



# **Steps to Excellence Program Implementation Plan: Launching a Child Care Quality Rating System in Los Angeles County**

**Prepared by the  
Los Angeles County  
Policy Roundtable for Child Care**

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## 1. Introduction

Three years ago, two members of the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) faced their own child care challenges. One, a new father, was investigating infant care, while the other was seeking preschool services for his grandchildren.

These two prospective child care consumers, leaders in their professions, were decidedly unsettled by their child care searches. They knew that participating in a high quality child development program could be beneficial and that a poor quality program could have negative consequences for young children. But how were they to determine which programs were high quality? Their confidence in the child care licensing system was shaken by news stories of convicted criminals working in programs and reductions in the number on-site inspections. Referrals and check lists were available – but the information to actually compare the quality of different programs was not readily accessible and confusing.

The Roundtable became their venue where these frustrations were aired and where solutions were explored. Recognizing that these experiences were shared with families throughout the County, the Roundtable set out to design a voluntary child care quality rating system that would:

- Provide parents with clear, concise information on the quality of individual child care settings serving children from infancy through preschool,
- Distinguish programs that are meeting higher program standards,
- Create incentives and provide supports so programs can achieve and maintain higher program standards,
- Build a case for linking reimbursement rates to program quality, and
- Provide benchmarks to determine if the quality of care in individual programs or communities is improving over time.

Over the past three years and in conjunction with a variety of stakeholders, the Roundtable has developed the Steps to Excellence Program (STEP). STEP is a child care rating system which will provide families, providers and communities with critically important information on the quality of child care services. As proposed, participation in STEP would be voluntary and all licensed child care programs would be encouraged to engage in program improvements that have been shown to improve outcomes for children. Attention has been paid to align standards with child care licensing, and various funding and accreditation systems so as to minimize the administrative burden of participation. The Roundtable recognizes that technical assistance and support will be needed to ensure broad participation from family child care homes and child care centers.

Given the size and complexity of Los Angeles County, we are presenting a detailed plan to pilot the implementation of STEP in specific communities in Los Angeles County. A number of organizations have expressed interest in supporting the implementation of STEP either financially or programmatically. With the support of the Board of Supervisors and these partners, the STEP could effectively narrow the gap between what we know and what we do to

promote the healthy development of the thousands of young children enrolled in child care and development programs throughout Los Angeles County.

## 2. What is a Child Care Quality Rating System?

In *Stair Steps to Quality*, Anne Mitchell succinctly defined a Quality Rating System (QRS) as a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in early care and education settings and highlighted the following five elements common to most QRS:<sup>1</sup>

- a. **Standards** – Compliance with state child care licensing generally serves as the minimum, with two or more levels of quality criteria above licensing. Standards are based on early care and education research and practices that have gained wide acceptance.
- b. **Accountability** – Valid and reliable methods of assessment are used to monitor compliance with standards and assign quality ratings.
- c. **Programs & practitioner outreach & support** – Outreach is conducted to promote participation and support is provided to programs to facilitate their meeting criteria expressed in the standards and improving their program quality.
- d. **Financing incentives linked to compliance with quality standards** – Incentives could be in the form of quality bonus payments, tiered reimbursement rates, quality grants and/or wage supplements.
- e. **Parent education** - Effectively communicate with families how the QRS works and how to use the information on program quality when choosing a child care program.

## 3. Why is a Quality Rating System (QRS) necessary?

There are just over 3,000 (3,070) licensed child development centers and nearly 11,000 (10,962) licensed family child care homes in Los Angeles County. Combined, these programs have an estimated capacity to care for 226,000 children ranging in age from six weeks to five years.

