ECE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE
IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

November 10, 2005
**Background**

Based on the First 5 LA Board request to develop an initiative that would address the needs of the Early Care and Education (ECE) workforce, staff presented The *ECE Workforce Development Initiative Concept Paper* for discussion at the September 2005 Board meeting. The *Workforce Development Initiative Concept Paper* presented by staff articulated a comprehensive initiative design that addresses the multifaceted needs of the ECE workforce. The concept paper described an initiative framework that addresses the ECE workforce along a continuum of provider type, extending from entry into the early care and education career lattice through advancement. Additionally, the ECE workforce development initiative model presented in the concept paper also incorporates, as requested, strategies for bridging the gap between the current educational status of the workforce and those set through the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) quality standards.

Based on staff’s presentation and the Board’s subsequent discussion at the September 2005 Board meeting, the Board requested staff to further develop the initiative framework in order to consider approval of the ECE Workforce Initiative for the November Commission meeting. The Board requested that staff present the ECE Workforce Development Initiative at the November Board meeting with the inclusion of an initiative allocation and more specificity to the programmatic components.

To develop further the ECE Workforce Development Initiative Implementation Framework, staff continued gathering information from several sources including more in-depth conversations with representatives from the Workforce Development Roundtable convened to inform the development the concept paper, as well as practitioners in the field that have designed and implemented similar initiatives and programs. As stated previously, the proposed initiative design is based on an assessment of best practices, innovation and an identification of how First 5 LA could potentially make the most significant impact on improving the quality of early care and education and furthering the professionalism of the field.

The proposed implementation framework is intended to provide the Board with a scope of the activities within each program component and an understanding of the required implementation activities for each. It is important to highlight that as noted, the proposed framework is designed as a comprehensive initiative for the development of the ECE workforce. Accordingly, during the initiative implementation staff will ensure the development of cross cutting strategies to link together each program component.
The goal of this pilot is to increase the training and education levels of the current workforce.

As discussed in the concept paper, the current early care and education (ECE) workforce spans a continuum from informal caregiver to teacher and is comprised of individuals with diverse experience, training and education. Accordingly, the Career Development Pilot program is designed to provide professional development services for individuals working at different points along this continuum. For this reason, we designed the program to meet the unique needs of individuals along the continuum and tailored services by categorizing the workforce into three strands: Strand 1 Project—Mentors for Informal Caregivers; Strand 2 Project—Career Advocates for Providers and Teachers not on a formal education track; Strand 3 Project—Super Counselors for ECE Teachers enrolled in Community and Four-Year Colleges.

Each strand is designed to provide some form of mentorship and/or counseling services to enhance individuals’ skills and enable them to grow and develop professionally. Additionally, the Career Development Pilot Program is intended to work as a coordinated system in which mentors, career advocates and super counselors work together to share practices and provide guidance to individuals in the ECE workforce as they move along the continuum of providing care to young children.

It is important to note that in keeping with the First 5 LA strategic plan and the current discussion of modified priorities, through the implementation of the Career Development Pilot Program staff will ensure an emphasis is place on including providers and teachers who work with infants and toddlers.

STRAND 1 PROJECT—MENTORS FOR INFORMAL CAREGIVERS

Project Description

Experienced teachers will be recruited and trained as mentors and will provide guidance and supervision to informal caregivers to assist them with enhancing their skills in working with young children. Mentors will conduct quarterly training modules for groups of caregivers based on their needs. Modules will be designed around topics ranging from health, safety and nutrition, to early language, communicating with parents, and social and emotional behavior of young children. Additionally, mentors will be available to give one-on-one support to caregivers on an ongoing basis throughout the program year. Mentors will receive compensation for their services and providers will be given incentives for their participation.

To implement the program design described above, First 5 LA staff anticipates working with contractors selected through a competitive process. Selected contractors will be responsible for working with First 5 LA staff to assist with further development of the model including program implementation and management. Each contracted agency will hire project managers to facilitate and manage mentor activities through the provision of trainings and supports.
Staff will continue working with the Workforce Roundtable to develop the scope of activities and required criteria to include in the RFP. Through the RFP, First 5 LA will solicit proposals aimed at identifying up to five eligible agencies and/or collaboratives. The decision to select five applicants is based on the goal of achieving sufficient geographic spread across the county and program diversity. This will allow First 5 LA to identify best practices over the three year timeframe that could be replicated countywide.

