



**Stronger Together**

# **Water Cooler Policy Report**

**Informing Advocacy for Children Birth to Five**

**California Infant and Toddler Early Learning  
Policy Recommendations**

**May 2012**



# Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction to the Water Cooler	3
The Workgroup Process	3
The Infant and Toddler Workgroup Vision	5
The Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Agenda	6
Policy Recommendations	7
Funding	7
Access to High Quality Early Learning Services	9
Workforce Development	10
System Building	12
Conclusions	15
Next Steps	15



CHILDREN NOW



## Acknowledgements

The workgroup was co-chaired by Florence Nelson of ZERO TO THREE and Jolene Smith of FIRST 5 Santa Clara.

This report was written by Florence Nelson of ZERO TO THREE and Kathleen Manis of Advancement Project, with consultation from Workgroup members.

Generous funding was provided for this California early education policy project by the Birth to Five Policy Alliance, the Boeing Corporation, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

Copyright © by Advancement Project

May 2012

Los Angeles, California

## Executive Summary

The Water Cooler Infant-Toddler Workgroup convened over 130 individuals representing 95 organizations to develop recommendations to address the policy problems facing early care and education services for infants and toddlers in California. Over the course of five meetings, the workgroup formulated, discussed and ranked policy recommendations in the areas of funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and the building of a comprehensive system for infant and toddler care and education in California. The workgroup made the following recommendations, ranked in order of priority as expressed by workgroup members.

### **Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Areas And Summary Recommendations**

#### ***Funding***

- Create new opportunities to fund 0-3 supports and services by:
  - Restructuring early childhood funding to provide efficient funding for children 0-3 within 0-5 resources
  - Developing new funding streams
- Expand current opportunities for 0-3 funding
- Prioritize funding towards high-impact investments and high-needs populations

#### ***Access to High Quality Early Learning Services***

- Reform child care licensing regulations
- Rebuild state investment in early childhood quality initiatives
- Advance a Quality Rating and Improvement System for ages 0-5

#### ***Workforce Development***

- Provide access to appropriate professional development opportunities
- Develop specific supports for providers who care for dual language learners and children with special needs
- Support family engagement in early learning

#### ***System Building***

- Support connections and better integration between systems that provide services to children age 0-3 and their families
- Engage in comprehensive early childhood system planning for the State of California
- Develop a comprehensive 0-5 data system for the State of California
- Preserve the California Early Learning Advisory Council



## Introduction and the Water Cooler

The Water Cooler network was formed by a core group of early learning policy, advocacy and service provision organizations: Advancement Project, the California Community Foundation, Children Now, Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, First 5 California, and Preschool California. The purpose of the Water Cooler is to bring together all of the stakeholders in early education policy, advocacy, research, and service provision to share information and advocate more effectively for California's youngest learners at the federal, state and local levels. Currently over 30 statewide organization are active members of the Water Cooler. Now in its fourth year, the Water Cooler convenes quarterly 100-person meetings in Sacramento to discuss policy developments, budget and funding strategies, and best practices in the field. A yearly two-day conference is also convened in collaboration with First 5 California, attracting nearly 500 attendees annually. The Water Cooler also hosts smaller workgroups on specific topics and policy problems of interest and import to the early education field. The workgroups are tasked with exploring their topic in great depth and coming up with a set of recommendations based upon the consensus of the group. The Infant-Toddler Workgroup is one such gathering with a focus on the early care and education needs of infants and toddlers in California, and how the current system might best be influenced to better support the needs of all infants and toddlers in California.

## The Workgroup Process

In the fall of 2010, a group composed of representatives from Advancement Project, the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Children Now, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, First 5 California, Preschool California and ZERO TO THREE drafted an initial vision and policy agenda outline for strengthening infant-toddler care in California. The group presented the draft to the full Water Cooler membership on November 8, 2010 and invited all members to join the resulting Infant-Toddler Workgroup. The workgroup was co-chaired by Florence Nelson of ZERO TO THREE and Jolene Smith of FIRST 5 Santa Clara. In the end, 130 individuals representing 95 organizations participated in workgroup meetings and/or provided formal feedback on the group's recommendations.