Child care licenses issued by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division are intended to ensure the basic health and safety of child care programs. However, even this limited scope was undermined by California's recent fiscal crisis:

“Under standards implemented during the state budget crisis in 2003, California switched from annual monitoring of day-care facilities to a system of inspecting only once every five years, one of the least-frequent monitoring programs in the nation. But despite recent improvement efforts, inspections are still not happening often enough to meet even the lower standard, auditors found.”<sup>2</sup>

Health and safety are essential - but far from exclusive - factors in determining the quality of child development services. High quality child development services also address relationships, environments, and resources that support the healthy development of children and their families. Accreditation programs managed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association for Family Child Care offer comprehensive

assessments of child development program quality. These programs are national in scope and participation is voluntary. Unfortunately, only 7 percent of the child care centers and less than 2 percent of the family child care homes in Los Angeles County are accredited.

The quality of child development programs is of concern to parents and policy makers because research has shown that children who participated in high quality child care and development programs had better cognitive and social skills upon entering the K-12 education system, lower enrollment rates in special education, higher high school graduation rates, fewer arrests, and higher rates of employment than their peers who did not participate in such programs.<sup>3</sup> Children attending mediocre or poor quality program do not enjoy these benefits.

“Research demonstrates that it is the quality of a program that is most important to a young child’s development. Indicators of quality that encourage conditions in which children are better able to learn and grow include: low teacher-child ratios, small group sizes, qualified teaching staff, positive teacher-child interactions, parental involvement, and access to comprehensive services such as health care and mental health services.<sup>4</sup>

Low-income and minority children can benefit fully from good schools only if they enter these schools ready to learn. Narrowing the achievement gap requires early childhood programs, staffed with professional teachers and nurses, and with curricula that emphasize not only literacy but social and emotional growth. Social class differences in vocabulary and conceptual ability develop by age 3.<sup>5</sup>

There is an unacceptably wide gap between what we know and what we do to promote healthy childhood development.”<sup>6</sup>

The quality rating system developed by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care, known as Steps to Excellence Program (STEP) is designed to provide parents with objective and relevant information with which to compare child care options. The system is also intended to focus training and support for child care providers on program improvements which maximize positive outcomes for children, and to engage both licensed family child care homes and child care centers in making those program improvements.

The Roundtable acknowledges that a significant number of young children are receiving regular child care services from relatives, friends and neighbors. These providers, who are frequently caring for their own children and those of one other family, are not required to be licensed. The Roundtable’s decision to limit participation in the QRS to licensed providers was in response to the complexity of the task and the need to work with an identifiable population. This decision should not be viewed as valuing licensed care over license-exempt care.

#### **4. What value would STEP offer families, providers and communities in Los Angeles County?**

STEP is designed to assess those aspects of child care programs which affect child outcomes, and to make that information available to **parents** in a clear and concise manner. Many of the program aspects which affect child outcomes are not obvious to the casual observer. For example, teacher education, retention and compensation have been shown to positively impact the language, math, and social skills of participating children through at least third grade. Research has also demonstrated that lower child to teacher ratios positively impact the quality of interactions between teachers and children. Opportunities for complex play and learning can be enhanced by the materials available in the classroom.

Locally, Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) is using an abbreviated version of the STEP quality rating system. LAUP refers to their version as the 5-Star Quality Assessment and Improvement Scale. The scale is used to define the programmatic standards that LAUP classrooms must meet, inform parents about program quality, identify areas where technical support is needed, and determine the level of financial support. It should be noted that LAUP services are limited to four-year olds, and the 5-Star Quality Assessment and Improvement Scale is limited to those classrooms. Implementation of STEP would give parents of younger children a similar tool to assess the quality of the prospective programs.

STEP would also provide **child care operators** with a focused message on indicators of high quality child development services for young children from birth through five. The difference between basic licensing standards and the standards required for accreditation is significant – so much so that many programs see accreditation as unattainable. By contrast, STEP is intended to involve programs from across the quality spectrum and to acknowledge incremental improvements in areas that impact child outcomes.

By recognizing the quality of all programs, STEP effectively highlights programs that are providing high quality services. It is a long-term goal that reimbursement rates for publicly funded child care services would reflect the higher costs associated with higher quality programs.

