parents/families with preschool-aged children who represent the languages/cultures of the children and children with disabilities and other special needs.</p>	<p><b>12. Implement Family Outreach and Involvement.</b></p>
<p><b>13. Connect with Wrap Around Child Care and other Family Supports as needed</b></p>	<p>Preschool will be a viable option for all families by providing connections to full day, full year child care services when needed. The wrap-around child care services will be integrated with current high quality child care providers with minimal transitions for children and families. A variety of public and private funding mechanisms, including fees, will be used to support wrap-around child care. Options could include: ½ day preschool program with public/First 5 funding in a full-day preschool; a ½ day preschool with public/First 5 funding with wrap around childcare that has a sliding fee scale for parents and/or subsidized childcare; ½ day preschool program with public/First 5 funding with licensed childcare at the same program/site or in neighborhood locations such as family childcare homes and child care centers; ½ day preschool with public/First 5 funding with ‘wrap around’ parental or informal care; and other options that meet the stated criteria.</p>	<p><b>13. Connect with Wrap Around Child Care and other Family Supports as Needed.</b></p> <p>Multiple factors suggest that at least 50 percent of Merced’s preschool children will need access to full-day, full-year preschool programs or wrap-around child care in order to participate in PFA. These factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 53 percent of four-year-olds in Merced County live in two-parent households where both parents work, or with a single parent who works.</li> <li>• Many four-year-olds in Merced are children of migrant workers.</li> <li>• Merced is a predominantly rural county, where it is frequently necessary to travel long distances to get to work.</li> </ul> <p>In addition to these factors related to family employment, there may be programmatic reasons to provide at least programs lasting at least the length of a school day or extended through the summer for children most at risk of not being ready for school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new six-state study on state preschool programs suggests that some part-day program children spend too much time waiting in line for activities such as going outside or snacks, and that this limits opportunities for interaction between teachers and students.</li> <li>• The Georgia Pre-K Study indicated that some of the children most at risk of not being ready for school lost considerable ground between the</li> </ul>

Core Criteria	Expanded Criteria for PFA Demonstration Project	Merced
		<p>time the preschool ended and the next fall when kindergarten began. (Henry et al, 2003).</p> <p><u>The Role of FCCH in Wraparound Care</u>                      One way for Preschool for All to achieve its full potential is to encourage schools, child care centers, and family child care providers to think of themselves as a neighborhood-based team. This process begins by determining the areas in the county in which the largest numbers of active, licensed family child care providers are clustered around a school; these family child care homes and schools can then collaborate to provide a full day's care for children.</p> <p>First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant criteria indicate that, in order to participate in PFA, there must be a sufficient number of preschool children in a family child care home to provide a socialization experience that will prepare children for a kindergarten environment. A majority of the children enrolled in large family child care homes must be of preschool age. In addition, small family child care homes must participate in a network.</p> <p>Based on the above criteria, Merced County might pursue one of the following three approaches to including family child care in the delivery of PFA and thereby address the need of families for full-day services: 1) A Family Child Care Network Model, 2) A Circuit Teacher Model, or 3) A Wraparound Model. Each of these models is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.</p> <p><u>Transportation</u></p> <p>In addition, in order to participate in PFA, some children in rural areas of Merced County may need transportation to preschool sites. Especially for the 30 percent of the children who live in poverty, families may be unable to transport the children except by using public transportation, which may not be available.</p>

\*See Table 2-1 for research findings on each program element.

**Section 3.  
Estimating the Supply and Demand for  
Preschool in Merced County**

## Introduction

To provide a basis for determining how best to phase in the upgrading and expansion of preschool programs in Merced County, this section analyzes:

- The demographic characteristics of the county's young children and families, and
- The supply and characteristics of early childhood education (ECE) programs currently in place to serve them.

Merced County has a high proportion of preschool children who are English learners, who live in low-income families, and whose parents have comparatively little education – the very children who have been found in numerous research studies to derive the greatest benefits from high quality preschool.

Merced County also has a growing supply of early care and education programs for four-year-olds. However, the programs are unevenly distributed across the county, and, even in the areas where the supply is greatest, there is a wide variability in the quality.

Any action plan to implement Preschool for All must take into account these Merced County-specific characteristics.

## General Demographics and Characteristics of Children and Families in Merced County

To assess the potential use of preschool in Merced County, this section analyzes the general demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the children and families in the county. Although this information will not reveal exactly how many parents might *use* preschool services (known as the true demand) if it were free and accessible to all four year-olds, the analysis will help better define the need for *Preschool For All* and the potential participation rate.

### **Target Population**

Merced County has the youngest population of any county in California, with children ages 14 and under comprising nearly 29 percent of the population. In addition, the percentage of young children five and under in Merced County is higher than that in 57 out of the state's 58 counties (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

In estimating the target population of four-year-olds for Preschool for All in Merced County, we considered two possible approaches.

1. Based on California Department of Finance (DOF) projections, building on the U.S. Census from 2000, in May 2004, there were 3,786 four-year-olds in Merced County and this number was projected to grow to 4,034 by 2005.

2. Using the number of kindergartners as a “proxy” for the number of four-year-olds in the county, there were, according to the California Department of Education, a combined total of 4,274 children enrolled in public and private kindergarten in 2004-05 in Merced County – 240 more than the DOF’s estimated total (4,034) as of 2005.

Recognizing that Merced is growing rapidly, in our estimates of the target population, we used the higher number resulting from using the number of kindergartners as a proxy for the number of four-year-olds in the county.

As shown in Table 3-1, Merced City Elementary School District had the largest percentage (29.95 percent) of kindergartners, followed by Los Banos Unified (16 percent), and Atwater Elementary School District (13 percent).

**Table 3-1. Public and Private School Enrollment in Merced County, by School District, 2004-05**

School District	Kindergarten	Percentage of Total
Merced City Elementary	1,280	29.95%
Los Banos Unified	688	16.10%
Atwater Elementary	535	12.52%
Livingston Union Elementary	264	6.18%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	225	5.26%
Winton Elementary	211	4.94%
Weaver Union Elementary	207	4.84%
Delhi Unified	192	4.49%
Hilmar Unified	169	3.95%
Gustine Unified	158	3.70%
Planada Elementary	86	2.01%
McSwain Union Elementary	79	1.85%
Le Grand Union	49	1.15%
Merced County Office of Education	41	.96%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	30	.70%
El Nido Elementary	24	.56%
Merced River Union Elementary	19	.44%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	9	.21%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	8	.19%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,274</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Source: California Department of Education web site. Public school enrollment: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp>. Private school enrollment: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ps/>. (According to CDE, a total of 188 children were enrolled in private school in 2004-05).

### **Population Growth**

Merced County’s population is projected to grow faster than that of the state as a whole, and the population of preschool children is projected to grow substantially over the next decade. The DOF’s projections for 2005 reflect a 7 percent increase (4,034 four-year-olds), followed by a one percent increase (4,036 four-year-olds) in 2006. By 2014, the DOF estimates that there will be 5,399 four-year-olds in Merced County – a 43 percent increase from 2004.

Although there is no systematic data on the projected growth by school district, cities with the highest proportion of children birth to four in 2000 were South Dos Palos (11.8 percent), Delhi (9.6 percent), Merced and Winton (both 9.5 percent) and Ballico and Livingston (both 9.3 percent).

**Table 3-2. Children Ages 0 Through 4 and Total Population Numbers by Zip Code, Merced County, 2000**

Zip Code	City	Age 0-4	Percent of Total Population	Total Population
93665	South Dos Palos	39	11.8%	331
95315	Delhi	973	9.6%	10,141
95348	Merced	2,191	9.5%	23,093
95388	Winton	1,088	9.5%	11,455
95303	Ballico	74	9.3%	798
95334	Livingston	1,181	9.3%	12,666
93635	Los Banos	2,689	9.2%	29,120
95365	Planada	377	9.1%	4,145
95301	Atwater	2,484	8.9%	27,794
95333	Le Grand	288	8.8%	3,255
95317	El Nido	69	8.7%	795
93620	Dos Palos	809	8.6%	9,386
95340	Merced	5,040	8.5%	59,285
95322	Gustine	641	8.1%	7,868
95369	Snelling	93	8.1%	1,153
95374	Stevinson	146	7.5%	1,943
95324	Hilmar	481	6.7%	7,157

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. In *Merced County Children and Families Commission Secondary Data Report* (January 2003), pages 6-7.

### **Economic Status**

Although Merced County is gradually transitioning to a service-based economy, it still relies primarily on agriculture and related industries such as food- and cotton-processing, and has a large migrant community. Median household income was estimated at \$29,859 in Merced in 1999, according to the U.S. Census, as compared to \$43,744 statewide. The construction of the new University of California Merced campus is expected to boost the economy substantially. However, nearly one-fifth of the population currently lives in poverty, and the percentage is higher among families with preschool children. According to the 2000 Census, an estimated 30 percent of the county's children 0-4 were living in poverty in 2000, the fourth highest rate in the state. Table 3-3 displays the number of Merced County's school-aged children living in poverty, by school district, according to the Census 2000. As shown in the table, as of 2000, Weaver School District had the highest poverty rate (38 percent), followed by Planada Elementary School District (37 percent).

**Table 3-3. School-Aged Children in Poverty in Merced County School Districts, 2000**

School District	Grades	Population of Children	Number of School-Aged Children in Poverty	School-Aged Children in Poverty	Percentage of School-Aged Children in Poverty
Weaver Union Elementary	K-8	7,387	1,463	569	38.89%
Planada Elementary	K-8	5,113	1,028	380	36.96%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	K-8	1,861	321	109	33.96%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Unified	K-12	10,761	2,865	966	33.72%
Merced City Elementary	K-8	74,641	13,686	4,476	32.70%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	K-8	513	74	22	29.73%
Livingston Union Elementary	K-8	13,226	2,645	691	26.12%
Atwater Elementary	K-8	28,111	5,186	1,336	25.76%
Merced River Union Elementary	K-8	914	168	41	24.40%
Le Grand Elementary	K-8	2,411	516	122	23.64%
El Nido Elementary	K-8	1,074	204	48	23.53%
Gustine Unified	K-12	8,075	1,811	420	23.19%
Delhi Unified	K-12	10,199	2,693	588	21.83%
Hilmar Unified	K-12	9,908	2,257	462	20.47%
Snelling-Merced Falls	K-8	799	117	21	17.95%
McSwain Union Elementary	K-8	4,871	826	143	17.31%
Los Banos Unified	K-12	30,882	7,784	1,094	14.05%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates – School District Estimates.

<http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/saipe/saipe.cgi>

Merced has a much higher percentage of children in poverty when “low income” is measured by eligibility for free- and reduced-price meals. Overall, 72 percent of the elementary school children in Merced County qualified for free- or reduced-price meals, as compared to 56 percent statewide. Merced’s Table 3-4 displays the number of Merced County’s elementary school children eligible to receive free- and reduced-price meals, by school district, in 2004-05, according to the California Department of Education. As shown in the table, as of 2004-05, El Nido Elementary School District had the greatest percentage (99 percent) of school-aged children eligible for free or reduced-price meals, followed by Winton Elementary (90 percent), and Livingston Elementary (86 percent).

**Table 3-4. Elementary School Children Eligible for Free- and Reduced-Price Meals in Merced County School Districts, 2004-05**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Public Enrollment in Elementary School</b>	<b>Number of Elementary School Children Eligible to Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</b>	<b>Percentage of Elementary School Children Eligible to Receive Free/Reduced Lunch</b>
El Nido Elementary	207	204	98.55%
Winton Elementary	1,251	1,122	89.69%
Livingston Union Elementary	1,609	1,388	86.26%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Unified	1,379	1,172	84.99%
Le Grand Union Elementary	424	354	83.49%
Planada Elementary	526	438	83.27%
Atwater Elementary	3,791	2,840	74.91%
Delhi Unified	1,025	766	74.73%
Merced City Elementary	7,271	5,427	74.64%
Los Banos Unified	4,140	2,898	70.00%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	321	224	69.78%
Weaver Union Elementary	1,928	1,333	69.14%
Snelling-Merced Falls	88	60	68.18%
Merced River Union Elementary	204	135	66.18%
Gustine Unified	896	590	65.85%
Hilmar Unified	1,037	537	51.78%
Merced County Office of Education	694	292	42.07%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	92	34	36.96%
McSwain Union Elementary	791	222	28.07%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,674</b>	<b>20,036</b>	<b>72.40%</b>

Source: California Department of Education: 2004/2005 Free/Reduced Meals Information

### ***Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity***

According to the DOF's 2004 estimates, the majority (62 percent) of the four-year-olds in Merced County are Hispanic, followed by White (26 percent), Asian (5 percent) and Black and multi-racial children (3 percent, respectively). According to the Census, as of 2000, 45.2 percent of children ages 5 and older lived in a household where a language other than English was spoken.

**Table 3-5. Four-Year-Olds by Ethnicity, 2004**

<b>Race</b>	<b>Number of Four-Year-Olds</b>	<b>Percentage of Four-Year-Olds</b>
Hispanic	2,363	62%
White	980	26%
Asian	205	5%
Black	105	3%
Multirace	108	3%
Pacific Islander	11	<1%
American Indian	14	<1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,786</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Department of Finance estimates:

[http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU\\_datafiles/Race/RaceData\\_2000-2050/Merced.txt](http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU_datafiles/Race/RaceData_2000-2050/Merced.txt)

### ***Educational Status***

By multiple measures, many preschool children in Merced County face educational challenges. More than a third of the children live in households where the adults have less than a high school education. Merced has a higher high school drop-out rate than the statewide average – 3.4 percent in 2000-2001, according to the California Department of Education, Policy and Evaluation Division, as compared to the statewide average of 2.8 percent. Finally, in 2004, 39 of Merced County's 51 elementary schools had low Academic Performance (API) scores of 1-5.

**Table 3-6. APIs of Elementary Schools, by School District**

School District	Number of Schools in District	Number of Schools with API:		
		1-3	4-5	6 and over
Merced City Elementary	12	8	2	2
Atwater Elementary	7	3	2	2
Dos Palos Oro Loma Jt. Unified	3	3	0	0
Delhi Unified	2	2	0	0
Gustine Unified	2	2	0	0
Livingston Union Elementary	3	2	1	0
Los Banos Unified	6	2	2	2
Winton Elementary	2	2	0	0
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	2	1	0	1
El Nido Elementary	1	1	0	0
Le Grand Union Elementary	1	1	0	0
Plainsburg Union Elementary	1	1	0	0
Planada Elementary	1	1	0	0
Hilmar Unified	2	0	1	1
McSwain Union Elementary	1	0	0	1
Merced River Union Elementary	2	0	1	1
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	1	0	0	1
Weaver Union Elementary	2	0	1	1

Source: 2004 Academic Performance Index (API) Base Report, California Department of Education

According to the Census 2000, 64 percent of Merced County's adults age 25 years and older graduated from high school, as compared to 77 percent throughout the state of California. In several cities in Merced County – Delhi, El Nido, Livingston, and Planada – half to two-thirds of the adults do not have high school degrees.

Only eleven percent of the county's population have bachelor's degrees or higher, as compared to 27 percent statewide and 24 percent in the nation. Moreover, while 20 percent of the adults over age 25 have bachelor's degrees or higher in Merced City, the largest and most urban city in the county; fewer than 7 percent have bachelor's degrees or higher in Dos Palos, Delhi, El Nido, Livingston, Planada, and Stevinson.

**Table 3-7. Educational Attainment of Adults over Age 25 by Zip Code, Merced County, 1999**

Zip Code	City	No High School Degree	High School Degree	Some College	Associate Degree	B.A. or Graduate Degree
93620	Dos Palos	47.2%	24.8%	15.0%	5.6%	7.4%
93635	Los Banos	39.0%	25.5%	19.0%	5.5%	11.0%
93665	South Dos Palos	44.8%	27.0%	18.0%	3.9%	6.3%
95301	Atwater	25.2%	22.0%	28.9%	10.0%	13.9%
95303	Ballico	29.9%	28.0%	23.4%	9.1%	9.6%
95315	Delhi	49.1%	26.0%	15.4%	5.8%	3.7%
95317	El Nido	59.3%	18.0%	14.8%	2.5%	5.3%
95322	Gustine	41.8%	28.3%	15.3%	6.8%	7.9%
95324	Hilmar	35.0%	28.9%	17.6%	6.5%	11.9%
95333	Le Grand	42.6%	20.9%	18.2%	6.3%	11.9%
95334	Livingston	61.5%	14.7%	12.1%	5.4%	6.3%
95340	Merced	37.3%	21.3%	19.5%	8.0%	13.9%
95348	Merced	18.6%	23.1%	27.7%	10.1%	20.5%
95365	Planada	66.9%	15.6%	12.4%	2.6%	2.4%
95369	Snelling	42.6%	24.2%	18.9%	4.6%	9.7%
95374	Stevinson	42.2%	32.0%	16.3%	4.0%	5.5%
95388	Winton	44.0%	23.8%	19.5%	4.6%	8.0%
<b>County Total</b>		<b>37.8%</b>	<b>22.9%</b>	<b>20.2%</b>	<b>7.2%</b>	<b>11.8%</b>

Source: Claritas Health Solution. In *Merced County Children and Families Commission Secondary Data Report* (January 2003), pages 31-32.