The workgroup met five times throughout the year. Each meeting included an educational presentation on a particular topic from the group's initial agenda followed by extensive discussion to refine the recommendations.

### Meetings:

1. December 15, 2010 – Sacramento (Home Visitation)
2. February 9, 2011 – San Jose (California Infant-Toddler Landscape)
3. April 20, 2011 – San Jose (Blending and Braiding Funding; Comprehensive Early Childhood Systems)

4. June 13, 2011 – San Jose (Developmental Screening and Early Identification of Developmental Delays)
5. June 20, 2011 – Los Angeles (Overview of Recommendations to Date: Review and Refinement)

Throughout the discussions, workgroup members sought to identify policies that could be implemented on a statewide level or scaled up from local efforts. Additionally, they committed to recommending policies that would:

- Benefit infants and toddlers (0-36 months)
- Align with the goal of “access to quality”
- Address an issue where there is an immediate opportunity to move forward
- Have synergy with partners’ agendas
- Prove achievable with current advocacy resources
- Affect a long-term impact
- Generate positive system change

In June 2011, all workgroup participants were invited to participate in an on-line survey to rank their top priorities for policy recommendations. A total of 109 partners responded to rank their priorities and provide extensive comments on each issue, resulting in a detailed policy agenda covering the following areas of infant-toddler policy in California:

**Funding**  
**Access to Quality**  
**Workforce Development**  
**Systems Building**

The workgroup presented its resulting Infant-Toddler Policy Agenda at the general Water Cooler Meeting on September 14, 2011.

## Vision Components

- ★ All infants and toddlers are healthy and safe in their homes.
- ★ Children are ready to thrive in preschool and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.
- ★ Every parent, teacher, provider and caregiver has access to evidence-based, high quality, effective programs and services that help them support their infant or toddler's early development and promote optimal learning.
- ★ For infants, toddlers and families who need extra help, systems are in place to identify and provide services at the earliest opportunity when children need closer support, monitoring or attention, and those most at risk receive comprehensive, intensive services.
- ★ Prenatal and birth-to-3 programs are part of a seamless continuum of early development and learning supports that lay the foundation for healthy development and successful educational experiences in preschool through third grade and on through the K-12 years.
- ★ The political will exists to expand public policies that promote young children's health, safety and development to fully fund high quality services for infants and toddlers

## The Infant-Toddler Workgroup Vision

Healthy development begins with the nurturing relationships that surround infants and toddlers at home and in their neighborhood. Parents and caregivers help young children build trust and explore the world around them while they learn to communicate and regulate their bodies and emotions. Research from a range of disciplines – neuroscience, economics, and behavioral research- demonstrates that the experiences and relationships formed from birth to three years of age play a critical role in a child's ability to grow up healthy and ready to learn. A child's first experiences begin his or her continuum of learning, literacy, competence and mastery and provide a foundation for achievement in the school years and into adulthood. Support for learning during the earliest years yields higher returns in student achievement than investments in learning that are made in later years. Cost-benefit research shows that for at-risk children—and for the schools they will attend—playing catch-up later in life is expensive and inadequate. Yet despite the clear need to invest significantly in 0-3 education, federal and state funding is consistently lowest for this age group. While roughly 85% of the brain's core structures are formed by age three, only about six cents of every dollar that California invests in education and development services for children from birth to age 18 goes to support infants and toddlers.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, many young children start school – even preschool – without the necessary knowledge and abilities to succeed; a gap in learning that only widens over time. In fact, the academic achievement gap begins to show as early as nine months of age across a broad spectrum of developmental domains. These early differences predict reading scores in third grade as well as later school success.<sup>2</sup>

Investments in the 0-3 years are fundamental to closing the achievement gap, but much more must be done to provide adequately for all children at this stage. On our end, early childhood advocates must create a sense of urgency that will push decision-makers at the state and local levels to provide additional resources and support for this critical period in children's educations. With new and expanded investments in children ages 0-3, we will ensure healthy development for all students and prepare them for a successful transition into the pre-K-12 years.