**Project Activities**

- Mentors conduct quarterly training modules for providers/caregivers
- Mentors provide on-going individualized guidance and support to providers/caregivers
- Mentors meet periodically with Career Advocates and Super Counselors to create programmatic linkages to promote continuity among the strands;
- Project coordinators provide quarterly trainings for mentors to support mentor development
- Project coordinators provide on-going support and supervision to mentors

**Funding Mechanism**: Request for Proposals (RFP)

**Number of Pilot Sites**: 5

**Estimated Number Served**: 500 caregivers & 25 mentors per year

**Estimated Cost**: $1 million per year for 3 years

**Next Steps**:

- Reconvene Workforce Development Roundtable between December 2005 and March 2006 to advise staff on the development of a Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Issue RFP May 2006
- Award contracts September 2006
- Develop an evaluation plan in accordance with the First 5 LA Accountability framework that includes common performance measures for each site as well as process and outcome measures for the Strand 1 pilot project as a whole (December 2005 – March 2006).
STRAND 2 PROJECT—CAREER ADVOCATES FOR PROVIDERS AND TEACHERS NOT ON A FORMAL DEGREE TRACK

Project Description

In the Strand 2 Project, trained teachers will work as Career Advocates to assist ECE providers/teachers in Strand 2 with assessing their current skill sets and working with them to define their professional goals and to create an individualized career development plan. Through the career development plans, Career Advocates will identify training needs and link providers/teachers to training resources. Career development plans may also include a formalized education plan for provider/teachers who want to obtain a college degree.

In order to successfully implement the program design described above and bridge the gap between education of the current workforce and emerging preschool teaching standards, it is critical to build on existing resources to enhance the services provided by agencies currently supporting the ECE workforce (e.g., connecting to the County Early Educators Program, leveraging Resource and Referral trainings and local workforce initiative activities). Potential strategic partners are listed below based on their roles and services and access to the ECE workforce:

- Resource and Referral Agencies
- The Los Angeles Office of Education (LACOE)
- The Los Angeles County Office of Child Care
- Cities with ECE Workforce Development Initiatives
- California Early Childhood Mentor Program

Staff will work in partnership with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) to identify those areas of the county where the Strand 2 Project will complement LAUP’s efforts and will build on other First 5 LA investments.

Project Activities

Career Advocates will:

- Work with providers and teachers to identify career goals and create career development plans;
- Provide on-going individualized guidance and support to providers and teachers helping them to mitigate the barriers (e.g., language, access, cost and unit transfer) to taking ECE courses and obtaining Bachelor of Arts degrees;
- Meet monthly together to share best practices and develop collaborative relationships;
- Meet on a monthly basis or as needed with First 5 LA staff;
- Meet regularly with Mentors and Super Counselors and create programmatic linkages to promote continuity among the strands;
- Provide access to school transcript translation and evaluation services for ECE providers/teachers who have education from outside the United States; and
- Receive ongoing supervision and training.
**Funding Mechanism:** Strategic Partnerships

**Number of Pilot Sites:** 5

**Estimated Number Served:** 375 Providers & 25 Career Advocates per year

**Estimated Cost:** $1 million per year for 3 years

**Next Steps:**

- Develop detailed implementation plan with LAUP and other key stakeholders January – May 2006
- Identify Strategic Partners May-August 2006
- Award Contracts September-November 2006
- Develop an evaluation plan in accordance with the First 5 LA Accountability framework that includes common performance measures for each site as well as process and outcome measures for the Strand 2 project as a whole (January – May 2006).
STRAND 3 PROJECT— “SUPER COUNSELORS” FOR ECE TEACHERS ENROLLED IN COMMUNITY AND FOUR YEAR COLLEGES

Project Description

“Super Counselors” are trained career and academic counselors who have an in-depth understanding of the early childhood education field. These are unique professionals who have a deep understanding of the academic, career, and financial aid issues that ECE students must navigate to successfully complete a college degree.