### ***Projected Participation Rate***

The factors reviewed above underscore the high *need* for quality preschool in Merced County. As indicated in earlier sections of this report, research shows that, while quality preschool benefits children from all income levels and cultural backgrounds, it has the greatest impact on children who are poor and/or whose parents have little education. In addition, quality preschool has been found especially to benefit Latino children (Gormley et al., 2004).

Nevertheless, even if preschool were free and accessible to all four year-olds, preschool participation in Merced County would not be expected to be 100 percent. Based on the only two states that currently offer preschool to all four year-olds, participation in California has been estimated at 70 percent.

- In Georgia, which initiated a universal preschool program in 1993, the participation rate in publicly funded preschool is still 70 percent, including enrollment in both the state-sponsored preschool program and federally sponsored Head Start.
- In Oklahoma, which initiated a universal preschool program in 1998, the participation rate is 67 percent, including enrollment in both the state-sponsored preschool program and Head Start collaborative programs.

A closer look at participation in Georgia's preschool program suggests that participation rates vary by county, with some areas substantially exceeding 70 percent and some substantially below, in part because program expansion cannot keep pace with rapid population growth in some localities (Source: Daphne Haley, Georgia Pre-kindergarten Program, 404-656-5957).

Other factors that may influence preschool participation include hours of service, access to transportation, and the amount of information available to parents regarding the availability of preschool.

- **Part-day vs. full-day:** For children of working parents in Merced County, the degree to which preschool is offered in (or linked to) full-day, full-year settings is likely to affect the participation rate.

At the time of the 2000 Census, 53 percent of Merced County's four-year-olds were living with two working parents or a single parent who worked. In addition, with many families living in western Merced County to access affordable housing but continuing to work in the South Bay, 25 percent of adults worked outside the county. For these working parents, access to preschool in full-day settings, or to convenient wraparound care, may be essential.

In both Georgia and Oklahoma, children have access to full day/school year programs, as opposed to being limited to part-day programs. In Georgia, the program duration is 6.5 hours for the school year, while in Oklahoma 43 percent of the children participate in full-day and 57 percent in part-day programs. Therefore, there is no statewide data available on how a universal preschool program limited to part-day services would affect participation.

However, a recent survey of parents conducted in San Mateo County underscores the importance of making some preschool programs available in settings that provide full-day services or easy access to wraparound child care (4Cs of San Mateo County in collaboration with the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, and UC Berkeley Survey Research Center: *Preschool for All Supply and Demand Study, 2004*). Sixty-eight percent of low-income families, defined as those with incomes under \$35,000 per year, indicated it was important that preschool be available in full-day settings.

- **Distance from Home/Transportation:** Access to preschool programs a short distance from home or to public transportation from home to preschool may also be a significant factor affecting preschool participation, especially in the many rural areas of Merced County.

As indicated in the analysis below of the availability of preschool programs across the county, preschool enrollment is currently highest in Merced City Elementary School District, an area of the county with relatively high density population, where families are likely to live fairly close to schools and centers. However, without access to

transportation in more rural areas of the county, such as Delhi, Hilmar, South Dos Palos and Le Grand, many children may be unable to participate. According to Dwight Thompson, principal of Dos Palos Elementary School, providing school bus transportation in Dos Palos has been essential to allow children to participate in preschool programs.

According to the parent survey conducted in San Mateo County (4Cs of San Mateo County, 2004), 25 percent or more of the respondents said it was important that the preschool be located within walking distance from home, and two-thirds of low-income families said it was important to have access to public transportation. In Merced County, it is unclear in the absence of a similar survey what percentage of children would need transportation in order to participate, and, if transportation is needed, whether parents would prefer to accompany their children on public transportation or to have children rides buses themselves to preschool sites.

**Table 3-8. Population and Density of Cities in Merced County, 2000**

City	Population	Area in Square Miles	Population Density Per Square Mile of Land Area
Atwater	23,113	5.41	4,277
Los Banos	25,869	8.16	3,219
Merced City	63,893	19.86	3,217
Dos Palos	4,581	1.49	3,076
Winton	8,832	2.87	3,074
Livingston	10,473	3.47	3,020
Gustine	4,698	1.58	2,971
Planada	4,369	2.13	2,051
Delhi	8,022	4.65	1,725
Hilmar-Irwin	4,807	3.92	1,227
South Dos Palos	1,385	1.50	922
Le Grand	1,760	3.58	491

Source: Census 2000.

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable?\\_bm=y&-geo\\_id=04000US06&-box\\_head\\_nbr=GCT-PH1-R&-ds\\_name=DEC\\_2000\\_SF1\\_U&-lang=en&-format=ST-7S&-sse=on](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US06&-box_head_nbr=GCT-PH1-R&-ds_name=DEC_2000_SF1_U&-lang=en&-format=ST-7S&-sse=on)

- Outreach/Dissemination of Information:** On a statewide basis, Latino children are underrepresented in formal early care and education care settings. Only 37 percent of Latino children ages three to five are enrolled in preschool/child care in California, as compared with 58 percent of white, 56 percent of African American children, and 50 percent of Asian children (Lopez and de Cos, January 2004).

While some have interpreted the lower enrollment of Latino children as an indication that Latino families may not want to enroll their children in preschool programs, surveys suggest that Latino families may be at least as interested in enrolling their children in preschool as are other families.

For example, a public opinion poll among California voters shows that while 75 percent of voters generally favor state funding for preschool programs, an overwhelming 86 percent of Latino voters favor state funding for preschool (Peter D. Hart Research Associates and the Tarrance Group, 2004). Similarly, a 2004 parent survey (4Cs of San Mateo County in collaboration with the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, and UC Berkeley Survey Research Center: *Preschool for All Supply and Demand Study, 2004*) conducted in San Mateo County found that more Spanish-only speaking families said they would be “very likely” to enroll their children in preschool than would English-only speaking families (86 percent versus 60 percent). Spanish-speaking respondents were also more likely than English-speaking respondents to prefer elementary schools and child care centers as the setting for preschool programs.

In reviewing the disparities in preschool participation in California, Lopez and de Cos (2004) conclude that “the dissemination of information” about the availability of preschool in predominantly Latino communities is an important consideration.

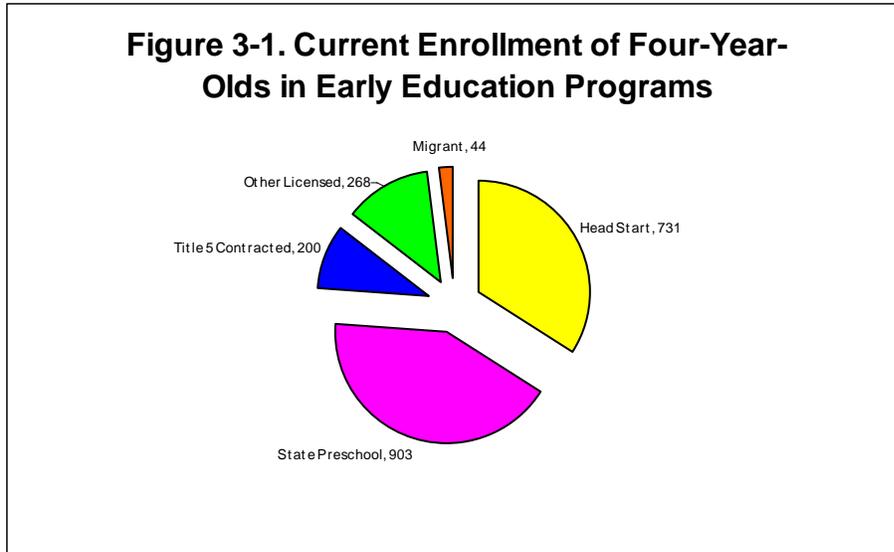
Given the multiple factors that could influence participation in preschool, for the sake of this analysis we project 70 percent as the minimum participation rate in Merced County, with 90 percent in Merced City Elementary School District where there has been a history of high investment and participation in preschool. The overall participation rate in Merced County would therefore be 80 percent, higher than the statewide average. Much will depend, however, upon the resources available to invest in preschool and the extent to which the program is tailored to meet the specific needs of Merced County’s children and families.

## **The Characteristics of Early Care and Education (ECE) Programs in Merced County**

Both the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Criteria and the proposed Preschool for All ballot initiative state that their intent is not to create a stand-alone, entirely school-based preschool system, but rather to coordinate with and build upon the existing system of publicly supported and/or regulated early care and education programs. Therefore, in planning for the implementation of PFA in Merced County, it is essential to understand the characteristics of the existing supply on both a countywide basis and down to the school district and/or zip code level.

### ***Overall Status of Preschool Enrollment and Supply***

Thirty-seven percent of children ages 3 to 5 not in Kindergarten were enrolled in preschool or child care in Merced County in 2000, as compared to 47 percent statewide, according to an analysis conducted by the California Research Bureau (Lopez and de Cos, 2004). Preschool participation is higher for four-year-olds than three-year-olds. Based on AIR’s analysis, by 2005, 50 percent of four-year-olds were enrolled in some type of formal early education and care.



As indicated in Table 3-9, the number of total center-based preschool slots grew from 2,533 in 2000 to 2,554 in 2003 – a percentage increase of approximately one percent – even though the number of centers decreased slightly from 66 to 63. Meanwhile, the *Portfolio* reports that the number of family child care homes (FCCH) increased from 314 FCCH in 2000, to 376 in 2003. It is important to note that these numbers may underestimate the number of spaces, as they exclude child care sites that do not receive referrals from Merced County’s child care resource and referral agency.

**Table 3-9. Total Number of Licensed Child Care Slots in Child Care Centers for Children Ages 2 through 5, Merced County and California, 1996, 1998, 2000, and 2003**

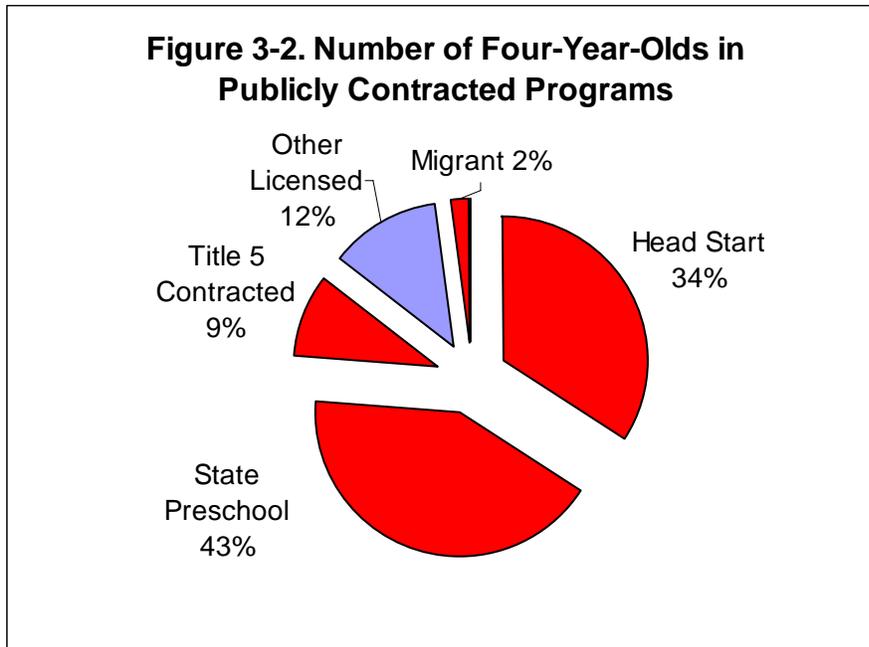
	1996	1998	2000	2003
Merced County	749	2,228	2,533	2,544
California	393,612	405,977	406,278	423,342

Source: Child Care Resource and Referral Network: *The 1999 California Child Care Portfolio*, *The 2001 California Child Care Portfolio*, and *The 2003 California Child Care Portfolio*.

**Publicly Contracted Programs**

The majority of Merced County’s preschool services for four-year-olds are in publicly contracted programs, either State Preschool or General Child Care Programs funded by the California Department of Education, or Head Start programs that are funded by the federal Administration for Children and Families.

Overall, 88 percent of the center-based preschool spaces for four-year-olds in Merced County are contracted with either CDE or Head Start. The dominance of publicly contracted programs primarily reflects the fact that a high percentage of children in Merced County meet the income eligibility requirements for these programs.



### ***Distribution of Preschool Services***

The distribution of early care and education programs across school districts/zip codes varies widely. Tables 3-10 through 3-15 show the distribution of licensed slots serving four-year-olds, by school district and type of program.

### **State Preschool/Title I/School Readiness**

As shown in Table 3-10, there were 903 four-year-olds enrolled in State Preschool, Title I, and School Readiness programs in 2005. As shown in the table, the majority (71 percent) of the four-year-olds were enrolled in programs in Merced City Elementary School District, followed by Winton Elementary School District (10 percent), Weaver (7 percent), Dos Palos (5 percent), Delhi (4 percent) and Atwater (2 percent).

**Table 3-10. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in State Preschool, by District, 2005**

<b>School District</b>	<b>State Preschool/ Title I/School Readiness Four-Year-Old Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Enrollment</b>
Merced City Elementary	640	70.87%
Winton Elementary	88	9.75%
Weaver Union Elementary	60	6.64%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	41	4.54%
Delhi Unified	34	3.77%
Atwater Elementary	20	2.21%
Hilmar Unified	20	2.21%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
El Nido Elementary	0	0.00%
Gustine Unified	0	0.00%
Le Grand Union	0	0.00%
Livingston Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Los Banos Unified	0	0.00%
McSwain Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Planada Elementary	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Head Start

As shown in Table 3-11, there were 731 four-year-olds slots in Head Start in 2005. The largest percentage (29 percent) of the slots were located in Merced City Elementary School District, followed by Atwater Elementary and Los Banos Unified (both 14 percent), and Livingston Union Elementary (13 percent).

**Table 3-11. Four-Year-Old Slots in Head Start, by District, 2005**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Head Start Four-Year-Old Slots</b>	<b>Percentage of Slots</b>
Merced City Elementary	214	29.27%
Atwater Elementary	101	13.82%
Los Banos Unified	101	13.82%
Livingston Union Elementary	95	13.00%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	71	9.71%
Delhi Unified	37	5.06%
Planada Elementary	33	4.51%
Gustine Unified	22	3.01%
Le Grand Union	20	2.74%
Hilmar Unified	14	1.92%
Winton Elementary	14	1.92%
Merced River Union Elementary	10	1.37%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
El Nido Elementary	0	0.00%
McSwain Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Title 5 General Child Care Slots for Four-Year-Olds in Center-Based Care**

As shown in Table 3-12, there were 200 four-year-olds enrolled in Title 5 contracted slots in center-based care as of October 2004. The majority (36 percent) of the four-year-olds were enrolled in Title 5 center based child care in Livingston Elementary School District, followed by Merced City Elementary (30 percent) and Los Banos Elementary (22 percent).

**Table 3-12. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Title 5 Center-based General Child Care, by District, October 2004**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Center-based Child Care Four-Year-Old Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Enrollment</b>
Livingston Union Elementary	71	35.50%
Merced City Elementary	59	29.50%
Los Banos Unified	43	21.50%
Winton Elementary	8	4.00%
Atwater Elementary	7	3.50%
Delhi Unified	5	2.50%
Planada Elementary	4	2.00%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	2	1.00%
El Nido Elementary	1	0.50%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
Gustine Unified	0	0.00%
Hilmar Unified	0	0.00%
Le Grand Union	0	0.00%
McSwain Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	0	30.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Other Center-based Child Development Programs**

As shown in Table 3-13, there were 268 four-year-olds enrolled in other center-based care in 2005. The majority (39 percent) of the four-year-olds were enrolled in center based child care in Merced City Elementary School District, followed by Los Banos Unified (28 percent) and McSwain Union Elementary (18 percent).

**Table 3-13. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Other Center-based Child Care, by District, 2005**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Center-based Child Care Four-Year-Old Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Enrollment</b>
Merced City Elementary	105	39.18%
Los Banos Unified	75	27.99%
McSwain Union Elementary	48	17.91%
Atwater Elementary	32	11.94%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	8	2.99%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
Delhi Unified	0	0.00%
El Nido Elementary	0	0.00%
Gustine Unified	0	0.00%
Hilmar Unified	0	0.00%
Le Grand Union	0	0.00%
Livingston Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Planada Elementary	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Winton Elementary	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

**Migrant Head Start**

As shown in Table 3-14, there were 44 four-year-olds enrolled in migrant programs in 2005. The largest percentage (32 percent) of the children enrolled in migrant programs were in Merced City Elementary, followed by Planada Elementary (27 percent), and Atwater Elementary (23 percent).