## **The Infant-Toddler Early Learning Policy Agenda**

The workgroup discussions focused on four policy areas identified as integral to infant and toddler care and education in California: funding, access to quality services, workforce development, and early childhood comprehensive system building. Within each area, the group made a range of policy recommendations. These areas are highly interrelated, and it is important to note that a policy change in any one area will ultimately affect the entire system. To provide a framework for prioritizing our recommendations, workgroup participants ranked the focus areas as follows: increased funding, access to quality, workforce development, and comprehensive early childhood system building.

Within the four main policy areas, the group made the following recommendations, which are discussed in detail in the following sections:

### **Infant and Toddler Early Learning Policy Areas And Summary Recommendations**

#### ***Funding***

- Create new opportunities to fund 0-3 supports and services by:
  - Restructuring early childhood funding to provide efficient funding for children 0-3 within 0-5 resources
  - Developing new funding streams
- Expand current opportunities for 0-3 funding
- Prioritize funding towards high-impact investments and high-needs populations

#### ***Access to High Quality Early Learning Services***

- Reform child care licensing regulations
- Rebuild state investment in early childhood quality initiatives
- Advance a Quality Rating and Improvement System for ages 0-5

#### ***Workforce Development***

- Provide access to appropriate professional development opportunities
- Develop specific supports for providers who care for dual language learners and children with special needs
- Support family engagement in early learning

#### ***System Building***

- Support connections and better integration between systems that provide services to children age 0-3 and their families
- Engage in comprehensive early childhood system planning for the State of California
- Develop a comprehensive 0-5 data system for the State of California
- Preserve the California Early Learning Advisory Council



## Policy Recommendations

### Funding

Currently less than 8% of the combined federal and state per-child spending on development and education programs goes to children under the age of 3 years.<sup>3</sup> Recent cuts to child care, Early Start, and early childhood quality improvement efforts have further reduced this funding, limiting the opportunities for our youngest children to access high-quality programs. It is a priority of the workgroup to restore and enhance such critical investments in our youngest learners. Strong efforts should also be made to ensure that California's infants and toddlers benefit from expanded funding opportunities at the federal level.

Successfully funding 0-3 programs in the current economic climate requires a complex system of creative blending and braiding of available funding sources, a complex undertaking that often present regulatory and administrative barriers that many programs cannot overcome. Funding silos prevent efficient uses of available monetary resources and comprehensive, whole-child approaches. The vision for funding would be a unified revenue stream supporting children from birth (or even before birth) to career that is inclusive of children 0-3. Achieving this vision requires restructuring current funding streams to increase efficiency and removing barriers as well as creating new sources of funding for the youngest children.

The workgroup highlighted the necessary changes needed in the reimbursement rate system in order to better support licensed providers and to incentivize them to increase the quality of the services they provide. The workgroup also highlighted the fact that for infants and toddlers, it is important to focus on a comprehensive approach to service provision. This approach would support traditional center-based settings in addition to programs for health and healthy development, the families of children in these programs, and family, friend and neighbor caregivers. The group focused on supports such as home visitation programs, developmental screening and referral initiatives, special programs for the infants and toddlers of teen parents, and comprehensive family engagement by service providers for the families of infants and toddlers.

### Recommendations – Funding

**Top Priority:** Advocate for minimum funding guarantees for infant-toddler programs in state and federal funding sources, e.g. Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grants, Title I, and CCDF.

**Additional Recommendation:** Create a new state revenue source that supports early learning from age zero to five. Within this new revenue stream, at least 30% of funds should be set aside for infants and toddlers.

Survey respondents were concerned that the current fiscal climate will not support new revenue initiatives. As early childhood education advocates, we need to advocate for infants

And toddlers to benefit from existing 0-5 funding streams, and focus on efficiencies gained through comprehensive planning and collaboration. Acceptable strategies also need to be developed to restructure 0-5 funding so that funds from multiple sources can be layered to support high-quality programs. Workgroup members thought it important that systems planning continue so that new funds, when obtained, can be used efficiently to promote high quality services. Workgroup members want the Early Learning Advisory Council to be preserved as it is an important mechanism both for securing new funding and in planning for the efficient use of funds to support early learning and development.