Millions of dollars are used each year to purchase child care services for **clients of Los Angeles County**. During Fiscal Year 2004-05, the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) administered \$104,550,000 in Stage 1 Child Care payments for Los Angeles County families participating in the CalWORKs Program. An additional \$138,000,000, administered by community-based child care organizations, was available for families using Stages 2 and 3 child care. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) administered a contract which included \$12,225,839 in child care payments.

Children in families who are receiving services from DPSS and/or DCFS are extremely vulnerable due to poverty, neglect and /or abuse. In many instances, these families are new to social service institutions and the formal child care sector. Frequently, parents have limited time to choose a child care setting and varying levels of support to make an informed choice. STEP could provide assurances that these families, who could reap significant benefits from quality child care, are in fact accessing high quality services.

## **5. Who else is implementing quality rating systems and what lessons can we learn?**

Quality Rating Systems (QRS) are a rapidly advancing approach for improving child care quality. United Way of Orange County launched a program this past spring to assess the quality of child care centers. Fourteen states are currently operating QRS that encompass both child care centers and family child care homes:

Colorado	New Mexico
District of Columbia	North Carolina
Iowa	Oklahoma
Kentucky	Pennsylvania
Maryland	Tennessee
Montana	Vermont
New Hampshire	Wyoming

In addition, 23 other states report operating tiered reimbursement systems, which pay higher rates to programs meeting standards above local licensing regulations. The experiences of these “pioneers” offer guidance on what a QRS can contribute to the field of early care and education.

In 1998, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services launched its “Reaching for the Stars” program. This program was intended to improve the quality of child care, particularly for children receiving child care subsidies, by establishing quality criteria beyond licensing standards. Programs meeting these enhanced standards were reimbursed at higher rates for their services. Between Fall 2001 and Spring 2002, a sample of star-rated child care centers and family child care homes was identified. Observations were conducted at the sample sites using the Caregiver Interaction Scale, and Family Child Care Environment, Infant/Toddler or Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale(s). Results of this evaluation revealed that:

- The quality of care available to preschool-age children had improved between 1999 and 2002.
- Many centers raised their Star levels between 1999 and 2002.
- Family child care home quality varied by Star level, with higher levels of quality being offered in homes with high ratings.<sup>7</sup>

North Carolina moved from a two- to five-star child care licensing system in 1999. The purpose of the five-star system was to emphasize the importance of child care quality and to provide parents with additional information to compare their child care options. Research conducted in December 2000 revealed a significant relationship between the star rating level of a child care center and other indicators of program quality.<sup>8</sup>

The RAND Corporation is in the process of conducting a five-year evaluation of **Educare**, a public-private partnership created to improve child care quality for Colorado's children. With OMNI, a Denver-based non-profit research institution, RAND will validate Educare's quality rating system. To do so, the RAND/OMNI team is conducting assessments of children's cognitive and social functioning as well as utilizing alternative quality indicators in a set of child care centers and family child care homes that are receiving public funds to improve child care quality. Study findings should assist Educare in making any needed adjustments to its rating system. Study data should substantially increase understanding of the effects of child care quality on children. Results should also contribute to improved child care practice, to new understandings about how to leverage quality improvement funds, and to addressing other important policy questions in the child care arena.

## **6. Steps to Excellence Program: A QRS for Los Angeles County**

### **a. Guiding Principles**

The following principles have guided the development of STEP for child care centers and family child care homes in Los Angeles County:

- **Voluntary and beneficial** - Participation in STEP will be voluntary and beneficial to programs, effectively communicating to parents the value of the services provided.