**Table 3-14. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Migrant Programs, by District, 2005**

School District	Migrant Four-Year-Olds	Percentage of Enrollment
Merced City Elementary	14	31.82%
Planada Elementary	12	27.27%
Atwater Elementary	10	22.73%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	7	15.91%
Los Banos Unified	2	4.55%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
Delhi Unified	0	0.00%
El Nido Elementary	0	0.00%
Gustine Unified	0	0.00%
Hilmar Unified	0	0.00%
Le Grand Union	0	0.00%
Livingston Union Elementary	0	0.00%
McSwain Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Winton Elementary	0	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

### Family child care

Merced County's R&R agency maintains an updated database of the licensed family child care homes currently providing care in the county. Furthermore, the county's Local Planning Council (LPC) distributed a survey to licensed family child care providers throughout the county to determine supply and demand. According to the survey, there were 356 slots for three- and four-year-olds in family child care in the county at the time of the survey. The largest percentage of slots (40 percent, or 142 slots) were located in the neighborhoods of Merced City Elementary School District. Because there are no family child care homes in Merced County that are currently part of networks required for participation in the First 5 California Demonstration Grant, they are not included in our estimate of the percentage of children served in formal early care and education. However, our recommendations will include the creation of family child care networks in Merced County to help family child care participate in PFA.

**Table 3-15. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Family Child Care, by District, 2004**

School District	Four-Year-Old Enrollment	Percentage of Enrollment
Merced City Elementary (Largest school district)	142	39.89%
Unknown	91	25.56%
Atwater Elementary	47	13.20%
Los Banos Unified	17	4.78%
Delhi Unified	13	3.65%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Jt. Unified	12	3.37%
Livingston Union Elementary	12	3.37%
Winton Elementary	9	2.53%
Planada Elementary	8	2.25%
Gustine Unified	5	1.40%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	0	0.00%
Delhi Elementary	0	0.00%
El Nido Elementary	0	0.00%
Hilmar Unified	0	0.00%
Le Grand Union	0	0.00%
McSwain Union Elementary (95340-8893)	0	0.00%
Merced County Office of Education	0	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	0	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary (95340-9557)	0	0.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	0	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: Local Planning Council survey. Note: Survey response rate was 20 percent.

### Implications of Program Distribution

Table 3-16 presents the percentages of four-year-olds enrolled in preschool programs by type of program compared to the kindergarten population of the school district. As shown in the table, not surprisingly, State Preschool/Title I/School Readiness preschool enrollment is highest in Merced City Elementary School District, the area of largest population which was Merced County's first School Readiness Initiative site as well as a Packard Foundation Preschool for All "flagship".

By contrast, Livingston Union has 36 percent of the Title 5 full-day General Child Care spaces, but no State Preschool or other center-based programs. And Los Banos has a higher proportion of both Title 5 full-day General Child Care spaces and other center-based care, and a much smaller proportion of part-day programs, with a Head Start program but no State Preschool.

The differences in the types of preschool programs that have developed in various school districts probably reflect many factors, such as income eligibility, percentage of working parents, local interest and leadership. While the differences do not necessarily point to any need to redistribute programs, they do suggest that in implementing Preschool for All in Merced County, there is unlikely to be a one-size-fits-all solution. That is, in some school districts, it may make sense to expand an existing State Preschool program, while in others it would be more feasible to expand Head Start. In other districts, the priority may be to make sure at least some preschool options are available in full-day settings accessible to children of working parents.

**Table 3-16. Four-Year-Old Enrollment in Programs, by District, 2005, Compared to Percentage of Population**

<b>School District</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Kindergarten Enrollment by District or Catchment Area</b>	<b>Percentage of State Preschool/ Title I/School Readiness Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Head Start Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Title 5 Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Other Center-Based Child Care Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Migrant Program Enrollment</b>
Atwater Elementary	12.52%	2.21%	13.82%	3.50%	11.94%	22.73%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	.70%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Delhi Unified	4.49%	3.77%	5.06%	2.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	5.26%	4.54%	9.71%	1.00%	2.99%	15.91%
El Nido Elementary	.56%	0.00%	0.00%	0.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Gustine Unified	3.70%	0.00%	3.01%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Hilmar Unified	3.95%	2.21%	1.92%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Le Grand Union	1.15%	0.00%	2.74%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Livingston Union Elementary	6.18%	0.00%	13.00%	35.50%	0.00%	0.00%
Los Banos Unified	16.10%	0.00%	13.82%	21.50%	27.99%	4.55%
McSwain Union Elementary	1.85%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	17.91%	0.00%
Merced City Elementary	29.95%	70.87%	29.27%	29.50%	39.18%	31.82%
Merced County Office of Education	.96%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Merced River Union Elementary	.44%	0.00%	1.37%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	.19%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Planada Elementary	2.01%	0.00%	4.51%	2.00%	0.00%	27.27%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	.21%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Weaver Union Elementary	4.84%	6.64%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Winton Elementary	4.94%	9.75%	1.92%	4.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **Comparison of ECE Enrollment and Need/Projected Participation Rate**

As shown in Table 3-17, if kindergarten enrollment is used as a proxy for the number of four-year-old children, 50 percent of the four-year-olds in the Merced County were enrolled in some form of formal early care and education program as of 2005.

However, the percentage of children enrolled varies greatly by district. For example, nearly 81 percent of the four-year-olds in Merced City Elementary District are enrolled in some form of formal early education program, while 39 percent are enrolled in such programs in the Delhi Unified School District. In some districts, such as Ballico-Cressey and Plainsburg, there are no four-year-olds enrolled in formal early care and education.

Table 3-17 also indicates how many children would need to be enrolled by district in order to meet a 70 or 85 percent participation rate. As indicated above, no state currently enrolls more than 70 percent of its four-year-olds in preschool. However, enrollment rates may vary considerably across the state and within a county. For the sake of estimating “need” for preschool in this report, therefore, we use 70 percent as the floor but not the ceiling for the projected participation rate. Merced City Elementary has already managed to reach 81 percent participation, and, ideally, others will follow. However, because some districts have few if any preschool services and because Merced County faces a rapid growth rate, it is unlikely that the overall county rate will exceed 80 percent.

**Table 3-17. Comparison of ECE Enrollment and Need, by District, 2005**

School District	Kindergarten Enrollment for Selected School Year, 2004-05*	70% of Kindergarten Enrollment	85% of Kindergarten Enrollment	4-year-old children in district enrolled in formal early education program	Percentage of 4-year-olds in district enrolled in formal early education program
Atwater Elementary	535	375	455	169	31.64%
Ballico-Cressey Elementary	30	21	26	0	0%
Delhi Unified	192	134	163	76	39.44%
Dos Palos Oro Loma Joint Unified	225	158	191	129	57.38%
El Nido Elementary	24	17	20	1	4.17%
Gustine Unified	158	111	134	22	13.78%
Hilmar Unified	169	118	144	34	19.88%
Le Grand Union	49	34	42	20	41.65%
Livingston Union Elementary	264	185	224	166	62.87%
Los Banos Unified	688	482	585	220	32.02%
McSwain Union Elementary	79	55	67	48	60.76%
Merced City Elementary	1,280	896	1,088	1,032	80.65%
Merced County Office of Education	41	29	35	0	0%
Merced River Union Elementary	19	13	16	10	53.70%
Plainsburg Union Elementary	8	6	7	0	0%
Planada Elementary	86	60	73	49	56.65%
Snelling-Merced Falls Union	9	6	8	0	0%
Weaver Union Elementary	207	145	176	60	28.99%
Winton Elementary	211	148	179	110	51.95%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4,274</b>	<b>2,992</b>	<b>3,633</b>	<b>2,146</b>	<b>50.21%</b>

\*Public school enrollment: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp>. Private school enrollment (a total of 188 children were enrolled in private school in 2004-05): <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ps/>

\*\* [http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU\\_datafiles/Race/RaceData\\_2000-2050](http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU_datafiles/Race/RaceData_2000-2050)

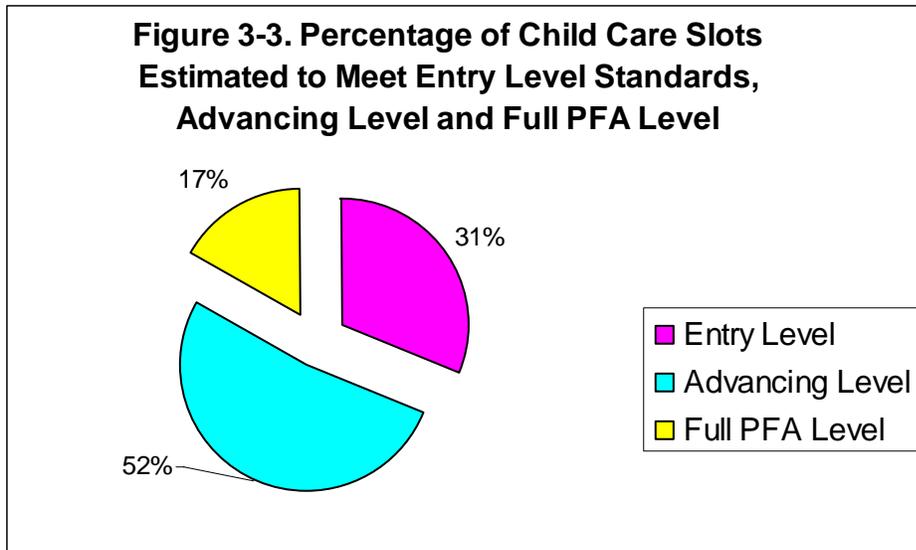
## Program Quality

While Merced County has made significant strides in expanding access to preschool, only a small percentage of the programs are currently estimated to meet First 5 California full PFA quality standards. At the same time, however, a majority of the 2,251 center- or school-based spaces for four-year-olds may meet at least the Entry Level standards for participation in the

First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant or the program proposed in the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative.

It should be noted that only an application process, followed by site visits to programs, will provide a complete picture of the status of program quality. However, it is possible to make a preliminary estimate based on the requirements for state and federally contracted programs, on the data available from the largest State Preschool operator in Merced County (Merced City Elementary School District) and from Head Start Program Information Reports, and on the data obtained from workforce studies in other counties.

- Based on contract standards, it appears that 88 percent of the spaces would meet the Title 5 standards required for Entry Level participation. State Preschool and General Child Care spaces, which are required to meet Title 5 standards in order to have a contract, compose 52 percent of the center- or school-based spaces for four year-olds. Head Start and Migrant Head Start spaces, which are required to meet Head Start Performance Standards, composed another 36 percent of the supply of center- or school-based spaces for four year-olds.
- Based on the fact that Head Start requires at least 50 percent of its teachers to have Associate's degrees, and data from *Inside the Pre-K Classroom* on the qualifications of State Preschool staff, as many as 52 percent of the center- and school-based spaces in Merced County may meet the Advancing Level in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant criteria.
- Finally, based on the findings from workforce studies in the eight counties where they have been conducted, the percentage of early care and education teachers with Bachelor's degrees is generally approximately the same as the percentage of adults in the county with Bachelor's degrees. Eleven percent of the adults in Merced County have Bachelor's degrees. However, because 50 percent of the lead teachers in the State Preschool Program in Merced City already have Bachelor's degrees, we estimate that approximately 17 percent of the spaces countywide may meet the PFA Full Quality Level.



A missing piece in the assessment of preschool program quality in Merced County is the percentage of programs that could currently meet the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant requirement of a score of 5 or higher on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS).

- Many programs that may be potential participants have never, or not recently, been scored. Fortunately, the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant does not require that programs have this score until June 2006, at least six months after programs may begin participating in PFA.
- A countywide team is needed to assess facilities using the ECERS and Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS). One possibility would be to place such a team under the leadership of Jan Paystrup, curriculum/staff development specialist for the Merced County Office of Education.
- Merced County, if awarded the PFA Demonstration Grant, will need to provide technical assistance to programs on how to improve their scores quickly (e.g., between November 2005 and June 2006).
- The Merced Community College Child Development Center could serve as a model site for how to achieve a high score on ECERS. This program recently received an overall score of 6 in an independent evaluation, with the highest possible score of 7 in some key areas.

National accreditation, while not required for participation in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant or the proposed ballot initiative program, is another index of program quality. Very few center- or school-based programs in Merced County are nationally accredited, in part because it takes over a year for National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) to make an accreditation visit once a visit is requested. Of the family child care homes

in Merced County, five are accredited by the National Family Child Care Association, and five more have applied for accreditation. Therefore, major focus on expanding the number of accredited programs does not seem to be feasible in Merced County at this time.

Table 3-18 shows the number of slots Merced County's school districts need to upgrade and/or add in order to achieve target participation by Year 10. Phase-in years and target participation rates vary according to the tier each district has been assigned. So, for example, Merced City and Winton are both Tier 1 districts and are expected to begin the phase-in process in Year 1. However, because its current participation rate is 89 percent, Merced City is expected to achieve its target participation rate of 90 percent by Year 5. In contrast, because Winton currently only has a 52 percent participation rate, it will aim for a 70 percent target participation rate between Years 1 and 5.

Many of Merced County's school districts have children enrolled in child care and therefore must upgrade existing slots. For example, in Merced City Elementary School District, 1,137, or 89 percent, of its 1,280 four-year-olds were enrolled in an early education program as of 2004-05. Thus, in order to achieve its target PFA enrollment rate of 1,152 children, it must upgrade 860 slots and add 299 slots between Years 1 and 5.

Finally, because some districts did not have any children enrolled in an early childhood education program as of 2004-05, they will focus their efforts on adding, rather than upgrading, slots. For example, none of the approximately 30 children living in the Ballico-Cressey Elementary School District area were enrolled in an early education program as of 2004-05. Thus, Ballico-Cressey does not have any existing slots to upgrade. Ballico-Cressey School district would be expected to create 21 new slots by Year 10.

**Table 3-18. Upgraded and New Child Care Spaces Needed by Year 10, by District, 2005**

School District	Kindergarten Enrollment, 2004-05	Four-year-old children in district enrolled in formal early education program	Target Enrollment (by Year 10)	Number of upgraded spaces (by Year 10)	Number of new spaces (by Year 10)
Atwater Elementary	535	169	394	189	205
Ballico-Cressey	30	0	21	0	21
Delhi Unified	192	76	160	100	60
Dos Palos Oro	225	129	196	168	28
El Nido Elementary	24	1	18	18	0
Gustine Unified	158	22	129	40	89
Hilmar Unified	169	34	125	40	85
Le Grand Union	49	20	34	20	14
Livingston Union	264	166	200	180	20
Los Banos Unified	688	220	501	240	261
McSwain Union	79	48	55	48	7
Merced City	1,280	1,032	1,056	1039	17
Merced River Union	19	10	23	20	3
Plainsburg Union	8	0	6	0	6
Planada	86	49	73	73	0
Snelling-Merced	9	0	6	0	6
Weaver Union	207	60	145	60	85
Winton Elementary	211	110	180	140	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,274</b>	<b>2,146</b>	<b>3,322</b>	<b>2,375</b>	<b>947</b>

\*Public school enrollment: <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/dataquest.asp>. Private school enrollment (a total of 188 children were enrolled in private school in 2004-05): <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/ps/>

\*\* [http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU\\_datafiles/Race/RaceData\\_2000-2050](http://www.dof.ca.gov/html/Demograp/DRU_datafiles/Race/RaceData_2000-2050)

## Determining High Priority Areas

Both the First 5 California Preschool for All Demonstration Grant and the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative require that the program be phased in, with priority given to areas where there are a high proportion of children in schools with low API scores, children from low-income families, children who are English Language Learners, and/or a limited existing supply of preschool programs.

At the same time, for the purposes of qualifying for a First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant, applicants must agree to serve at least 1,000 four-year-olds, and to offer preschool to all of the four-year-olds within a school district, city, or county, with a school district being the smallest unit considered to be a “system”.

Table 3-19 below provides a profile of school districts based on these criteria. The six demonstration site districts (Merced City, Winton, Livingston, Delhi, Planada, and El Nido) are shown in italics.

**Table 3-19. Determining High Priority**

School District	Estimated population of 4-year-olds	Percentage of 4-year-olds Eligible for Free and Reduced Meals	Percentage of 4-year-olds Currently Served in Formal ECE	Percentage ELL*	Percentage of Schools in District with Low API scores (1-5)**
Delhi	192	74.23%	39.44%	62.14%	100.00%
El Nido	24	98.55%	4.17%	95.45%	100.00%
Livingston	264	86.26%	62.87%	75.10%	100.00%
Merced City	1,280	74.64%	88.85%	31.39%	83.33%
Planada	89	83.27%	56.65%	67.42%	100.00%
Winton	211	89.69%	51.95%	67.93%	100.00%
Atwater	535	74.91%	31.64%	40.72%	71.43%
Ballico-Cressey	30	69.78%	0%	30.56%	50.00%
Dos Palos	225	84.99%	57.38%	60.98%	100.00%
Gustine Unified	158	65.85%	13.78%	49.22%	100.00%
Hilmar	169	51.78%	19.88%	36.36%	50.00%
Le Grand	49	83.99%	41.65%	50.00%	100.00%
Los Banos	688	70.00%	32.02%	35.94%	66.67%
McSwain	79	28.07%	60.76%	18.00%	0.00%
Merced River	17	66.18%	53.70%	76.47%	50.00%
Plainsburg	8	29.73%	0%	18.75%	100.00%
Snelling-Merced Falls	9	68.18%	0%	30.77%	0.00%
Weaver Union	207	69.14%	28.99%	47.54%	50.00%

\*Source: California Department of Education, Dataquest, 2003-04.