Super Counselors will be hired by community and/or 4-year colleges to provide individualized counseling and guidance to students. They will also work with faculty and student support programs and will collaborate with the broader ECE and family support communities to identify and promote resources for improving the professional development and service delivery systems in Los Angeles County.

Essential Strategic Partners:

- Community Colleges
- 4-Year Colleges

In order for First 5 LA to successfully implement this project, there is a significant amount of relationship building that needs to occur with the higher education community. Staff will work in close partnership with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and the Higher Education Consortium supported through this initiative to identify and select implementation partners.

Project Activities

Super Counselors will:

- Provide on-going individualized guidance and support to ECE students to assist them identify and achieve their academic and career goals;
- Work with school administration to develop strategies that will help students overcome identified barriers within the college system that limit recruitment, professional advancement, or retention of ECE staff and providers;
- Monitor and track emerging needs and trends in ECE training from a broad perspective including cross discipline education, collaborative training programs, and recent research in best practices for ECE and related fields;
- Meet monthly together to share best practices and develop collaborative relationships;
- Meet on a monthly basis or as needed with First 5 LA staff; and
- Meet periodically with Mentors and Career Advocates to create programmatic linkages to promote continuity among the strands.

Funding Mechanism: Strategic Partnerships

Number of Pilot Sites: 5

Estimated Number Served: 1200 Students & 10 Super Counselors per year

Estimated Cost: $1 million per year for 3 years
Next Steps:

- Develop detailed implementation plan with LAUP and other key stakeholders, January – May 2006
- Meet with local colleges and universities, March – August 2006
- Identify Strategic Partners, September – December 2006
- Award Contracts, Spring 2007
- Develop an evaluation plan in accordance with the First 5 LA Accountability framework that includes common performance measures for each site as well as process and outcome measures for the Strand 3 project as a whole (January – May 2006).
High School Recruitment Pilot Program

Increase the supply of early education professionals who are younger and more diverse than the current population of providers.

Project Description:

The overarching goal of The High School Recruitment Pilot Program is to encourage more young people to consider early childhood education as a career goal by providing high school students with information, resources, and internship opportunities. An emphasis will be placed on ensuring that the potential workforce recruited is reflective of the cultural and linguistic diversity of families being served in Los Angeles County. Project Coordinators will provide career and academic counseling, internship opportunities, supervision, and will connect them to ECE courses at local higher education institutions (particularly community colleges).

First 5 LA staff will work with an identified strategic partner(s) and or consultant(s) who will be responsible for assisting with the development of the model and managing implementation. First 5 LA will work with LAUP staff to providing High Quality Child Care sites where high school students can do their internships.

Essential Strategic Partners:
- LACOE
- Targeted School District(s)
- Community Colleges
- Cities with ECE Workforce Development Initiatives

Project Activities:

Counselors will:
- Recruit students at targeted high schools who are interested in working with young children;
- Connect students with local community colleges and four-year colleges that offer ECE courses;
- Match students with internship opportunities at high quality early care and education programs; and
- Provide supervision to student interns.

Funding Mechanism: Strategic Partnerships

Number of Pilot Sites: TBD

Estimated Number Served: Ramp up to 100 students per year

Estimated Cost: $670,000 per year for 3 years
Next Steps:

- Identify strategic partner(s) and or consultant(s) to design and implement the overall project, March 2006;
- Target implementation date January 2007.
- Develop an evaluation plan in accordance with the First 5 LA Accountability framework that includes common performance measures for each site as well as process and outcome measures for the pilot project as a whole (March 2006–December 2007).
**Higher Education Consortium**

The goal of this consortium is to increase educational opportunities and reduce barriers by working with institutions of higher education to change their policies and practices.

**Project Description:**

First 5 LA will work in partnership with LAUP to convene a Higher Education Consortium and build on those activities already underway through other agencies such as the Office of Child Care.

Consortium participants may include top administrative representatives from community colleges and 4-year universities, financial institutions, foundations and other key stakeholders.

First 5 LA and LAUP will work collaboratively to develop a scope of work and deliverables for the consortium. The consortium will address a range of institutional-level policy issues including: financial aid/loan forgiveness opportunities; articulation agreements between 2 and 4 year institutions; programs and supports for Spanish Speakers and English Language Learners (ESL); the potential establishment of an early education credential; ECE courses that are more easily accessible to students and teachers.