- **Inclusive** – The goal is to include as many programs as possible in STEP, acknowledge incremental quality improvements, and promote a common understanding of high quality child development services among parents and child care providers.
- **Aligned** – The intent is to minimize administrative burdens associated with participation in STEP while also supporting involvement in various quality initiatives. Therefore:
  - Step 1 is aligned with basic licensing standards.
  - Step 3 is largely aligned with Title 5 of the California Education Code, which regulates programs funded by the California Department of Education and with the 3-Star level of the LAUP quality rating system.
  - Step 5 is largely aligned with the 5-Star level of the LAUP quality rating system and the accreditation standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Association for Family Child Care. Child care providers participating in these initiatives will be able to utilize some LAUP and accreditation materials to document compliance with the QRS.
- **Standards are research-based** or reflect best practices – The standards in STEP have been shown by research or best practices to positively impact child and family outcomes.
  - Rating Instrument – With support from the First 5 LA Commission, the quality rating instruments were field tested in 2005 by the Center for Improving Child Care Quality at the University of California, Los Angeles. It was determined that the rating instruments are capable of assessing program quality. Recommendations made at the time of the field test to further refine the instruments have been adopted.
  - Ratios – There is a general consensus among early childhood professionals and researchers that smaller classes and lower child-adult ratios improve quality in early childhood programs.<sup>9</sup>
  - Staff qualifications – The education levels of early childhood educators, as well as their specialized training in early childhood and child development, directly relate to the positive learning and development of children.<sup>10</sup>
  - Staff compensation and turnover – Teacher education is highly correlated with teacher wages and turnover. Teachers with more education are paid more and tend to stay at their jobs longer than those who are less educated and paid less.<sup>11</sup>
- **Support and technical assistance** – Efforts will be made to facilitate the successful participation of programs in STEP by expanding and mobilizing existing training and support resources.

- **“Prepping for the test”**– Programs are encouraged to carefully review STEP criteria and to integrate policies and practices, which align with STEP standards, into their daily operations.

The STEP rating instruments incorporate nationally recognized assessment tools that are frequently used to measure both process and structural quality of child care services.

**b. What does STEP measure?**

A copy of the STEP rating instruments and companion documents are included in Attachment A. Briefly, STEP is composed of the following components:

- (1) Regulatory compliance – Documentation is provided showing that the facility is in compliance with the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, local Fire and, if applicable, Health regulations.
- (2) Teacher/Child Relationships – This component includes the program’s self report on teacher and staff to child ratios, a reviewer’s confirmation of those ratios, and scores on the Adult Involvement Scale (AIS). The AIS will be conducted by a trained evaluator.
- (3) Learning Environment – A trained evaluator will administer and score the appropriate Environment Rating Scale(s).
- (4) Identification and Inclusion of Children with Special Needs – The program will provide documentation of their policies regarding the inclusion of children with special needs, as well as their practices to conduct, in conjunction with parents, developmental screens on all participating children.
- (5) Qualifications and Working Conditions – The program provides documentation of staff qualifications, compensation, retention and professional development.
- (6) Family and Community – The program provides documentation of strategies used to:
  - (i) welcome and encourage involvement all enrolled families
  - (ii) foster strong reciprocal relationships with families,
  - (iii) build on family strengths and social connections, and
  - (iv) facilitate connections between parents and relevant community resources.

**6. Implementation of STEP**

The size of Los Angeles County and the density of its population make implementation of even good ideas challenging. The number of licensed child care providers (child care centers and family child care homes) in Los Angeles County is larger than that of 46 states.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the Roundtable recognizes that implementation of STEP may be best accomplished through a phase-in process, beginning with a pilot. The Roundtable recommends that the pilot be launched in strategically identified communities in Los Angeles County so that, at the end of the pilot period, we will better understand how the rating system impacts:

- the child development choices of families receiving subsidized services and families paying the full cost of these services, and
- the operations of child development programs that are fully subsidized and those that rely on parent fees.