***If new Early Care and Education funds are secured, how should they be used?***

A variety of policy initiatives was proposed by the group.

**Top priority:** Restructure the child care reimbursement system for publicly funded infant-toddler programs so that providers are reimbursed for the true cost of providing high-quality care.

**Additional Recommendation:** Provide higher reimbursement rates in a tiered reimbursement system for programs meeting high quality standards such as Early Head Start standards, or for programs meeting standards at the higher levels of a Quality Rating and Improvement System.

The group recognized the child care reimbursement as a foundation for building and maintaining high-quality programs. Current reimbursement levels, based on market rates that are now more than a half-decade old, do not adequately cover the cost of providing high quality care to infants and toddlers. Consequently, they serve as a disincentive to providing infant and toddler care, particularly for children in the highest needs categories. Survey respondents prioritized making improvements in funding by restructuring reimbursement rates to approach the true cost of providing high-quality care. The second survey priority, a tiered reimbursement system, could be a short-term objective allowing the state to phase in higher reimbursement rates and begin a comprehensive re-structuring of the state's child care reimbursement system.

Raising the reimbursement rate for high-quality programs would have the additional advantage of improving compensation for infant-toddler providers which would attract more qualified professionals and ensure that centers offered infant and toddler spaces instead of offering most or all of their spaces to preschool children, which are less expensive to serve. Until there is adequate funding to benefit all programs and children, expanded funding should be targeted first to children at high risk, e.g., children meeting Early Head Start eligibility criteria in high-poverty communities, or some other criteria that prioritize those children most in need.

**Workgroup participants were asked to identify evidence-based programs that promote infant-toddler healthy development and school readiness, which should be supported if expanded funding is obtained. They recommended:**

**Top Priority:** Fund Early Start (early intervention) services at a level that ensures access for eligible children ages 0-3.

**Additional Recommendations:**

- Expand 0-3 home visitation services that support school readiness, with priority given to vulnerable children.
- Promote timely developmental screening, assessment and referral to services by creating linkages between infant-toddler early learning providers and pediatricians.
- Maintain child care and case management services for the infants and toddlers of teen parents.
- Support family engagement from the earliest points of entry into developmental and early learning services.

### **Access to High Quality Early Learning Services**

Many infants and toddlers in California lack access to high-quality early learning programs. Child care licensing regulations could set a floor on which program quality is built; though unfortunately, California does not perform well in terms of quality regulations and monitoring. In fact, the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) ranks California 50<sup>th</sup> among 52 states and territories in terms of the quality of regulations and the degree of monitoring for most programs.<sup>4</sup> Most infants and toddlers do not even benefit from the protections of licensing while in non-parental care. Licensed child care spaces in child care centers or homes accommodate only 12% of California's infants and toddlers.<sup>5</sup> Most children 0-3 who need non-parental care each week are cared for by license-exempt family or friends, with 41% of children 0-36 months in this form of care.<sup>6</sup> Only a small proportion of quality funding is devoted to these caregivers and recent cuts have further reduced this support.

As we work to expand access to infant-toddler care, we must ensure regulations pertaining to both licensed and license-exempt programs protect children's safety and promote program quality. For licensed programs, this means correcting weaknesses in the current licensing and monitoring systems to protect infants and toddlers. Demonstration projects and quality improvement supports can help programs set their sights higher in the delivery of quality programs. Even though quality improvements are needed to support children's educational and comprehensive well-being, there has been a steady decline in California's commitment to quality funding over the past decade. The withdrawal of federal child care quality funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) led to a

\$16.3 million reduction in investments in child care quality in FY2012. In addition, the Governor's proposal to eliminate the California Early Learning Advisory Council and related cost pressures halted progress on the development of a Quality Rating and Improvement System in 2011.

### **Recommendations – Access to Quality**

Workgroup members recommended raising the floor of quality early learning in California by strengthening child care regulations.

