

Preschool Bridging Model: 2006-2007 Pilot Project

As part of its School Readiness Initiative, the First 5 Sacramento Commission approved a Preschool Bridging Model Pilot for the community served by the Elk Grove Unified School District (EGUSD). This is a demonstration project which is based upon existing district services with the goal of piloting a mixed delivery system for serving children in their existing child care settings, both in child care centers and family child care homes. It is anticipated that information and data gathered from the Bridging Model will contribute toward the development of a countywide workforce development and preschool expansion plan. In April 2005, the First 5 Sacramento Commission allocated \$1.49 million to pilot the Preschool Bridging Model.

Program Quality

With the Preschool Bridging Model in place, 3-5 year-old children will be eligible for quality, preschool experiences for three hours per day, five days per week. All participating classrooms must have a willingness to enhance the quality of their programs. Services will be provided by a credentialed teacher and coaching support by staff from the Elk Grove Unified School District.

Additional Preschool Bridging services include:

- Early screenings and assessments for children
- Parent leadership and family support services
- Health and social services integrated with the educational program
- Enhanced services to increase the quality of existing early care and education centers

Preschool Bridging Model

The Preschool Bridging Model is based upon a mixed delivery system including public and private child care centers and family child care homes. In this model, the focus is on workforce and site development activities. A credentialed preschool teacher, from the Elk Grove Unified School District, will work as a team with staff in licensed child care centers and family child care homes to provide preschool services.

Based upon the existing Elk Grove Unified School District model, each Preschool Bridging Model classroom will also be supported by a Professional Development Coach. The coach is responsible for working with classroom staff to ensure that the individualized needs of English learners and children with disabilities and other special needs are met. The coach will assist the teaching staff through observation, accommodations and mentoring.

Some of the site workforce development activities will be delivered through the Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) program, funded by First 5 Sacramento through a contract with Child Action, Inc.

Preschool Bridging services include:

- Three-hour preschool program, five days per week
- Mentoring of classroom staff or family child care provider
- Child assessment and referral
- Kindergarten Transition planning

Implementation will be achieved through:

- Program expansion
- Workforce development
- Site development

Program Expansion

The goal of the Preschool Bridging Model plan is to pilot a mixed delivery system, including public and private child care centers and family child care homes, and to provide free, voluntary preschool services to 216 eligible 3-5 year-old children living within the district. Each site must be licensed and meet entry-level quality requirements. Program eligibility information can be obtained from the Sacramento County Office of Education.

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Program criteria include:

- A minimum staff to child ratio of 1:8, except in public programs where a 1:10 ratio is already in place
- An environment serving 3-5 year-old children
- Center staff to participate in workforce development activities

Workforce Development

Staff employed in Preschool Bridging Model programs are eligible to participate in workforce development activities through the CARES Program. The CARES Program offers educational incentives for college coursework, opportunities for professional development and assistance in developing quality improvement plans.

Participating child care providers receive benefits that include:

- Opportunity to co-teach with an Elk Grove Unified School District qualified preschool teacher
- Coaching support to enhance preschool services to children
- Educational Planning and CARES stipends for center staff working towards degrees in Early Childhood Education will be offered through Child Action, Inc.
- Professional Development Opportunities

Site Development

Funds allocated for the Preschool Bridging Model plan are allocated to the CARES Program for site and workforce development activities. Programs are required to have an outside evaluator complete either the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale or the Family Day Care Environmental Rating Scale. The CARES Program assists sites by providing incentives, developing quality improvement plans and providing technical assistance toward minimum entry level requirements. The EGUSD will assist with instructional materials to enhance learning environments. Stipends will be available to obtain NAEYC Accreditation.

Current Status

- Ten sites are operational
 - ❖ Three sites are Family Child Care Homes
 - ❖ Two sites are Faith Based
 - ❖ One Montessori Site
 - ❖ Four Private Child Care Centers
- EGUSD teachers with the PBM site teachers are conducting developmental screenings and the DRDP
- Family Advocate is providing Vision and Hearing Screenings and referrals for families as needed
- Quality enhancement of PBM site environments have occurred based on ECERS and FDCES scores
- Kindergarten transition activities are occurring
- Evaluation strategies are in place

For more information:



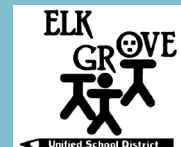
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