\*\*Source: 2004 Academic Performance Index (API) Base Report, California Department of Education.

## Special Challenges and Gaps in Existing Service

### **Status of ECE Workforce**

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the implementation of Preschool for All in Merced County is the current educational status of the early care and education workforce. Although a full assessment of the status of the workforce will require the results of a workforce survey, there is sufficient data available to make some preliminary estimates.

As suggested above, because 88 percent of the existing school- or center-based programs are either Title 5- or Head Start-contracted, they may have lead teachers who meet Title 5 standards (Master Teacher permit, with 24 units of ECE/CD plus 16 general education units and six specialization units plus 2 adult supervision units). These teachers would then meet the entry level qualifications for participation in both the First 5 California Demonstration Grant and the program proposed in the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative.

Furthermore, an estimated 52 percent of the lead teachers may currently have teachers who have AA degrees and therefore meet the qualifications for Advancing Level in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant application. Based on a review of Head Start Public Information Reports and data from the *Inside the Pre-K Classroom*, more than half of the lead teachers may have AA degrees necessary to qualify for Advancing Level.

However, countywide, only 17 percent are currently estimated to meet full PFA quality standards in both the First 5 PFA Demonstration Grant and the proposed ballot initiative. According to workforce studies that have been conducted in eight counties, the percentage of ECE teachers with a Bachelor's degree working in each county is very similar to the percentage of the general population in that county with Bachelor's degrees. In San Francisco, for example, 43 percent of center-based teachers have a Bachelor's degree—the same percentage of the general population with BAs. Based on these findings, an estimated 11 percent of center-based teachers in Merced County would have Bachelor's degrees [Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the Institute of Industrial Relations (IIR) at the University of California Berkeley, the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW), and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 2001)]. We estimate a somewhat higher percentage of 17 percent primarily because of the significant effort to hire BA-level teachers in the flagship preschool program in Merced City Elementary School District, where 50 percent of the lead preschool teachers are currently estimated to have the BA degrees necessary to meet the full PFA standards.

Therefore, while a substantial percentage of preschool programs in Merced County can meet the Entry Level standards for PFA participation, a smaller percentage meet the Advancing Level, and very few meet the Full PFA quality standards. Because moving from an Associate's to a Bachelor's degree generally requires several years, Merced County will be unlikely to achieve this goal for the entire county within the five-year period of the First 5 PFA Demonstration Grant. Even to accomplish this goal within a few districts will require:

- Investing in stipends to assist teachers in obtaining Associate's and Bachelor's degrees;
- Expanding course availability at Merced Community College;
- Completing articulation agreements between Merced Community College and UC Merced to allow students to move easily between an AA and BA degree;
- Offering nighttime, weekend, and summer courses;
- Investing in on-line courses toward both an AA and BA degree; and
- Providing some course offerings off the college and university campus (e.g., in child care, State Preschool or Head Start programs that employ a substantial number of teachers. For example, Cabrillo Community College has initiated such a program in partnership with Head Start).

### **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children**

The need to retain and recruit teachers who share the cultural and linguistic background of the children and families in their programs compounds the challenge of improving teacher educational qualifications over a rapid timeframe. As stated above, 62 percent of the four year-olds in Merced County are Latino, and at least 45 percent are English Language Learners, with higher percentages in many school districts. There is also a growing Hmong population.

Recent studies underscore the importance of providing Latino and ELL children access to bilingual teachers in order to enhance school readiness outcomes (August et al, 2002; Tabors et al, 2003.) To promote family involvement in preschool programs, it is also important to have staff who can relate to the parents.

Seventy-six percent of child care centers in Merced County have at least one Spanish-speaking staff member (Policy Analysis for California Education, Child Care Indicators, 1998), as do 28 percent of licensed family child care homes.

However, there are concerns that Latino and limited-English-proficient teachers may face challenges in meeting increased formal education requirements and, as a result, leave the ECE field (Calderon, 2005).

National Council of La Raza's recommendations to help retain and recruit a diverse workforce include:

- Build a bilingual teachers' "career ladder" program for non-degreed teachers which includes financial and academic supports.
- Provide grants to Institutions of Higher Education to develop and expand diverse faculty. For example, at Merced Community College, it has been difficult to find teachers who are both bilingual and have the masters' degrees necessary to teach multiple ECE classes.
- Create a pathway for a career in ECE at the high school level.

### **Special Needs Children**

Merced County is making strides toward the inclusion of children with disabilities and other special needs in mainstream early care and education settings. Many preschool children with disabilities and other special needs in Merced County are already in inclusive settings. However, there is a need to identify children with special needs earlier, especially including the broader definition in the First 5 Special Needs Project, and to expand efforts to train both early care and education staff and special education staff on the benefits of inclusive settings.

### **Inclusive Services**

Many preschool children with identified disabilities and other special needs in Merced County are already in inclusive settings, especially in Head Start, family child care, or at Merced College Child Development Center. According to the project's stakeholders, 10 percent of the county's children have special needs, but 80 percent of the children identified have mild to moderate

disabilities and may be already enrolled in typical early childhood settings. For example, Merced City Elementary School District is running a full inclusion program in one of its elementary schools (Reyes Elementary). In Dos Palos, 8 percent of the children served in contracted programs have special needs, the majority of which are speech and language disorders.

The severely disabled, however, have traditionally been served by the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) in sites co-located with regular preschool sites, but not actually in the same program. Deaf children are enrolled exclusively in separate preschool programs. The county is taking several steps to ensure full inclusion throughout the county. According to stakeholders, the MCOE special education department “is making a big shift towards no more isolated slots. At a minimum, children will be co-located,” with any new facility money for special needs preschool to be invested in inclusive settings. MCOE Superintendent Lee Andersen and Coordinator Gaye Riggs see an opportunity to use special education as leverage to cover the cost of new classrooms. Efforts have also been made to establish a center at the new UC Merced campus in partnership with MCOE, and that would serve typically developing as well as special needs children, but this plan has recently run into difficulty. In another effort, Marilyn Scorby, director of the Merced College Child Development Center, wrote a grant to bring children that are already in special education to the center.

Stakeholders noted that a teacher and two aides are required for eight to ten children with severe disabilities, with an “embedded” instructional person from special education. However, if these children were embedded into other mainstream programs, the staff could follow them, thereby assuring full inclusion and a partnership between mainstream and special education. There are other plans for full inclusion planned as well. For example, in Merced City Elementary School District, one of the speech pathologists will increase from two days a week to five days a week in the 2004-05 school year. Winton School District is in the planning process for a fully inclusive elementary school in 2006-07, and Atwater School District is considering steps towards full inclusion.

Merced has also received local gifts (approximately \$75,000) from philanthropic organizations to expand preschool play areas and include equipment for preschool children with handicaps and other special needs.

### **Need for Outreach/Early Identification**

Despite these many advances in the provision of preschool for children with special needs, it appears that Merced County, like the rest of California, faces the challenge of identifying more preschool children with special needs so that they can receive early intervention when it will be most effective.

Statewide, 10.5 percent of children in kindergarten through grade 12 receive IDEA-supported services. Based on data obtained from the California Department of Education (Drovin, 2005), in December 2004, only 4.66 percent of the four-year-olds in that year had IEPs. Of these, 73.4 percent have speech or language impairments or specific learning disabilities, and 26.6 percent have more severe disabilities.

In Merced County, according to the California Department of Education, 122 four-year-olds were enrolled in special education. When compared against DOF estimates of the number of four-year-olds as of 2004, this number represents 3.22 percent of the four-year-old population.

Thus, it is likely that there are more preschool children eligible for IDEA-supported services in Merced County than have yet been identified if one uses the expanded definition of special needs in the First 5 Special Needs Project that suggests that approximately 18 percent “have or are at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who require developmental, health, mental health, and related services and/or supports of a type or amount not usually required” (Newacheck et al, 1998).

One goal of Merced’s PFA Plan should be to implement screening programs in early childhood settings that may identify children in need of further assessment to determine if they have special needs. While many of these children may already be enrolled in preschool programs, it is unlikely that they are receiving all of the early intervention services to which they may be entitled.

Possible recommendations include:

- Aim to increase the percentage or number of four-year-olds with disabilities or other special needs identified as IDEA eligible and the percentage of those identified at risk but no eligible for IEP or IDEA and enrolled in mainstream preschool programs in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration sites from approximately 2 to 10.5 percent.
- Establish agreements between the Merced County Office of Education, the Regional Center, and the First 5 Merced Children and Families Commission that they will work together to ensure that proper implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, including search and serve, referral process, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Program plan (IPP) process and provision of special education and related services when appropriate.
- Agree to have Merced PFA programs, in conjunction with MCOE and the RC, participate in an evaluation that may include collecting the IEPs or IPPs of participating children to ensure that the children are receiving appropriate early intervention services.
- Expand the six-week training on inclusive child care previously offered to family child care providers in MCSD to providers in other districts.
- Provide training for special education teachers participating in PFA programs on the benefits of inclusive classrooms.
- Incorporate the materials related to the definition of disability categories, evidence-based screening tools and protocols, assessment and referral protocols, effective family outreach, and teacher/staff training developed by Merced’s Special Needs Project, once they are available.

### **Extended Day/Wraparound Services**

Another challenge to the implementation of Preschool for All in Merced County is the need to provide extended day/year care or wraparound services for children of working parents that accommodate family work schedules.

As noted above, 53 percent of the four-year-olds in Merced County live either in a home where both parents work, or with a single parent who works. However, according to the *2003 California Child Care Portfolio*, as shown in Table 3-20, Merced County has a much higher percentage of center-based spaces that are only available part-time than does the state as a whole. Furthermore, based on AIR's analysis, the percentage of part-time only spaces is actually much higher: assuming that all 903 State Preschool and 731 Head Start spaces are exclusively part-time, 73 percent of the existing center-based spaces are part-time only.

**Table 3-20. Percentage of Full- and Part-Time Slots in Licensed Child Care Centers, Merced County and California, 2002**

	<b>Full-time and Part-Time</b>	<b>Only full-time available</b>	<b>Only part-time available</b>
Merced County	54%	5%	41%
California	73%	9%	17%

Source: Child Care Resource and Referral Network, *The 2003 California Child Care Portfolio*.

Without careful planning, the advent of Preschool for All is likely to increase the disproportionate supply of part-time programs. Both the First 5 PFA Demonstration Grant and the proposed PFA ballot initiative are limited to three hours of public funding. This suggests that it will be important to explore the possibility of embedding PFA in some of the 373 Title 22 child care spaces, as well as in the 200 Title 5 General Child Care spaces.

Equally important, as indicated in Table 3-21, family child care offers an important resource for full-day PFA and/or wraparound care. Family child care will be a critical resource in the most rural areas of Merced County where distances may make transporting children to school- or center-based programs impractical. Large family child care homes or small family child care homes that are part of networks and that have a substantial number of preschool children, a curriculum, and a provider with a BA would be candidates to provide PFA directly. Other family child care homes may participate as providers of wraparound care linked to center-based programs, such as State Preschool or Head Start. Child Care Resource and Referral, now administered by the Merced County Office of Education, might take the lead in organizing these clusters.

**Table 3-21. Percentage of Full- and Part-Time Slots in Licensed Family Child Care Homes, Merced County and California, 2002**

	<b>Full-time and Part-Time</b>	<b>Only full-time available</b>	<b>Only part-time available</b>
Merced County	96%	4%	0%
California	85%	13%	2%

Source: Child Care Resource and Referral Network, *The 2003 California Child Care Portfolio*

One way for Preschool for All to achieve its full potential is to encourage schools, child care centers, and family child care providers to think of themselves as a neighborhood-based team. This process begins by determining the areas in the county in which the largest numbers of active, licensed family child care providers are clustered around a school; these family child care homes and schools can then collaborate to provide a full day's care for children.

For example, when AIR staff examined the zip codes of large, active, licensed family child providers in Merced City Elementary School District, they found that the largest number of providers (14 of the 49) was located near Peterson Elementary School. Peterson Elementary is located in the northeast pocket of Merced City School District. The other elementary schools, in descending order, were as follows: Franklin (7); Fremont and Burbank (5); Wright (4); Givens, Gracey, and Muir (3); Reyes and Chenoweth (2); and Sheehy (1).

Furthermore, when AIR staff mapped the zip codes of small, active, licensed family child providers in Merced City School District, the largest number of providers (10 of the 52) was located near Fremont Elementary School. Peterson is located in the western pocket of Merced City School District. The other elementary schools, in descending order, were as follows: Gracey (9); Peterson (7); Burbank (6); Franklin (5); Wright (4); Reyes (3); Sheehy, Chenoweth, and Givens (2); and Muir (1).

It would make sense to encourage collaborations between those elementary schools that currently have a preschool program in place (or are planning one) and that have a large number of nearby family child care homes.

First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant criteria indicate that, in order to participate in PFA, there must be a sufficient number of preschool children in a family child care home to provide a socialization experience that will prepare children for a kindergarten environment. A majority of the children enrolled in large family child care homes must be of preschool age. In addition, small family child care homes must participate in a network.

Based on the above criteria, Merced County might pursue several approaches to including family child care in the delivery of PFA and thereby addressing the need of families for full-day services:

### ***(1) Family Child Care Network Model***

First, Merced County might explore the establishment of a family child care network where small family child care homes would participate in a larger setting where a total of at least 20 preschool children would have an opportunity to participate in group activities at least once a week for a half day during the school year, and during the summer months full-day, five days per week, for eight weeks. Participating providers would have to meet the same educational qualifications as other PFA teachers, and commit to obtaining a BA. Family child care providers would have an opportunity for regular mentorship opportunities from teachers meeting full PFA standards. During the summer months, family child care providers might go to school to work toward higher degrees and/or work in the school-based PFA program.

### ***(2) Circuit Teacher Model***

Merced County might also explore a model whereby school district teachers who already have BA degrees in ECE/CD visit family child care homes for at least 525 hours over the school and summer year. This might be a way to offer PFA especially in rural areas where there are few centers available, and where distances to school sites are too great for children to travel easily on a daily basis.

### ***(3) Wraparound Model***

Meanwhile, both large and small licensed family child care homes can play a big role in PFA by offering wrap-around care. The provision of wraparound care could help meet the needs of children by providing the opportunity for a more informal, nurturing form of attentive care to supplement the structured preschool program. Additionally, the provision of wraparound care could help meet the expressed needs of family child care providers for additional business.

According to Merced County's LPC survey, 68 percent of the family child care providers who responded reported that they have full-time vacancies and 58 percent of the family child care providers who responded reported that they have part-time vacancies. Although these findings may be skewed by the possibility that the family child care providers most interested in PFA were more likely to fill out the survey, there are clearly some providers who are under-enrolled.

It is also possible that the provision of "wrap-around" care would still qualify for a fulltime reimbursement for the provider. For purposes of state subsidized care, "fulltime" is defined as "six hours or more". Since many families would still need that many hours of wraparound care in addition to the three hours of PFA, wraparound care providers might still qualify for full-time reimbursement through the Alternative Payment Program.

Given the research findings that "children need programs that enhance and reinforce their development over the summer or they lose a portion of the knowledge and skills learned during the school year" (Henry, 2003), family child care providers could also play a critical role in summertime child care. The county could use local funds to offer school readiness training to family child care providers who provide full-time child care over the summer months that precede kindergarten. Children would enter kindergarten better prepared and benefit tremendously from the continuity of care, and providers could improve and increase their businesses.

### ***Access in Rural Areas/Transportation***

Children in rural areas of Merced County may need transportation to preschool sites. Especially for the 30% of the children who live in poverty, families may be unable to transport the children except by using public transportation, which may not be available.

However, neither the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant nor the proposed PFA Ballot Initiative provides funds to help cover the cost of transportation.

To address the need for transportation, a further analysis is needed to determine the extent to which Head Start and school districts could make transportation available, and the extent of access of families to public transportation.