**Top Priority:** Raise the floor of quality standards in 0-3 child care licensing regulations, especially by addressing regulations that support braided funding with high quality programs such as Early Head Start (for instance, workforce requirements, ratios and group sizes, and program content). Licensing regulations should also reflect best practices for infant-toddler health and safety, e.g. safe sleep policies and uniform hand-washing and diapering policies.

#### **Additional Recommendations:**

- Work to rebuild investments of state funds to support quality initiatives.
- Restart the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) effort.

Some workgroup participants indicated that they would direct efforts to improving the quality and breadth of services in existing programs before expanding access (child care spaces), stating that an investment in caregiver compensation would improve the stability and quality of experiences for infants, toddlers, and parents using child care services. Others indicated that access expansion is the most pressing issue and that it should be addressed before enhancing the quality or comprehensiveness of services. Strengthening licensing regulations for infant-toddler programs was not a pressing priority for some survey respondents because most infants and toddlers are not served in licensed child care settings. Subsequently, providing professional development opportunities for license-exempt child care providers was not ranked as a high priority (see Workforce priorities below).

A focus on the infant-toddler workforce is an important aspect of quality programs. Workforce recommendations are addressed in a separate section below.

### **Workforce Development**

Improving the quality and preparedness of the infant-toddler workforce will help to ensure that all children 0-3 receive the highest-quality early learning services. It has been documented that those in the workforce serving infants and toddlers are less likely to hold college degrees or credits than preschool providers.<sup>7</sup> Infant-toddler providers, especially in home-based settings such as family child care, are more likely to speak English as a second

language and to face barriers in attending college to meet professional development requirements. Our workforce development recommendations are aimed at removing barriers so that infant-toddler providers can access professional development opportunities, especially those which support dual-language learners and culturally sensitive care giving.

### **Recommendations – Workforce Development**

**Top Priority:** Ensure broad availability of college courses and professional development opportunities for infant-toddler caregivers, especially training to help providers meet higher quality standards. Provide the additional supports for college readiness that are needed by infant-toddler providers to help them satisfy course requirements (e.g., foreign transcript review, English-language skill development, scholarships and stipends).

#### **Additional Recommendations:**

- Ensure caregivers have training on identification of and early intervention for children at risk and with special needs.
- Expand training opportunities for infant-toddler providers in supporting the needs of dual language learners, including increasing access to evidence-based professional development programs for infant-toddler providers who are themselves English Language Learners.

While California continues to make progress in creating a coherent workforce development system with high quality standards, the level of access and participation amongst those offering infant-toddler services is unknown.<sup>8</sup> As these professional development opportunities expand, the state should track access to the programs, enrollment by infant-toddler providers, and measured outcomes. Additionally, the workgroup discussions made clear that the state should examine the following questions related to existing professional development opportunities and outcomes:

- Do the new Early Childhood Teacher Competencies adequately prepare infant-toddler professionals, especially on issues important to the 0-3 years such as reflective practice, emergent language and family engagement?
- As the Course Alignment Project succeeds in supporting articulation between the community colleges and the California State University system, will infant-toddler caregivers be able to find lower division courses that support their needs to develop competence?
- Which infant-toddler professionals take advantage of opportunities such as the Infant, Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Competencies or the ECE Teacher Competencies?

- How will the scarce resources for professional development and quality improvement be shared among 0-3 and preschool professionals?
- Will infant-toddler providers participate in the pilot Workforce Registry?

Workgroup participants also emphasized the importance of family engagement in early childhood programming as a value, although this area did not rise to the top of the priority rankings. Workforce development can be provided in ways that recognize this need. Recommendations for how to support family engagement within workforce development measures include:

- Improve cultural and language competence of service providers so that English-language learner families can be meaningfully engaged in early learning.
- Expand access by families and license-exempt child care providers to home visitation programs that support early learning, including early literacy and language acquisition.
- Support system development by tracking access to service provider training and growth of culturally and linguistically responsive services.

Workgroup participants acknowledged that most infants in out-of-home child care are cared for by license-exempt child care providers, and commented that adequate attention should be paid to this environment where many infants and toddlers spend significant time. In spite of this, providing professional development opportunities for license-exempt providers was not a highly-ranked priority of the survey respondents.

