

San Mateo County Office of Education San Mateo Early Childhood Quality Improvement Project (EQuIP)

INTRODUCTION

The San Mateo Early Childhood Quality Improvement Project (EQuIP) is a comprehensive, countywide early childhood education quality improvement initiative. Using lessons learned from the Preschool for All demonstration project, and the strong background that the San Mateo Office of Education (SMCOE) has developed in supporting program improvement for early childhood education (ECE) programs, EQuIP offers a menu of evidence-based strategies sure to meet the needs of all types of programs (family child care, infant-toddler, preschool, and exempt care). The program model overview described below directly addresses First 5 San Mateo's (F5SMC) 2009-2015 Strategic Plan, responds to documented community needs, and uses evaluation findings to strengthen proposed activities.

BACKGROUND

Preschool for All (PFA) in San Mateo County was launched in 2004, and has been a multi-year demonstration project designed to support the implementation of high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year olds in San Mateo County. As the recipient of an early implementation grant from First 5 California, San Mateo County was the first California county to implement a PFA program. The first preschool classrooms opened in March 2005. The San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) served as the lead agency responsible for administering the project. FY 08-09 was the final year that direct classroom spaces were funded as part of PFA. As the chapter of PFA closed in 2009, a new chapter began as PFA transformed itself into a quality support initiative for early childhood education (ECE) programs throughout San Mateo County.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Improve the quality of ECE programs through training, technical assistance and leadership development.
- Build the long-term capacity of ECE providers and programs to provide high quality programs for children 0-5.
- Be accessible to center-based and family child care providers in public and private programs.
- Promote family involvement.
- Promote intentional collaboration with partner First 5 grantees and others.
- Leverage available private and/or public resources to the greatest extent possible.
- Support high quality programs through a combination of county-wide and targeted interventions.

STRATEGIES

- *Teachers and classrooms will have a much wider array of supports to choose from, ranging from broad-based Technical Assistance (TA) to specific TA targeting particular domains of quality. Teachers and administrators will be able to select the type of support that best meets their needs.*
- *Virtual Pre-K, Raising a Reader, and Early Childhood Language Development Institute services will provide concrete strategies and materials for increasing parental involvement in children's learning both in the classroom and at home, with a special emphasis on English Language Learners.*
- *Curriculum materials to enhance science and math instruction will be made available through SMCOE Curriculum Services and RAFT. Raising a Reader will be expanded to continue successful literacy supports.*
- *Devereux trainings and the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning trainings will build teacher skill and capacity to address children's social-emotional development in the classroom.*
- *Independent environmental assessments and follow-up technical assistance will continue and be expanded to infant-toddler programs and family child care homes. Mini-grants will be available to help address materials and equipment needs identified on assessments.*
- *The EQuIP Technical Assistance Coordinator will become trained in administering the CLASS and will provide technical assistance to classrooms focused on improving teacher-child interactions.*

EQUIP GOALS

The following goals summarize what EQuIP is accomplishing through coordinated training, technical assistance, and supports to early childhood providers and programs.

- *Promote the educational and career progress of ECE professionals towards completing ECE Certificates, Child Development Permits and Degrees.*

- *ECE programs will provide high quality learning environments for children 0-5 years old.*
- *Teachers and providers will have the knowledge and skills to provide high quality early care and education services to children ages 0-5.*
- *Child care center directors will have the knowledge and skills they need to effectively lead and manage high quality early care and education programs for children ages 0-5.*
- *Advance F5SMC's Communications and Systems Change efforts to promote optimal early childhood development for children 0-5 in San Mateo County.*
- *Demonstrate the effectiveness of project strategies through participation in an independently administered process and outcome evaluation.*

EQUIP PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Workforce Development; Environmental Assessments and Technical Assistance; Behavioral and Social Emotional Health; Infant and Toddler Care and Development; Curriculum Supports (*Virtual Pre-K, Early Childhood Language Development Institute (ECLD)*); Raising a Reader; Leadership Development and Peer Mentoring for Child Care Administrators; Communications and Systems and Data Collection (For in depth information on the EQUIP Program Components see contact information below).

DID YOU KNOW.....

- San Mateo PFA was highlighted in a national RAND report released in 2009, which found that PFA classrooms in San Mateo outperformed classrooms statewide on all measures of quality assessed.
- The PFA demonstration project increased capacity and improved the quality of preschool for all four-year-old children, regardless of income, in the two target communities within the Redwood City and East Palo Alto School Districts.
- In the 2006-07 to 2008-09 school years, 2,084 children attended PFA programs. Of these children, data matched 594 to the Redwood City School District (RCS), 567 who moved directly from PFA to enter RCS as kindergarteners.
- In 2008-2009, 782 children in a low performing school district attended high quality preschool through Preschool for All.
- From March 2005 through April 2009, over 3,300 children were served in PFA classrooms by 5 child development programs within the boundaries of Redwood City and Ravenswood school districts. The classroom partners included the Redwood City School District Child Development Centers, Head Start and three community based non-profits.
- The American Institutes of Research (AIR) conducted a four-year evaluation of PFA in San Mateo County generating a wealth of information about how to work with early childhood programs on quality improvement. EQUIP strategies incorporate these lessons into the strategies chosen for implementation.

The children that participated in the Preschool for All Launch in March 2005 are now in the 3^d grade!



(March 2005)

For additional information on San Mateo Early Childhood Quality Improvement Project or the PFA Demonstration Project, contact Jeanie McLoughlin at jmcloughlin@smcoe.k12.ca.us or go to <http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/>.