## **Summary of Findings**

- Merced County has a high need and potential interest in preschool if it were free and available to all four-year-olds. Within 10 years, at least 75 percent of children that age would be likely to participate in every school district, with as many as 85 percent in areas where a substantial number of programs already exist, and a countywide projected participation rate of 82 percent.
- Approximately 50 percent of four-year-olds are currently enrolled in some type of early care and education program in Merced County, but:
  - The distribution of programs is uneven across school districts, and
  - There are few center-based options for full-day, full-year care for children of working parents.
- Family child care clustered around centers and school sites participating in PFA offers an important resource for meeting the wraparound care needs for children of working parents. It may be possible to offer PFA in family child care homes directly, supplemented by weekly and summer activities in a larger group setting.
- As many as 88 percent of the preschool programs in Merced County would meet the Entry Level Title 5 standards for the First 5 PFA Demonstration Grant and the program proposed in the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative, 52 percent might qualify for the Advancing Level, and 17 percent for the Full PFA Quality Level.
  - A major effort will be required to have enough teachers with BA degrees by the fifth year of the Demonstration Grant within a subset of school districts participating in that project.
  - The challenge is compounded by the need to retain and recruit teachers who are bilingual.
  - An unknown number of programs would currently receive a 5 or higher on the ECERS or FDCRS, and the county will need to rapidly establish a team to assess facilities participating in PFA and a plan to provide technical assistance to help them score a 5 by the end of the first six months of the Demonstration Project.
- Merced County has made significant strides toward providing services for children with special needs in inclusive settings, but further effort is needed to identify children with disabilities and to provide training for inclusive programs.

**Section 4.  
Estimating the Cost of Enhanced and New Programs**

## Introduction

This section begins with a brief overview of the cost estimate methodology and a description of the basic policy parameters for Preschool for All in Merced County. Next we estimate the direct costs associated with the provision of preschool services, by school district, in Merced County. Then we offer one potential scenario for phasing in PFA in Merced County, involving a possible First 5 California Demonstration Project within the larger countywide plan. Finally, the section provides a preliminary estimate of the associated costs for investments in workforce development, facilities, and county level administration.

## Overview of the Model

The basic approach in this cost estimate involves adapting a model originally developed by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) and Early Childhood Policy Research (ECPR) for states to estimate the cost of implementing universal preschool. Much of the methodology used in the IWPR/ECPR model can be applied to the development of local cost estimates. It is designed so that users may rely upon available data sources, thereby not requiring extensive new research. The model assumes that the majority of costs related to program implementation will be upgrading early education teachers, both in terms of professional development and compensation. In addition, the model assumes that investments will not only be made at the program level, but also at the systemic level, helping local jurisdictions support preschool programs with funds for workforce development, facilities, and administration and quality assurance.

The IWPR/ECPR model is composed of two categories, **direct service costs** and **infrastructure (or indirect) costs**. The direct service costs, as outlined in *The Price of School Readiness: Estimating the Cost of Universal Preschool in the States: A Tool for Researchers, Advocates and Policymakers* (Golin & Mitchell, 2004), include an estimated per-child-hour unit cost to a specific early care and education program to provide children preschool at a standard set forth by early childhood experts. In the case of the First 5 plan, this would mean the cost of compensating teachers appropriately for meeting Preschool for All standards as outlined above. The per-child-hour cost also includes non-personnel costs such as occupancy, administration, insurance, classroom materials and furniture, and other costs associated with direct service. Infrastructure costs, as outlined above (Golin & Mitchell, 2004), include adequate funds for workforce development to ensure the availability of qualified teachers; monitoring for program quality assurance (such as additional inspectors); evaluation and child assessment (which in California includes ensuring the full implementation of the Desired Results System, including both developmental profiles of children and third-party evaluation to monitor program quality through the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS) and Family Day Care Rating Scale (FDCRS), and participation in the statewide evaluation of PFA; facilities renovation and/or construction (with an emphasis of ensuring that construction take place in areas with the greatest need); and administration or governance.

Recognizing that investments in infrastructure and evaluation will be essential to the successful implementation of Preschool for All, and that these components will require statewide direction and support, First 5 California is reserving 10 percent of its \$100 million for Preschool for All

Demonstration Grants to address these infrastructure needs. First 5 California indicates that these funds will most likely be targeted to the counties that are awarded PFA Demonstration grants. However, it is unclear how much of the above funds will be used at the state level to support a statewide evaluation, and how much will be made available to counties to help finance infrastructure investments. Therefore, this section focuses primarily on the direct service costs associated with Preschool for All in Merced County. We also include a very preliminary cost estimate of the infrastructure components, recognizing that many of these costs might be financed at least in part at the state level.

## **Cost Estimate Assumptions**

Our cost estimate assumptions are based on the First 5 California Preschool for All Demonstration Project criteria, which mirror the recommendations in the Superintendent's Universal Preschool Task Force Report in 1998 and in the School Readiness Workgroup Recommendations of the State Master Plan for Education in 2002. The assumptions also take into account the provisions of the proposed Preschool for All Ballot Initiative filed in June 2005, which are closely aligned with the First 5 California PFA criteria.

## **Program Parameters**

### ***Participation Rate***

- Preschool will be free and made available to all four-year-olds whose families want them to participate.
- Participation will range in Merced County from 70 to 82 percent within five years, with an overall projected county rate of 82 percent, higher than the statewide projected average of 70 percent because of the high proportion of children from low-income families.

### ***Service Delivery Model***

Rather than constructing a new public school grade for four-year-olds, PFA will build upon the existing system of early childhood programs, improving existing programs and creating new spaces in areas that have unmet need.

- Programs will take place in a variety of publicly and privately operated settings that meet PFA standards.
- PFA providers may include school districts, higher education institutions, as well as licensed private child care centers and family child care homes.
- Based on current enrollment, more than 1,687 children can be served in upgraded or fully funded State Preschool, Head Start or Migrant Head Start programs. As indicated below, upgraded spaces cost less than half (33 to 44 percent) of the cost of a new space. Building on these existing publicly funded programs is therefore a key factor in this cost estimate.

**Staffing**

- PFA programs when fully implemented shall have no more than 20 children per classroom with at least a master teacher and a second teacher with an Associate's degree. During the phase-in period, PFA programs may follow the existing Title 5 standards (maximum class size of 24 and a staff-child ratio of 3:24).
- Every classroom shall have a master teacher with a Bachelor's degree with 24 units in early childhood education/child development within five years, with the goal of all preschool master teachers having a Bachelor's degree and an Early Education credential or Multiple Subject elementary credential within 10 years.
- There is a plan for assistant teachers to have an Associate's degree with appropriate credits in early childhood education/child development within 5 years.
- Teachers with Bachelor's degrees and credentials will be compensated at levels competitive with those of public elementary school teachers. To be eligible for fulltime compensation from the preschool program, teachers and assistant teachers will teach two 3-hour sessions. (This does not preclude teachers working part-time, or having half of their work day financed by PFA and the remainder by Alternative Payment Program subsidies or parent fees)
- Financial aid and other support will be available to help teachers obtain the required education.

**Part-Day Program with Connections to Full-Day Services**

The number of hours of publicly funded preschool service will be 525 hours. The typical pattern will be 3 hours per day for 175 days, although some programs operating year-round might distribute the hours differently.

- Preschool will be a viable option for all families, including those with two working parents, or those headed by a single working parent, by providing connections to full-day, full-year services when needed, either by embedding the preschool program in a full-day program, or by providing linkages to other early care and education providers for wraparound services.
- However, the PFA program will only cover the costs of 525 hours of service (3 hours per day for 175 days per year or the equivalent on a year-round basis). The non-preschool hours will be financed by other non-PFA sources, such as parent fees or the Alternative Payment Program.

## **Transportation**

The estimate does not include funds for transportation.

The decision of whether or not to provide transportation for preschool children to and from preschool programs will be left to county offices of education, school districts, other agencies such as Head Start, and families.

## **Special Needs**

The estimate assumes that the Merced County Office of Education and school districts shall continue to provide special education related services as required by state and federal law to children who may be served using PFA funds. However, the estimate for direct services costs also includes a cost factor to support the anticipated additional costs associated with providing preschool for children with exceptional needs.

- Based on the percentage of children in kindergarten through grade 12 in California receiving IDEA supported services, the estimate assumes that 10.5 percent of the four-year-olds enrolled in Preschool for All will be children with exceptional needs.
- Based on data obtained from the California Department of Education (Drovin, 2005), in December 2004, of these, 73.4 percent have speech or language impairments or specific learning disabilities that qualify for 1.2 times the cost of typical State Preschool or other CDE-contracted programs, and 26.6 percent have more severe disabilities that would qualify for a 1.5 cost factor.

## **Phase-In**

The estimate is based on a 10-year program implementation process, beginning with a priority for neighborhoods with the most low API schools 1-5 and high proportions of children from low-income families, and being available in 2016 to all eligible children whose families want to enroll them.

## **Direct Service Costs**

The estimate includes both the direct cost of a *new, fully supported* PFA space and of spaces *upgraded* to PFA standards. The direct cost of PFA includes personnel and non-personnel.

*Personnel* costs include salary and benefits for both instructional and program site administrative staff:

- A lead teacher and assistant teacher or instructional aide who each teach two 3-hour sessions per day
- Site supervisor (per 120 children) who also serves as a lead teacher

- Pro-rated share of relevant support staff (educational specialist, enrollment specialist, accountant/bookkeeper/office manager)
- Program director overseeing multiple sites (.15 FTE for 120 children)

*Non-personnel* costs include:

- Equipment (classroom, outdoor and office)
- Supplies (office, food and classroom/educational)
- Contractual services
- Rent/mortgage
- Depreciation/use allowance
- Utilities/telephone
- Building and child liability insurance
- Building maintenance and repair
- Accounting and legal services
- Publications/advertising
- Printing, training and staff development.

An increase in the cost of teacher compensation is the major factor affecting the cost of both new and upgraded spaces.

- For the first five years of PFA implementation, when many teachers will not yet have Bachelor's degrees, the low-end beginning K-12 public school teacher rate will suffice to estimate teacher compensation.<sup>1</sup>
- Beginning in 2011 (Year 6) compensation will be increased incrementally until parity with the average salary for kindergarten teachers is achieved.

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<sup>1</sup> This factor was taken into account in estimating the "price" of an upgraded slot and the newly created space in the first four years. The prices of these slots have been adjusted to reflect the proportion of teachers who have various levels of qualifications: Entry Level (Title V requirement), Advancing Level to PFA Quality Criteria, and First 5 PFA quality level. Year 5 will see the 'full' price (using beginning teacher salary) in place when all teachers are expected to reach PFA quality level.

- Because only half of the teachers in the Merced City Elementary School District preschool programs have Bachelor's degrees, and a much smaller percentage of preschool teachers countywide meet these qualifications, the average cost per child in the first few years is estimated to be \$4,380.<sup>2</sup> At full implementation at Year 5, it will rise to \$4,781, and at Year 10, the average cost becomes \$5,492.
- For purposes of the First 5 California Preschool for All Demonstration Grant, 103 spaces in the first year will be funded at the Entry Level, 196 at the Advancing Level, and 64 at the Full PFA Quality Level.
- For the remainder of the phase-in plan, the estimate assumes that all teachers meet the full PFA Quality Level.

Based on current enrollment, by Year 5, 1,687 four-year-olds will receive PFA quality services in a variety of program settings. Of this, 1,217 children can be served in upgraded State Preschool and Head Start programs; another 217 children can be served in existing General Child Care/Other licensed centers, including Migrant Head Start. Although the cost of these spaces is estimated at the cost of a full preschool space, Merced County will realize some savings because of not having to invest in additional teachers or facilities. The 1,687 spaces available by Year 5 will also include 253 new spaces that can be located in all types of programs, the cost of which will be based on the "price" of a full preschool space.

Because the PFA program will build upon the existing preschool and child care system, dividing the direct service line item by the number of children does not yield the full per-child cost.

## **Program Support Services**

### ***State and County-Level Administration***

The estimate assumes 6 percent for state and county-level administration, as indicated in the ballot initiative language.

As noted above, the cost of site level administration is included in the direct cost per child.

### ***Monitoring-Program Review***

Costs assume one monitor for about every 50 contracted programs. Salaries are based on current salaries and benefits for California Department of Education monitors, but might be employed at the county level. Monitors would serve the function of providing technical assistance by telephone, and visiting the programs annually.

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<sup>2</sup> When the proportions of Entry Level, Advancing Level, and the full PFA Quality Level teacher qualifications are factored in, the adjusted cost of a new, full price slot for Year 1 is \$3,924, Year 2 is \$4,158, Year 3 is \$4,437, and Year 4 is \$4,602 and Year 5 is \$4,781. The average of these figures across the 4 years is \$4,380. At Year 5 when all teachers meet the PFA qualifications, the estimated cost of a new slot is \$4,781.

**Evaluation**

The estimate includes funds for observational classroom assessments such as the Early Childhood Environmental Rating scale, and participation in a statewide evaluation to determine the impact of the program on school readiness and other child outcomes.

**Parent Advocate Program/Family Outreach**

The estimate includes funds for targeted outreach to limited English families. The estimates are based on Merced's share of a statewide outreach campaign, based on an analysis provided by Preschool California.

**The Merced County Cost Estimate**

Merced County is one of the poorest counties in the state, with 30 percent of children birth to four in poverty and 72 percent of elementary school children eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Sixty-two percent of preschool children in Merced County are Latino, and at least 45 percent are English Language Learners. In many ways, the county has a relatively strong supply of early care and education programs, with 50 percent of the four-year-olds enrolled in some type of formal early care and education. The Merced City Elementary School District serves as one of the PFA "flagship" sites supported by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. As the Merced County Office of Education gains experience in taking on new roles in administering Head Start, Child Care Resource and Referral, and Alternative Payment Programs, along with its traditional responsibilities administering resources for children with special needs, it will be well-positioned to provide centralized leadership for PFA in the smaller districts while working in consort with Merced City and other districts that have already been leaders in championing the expansion of quality preschool. Nevertheless, major challenges include the uneven distribution of preschool services, and the relatively low percentage of the early care and education workforce with Bachelor's degrees as required to meet the full PFA standards in the First 5 California Preschool for All Demonstration Grant criteria or the Preschool for All Ballot Initiative.

**Estimated Need****Table 4-1. The Estimated Need for Preschool in Merced County\***

Total Population of Four-Year-Olds in the County	4,233*
Projected Number of Participating Children in Demonstration Districts Participating at Full Implementation	3,322**
Projected Number of Children Who Will Need 3 Hours of Service, 175 Days per Year	1,661***
Projected Number of Children Who Will Need Preschool Embedded in or Linked to Full-Day, Full-Year Service (8-11 Hours of Service, 245 Days per Year)	1,661***
<p>*Population estimate based on 2004-05 kindergarten enrollment data, excluding 41 children served by the County Office of Education.</p> <p>**Overall participation rate estimated at 78%, including 83% participation rate in Merced City Elementary.</p> <p>*** Need for part-day vs. full-day (50% vs. 50%) based on the percentage of children with parents in the workforce, and the current distribution of part-day and full-day settings from Resource and Referral data.</p>	

**Table 4-2. Current Participation of 4-year-olds in Early Education Programs and Projected Participation in PFA**

School District	Percentage of four-year-olds in district enrolled in early education program	Current kindergarten enrollment	Projected participation rate by Year 5	Projected PFA enrollment by Year 5 (including expansion)	Projected participation rate by Year 10	Projected PFA enrollment by Year 10 (including expansion)
<i>Delhi</i>	39%	192	83%	160	83%	160
<i>El Nido</i>	4%	24	75%	18	75%	18
<i>Livingston</i>	63%	264	76%	200	76%	200
<i>Merced City</i>	81%	1,280	83%	1,056	83%	1,056
<i>Planada</i>	57%	86	85%	73	85%	73
<i>Winton</i>	52%	211	85%	180	85%	180
<i>Atwater</i>	32%	535	0%	0	74%	394
<i>Ballico-Cressey</i>	0%	30	0%	0	70%	21
<i>Dos Palos</i>	57%	225	0%	0	87%	196
<i>Gustine</i>	14%	158	0%	0	82%	129
<i>Hilmar</i>	20%	169	0%	0	74%	125
<i>Le Grand</i>	42%	49	0%	0	69%	34
<i>Los Banos</i>	32%	688	0%	0	73%	501
<i>McSwain</i>	61%	79	0%	0	70%	55
<i>Merced River</i>	54%	19	0%	0	121%	23
<i>Plainsburg</i>	0%	8	0%	0	70%	6
<i>Snelling-Merced</i>	0%	9	0%	0	70%	6
<i>Weaver</i>	29%	207	0%	0	70%	145

### **Estimated Direct Costs**

We designed two sets of proxy budgets – **Before Preschool for All** and **After Preschool for All** for three types of programs likely to deliver preschool services – the existing State Preschool Program, the General Child Care and Development Program, and Head Start. For this estimate, we assume that the per-child costs for family child care would be the same as those for centers participating in Preschool for All. The following summarizes the characteristics of each potential program setting:

- State Preschool Program:** Merced’s State Preschool programs are typically part-day, part-year, and must meet Title 5 standards (See Table II-3). These include a 1:8 staff-child ratio, a maximum group size of 24, and at least one teacher per class with a minimum of 24 units of Early Childhood Education or Child Development and 16 general education units. California Department of Education (CDE) contracts with local educational agencies, colleges, community action agencies and private-non-profit agencies to provide the service. Although the patterns may vary, it appears that most State Preschool Programs in Merced County operate two sessions per day.