**a. Opportunities for Collaboration**

Just as STEP rating instruments were designed to align with existing systems, implementation is intended to be accomplished in collaboration with organizations currently working with families and child development programs. The following list describes some of the collaborative opportunities that have been explored and highlights potential partners that have expressed interest in supporting STEP:

1. Outreach to families

- Child care resource and referral agencies: include information on STEP in the child care referral process, on organization Web pages and in newsletters.
- Department of Children and Family Services: encourage families receiving subsidized child care services through the Department to use STEP in making their child care choices, and incorporate information on STEP into written materials and Web page where child care issues are discussed.
- Department of Public Social Services: in conjunction with child care program subcontractors, inform families receiving CalWORKs child care subsidies of STEP and incorporate STEP information into the child care Web site maintained by the Department.
- LAUP: include a link to the Office of Child Care Web page, which posts rated child care programs.
- Office of Child Care: include information for parents and a listing of rated programs on Web site.

2. Outreach to programs

- Child care resource and referral agencies: include information on STEP in newsletters and work with centers and family child care providers.
- Child Care Planning Committee: incorporate regular reports into monthly meetings and assist with program recruitment.
- Office of Child Care: post information on STEP, including training opportunities, on Web page.

3. Technical assistance to programs

- Child care resource and referral agencies: align training and support activities with components of the STEP.

- Investing in Early Educators Program: sponsor training that aligns with the components of the STEP, such as the Environment Rating Scales, developmental screening tools and program management.
- Child Abuse Prevention Center: collaborate on training child care staff and family child care providers on the Family and Community portion of STEP, thereby promoting the Strengthening Families model of child abuse prevention.
- Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) - Child Care Training Institute: align training and support activities with components of STEP.

4. Administration of STEP rating:

- Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services and the Environmental Health Section of the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services: verify the status of applicants to STEP.
- Programs that include LAUP classrooms would not be required to repeat the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) observation.
- The City of Santa Monica and Connections for Children are interested in using the STEP as part of a tiered reimbursement system for subsidized child care in Santa Monica.

**b. Pilot Project Communities and Implementation Goals**

Building on the collaborations described above, the Roundtable has tentatively identified 60 cities and the Prevention Project target communities to launch STEP. The first chart on the next page identifies the communities, the pool of potential child care programs in each, the number of accredited centers and family child care homes, and LAUP sites.

Combined, there are currently over 400 child care centers, 73 of which include infant/toddler services, and 1,998 licensed family child care homes. This provides a pool of just over 2,400 programs to participate in STEP.

Our goal is to involve 210 or 50 percent of the child care centers and 400 or 20 percent of the licensed family child care homes in STEP over a two year period. We are also proposing that as a part of the STEP evaluation, at least 25 percent of all participating centers and 10 percent of all participating family child care homes would be rated during Year 3 as a part of the STEP evaluation.

Proposed Pilot Communities	Centers				Family Child Care Homes		
	Infant *	Preschool	LAUP Sites	NAEYC Accredited	Homes	LAUP Sites	NAFCC Accredited
<b>Prevention Initiative</b>							
Florence/Firestone 90001	1	7	1	0	60	1	0
Wilmington 90744	2	11	1	0	40	0	1
Pacoima/Arleta 91331	3	21	2	3	95	3	3
Palmdale 93550	3	16	2	2	195	2	2
<b>Inglewood</b>	8	38	2	2	350	1	5
<b>Long Beach</b>	27	136	11	14	504	9	20
<b>Palmdale (93550, 93551)</b>	4	25	2	2	403	2	4
<b>Pasadena</b>	13	70	2	6	178	0	1
<b>Pomona</b>	5	45	7	1	141	1	0
<b>Santa Monica</b>	7	50	3	14	32	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>419</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>1,998</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Proposed Participants</b>		<b>50% - 210</b>			<b>20%- 400</b>		

\*While centers are required to hold separate licenses to provide infant care, most infant programs operate as a part of a child development program serving multiple age groups. Accredited and LAUP sites per 6/20/06 listing on respective Web sites.