**Project Activities:**

The Consortium will:

- Meet regularly, potentially quarterly over the course of a year;
- Develop strategies and programs to facilitate policy change within the higher education system to reduce the existing barriers to meeting the professional development needs of the current ECE workforce; and
- Publish report on its findings and recommendations.

**Funding Mechanism:** Potential contract for consultant/facilitator

**Number of Pilot Sites:** N/A

**Estimated Number Served:** N/A

**Estimated Cost:** $500,000 per year for 2 years

**Next Steps:**

- Meet regularly with LAUP to create a process for convening the Consortium (e.g., identifying and inviting participants, selecting a venue for regular meetings and developing the scope of work planning meeting logistics), December 2005 – March 2006;
- Work with other entities to leverage resources and build on efforts already underway (e.g., The Office of Child Care), December 2005 – March 2006;
**Compensation and Retention Steering Committee**

The goal of this component is to increase compensation and retention for early care and education providers so that they are motivated to stay in the field and more young people are encouraged to enter the field.

**Project Description:**

As stated in the concept paper, determining compensation and benefits is beyond the scope of First 5 LA and requires policy level and legislative changes within the ECE system. Therefore, First 5 LA will begin moving forward, in partnership with LAUP, with implementing the recommendations of the Workforce and Professional Development Task team and convene a Compensation and Retention Steering Committee. The purpose of the Committee will be to bring together key policy makers to discuss strategies for addressing wage parity with K-12/salary schedules, and the establishment of benefits for ECE workers (i.e., benefit pools). It will be critical to work in partnership with the Office of Child Care, The California Department of Education, as well as with representatives from the insurance industry as part of this committee.

**Project Activities:**

The Committee will potentially do the following:

- Work with local entities and legislative officials to tie compensation to provider/teacher qualifications (i.e., ensuring ECE workforce standards are commensurate with appropriate salaries);
- Develop compensation guidelines and/or targets that will indicate progress toward the goal of comparability;
- Explore strategies for improving wages and benefits; and
- Work with the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at U.C. Berkeley on exploring compensation tiers and staff migration from privately to publicly operated Pre-K programs.

**Funding Mechanism:** Potential contract for consultant/facilitator

**Number of Pilot Sites:** N/A

**Estimated Number Served:** N/A

**Estimated Cost:** $500,000 per year for 2 years

**Next Steps:**

- Meet regularly with LAUP to create a process for convening the Steering Committee (e.g., identifying and inviting participants, selecting a venue for regular meetings and developing the scope of work planning meeting logistics), December 2005 – March 2006;
- Work with other entities to leverage resources and build on efforts already underway (e.g., The Office of Child Care, The California Department of
• Convene Steering Committee, spring 2006.
Public Education Campaign

The goal of this component is to improve the public perception of early care and education professionals so that they receive the respect they deserve and to encourage more people to choose early care and education as a career path.

Project Description:

First 5 LA will work to create Public Education Campaign that will promote the ECE profession and serve to support the other programs described herein. First 5 LA will work in partnership with First 5 California, KCET and other appropriate agencies to leverage resources and develop a comprehensive plan. The public education campaign will be targeted at high school students, ECE providers and the general public. The overall objective of the campaign will be to raise the consciousness of the significance of working with young children in all settings and promote professionalizing the field.

Potential Project Activities:

- Develop a statewide advertisement campaign to help educate the general public on the importance of the ECE field;
- Ensure the inclusion of information at vocational fairs and other appropriate venues to provide high school students with career information to introduce and promote an understanding of the field; and
- Create local programming that focuses on providing ECE workers with information about developing career plans, identifying resources relevant to enhancing their skill sets, and understanding the training and educational requirements to move along the ECE continuum.

Funding Mechanism: TBD

Number of Pilot Sites: N/A

Estimated Number Served: N/A

Estimated Cost: $1 million per year for 2 years

Next Steps:

- Work with First 5 LA Public Affairs staff to develop an action plan for moving forward with a public education campaign plan, December 2005 – February 2006.