- **General Child Care and Development Program:** Typically a year-round program for up to 10 hours per day. This program must meet the same Title 5 standards as the State Preschool Program. CDE contracts with either public or private agencies or local educational agencies to deliver the services in *centers* and *family child care home networks*.
- **Head Start:** Merced’s Head Start program operates part-day, part-year with education, health, medical, dental, nutritional and mental health services. However, for purposes of the budgets below, we only include the costs associated with the educational component. It is assumed that the costs of comprehensive services would remain the same, and that any added costs associated with implementing Preschool for All in Head Start would be associated with the educational component.

The first set of budgets was constructed to represent an “average” program, with Merced County data used for the specifics. State Preschool teacher salaries came from the Merced City Elementary School District, with review by the Merced County Office of Education and other school districts; Head Start teacher salaries came from Head Start Program Information Reports; and General Child Care teacher salaries came from local operators of the program. We circulated these budgets to various early care and education experts in the county to obtain their input and to ensure that that they were reasonable; then the costs were converted to per-child-hour units. Please note on the budget pages for Merced County in the Appendix that the actual cost of the State Preschool and General Child Care programs, even under existing standards, exceed the current state reimbursement rate.

The second set of budgets was constructed to represent the cost for each program to adhere to the Preschool for All standards. These budgets were constructed assuming increases primarily in personnel costs. Funding was added to ensure that each program had the following:

- At least one teacher with a Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or child development in every preschool classroom for at least 525 hours (3 hours for 175 days, or the equivalent distributed over 245 days), with salary and benefits comparable with those of public school kindergarten teachers.
- A second teacher in each class with an Associate’s degree in early education or child development for at least 525 hours, with a salary 80 percent of that of the teacher with a Bachelor’s degree.
- A program director paid according to the district’s average elementary school principal salary.
- For programs with at least one teacher in each class with a Bachelor’s degree in early childhood education or child development, a staff-child ratio of no more than 1:10 and a class size of no more than 20, in accordance with the accreditation criteria of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the class size recommendations of the State Master Plan for Education School Readiness Work Group. Under the Preschool for All Demonstration grants, the current 1:8 ratio would still be required for classrooms that did not have teachers with Bachelor’s degrees, including portions of the day in the full-day program in our estimate.

Table 4-4 below summarizes the direct unit costs of upgrading the existing State Preschool and Head Start (education component only) to meet Preschool for All standards; more detail on the “before” and “after” budgets for each program is available in Appendices 4-1 through 4-3. Once existing slots in the programs have been upgraded to meet the new standards, we assume that new slots in all programs will be purchased at the new State Preschool rate. (Note: Because the General Child Care program is required to meet essentially the same Title 5 standards as is the State Preschool Program, and because the General Child Care Program currently is estimated to have only about half of the funds necessary to meet those existing standards, it is assumed that the cost of upgrading the General Child Care program would amount to that of a new State Preschool space. This figure was used in estimating the cost of upgrading the General Child Care slots in the phase-in plan detailed in the following section.)

**Table 4-4: Estimating Direct Unit Cost of Providing Preschool in Merced County\***

<b>Program</b>	<b>Preschool for All Costs: The Cost of Operation plus improvements (per-child-hour)</b>	<b>Current Annual Allocation (per-child-hour)</b>	<b>Difference in Costs (per-child-hours)</b>
<b>State Preschool</b>	\$4,781 (\$8.85)	\$3,218 (\$5.96)	\$1,563 (\$2.89)
<b>Head Start</b>	\$5,320 (\$10.13)	\$3,503	\$1,817 (\$3.46)

\* Total cost estimates may be affected by the rounding of per-child-hour costs.

### ***Implementation Time Frame: Estimated Cost of Preschool for All in Merced County***

The Implementation Time Frame below provides one possible scenario for phasing in Preschool for All in Merced County. Essentially, the implementation would begin with upgrading existing early care and education programs in the six school districts proposed for consideration by First 5 Merced for participation in the First 5 California PFA Demonstration Project in Year One, serving a minimum of 75 percent of four-year-olds in each of these districts by the fifth year. Within 10 years, Preschool for All would be implemented countywide. A description of the year-by-year roll-out of the program is included below.

Table 4-4 summarizes the costs of new and upgraded slots. As indicated in the year-by-year tables, upgrading would take place in a variety of settings, including existing State Preschool programs, Head Start, Title 5 General Child Care and Development Programs, other center-based programs, and family child care. Because all new slots are assumed to have the same cost, we did not attempt to estimate the distribution of new slots in this exercise.

**Year One Estimate**

Because Merced County has applied for a First 5 California PFA Demonstration Grant that would not be awarded until October 2005, the first year estimate assumes that PFA implementation would begin in January 2006. Therefore, the first year cost is estimated at half the annual expense. The total number of children estimated to be served in upgraded slots in Year One is 277, and the total number of new spaces in Year One is 101. This represents about 18 percent of the 2,057 targeted four-year olds, or 8 percent of the total four-year olds in Merced. The estimated cost of PFA implementation in Year One is \$775,103 (see Table 4-4).

**Years Two – Three**

PFA enrollment is expected to rise to 54 percent by Year Three (333 new slots and 777 upgraded slots). The total cost of PFA implementation by Year Three is estimated to be about \$2.7 million.

**Years Four – Five**

By Year Five, the total number of new space reaches 470, and 1,217 for upgraded spaces (or a total of 1,687 spaces). These spaces can accommodate approximately 82 percent of all targeted four-year-olds (or close to 39 percent of all four-year-olds in Merced). The total cost of PFA implementation at Year Five will rise to \$4.3 million. The total amount of funds needed for PFA implementation for the first five years (Years 1 through Year 5) is about \$13.1 million.

**Years Six – Ten**

Beginning in Year Six, the rest of the county's districts will start PFA implementation. The number of new PFA slots will increase from 925 in Year Six to 1,505 in Year Ten, and the number of upgraded slots will rise from 1,557 in Year Six to 1,817 in Year Ten. A total of 3,322 children, or 78 percent of all four-year-olds in Merced, will be able to participate in PFA program at full implementation. At Year Ten, the total cost of full PFA implementation reaches \$13.5 million.

**Table 4-4. Cost of New and Upgraded Slots, Years One to Ten**

<b>Year</b>	<b># New Preschool Slots Established</b>	<b>Estimated Cost of New Slots</b>	<b># Slots Upgraded</b>	<b>Estimated Cost of Upgraded Slots</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	101	\$396,324	277	\$378,779	\$775,103
<b>Year 2</b>	517	\$749,826	293	\$1,218,294	\$1,968,120
<b>Year 3</b>	333	\$1,477,521	777	\$1,201,922	\$2,679,443
<b>Year 4</b>	425	\$1,955,850	937	\$1,497,293	\$3,453,143
<b>Year 5</b>	470	\$2,247,070	1,217	\$2,013,169	\$4,260,239
<b>Year 6</b>	925	\$4,555,555	1,557	\$3,021,710	\$7,577,266
<b>Year 7</b>	1,005	\$5,093,670	1,557	\$3,210,567	\$8,304,238
<b>Year 8</b>	1,153	\$6,009,102	1,657	\$3,630,004	\$9,639,106
<b>Year 9</b>	1,370	\$7,336,464	1,737	\$4,018,175	\$11,354,639
<b>Year 10</b>	1,505	\$8,265,970	1,817	\$4,440,378	\$12,706,348

**Table 4-5. Year by Year Cost Estimates with Inflation**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>Aggregated Across the Years</b>	<b>Total Cost after Inflation Adjustment</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	\$775,103	-	-
<b>Year 2</b>	\$1,968,120	\$2,743,223	\$2,017,323
<b>Year 3</b>	\$2,679,443	\$5,422,666	\$2,815,090
<b>Year 4</b>	\$3,453,143	\$8,875,809	\$3,718,657
<b>Year 5</b>	\$4,260,239	\$13,136,048	\$4,702,507
<b>Year 6</b>	\$7,577,266	\$20,713,314	\$8,572,981
<b>Year 7</b>	\$8,304,238	\$29,017,551	\$9,630,370
<b>Year 8</b>	\$9,639,106	\$38,656,657	\$11,457,868
<b>Year 9</b>	\$11,354,639	\$50,011,296	\$13,834,525
<b>Year 10</b>	\$12,706,348	\$62,717,644	\$15,868,488

**Table 4-6. District Phase in and Total Cost Years 1 – 5**

<b>Districts (Demonstration Grants)</b>	<b>Years of Phase In</b>	<b>Total Cost Y1-Y5</b>
Merced City	Y1-Y5	\$6,468,603
Winton	Y1-Y5	\$1,874,680
Livingston	Y1Y5	\$1,998,680
Delhi	Y1-Y5	\$1,869,280
Planada	Y1-Y5	\$761,514
El Nido	Y1-Y5	\$163,291
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$13,136,048</b>

**Table 4-7. Annual Per Child Costs**

Type of Program	Annual Cost Using Beginning Teacher Salary	Annual Cost Using Average Kindergarten Salary (100%)/Y10	Incremental Pay for Applying Average K Teacher Salary to Cost Model			
			3% Increase from Beginning Teacher Salary (Y6)	6% Increase from Beginning Teacher Salary (Y7)	9% Increase from Beginning Teacher Salary (Y8)	12% Increase from Beginning Teacher Salary (Y9)
<b>Head Start</b>						
<i>Upgrade</i>	\$1,817	\$2,634	\$2,107	\$2,239	\$2,371	\$2,502
<b>State Preschool</b>						
<i>Upgrade</i>	\$1,563	\$2,274	\$1,819	\$1,933	\$2,047	\$2,160
<i>Entire Cost</i>	\$4,781	\$5,492	\$4,924	\$5,068	\$5,211	\$5,355

**Year 1 Estimates**

	Number of Children	Unit cost (per child)*	Total Cost**
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	160	\$1,280	\$204,800
Head Start	117	\$1,487	\$173,979
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	41	\$3,924	\$160,884
Other Licensed	0	\$3,924	\$-
Migrant	0	\$3,924	\$23,544
New slots	60	\$3,924	\$235,440
<b>Total</b>	<b>378</b>		<b>\$775,103</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 2 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	300	\$1,358	\$407,400
Head Start	217	\$1,578	\$342,426
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	131	\$4,158	\$544,698
Other Licensed	40	\$4,158	\$166,320
Migrant	14	\$4,158	\$58,212
New slots	108	\$4,158	\$449,064
<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b>		<b>\$1,968,120</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$2,017,323</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 3 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	460	\$1,451	\$667,460
Head Start	317	\$1,686	\$534,462
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	151	\$4,437	\$669,987
Other Licensed	40	\$4,437	\$177,480
Migrant	14	\$4,437	\$62,118
New slots	128	\$4,437	\$567,936
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,110</b>		<b>\$2,679,443</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$2,815,090</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 4 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	580	\$1,505	\$872,900
Head Start	357	\$1,749	\$624,393
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	191	\$4,602	\$878,982
Other Licensed	80	\$4,602	\$368,160
Migrant	26	\$4,602	\$119,652
New slots	128	\$4,602	\$589,056
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,362</b>		<b>\$3,453,143</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$3,718,657</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 5 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	780	\$1,563	\$1,219,140
Head Start	437	\$1,817	\$794,029
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	191	\$4,781	\$913,171
Other Licensed	105	\$4,781	\$502,005
Migrant	26	\$4,781	\$124,306
New slots	148	\$4,781	\$707,588
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,687</b>		<b>\$4,260,239</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$4,702,507</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 6 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	900	\$1,819	\$1,637,280
Head Start	657	\$2,107	\$1,384,430
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	241	\$4,924	\$1,186,788
Other Licensed	213	\$4,924	\$1,048,904
Migrant	38	\$4,924	\$187,128
New slots	433	\$4,924	\$2,132,736
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,482</b>		<b>\$7,577,266</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$8,572,981</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 7 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	900	\$1,933	\$1,739,610
Head Start	657	\$2,239	\$1,470,957
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	241	\$5,068	\$1,221,354
Other Licensed	213	\$5,068	\$1,079,454
Migrant	38	\$5,068	\$192,579
New slots	513	\$5,068	\$2,600,283
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,562</b>		<b>\$8,304,238</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$9,630,370</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 8 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	920	\$2,047	\$1,882,872
Head Start	737	\$2,371	\$1,747,132
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	241	\$5,211	\$1,255,921
Other Licensed	221	\$5,211	\$1,151,695
Migrant	38	\$5,211	\$198,029
New slots	653	\$5,211	\$3,403,457
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,810</b>		<b>\$9,639,106</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$11,457,868</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 9 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	960	\$2,160	\$2,073,888
Head Start	777	\$2,502	\$1,944,287
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	241	\$5,355	\$1,290,488
Other Licensed	268	\$5,355	\$1,435,065
Migrant	38	\$5,355	\$203,479
New slots	823	\$5,355	\$4,407,432
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,107</b>		<b>\$11,354,639</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$13,834,525</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

**Year 10 Estimates**

	<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Unit cost (per child)*</b>	<b>Total Cost**</b>
<b>Upgrade of existing slots:</b>			
State Preschool	960	\$2,274	\$2,183,040
Head Start	857	\$2,634	\$2,257,338
<b>Slots at full preschool cost:</b>			
Title 5 Center-based	241	\$5,492	\$1,323,572
Other Licensed	268	\$5,492	\$1,471,856
Migrant	38	\$5,492	\$208,696
New slots	958	\$5,492	\$5,261,846
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,394</b>		<b>\$12,706,348</b>
<b>Total Cost After Adjusting for Inflation</b>			<b>\$15,868,488</b>

\*Combined total of first, second, and third levels.

\*\*The total cost may be affected by rounding of the number of children and/or inflation adjustment.

## **Section 4. Appendix**

**Appendix Table 4-1: Estimated Cost of Changing One State Preschool Program to Meet Standards of Preschool for All**

	Before PS Upgrade		After PS Upgrade	
Number days of service per year	180		180	
Number of sessions per day	2		2	
Number of preschool hours per day	3		3	
Number of preschool hours per year	540		540	
Total number of children	80		80	
Number of classes	4		4	
Number of classrooms	2		2	
Number of FTE instructional staff	6		4	
Number of children per class	24		20	
Staff to child ratio (1: XX)	8		10	
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)	0%		2.5%	
Cost per hour	\$6.13		\$8.85	
Cost per child per day	\$18.39		\$26.56	
Annual cost to include Preschool for All	\$3,218		\$4,781	
Budget Item	Annual Expense as State Preschool		Annual Expense as Preschool for All	
<b>Salaries</b>	<b>FTE</b>		<b>FTE</b>	
Program Administrator/Director	0.15	\$13,608	0.15	\$13,608
Site Supervisor	1	\$47,400	1	\$49,770
Lead/Master Teacher	-	-	1	\$41,475
Teacher	1	\$38,000	2	\$69,600
Assistant Teacher/Teacher Aide	3.5	\$63,000	0	-
Accountant/Bookkeeper/Office Manager	0.15	\$5,000	0.15	\$5,125
Education Specialist	0.15	\$9,195	0.15	\$9,425
Enrollment Specialist	0.15	\$5,400	0.15	\$5,535
Substitutes (\$85/day)	\$85	\$7,013	\$85	\$5,100
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$188,616</b>		<b>\$199,638</b>
<b>Mandatory Benefits</b>				
FICA (6.2%)		\$11,350		\$12,061
Medicare (1.45%)		\$2,633		\$2,821
Unemployment (.65%)		\$1,180		\$1,264
Workers' Compensation (2.16%)		\$3,923		\$4,202
<b>Subtotal (10.46%)</b>		<b>\$19,086</b>		<b>\$20,349</b>
<b>Other Benefits</b>		<b>\$44,565</b>		<b>\$47,740</b>
STRS, IP, Health, etc. (24.54%)				
<b>Subtotal Personnel (including benefits)</b>		<b>\$252,268</b>		<b>\$267,726</b>
<b>Non-personnel (per child)</b>				
Percentage of total budget (salaries, benefits, non-personnel)	20%	\$63,067	30%	\$114,740
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$315,335</b>		<b>\$382,466</b>
<b>Current reimbursement rate</b>		<b>\$3,218</b>		
<b>Cost per child year</b>		<b>\$3,942</b>		<b>\$4,781</b>
<b>Cost per child day</b>		<b>\$18.39</b>		<b>\$26.56</b>
<b>Cost difference per-child-year between State Preschool and Preschool for All</b>				<b>\$1,563</b>
<b>Budget Assumptions and Source Information</b>				
<b>Program and Staffing Characteristics (Before Upgrade)</b>				
Budgets are based on a Merced City School District State Preschool program. The program consists of two 3-hour sessions per day. Staff work 7.25 hours per day (50-minute lunch break and 30-minute preparatory time), 184 days per year. Each class has 3 adults: 1 lead teacher and 2 aides. Each teacher has 15 days of leave (including 5 days for professional development).				
<b>Program and Staffing Characteristics (After Upgrade)</b>				
Program consists of two 3-hour sessions per day. Staff work 7.25 hours per day (50-minute lunch break and 30-minutes preparatory time), 184 days per year. Each class has 2 adults: 1 lead teacher and an AA teacher.				