### c. STEP Pilot Program Budget

The Office of Child Care currently administers a number of programs funded by the California Department of Education. The recent award of dedicated funding to support the operation of the Centralized Eligibility List has created new flexibility in the administration of the Local Child Care Planning contract. Implementation of a child care quality rating system was listed as a goal in the Child Care Planning Committee's 10-year strategic plan. As a result, the use of Local Child Care Planning contract funds to support the implementation of such a system is consistent with both local child care planning efforts and contract funding terms.

The Office of Child Care can therefore dedicate the following staff and operational support to the implementation of STEP:

▪ Special Services Assistant III (20 percent time)	\$ 21,948
▪ Chief Program Specialist (10 percent time)	\$ 10,374
▪ Program Specialist III (25 percent time)	\$ 18,000
▪ Program Specialist III (100 percent time) (Currently allocated, but vacant position)	\$ 72,000
▪ Senior Secretary III (20 percent time)	<u>\$ 9,854</u>
	\$132,176
▪ Employee benefits	<u>\$ 55,514</u>
	\$187,690
▪ General operating costs: space, equipment, phone, etc.	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
▪ Total	<b>\$212,690</b>

Additional STEP costs would include the following:

<b>Budget Items</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
Program Observations	\$300,000	\$300,000	
Data analysis	\$5,000	\$5,000	
Project Evaluation			
▪ Follow-up observations			\$300,000
▪ Analysis, report			\$60,000
Subtotal	\$305,000	\$305,000	\$360,000
STEP incentives	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$80,000
Training/Coaching	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$100,000
Materials development & distribution	\$25,000	\$15,000	\$10,000
Subtotal	\$140,000	\$195,000	\$190,000
Grand Total	\$445,000	\$500,000	\$550,000

This budget would allow for a minimum of 110 child care center and 190 family child care home observations in both Year 1 and Year 2 or 50 percent of centers and 20 percent of the family child care homes in the pilot communities. The evaluation component would include follow-up observations of 50 percent of participating centers and family child care homes.

**d. Potential Funding Sources**

The Roundtable has explored a variety of funding sources to support the launching of the STEP pilot project including First 5 LA, multiple private foundations and two municipalities. While firm commitments have not been made, the results of these initial explorations have been extremely positive. One potential partner has already identified incentive funds to encourage participation in the quality rating system.

**e. STEP Implementation Schedule**

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
9/06-12/06	Research and secure funding commitment to conduct on-site ECERS and AIS estimated at \$305,000 - \$360,000 per year, beginning July 1, 2007. Determine mechanism to secure outside services.  Fill Program Specialist III (PSIII) position to act as lead on this program. Funds are currently available.	Policy Roundtable for Child Care, with staff support  Office of Child Care (OCC) – Service Integration Branch
9/06 – 4/07	Secure funding/resources to provide incentives to minimize the cost burden of participation in STEP.	Roundtable, staff
9/06 – 6/07	Secure funding to evaluate the STEP program.	Roundtable, staff
12/06 – 1/07	Finalize agreements with collaborating partners.	PS III

<b>Time Frame</b>	<b>Task</b>	<b>Responsible Parties</b>
1/07	Host event with community stakeholders, including major child care operators in Los Angeles County, to prepare for the July launch of the rating system.  Roger and Bonnie Neugebauer, editors of the <i>Child Care Exchange</i> are willing to facilitate session.	Roundtable, staff
1/07 – 8/07	Create and train the Roundtable STEP Review Committee.	Roundtable Chair with staff support, County Counsel, Community Care Licensing
Ongoing	Provide ongoing support to Committee	
1/07 – 4/07	Initiate recruitment of program to participate in STEP. Creation and distribution of materials and Web site.	PS III with support from the OCC, Roundtable, Planning Committee and partners
Ongoing	Continue promotion and recruitment effort, updating materials and responding to inquiries.	PS III with support from the OCC, Roundtable, Planning Committee and partners
5/07 – 6/09	Coordinate review of applications, verifications from Community Care Licensing and Health Services, schedule on-site observations and forward recommendations to the STEP Review Committee.  Coordinate review of annual program updates.	PS III, OCC
7/07 – 1/08	Secure program evaluator.	PS III, OCC, SIB
1/08 – 6/08	Finalize data collection procedures & project evaluation.	PS III, OCC, Vendor
7/09 – 12/09	Analysis and preparation of final report.	Evaluation Team