### **System Building**

All young children and their families need access to services that support their various needs including physical and behavioral health services in addition to high-quality and affordable early care and education services. Programs that address these needs are essential to a child's future health, happiness, and success, but programs are only as strong as the infrastructure that supports them. To be effective, programs must be organized within cohesive systems that coordinate and align a broad array of services, maximize the effective use of available funding, and encourage collaboration and linkages between different parts of the service provision system. Families and their children need seamless transitions as their children age and progress which support family engagement from early in the child's life and throughout developmental stages. Such a comprehensive system must include high-quality standards, evidence-based practices, unified funding sources, efforts at quality improvement, and accountability.

California has made strides in comprehensive early childhood system development in the past decade. First 5 has modeled system building at the county, regional and state levels.

Increased efforts have also fostered cross-sector collaboration between the early care and education, health, early childhood mental health, and early intervention systems. Furthermore, individual providers within these systems have established their own cross-sector collaborations and deserve support for their leadership in piloting comprehensive, cross-sector approaches.

Currently, there are additional opportunities to build on this foundation. For example, the new infusion of federal funds for evidence-based home visitation models provides one opportunity to create horizontal system connections. Transitional Kindergarten can also serve as a mechanism to build bridges vertically between the K-12 and 0-5 systems. Still, funds for these collaborative systems-building discussions are often the first to be cut when budgets become tight. During the current fiscal crisis, First 5 funds for locally-directed planning and systems-building are repeatedly threatened by legislative and executive proposals. Likewise, support for the Early Learning Advisory Council has been reduced. Our recommendations focus on building bridges between existing systems while laying the groundwork for comprehensive systems development inclusive of 0-3 services in the future.

### ***Recommendations - Developing an Early Childhood Education System for 0-5 and Beyond***

**Top Priority:** Promote effective referrals for children in foster care and those considered at risk of abuse and neglect to high-quality ECE programs.

**Additional recommendations:**

Strengthen transitions between systems beginning at birth.

Recommendations for building a 0-5 Data System to support systems building were also discussed:

- Create a unique identifier that can allow data tracking of children from birth and across systems.
- Track infant-toddler provider participation in high quality workforce development that is aligned with ECE Competencies, Foundations, Curriculum Guidelines, and other standards.

### ***The Role of ELAC***

California's Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC) was created to succeed the work of the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee (CAEL QIS). The ELAC's purpose is to develop a comprehensive early learning system and policy plan for birth to five services in California, and has already undertaken many important initiatives around system building and quality enhancement. This plan would develop a vision of a coordinated system addressing the entire range of policies and programs affecting children ages birth through five. The state took a drastic step back in systems building efforts when the Governor

proposed elimination of this advisory committee. In addition to receiving federal ARRA funds to support its work, the existence of an ELAC makes California more competitive for other funding sources, most notably the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Fund dollars. Currently, the ELAC continues to face considerable uncertainty in terms of status and scope. Workgroup members believe that preserving the Early Learning Advisory Council and sustaining its activities are important priorities. If the ELAC is able to go forward, the workgroup recommends that:

- ELAC ensures that the comprehensive plan includes strategies to increase availability of, access to and quality of infant-toddler programs.
- ELAC ensures that ELAC-supported activities, including QRIS implementation, workforce development initiatives, and data system development, consider the needs of infants and toddlers.



## Conclusions

One-third of California's 1.6 million infants and toddlers face serious risks that compromise their development and school readiness: living in poverty, growing up in a linguistically isolated family, or having parents who are unemployed or have less than a high school education.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, 330,000 children under age three live in families struggling with poverty and challenged to meet basic family needs. Many babies experience domestic violence, family drug use, family dissolution or homelessness. These challenges are associated with poor school performance, juvenile delinquency, dropping out of high school, and other problems that compromise life success.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, the 0-3 years mark the most significant period of development for our children as they learn to regulate themselves and navigate the world around them. Support and care during this process is critical to each child's ability to enter K-12 education well-developed and prepared to learn. This support becomes even more essential when infants and toddlers face the difficult challenges mentioned above. Investment in the care of children in this age group, particularly those in the highest needs situations, is non-negotiable.