**Appendix Table 4-2: Estimated Cost of Upgrading One Head Start Program to Include Preschool for All\***

	Before PS Upgrade		After PS Upgrade	
Number of days of service per year	165		175	
Number of sessions per day	2		2	
Number of Head Start hours per day	3.18		0	
Number of Preschool hours per day	0		3	
Number of Head Start hours per year	525		0	
Number of Preschool hours per year	0		525	
Total number of children	96		102	
Number of classes	6		6	
Number of classrooms	3		3	
Number of FTE instructional staff	6		6	
Number of children per class	16		17	
Staff to child ratio (1: XX)	8		8.5	
<b>Annual cost to include Preschool for All</b>	<b>\$3,503</b>		<b>\$5,320</b>	
Budget Item	Annual Expense as Head Start (3 hours, 175 days, 2 sessions per day)		Annual Expense as Head Start/ Preschool for All	
<b>Salaries</b>	<b>FTE</b>		<b>FTE</b>	
Program Director	.2	\$15,033	.2	\$17,350
Center Supervisor (also Lead Teacher after PFA)	1	\$34,496	1	\$49,770
Lead/Master Teacher	-	\$0	2	\$82,950
Teachers	3	\$68,499	3	\$104,400
Assistant Teachers	3	\$47,688	0	\$0
Child Development and Education Manager**	0.2	\$8,855	0.2	\$9,076
Enrollment Specialist	-	\$0	0.2	\$7,057
Secretary/Office Manager	0.2	\$4,956	0.2	\$5,080
Substitutes (\$85/day)		\$0		\$7,650
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$179,527</b>		<b>\$283,334</b>
<b>Mandatory Benefits</b>				
FICA (6.20%)		\$11,131		\$17,092
Medicare (1.45%)		\$2,603		\$3,997
Unemployment (1.19%)		\$2,136		\$3,281
Workers' Compensation (3%)		\$5,296		\$8,133
<b>Subtotal (11.79 percent)</b>		<b>\$21,166</b>		<b>\$32,503</b>
<b>Other Benefits</b>				
Health insurance, etc. (22.03 percent)		\$24,613		\$63,986
<b>Subtotal Personnel</b>		<b>\$225,306</b>		<b>\$379,823</b>
<b>Non-personnel (30% of total)</b>	33%	\$110,972	30%	\$162,781
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$336,278</b>		<b>\$542,604</b>
<b>Cost per child year</b>		<b>\$3,503</b>		<b>\$5,320</b>
<b>Cost difference per-child-year between Head Start and Preschool for All</b>				<b>\$1,817</b>
<b>Budget Assumptions and Source Information</b>				
<b>Program and Staffing Characteristics (Before Upgrade)</b>				
Budgets are based on a typical full-day Head Start program, running two 3-hour sessions per day. Staff work full-time, 180 days per year (includes 5 in-service days), and have 15 days of leave (includes 5 days for professional development, unless otherwise noted). The Preschool for All/Head Start program has three classrooms that serve 17 children per session – thus 34 children are served per day per classroom, for a total of 102 children per program. There is one teacher and one assistant teacher per classroom. Substitute teachers are hired through an existing pool of teachers to fill in for instructional staff who are on vacation. There is one program director, and one Child Development and Education Manager, each working 20 percent time, who play lead administrative roles. There is also a Secretary/Office Manager working out of the main office, working 20 percent time. A cost-of-living adjustment of 2.5% was made for staff who did not receive a salary increase through Preschool for All. Non-personnel costs for PFA/HS programs are 30% of the program's total cost.				
*Please note that this budget includes only the educational component of Head Start.				
**The Child Development and Education Manager is similar to the Education Specialist in the State Preschool and Title 5 child development program settings.				
2:17 Head Start staff to child ratio.				
<b>Source:</b>				
Child, staff, salary and non-personnel information were obtained from the Program Information Report for Merced County. Program Year 2002-03 and the County/National Averages Comparison (FY 2002) database were provided by the Head Start Bureau. Additional staff and salary information was obtained from Head Start (and other) Program Directors across the county and state.				

**Appendix Table 4-3. Estimated Cost of Upgrading One Child Care Program (Title 5) to Include Preschool for All**

	Before PS Upgrade		After PS Upgrade	
Number of days of service in a full year		245		245
Number of sessions per day		0		1
Number of preschool hours per day		0		2.2
Number of preschool hours in a year		0		540
Total number of children		96		100
Number of child care center hours		11		8.8
Number of classes		4		5
Number of classrooms		4		5
Number of FTE instructional staff		16		14
Class size		24		20
Instructional staff to child ratio (1:XX)*		8		10
Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)				2.50%
Annual cost per child	State reimbursement	\$7,205	PS plus wrap around	\$11,595
<b>Budget Item</b>		<b>Annual Expense as Child Care</b>		<b>Annual Expense to Include Preschool for All</b>
<b>Salaries</b>				
Director	0.2	\$18,141	0.20	\$18,141
Site Supervisor	1	\$42,163	1	\$64,863
Lead or Master Teacher	3	\$105,407	2.0	\$108,105
Teacher	-	\$0	3.0	\$129,726
Assistant Teacher/Teacher's Aide	12	\$295,579	6.0	\$151,484
Floater	-	-	2.0	\$86,484
Education specialist	0.20	\$12,260	0.20	\$12,567
Enrollment specialist	0.20	\$6,871	0.20	\$7,043
Accountant/Bookkeeper/Office Manager	0.20	\$6,200	0.20	\$6,355
Substitutes (daily rate)	\$85	\$20,400	\$85	\$17,850
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$507,021</b>		<b>\$602,619</b>
<b>Mandatory Benefits</b>				
FICA (6.2%)		\$30,170		\$36,256
Medicare (1.45%)		\$7,056		\$8,479
Unemployment (.065%)		\$316		\$380
Workers' Compensation (1.6%)		\$7,786		\$9,356
State Disability Insurance (1.18%)		\$5,742		\$6,900
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$51,071</b>		<b>\$61,371</b>
Other Benefits	24.5%			
Health, Dental, Retirement (PERS), IP				
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$124,245</b>		<b>\$147,672</b>
Non-personnel				
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$682,337</b>		<b>\$811,662</b>
Percent of total budget	20%	\$170,584	30%	\$347,855
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$852,921</b>		<b>\$1,159,517</b>
<b>Actual cost per child per year</b>		<b>\$8,885</b>		<b>\$11,595</b>
<b>Current annual reimbursement rate</b>		<b>\$7,205</b>		
<b>Diff bet current cost and reimbursement*</b>		<b>\$1,680</b>		
<b>Current cash reimb diff + new PS cost</b>				<b>\$4,390</b>
<b>Current daily reimbursement rate</b>		<b>\$28.82</b>		
<b>Actual cost per child day</b>		<b>\$36.26</b>		<b>\$47.33</b>
<b>Program and Staffing Characteristics (before upgrade)</b>				
Budgets are based on a typical Child Care program that is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. (11 hours).				
4 classes, each with 24 children (a total of 96 children). Ratio 1:8.				
Staff work eight hours per day, year round, and have 15 days of leave.				
Instructional staff (e.g., teachers, aides) work shifts to cover morning and afternoon pick-ups.				
<b>Program and Staffing Characteristics (after upgrade)</b>				
5 classes with 20 children in each class (total served increased to 100 children). Ratio 1:10.				

### Appendix 4-4: Staffing Pattern for Upgraded Child Care Program (Title 5) to Include Preschool for All

Hours	Number of Children	Preschool Classroom 1 Staff	Preschool Classroom 2 Staff	Preschool Classroom 3 Staff	Childcare Room 1 Staff	Childcare Room 2 Staff	Total Staff
		Class 1A & 1B (morning & afternoon class, 20 children each)	Class 2 A & 2B (morning & afternoon class, 20 children each)	Class 3A (morning preschool, 20 children – children stay in same room in afternoon – could save money by having part-time MT, and additional T)	Class 1B & 1A (child care) plus opening & closing	Class 2B & 2A (child care) plus opening & closing	
7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.	40				T1 TA4	T2 TA5 Floater A	4 plus Floater A**
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.	100	MT1 TA1	MT2 TA2	MT3 TA3	T1 TA4	T2 TA5 Floater A or volunteer	10 plus Floater A
11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.	100 (lunch, breaks, planning, nap)	MT1 TA1	MT2 TA2	MT3 TA3	T1 TA4	T2 TA5 Floater A	10 plus Floater A
2:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.	100	MT1 TA1	MT2 TA2	MT3 TA3	T3 TA6	T4 TA7 Floater B or volunteer	10 plus Floater B
4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.	40				T3 TA6	T4 TA7 Floater B	4 plus Floater B

Total Staff: 13.5 Full-time equivalents (FTEs)

3 Master Teachers (MT), BA level, all full time

4 Teachers (T), AA level, 3 FTEs only: T1 & T2 full time, T3 & T4 (.5 FTE each)

6 Teacher Assistants (TA): TA1, TA2, TA3, TA4, TA5 are full time, TA6 & TA7 (.5 FTE each) from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

\*\*1.5 floaters: Floater A (1 FTE) and Floater B (.5 FTE) provide 10+ hrs of floater support to provide the third adult in child care classroom when there is no volunteer available, and to relieve other staff in other classrooms when possible. 1 FTE may be 2 half-time persons.

Children move between preschool and child care classrooms:

A group of 20 (class 1A) stays in preschool classroom 1 from 9:00-11:30 to receive preschool instruction, stays through lunch until 2:00, then moves into one of the child care rooms (e.g., room 1) from 2:00 until close of center. A second group of 20 stays in a child care room (child care room 1) until lunch, then moves into preschool classroom 1 from 2:00-4:30, then returns to the child care room until dismissal.

Only the children in preschool classroom 3 stay all day in the same room. This estimate assumes that the MT3 and TA 3 would work fulltime with the same group; some savings could be realized if the MT3 worked part-time, and was followed by another part-time Teacher and Teacher aide. These savings could then be invested in another teacher or teacher aide for the child care classrooms.

For purposes of this exercise, one child care classroom is assumed to have 24 children (and therefore to need a third adult), and one 16 (and therefore not to need a third adult). This is necessary in order to be in compliance with Title 5 requirements. In the next version of the cost estimate exercise, we plan to reduce the Master Teacher 3's hours to part-time, and to invest the savings in another teacher aide so that both child care classrooms can have the class size of 20 and have 3 adults.

**Section 5:  
Financing Preschool for All**

## Introduction

There are both long-term and short-term approaches to financing Preschool for All.

The best *long-term strategy* is clearly to secure a stable revenue source and an investment in preschool equivalent to that in kindergarten. Based on the cost estimate in the sample county in Section 4, annual kindergarten rates or charter school rates (\$4,560-\$4,821/year) appear to be in the range necessary to finance the direct costs of operating a preschool program. Additional resources would be needed, however, to provide for the infrastructure costs: construction and renovation of facilities, workforce development, and technical assistance and monitoring.

The *short-term approach* to phasing in Preschool for All can best be summed up as “creative financing”. As indicated in Tables 1-2 and 1-3, a number of First 5 commissions and school districts in California are already employing this approach. It is important to stress that in no case has a school district or county pieced together sufficient funds to finance preschool for *all* four-year-olds. However, several localities have made preschool free and accessible to most four-year-olds within specific school neighborhoods. It is worth the effort to understand their financing strategies even in the event of a statewide investment in Preschool for All. As discussed in Section 4, the costs of implementing preschool are likely to vary across the state and, hence, there may always be a need for “creative financing” to supplement state investments even when Preschool for All becomes a statewide reality.

This section will therefore focus on the short-term strategies localities are using to finance substantial expansion of, if not universal access to, preschool. The section includes two case studies, lessons learned, and links to a compendium of funding sources for early care and education that was previously developed for First 5 California.

## Local Case Studies

### Elk Grove Unified School District

Elk Grove Unified School District provides free preschool services to 710 students, including 73% of children entering kindergarten in three First 5 School Readiness-targeted school neighborhoods and 51 percent of children in seven Title I schools (See Table 1-2 and Section 5). Pre-Kindergarten classes are staffed with one teacher and one instructional assistant. All Pre-Kindergarten teachers have college degrees and backgrounds in child development. Newly hired teachers are required to possess a multiple subject teaching credential. In addition, all Pre-Kindergarten instructional assistants have at least six units of early childhood education courses. Newly hired assistants are required to have 48 college units or an Associate’s degree.

*How does Elk Grove do it?*

Elk Grove uses a combination of multiple funding sources and measures to maximize the efficiency of the program. The total expenditure for the Pre-Kindergarten program in Elk Grove is \$3,396,390 (not counting an additional 10 percent in in-kind contributions), or approximately

\$4,783 per child, about \$1,600 more than the existing State Preschool Program expenditure per child.

### *Multiple Revenue Sources*

Table 5-2 shows the various sources of revenue for the program. The largest single source of funds is Head Start, the second largest is Title I, followed by First 5 Sacramento and First 5 School Readiness Initiative funds. The State Preschool Program is actually the smallest source of revenue for the program. The following shows how the funding sources are used:

- Elk Grove finances teacher salaries equivalent to that of kindergarten teachers primarily with Head Start, Title I, and local First 5 funds. Full-time teachers frequently teach one class funded by Head Start and another financed by Title I or First 5.
- Head Start, Title I, and First 5 funds also help finance social workers, parent leaders, a speech therapist, and health/nutrition coordinators) to provide comprehensive services for children who need them.
- Elk Grove uses local Title I and First 5 funds to finance preschool for children who are above the income eligibility requirements for Head Start. The Elk Grove Unified School District devotes 1/6 of its federal Title I funds to preschool services. While the children (except those with special needs) assigned to Head Start preschool classes must meet the federal poverty guidelines, the children in the Title 1 classes do not have to meet any specific income eligibility requirements. This is because eligibility for Title I funds is determined based on the status of the school as a whole, not the income of any one family.
- Elk Grove uses some First 5 School Readiness funds to finance a speech therapist and a teacher for a full inclusion class.
- Occupancy costs for the preschool program are largely provided in-kind by the school district. However, local First 5 funds have been used to purchase one re-locatable building for the program.

### *Efficiency Measures*

The Elk Grove Unified School District also takes steps to minimize the cost of the preschool program:

- All full-time teachers teach two sessions.
- Except for those preschool classes supported with State Preschool funds, classes take place less than 612.5 hours per year: Head Start operates 3.5 hours per day, 4 days per week; Title I operates 3 hours/3days per week, etc.
- Elk Grove maximizes use of existing space by offering a Twilight Program as well as morning and afternoon sessions.

## Kidango

Kidango administers part-day, full-year preschool as well as full-day, full-year programs for the New Haven Unified School District in Alameda County, and has just begun administering child development programs for the Alum Rock School District in Santa Clara County. The New Haven Unified program in Union City serves 550 children, and the Alum Rock program will serve 750 children when at full capacity. The Union City program is accessible to families of all income groups.

Each preschool class administered by Kidango includes a lead teacher (most with a bachelor's degree), a teacher, and a teacher aide (frequently a parent or volunteer). All preschool facilities in Union City in the New Haven Unified School District are either accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children or are in the process of applying for accreditation. All classes score at least 5 on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, and some score as high as 6.8 out of 7. In addition, Kidango uses the Head Start Prism system to ensure program quality.

### *Multiple Revenue Sources:*

- Kidango uses multiple state and federal funding sources (State Preschool, Head Start, and General Child Care and Development) to finance direct operating costs for the 62 percent of children enrolled who meet the current income eligibility guidelines for these programs.
- Revenue for facilities has come from a variety of sources -- Repair and Renovation grants from the Department of Education, Community Block Development Block Grant funds from the cities of Hayward and Union City, Alameda First 5 funds for playgrounds, and more than \$200,000 in private donations.
- The New Haven Unified School District by providing many in-kind contributions, such as reduced occupancy costs and janitorial services.
- Kidango makes services available to families above the income eligibility ceiling by charging fees at the full State Preschool Rate – \$17.96 per day.

### *Efficiency Measures:*

Kidango operates part-day programs on a double session.

- Kidango recruits parents and other volunteers to serve as teacher aides in many classrooms. Parents must volunteer six hours a month in order for their children to be in the preschool program, although the volunteer hours can be donated outside of class time.
- Kidango's executive director, Paul Miller, notes that, because of the downturn in the economy, the program has been able to attract and retain qualified teachers at lower salaries than those paid to elementary school teachers. However, Miller believes this is a temporary situation and supports the goal of compensation comparable to that for kindergarten teachers as a key strategy of retaining teachers with Bachelor's degrees.