## 7. Conclusion

The Roundtable is seeking support from the Board of Supervisors to implement the pilot phase of STEP. Endorsement by the Board of Supervisors will facilitate the Roundtable's ability to finalize the various partnerships identified in this plan and fully implement the assessment, training and support, promotion and evaluation components of STEP.

Based on the experience of other entities who have established child care quality rating systems, STEP has the potential to:

- Provide parents in the pilot communities with clear, concise information on the quality of individual child care settings serving children from infancy through preschool,
- Distinguish programs in the pilot communities that are meeting higher program standards,
- Create an incentive for programs to achieve and maintain higher program standards,
- Build a case for linking reimbursement rates to program quality, and
- Provide benchmarks to determine if the quality of care in individual programs or communities is improving over time.

STEP is a critically important program, designed to close the gap between what we know and what we do to improve the lives of young children in Los Angeles County.

## 8. Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Mitchell, Anne. "Stair Steps to Quality." United Way of America, July 2005, p. 4. Available on the Web at the National Child Care Information Center

[http://national.unitedway.org/files/pdf/sb6/stairstepstoqualityguidebook\\_finalforWEB.pdf](http://national.unitedway.org/files/pdf/sb6/stairstepstoqualityguidebook_finalforWEB.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Benson, Clea. "Child-care safety falls short state auditor says," Sacramento Bee, May 28, 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Examples of research on the impact of quality child development services *The High Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40* by Lawrence Schwienhart, [www.highscope.org](http://www.highscope.org); *The Children of the Cost, Quality and Outcomes Study Go to School*, Carollee Howes, et al, 1999; *Success in Early Intervention: The Chicago Child-Parent Centers*, Arthur Reynolds.

<sup>4</sup> *Reaching All Children? Understanding Early Care and Education Participation Among Immigrant Families*, 2006, CLASP, [www.clasp.org](http://www.clasp.org).

<sup>5</sup> Rothstein, Richard. "Reforms that Could Help Narrow the Achievement Gap," excerpted from *Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap*, Teachers College Press, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Shonkoff, Jack. Quoted by Kathy Cobb, Managing Editor of *The Region* in "The ABCs of ECD: Conference explores the latest research on the economic of early childhood development," December 2003. Available at <http://www.minneapolisfed.org/pubs/region/03-12/ecd.cfm>.

<sup>7</sup> Norris, Deborah, et al. "Reaching for the Stars" Center Validation Study, Executive Summary, November 2003 and "Reaching for the Stars" Family Child Care Home Validation Study, August 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Bryant, Donna, et al. *Validating North Carolina's 5-Star Child Care Licensing System*, Smart Start, Frank Porter Graham, University of North Carolina, February 2001.

<sup>9</sup> Prekindergarten Policy Framework, a project of the FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, section on program standards, Class Size and Adult Child Ratios, available at:

[http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section\\_num=7&subsection\\_num=1](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section_num=7&subsection_num=1).

<sup>10</sup> Prekindergarten Policy Framework, a project of the FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, section on program standards, Teacher Qualifications, available at:

[http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section\\_num=7&subsection\\_num=1](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section_num=7&subsection_num=1).

<sup>11</sup> Prekindergarten Policy Framework, a project of the FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH, section on program standards, Teacher Qualifications, available at:

[http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section\\_num=7&subsection\\_num=1](http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~npc/framework/framework.cfm?section_num=7&subsection_num=1).

<sup>12</sup> *Findings from the 2005 Child Care Licensing Study* produced by the National Association for Regulatory Administration and the National Child Care Information Center, released April 2006.