California's policymakers face difficult choices during tough economic times: what programs are essential to preserve? How do we share limited resources among many vital services? Today's budget decisions will have long-term consequences for California's most vulnerable children and families. Investments in the earliest years are a proven investment in our future and our public investment in this age group must reflect that reality. Not only will greater investment in children during their first three years reap significant future savings in public programs, create a more productive workforce and increase the number of future citizens who are self-sufficient; but it will also ensure that all children, regardless of where they live or the circumstances in which they were born, will have the opportunity to enter their education and their lives fully prepared to thrive.<sup>11</sup>

## Next Steps

Early learning advocates throughout California are working diligently on behalf of infants and toddlers. The Water Cooler, the workgroup, and our partner organizations implore policy makers to support the developmental and educational needs of infants and toddlers in California through furthering the policy recommendations put forth in this report. The needs of these young learners in California are great, and the benefit to our state of supporting these children and families will be felt for many years to come.

---

<sup>1</sup>C. Bruner, *Early Learning Left Out: Building an Early Learning Childhood System to Secure America's Future*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Washington, DC: Voices for America's Children, 2010. <http://www.voices.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/ELLO.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Halle, T., Forry, N., Hair, E., Perper, K., Wandner, L., Wessel, J., & Vick, J.

(2009). *Disparities in Early Learning and Development: Lessons from the Early Childhood*

*Longitudinal Study – Birth Cohort (ECLS-B)*. Washington, DC: Child Trends; Hart & T. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience Of Young American Children*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Voices for America's Children and C. Bruner, *Early Learning Left Out: Building an Early Learning Childhood System to Secure America's Future* (3rd Edition), 2010.

<sup>4</sup> National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (2011). *We Can Do Better: 2011 Update: NACCRRA's Ranking of State Child Care Center Regulation and Oversight*. Washington DC: NACCRRA. Available at <http://www.naccrra.org/publications/naccrra-publications/we-can-do-better-2011.php>.

<sup>5</sup> CA Resource & Referral Network (2009). *California Child Care Portfolio*. Available at <http://www.rrnetwork.org>.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony, J. J., & Muenchow, S. (2010). *California infant/toddler early learning and care needs assessment: A policy brief*. Sacramento, CA: American Institutes for Research as a partner in the California Comprehensive Center at WestEd. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/airpolicybrief.pdf>

<sup>7</sup>Center for the Study of Child Care Employment (2006). *California Early Care and Education Workforce Study: Licensed Child Care Centers and Family Child Care Providers: Statewide Highlights, July 2006*. Berkeley, CA: Center for the Study of Child Care Employment, Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California at Berkeley and California Child Care Resource and Referral Network. Available at <http://www.irle.berkeley.edu/cscce/2006/california-early-care-and-education-workforce-study/>

<sup>8</sup> Anthony and Muenchow, *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> Estimate based on figures for children 0-6 years of age from the National Center for Children in Poverty, retrieved May 18, 2010 from [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/pdf/profile\\_early\\_childhood\\_CA.pdf](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/pdf/profile_early_childhood_CA.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> J. Heckman, "Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children," *Science*, 312 (2006): 1900-1902.

<sup>11</sup> For more information see <http://www.zerotothree.org/policyguide>.

## Water Cooler Staff Support

Molly Munger, Co-Director, Advancement Project

Sharon Scott Dow, Director of Governmental Relations, Advancement Project

Kim Pattillo Brownson, Director of Educational Equity, Advancement Project

Khydeeja Alam Javid, Legislative Advocate, Advancement Project

Kathleen Manis, Policy Analyst, Advancement Project

Angela Vazquez, Policy Analyst, Advancement Project

Melissa Reardon, Administrative Coordinator, Advancement Project



ADVANCEMENT  
PROJECT

1910 West Sunset Blvd. Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90026  
213 989-1300

925 L Street, Suite 305  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
916 441-0162

[www.advancementprojectca.org](http://www.advancementprojectca.org)