## Redwood City School District

The Redwood City School District primarily finances its preschool program with State Preschool funds and in-kind school contributions from the school covering various costs (e.g., space, janitorial, utilities). In addition, the district program has a fulltime Mental Health worker funded by First 5 San Mateo, and home visiting services funded by the First 5 School Readiness Initiative.

Preschool sites are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Although this program is not yet able to provide salaries equivalent to those of kindergarten teachers, its teacher salaries and benefits exceed those of most private early care and education programs in the area. The following efficiency measures help make it possible for the district to pay competitive salaries and benefits:

- The program operates double session: Each teacher has a 3-hour class in the morning, and a 3-hour class in the afternoon.
- A master teacher serves as both the site supervisor and a full-time teacher, thereby reducing administrative costs. For supervisory responsibilities, the master teacher receives a 20 percent bonus.
- Laura Keeley, the district preschool coordinator, oversees not only the State Preschool Program but also the General Child Care and Development Program and the School-Age Program. Thus, administrative costs are again minimized because the lead administrator oversees programs serving 519 children.

## Lessons Learned

The school districts and other local entities making the most progress in expanding access to preschool beyond the current State Preschool income eligibility requirements and in providing salaries equivalent to those for kindergarten teachers use multiple funding sources, such as Head Start, Title I, local First 5, state First 5 School Readiness, as well as State Preschool. In addition, the programs are using various measures to maximize their efficiency.

The lessons learned may be summarized as follows:

### *Partner with Head Start*

As illustrated in the Elk Grove and Kidango case studies above as well as in Tables 1-2 and 1-3, Head Start is a major funding partner with many school districts and First 5 commissions making significant progress in expanding preschool. Head Start funds play a major role in financing preschool in Merced City School District and San Diego Unified. Head Start also plays a critical role in the preschool expansion activities for local First 5 commissions in Alpine, Calaveras, Mendocino, Placer, Sonoma, and Ventura.

It is important to note that the school district or other entity using Head Start to expand preschool services does not have to be a Head Start grantee. For example, the Elk Grove Unified School District is a Head Start delegate agency, not the grantee. Similarly, in an effort to coordinate the investment of First 5 school readiness funds with Head Start, the First 5 commission in Orange County has placed a school readiness coordinator in the office of the local Head Start grantee.

#### *Work to Obtain a Portion of Title I Funds*

School district allocation of federal Title I funds to help finance preschool expansion, as in Elk Grove, Merced, and Santa Ana in Orange County (See Table 1-3), is a key mechanism because it is a flexible funding source – there are no income guidelines limiting which children can participate, so long as they attend the Title I-designated school. In short, unlike State Preschool and Head Start funds, Title I can be used to finance preschool for *all* – or at least all in the school neighborhood.

It must be said that school district allocation of Title I funds to preschool is so far the exception, not the rule. According to Arthur Reynolds' study of the Chicago Parent-Child Centers, only 2 percent of Title I funds nationwide are used for pre-kindergarten programs. At a time when school districts are suffering in general from budget shortfalls, it may be more difficult to persuade school districts to allocate Title I funds to preschool. Yet, some school boards and school superintendents appear to have decided that investment in preschool is a highly cost-effective use of federal Title I funds, which were, after all, designed to help compensate for educational disadvantage. By investing Title I in the preschool years, these districts hope to reduce more costly expenditures for compensatory education later on.

#### *Apply for State Preschool and General Child Care and Development Funds When Available*

California's State Preschool Program, established more than 60 years ago, remains a major source of preschool funding (\$310 million for the 2002-2003 fiscal year), serving 141,452 children. California's General Child Care and Development Program, which must meet the same standards as the State Preschool Program, is the state's largest contracted full-day early care and education program, serving 126,448 children per year. Although both programs have suffered in recent years from not receiving Cost of Living Adjustments, some localities are managing to offer quality programs even at the existing state reimbursement levels by supplementing these dollars with other funds or in-kind contributions.

By hiring school readiness coordinators in all 26 school districts a year before the School Readiness Initiative, all school districts in Orange County eligible for First 5 School Readiness funds applied for the maximum available State Preschool Program dollars available. Similarly, Merced City School District (MCSD) not only applied for the maximum dollars available to the district, but also for additional dollars that other districts had not claimed.

#### *Use Local First 5, and District School Bonds to Purchase Facilities*

Local First 5 funds are especially useful in financing facilities, such as the purchase of relocatable buildings. While use of state First 5 funds is not allowed for purchase of facilities, there

are no such restrictions on the use of the local First 5 funds. Use of these dollars, a declining revenue source, for purchase of facilities also makes sense because it is a one-time expenditure.

Local First 5 funds have been instrumental in the purchase of facilities in Elk Grove, Merced, Riverside, San Benito, and Tulare (See Table 1-3). With funds from First 5 and the California Department of Education's Child Care Facilities Revolving Fund, the Merced City School District will have a preschool at 11 of its 12 elementary schools by June 2004. In Riverside, local commission funds have been used to finance five model preschool facilities as well as, in partnership with the school district, to establish a Preschool Academy (Rob Reiner Children and Families Development Center), which includes an infant-toddler program, autistic pilot program, home visitor and family intake, and a clinic, as well as a preschool facility serving 260 children. In San Benito County, the school district contributed the land for a preschool program, and the local commission is providing \$350,000 to purchase a re-locatable building.

District bonds are a major source of funds for preschool facilities in a few counties. For example, in Santa Clara County, a San Jose Unified School District bond includes \$9 million to develop or renovate preschool facilities. In Los Angeles County, a Los Angeles Unified School District bond includes \$80 million for preschool facilities.

#### *Explore Use of Migrant Child Care, CBET, and ESL*

In addition to the major state and federal funding sources being used to finance preschool expansion, some counties are making good use of more specialized funding sources. In San Benito County, the local First 5 commission is using Migrant Child Care and Development funds to help finance the operation of a new preschool program. Using these funds, there is no income eligibility requirement; however, the family must have moved within the last 3 years or work in the agricultural industry.

Building on Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, First 5 Contra Costa is supporting a parent cooperative approach to expanding preschool services in school settings. Children are in preschool four days a week, while parents are in ESL classes or assist in the classroom. Similarly, the Children and Families Commission of Orange County has used CBET funds to purchase re-locatable buildings for preschool.

#### *Use First 5 School Readiness Funds as the "Glue" and for Special Populations*

Local First 5 commissions are using First 5 School Readiness funds to provide the "glue" for preschool expansion. For example, Elk Grove uses some of the School Readiness funds to finance a school readiness coordinator and much of the rest to support a full inclusion preschool program serving both children with special needs and typically developing children.

Similarly, the Merced County Children and Families Commission's investment in school readiness has been used to help leverage more than \$5 million in additional state and federal funds, including federal Early Reading First and Even Start grants.

*Pursue In-Kind Contributions from School District*

“In-Kind” funding is the least discussed, least understood source of funds for preschool. But it is worth noting that in all three of the programs featured in case studies above, school district in-kind contributions play an important role. In Elk Grove, the school district contributes 10 percent above the rest of the budget in the form of in-kind contributions. In both the New Haven Unified School District program operated by Kidango, a private non-profit agency, and the Redwood School District, it would be difficult for the programs to survive without the in-kind contributions.

*Conduct Two Sessions*

If preschool is to be operated at a cost equivalent to that of kindergarten or charter kindergarten, providing two part-day sessions appears to be essential. The reason is obvious: a pre-kindergarten class, unlike a kindergarten class, requires a second teacher in order to meet the staff-child ratio of 1:10, the standard required for accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as well as for participation in the Head Start program. Thus, if the lead teacher in each pre-kindergarten class is going to have qualifications and compensation comparable to that of a kindergarten teacher, the teacher must teach two part-day classes in order to make possible the additional teacher or instructional aide.

## Elk Grove Unified School District Learning Support Services Pre-Kindergarten Program

### Overview

The Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD) operates Pre-Kindergarten programs at seven elementary campuses. The program serves 710 students through the following sources of funding:

- Head Start – 260 students/13 teachers (13 classes operate 3.5 hours/4 days per week)
- Title I – 230 students/12 teachers (12 classes operate 3 hours/3 days per week)
- First 5 Sacramento – 120 students/6 teachers (4 classes operate 3.5 hours/4 days per week & 2 classes operate 3 hours/3 days per week)
- First 5 California (School Readiness Initiative) – 60 students/2 teachers (3 classes operate 2.5 hours/2 days per week & 1 class operates 2.5 hours/3 days per week)
- State Preschool – 40 students/2 teachers (2 classes operate 3 hours/5 days per week)

EGUSD has the funded capacity for 23 teachers (14 full-time and 9 part-time) to teach 37 classes. Elk Grove currently has 22 teachers on staff for 36 classes. Twelve full-time teachers teach two classes each (24 classes) and eight part-time teachers (0.6 FTE or 0.4 FTE) teach one class. The two full-time preschool staff funded through School Readiness team teach four classes.

**Figure 5-1.  
Pre-Kindergarten Teaching Staff**

	Number of Pre-K Teachers	Number of Classes Taught per Teacher	Total Number Of Classes
	12 - 1.0 FTE	2	24
	7 - .6 FTE 1 - .4 FTE	1	8
	2 – 1.0 FTE (School Readiness)	4 (Teaching Team)	4
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>22</b>	--	<b>36</b>

Pre-Kindergarten classes are staffed with one teacher and one instructional assistant. All Pre-K teachers have college degrees and child development backgrounds. They are paid on the same salary schedule as EGUSD K-12 teachers. Beginning in 2002, new teachers are required to possess a multiple subject teaching credential. In addition, all Pre-K instructional assistants have at least six units of early childhood education courses. New hires are required to have 48 college units or an AA degree.

**Table 5-2. Elk Grove Unified School District Learning Support Services (Preschool)**

	# Of Positions	Head Start	# Of Positions	Title 1	# Of Positions	State	# Of Positions	Prop 10	# Of Positions	School Readiness
Teachers@0.6FTE-4.5hrs/day	13	402,934			2	52,621	4	122,255		
Teachers@0.4FTE-3hrs/day			12	237,193				250,220		
LeadTeacher@0.6FTE-4.5hrs/day	1	46,020								
Teacher-FullInclusion@1FTE-7.5hrs/day									1	63,764
SpeechTherapist@1FTE-7.5hrs/day									1	59,365
ResourceTeacher@0.7FTE-5.25hrs/day	1	53,690								
ResourceTeacher@0.3FTE-2.25hrs/day			1	23,167						
Teachers-Subs (timesheet)		28,642		5,000		1,500		8,653		
I.A. @0.5375FTE-4.3hrs/day					2	26,505				
I.A. @0.5625FTE-4.5hrs/day	6	71,569						439,443	1	13,532
I.A. @0.5938FTE-4.75hrs/day	7	85,067								
I.A. @0.4375FTE-3.5hrs/day			12	105,869				215,469		
I.A.-Subs (timesheet)		8,000		1,440		1,000		5,408		
ProgramCoord. @0.5FTE-4hrs/day	1	45,347								
ProgramCoord. @0.4FTE-3.2hrs/day			1	36,277						
ProgramCoord. @0.1FTE-0.8hrs/day								19,069		
ProgramAdmin. @0.22FTE-1.76hrs/day	1	16,460	1	16,460						
ProgramAdmin. @0.56FTE-4.48hrs/day									1	43,366
ProgramSpecialist@0.6FTE-4.5hrs/day	1	49,415								
ProgramSpecialist@0.3FTE-2.4hrs/day			1	24,708						
ProgramSpecialist@0.1FTE-0.8hrs/day								18,236		
ParentLeader@0.25FTE-2hrs/day	1	6,499								
ParentLeader/Fam.Adv. @0.75FTE-6hrs/day	2	35,456						121,720	1	17,728
ParentLeader@0.625FTE-5hrs/day	1	14,774								
ParentLeader@0.5FTE-4hrs/day			1	10,763						
ParentLeader/Fam.Adv. @1FTE-8hrs/day									1	23,637
SocialWorker@0.7FTE-5.25hrs/day	1	45,062								

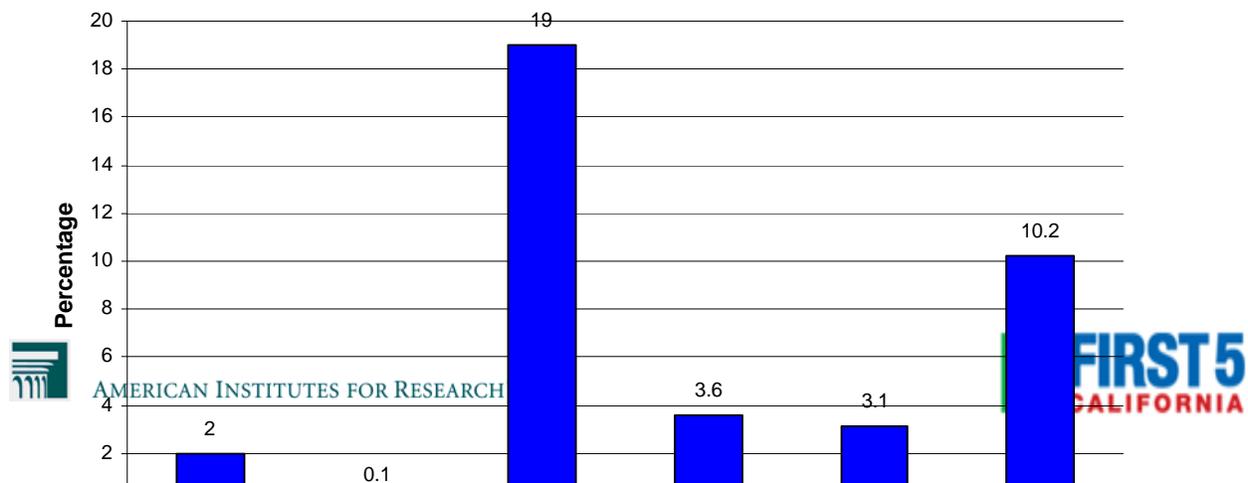
SocialWorker@0.3FTE-2.25hrs/day			1	18,498				
HealthNutrition@0.6FTE-4.8hrs/day	1	31,209						
HealthNutrition@0.3FTE-2.4hrs/day			1	16,282				
HealthNutrition@0.1FTE-0.8hrs/day						1	6,331	
ProgramEducator@0.5FTE-4hrs/day			1	19,994				
Clerk@1FTE-8hrs/day	1	29,969						
Clerk@0.5FTE-4hrs/day			5	88,214				1 19,883
Extra Clerical (timesheet)		4,000						
FiscalTechnician@0.5FTE-4hrs/day			1	20,849				
FiscalTechnician@0.5FTE-4hrs/day						1	20,848	
StaffSecretary@1FTE-8hrs/day	1	35,259						
BusAttendant@0.5FTE-4hrs/day	4	42,368						
Yard Duty (timesheet)		5,000						
Benefits		314,750		212,403		27,806	101,474	64,412
Supplies		52,014		40,000		7,545	53,441	9,000
Space		19,600						
Indirect		81,680		49,645		6,621	26,181	17,811
Total	43	<u>\$1,524,784</u>	38	<u>\$926,762</u>	4	<u>\$123,598</u>	16 <u>\$488,748</u>	7 <u>\$332,498</u>

Personnel	1,056,740	624,714	81,626	307,652	241,275
Benefits	314,750	212,403	27,806	101,474	64,412
Other	71,614	40,000	7,545	53,441	9,000
Indirect	<u>81,680</u>	<u>49,645</u>	<u>6,621</u>	<u>26,181</u>	<u>17,811</u>
	<u>\$1,524,784</u>	<u>\$926,762</u>	<u>\$123,598</u>	<u>\$488,748</u>	<u>332,498</u>

**Table 5-3. Elk Grove Unified School District In-Kind**

Description	In-Kind Amount Per Year (\$)
Space - Florin Elementary - 725 sq. ft. @0.66 per sq. ft. = \$479/month	5,748
Space - Prairie Elementary - 1859 sq. ft. @0.66 per sq. ft. = \$1,227/month	14,724
Space - F. Markofer Elementary - 1859 sq. ft. @0.66 per sq. ft. = \$1,227/month	14,724
Full Inclusion Teachers - Prairie/Markofer	33,821
Full Inclusion Para-Educators - Prairie/Markofer	35,133
Full Inclusion Program Specialists - Prairie/Markofer	10,000
Full Inclusion School Nurses – Prairie/Markofer	10,656
Full Inclusion Speech Therapists - Prairie/Markofer	13,884
Full Inclusion Vision Therapists - Prairie/Markofer	10,128
Budget Technician II @ 0.2 FTE	14,148
Director @ 0.1 FTE	13,368
5 Twilight Coordinators @ 0.2 FTE each	89,029
6 Site Administrators @ 0.05 FTE each	38,778
Early Intervention 1,059 hrs @\$51.88/hr	54,941
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>359,082</u></b>

**Percentage of Title I Funds Reserved for Preschool 2003-04**



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