

A Foreword from the Co-Director of the Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd

Seeking to forge a strong link between the California Department of Education's (CDE) early care and education quality improvement initiatives and higher education in California, the Faculty Initiative Project (FIP) has been supporting the efforts of faculty to infuse information from the CDE's initiatives into their course work. The instructional guides, which are being created collaboratively with higher education faculty, are a critical component of the Faculty Initiative Project's work. This document, the *CDE/ECE Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1*, is the latest installment of these practical, user-friendly resources.

The preschool learning foundations are at the center of CDE's preschool learning and development system. Created by leading experts, the foundations are based on research and evidence-based information. Volume 1 provides descriptions of young children's learning and development at around 48 months of age and at around 60 months of age in the domains of social-emotional development, language and literacy, and mathematics. In addition, a continuum of English language development describes the process of acquiring competence in English of children who are dual language learners. The CDE has broken new ground with the English language development foundations, which stand as a model for other states as they continue to work on resources similar to the foundations.

Higher education faculty will easily recognize the content of the learning foundations, for it focuses on many concepts they already teach. In the social-emotional development domain, for example, the foundations cover topics such as children's developing self-awareness, self-regulation, peer interaction, and attachments. The foundations identify areas of preschool learning and development that are particularly important for teachers and programs to support. The CDE's preschool curriculum framework and its Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment instrument will be aligned to the foundations. Through infusing the foundations into their course work, faculty will be able to introduce resources and tools that are intended to facilitate their students' work as early childhood educators.

This instructional guide is designed to meet the needs of faculty in a wide variety of situations. Following a widely used teaching and learning sequence, it offers open-ended activities that can be used in their current form or adapted. In a nutshell, the instructional guide provides an easy to-use, ready-to-go set of comprehensive resources, including in-class activities and handouts, that relate to all instructional levels, from an introductory class to master's level graduate study.

My colleagues and I at WestEd greatly appreciate having the opportunity to partner with the Faculty Initiative Project advisors and consultants from higher education. We are excited about this collaborative effort to create resources that are designed specifically for faculty. It is our hope that this instructional guide will help faculty foster a broad and deep understanding of early learning and development in their students—tomorrow’s early childhood educators. Together with the CDE, we look forward to continuing our work with higher education to ensure that all young children have teachers who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to provide high quality early care and education.

Peter Mangione
Co-Director, Center for Child and Family Studies
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