



# Early Educator

CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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## CFT Calls for Investment in ECE Workforce as RAND Study Confirms Value of Quality

This month, The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) released *Expanding Access to Quality Preschool: Investing in Our Children's Success*. Drawing on data from the RAND Corporation's 2007-08 California Preschool Study, the 12-page booklet provides an overview of the many challenges faced by California's center-based child development system. The CFT booklet is available in English and Spanish and can be found on the CFT website at [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org). Just

click on Early Childhood under member center on the left side of the page.

The CFT argues that if we are to make progress in significantly boosting the quality of California's preschools and in closing the state's achievement gap, it is critical that early childhood education programs employ well-trained teachers who are responsive to children's developmental needs.

CFT President Marty Hittelman said: "Focusing our limited dollars on

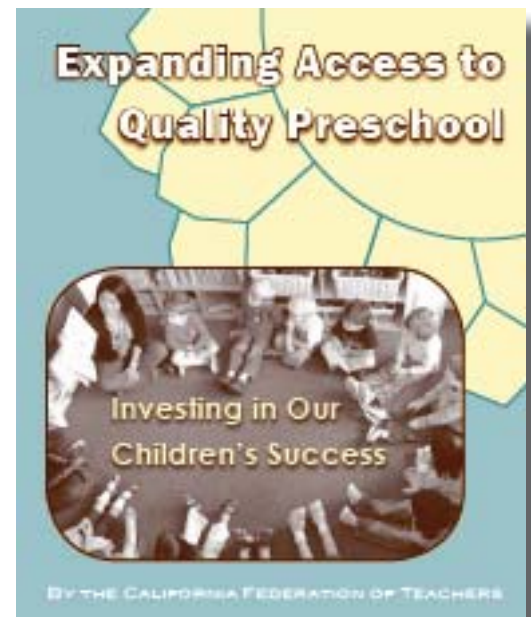
programs serving children one or two years before kindergarten can improve school readiness and raise performance on academic achievement tests in the early elementary grades through middle school. Yet, in

California, just 36 percent of preschool-age children in center-based settings have a lead teacher with a postsecondary degree in the early childhood field at the associate level or higher.

"Quality care and education for California's children is paramount to the CFT," notes Sandra Weese, CFT's Early Childhood Education Organizing Project Director. "The CFT is working to provide each child with knowledgeable well-compensated program staff and educators as they

California's early childhood education workforce is a smart investment in our state's future that can help improve our entire academic system."

Several well-designed studies show high-quality preschool



work to move California to a place where all preschool-aged children have equal access to a safe, high quality early childhood program," Weese added.

To inquire about the study, contact Sandra Weese at 510.523.5238 or [sandraweese@sbcglobal.net](mailto:sandraweese@sbcglobal.net). Read more about the California Preschool Study and related items of interest by visiting RAND at [www.rand.org/pubs/technical\\_reports/TR537](http://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR537) or Preschool California at [www.preschoolcalifornia.org/rand-study](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org/rand-study).

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS



BARACK  
**OBAMA**

**"...We are going to invest in early childhood education to close the achievement gap. And I won't just talk about how great teachers are; I will reward them for their greatness by giving them higher salaries and giving them more support."**

*Barack Obama, Feb. 19, 2008*

Where Barack Obama Stands On

## Early Childhood Education

■ **Will expand voluntary, universal preschool.** His "Zero to Five" plan will promote states' efforts to move toward voluntary, universal preschool. ([barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com))

■ **Supports expansion of Head Start and Early Head Start.** He will ensure high-quality environments for young children. He will increase the funding and the quality of both Early Head Start and Head Start. ([barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com); Vote 272, Oct. 26, 2005)

■ **Will improve quality.** He will fight to improve the quality of early childhood education services and will work to ensure that early childhood educators receive better pay, resources and supports. ([barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com); AFT Presidential Candidate Questionnaire)



The AFT recommends Barack Obama for president.  
**Vote on Nov. 4.**

**"Without a strong base on which to build, children, particularly disadvantaged children, will be behind long before they reach kindergarten."**

*[barackobama.com](http://barackobama.com)*

## VOICE Coalition Organizes Alameda county ECE forum

The Early Childhood Education Organizing Project (ECEOP) staff and the CFT Early Childhood Education Committee members worked with the rest of the Voices Organized to Improve Child Care and Early Education (VOICE) coalition to organize an Alameda County ECE Forum which was held on August 7<sup>th</sup> from 6 to 9 PM at Bananas Resource and Referral in Oakland, CA.

VOICE is a coalition of child care advocates, unions and child care and early education worker organizations working together to improve the quality of child care and early education

programs and jobs, and parents' access to affordable child care.

The coalition decided to hold the forum in Alameda County because First 5 Alameda County is currently developing its five year strategic plan and is seeking input from stakeholders on priorities for the plan.

Representatives from First 5 Alameda, Preschool California, Children Now and the Senate and Assembly members for Alameda were at the forum to hear from ECE providers and parents and provide updates on current ECE issues.

About 35 participants in the forum raised concerns

about how to improve child care and early education jobs, how to provide affordable, quality preschool and infant care, and how to get the resources needed to preserve and create more quality care.

Most participants also agreed to take specific actions to influence local and state ECE policy and legislation and the coalition agreed to follow up to keep participants informed and engaged.



Tanya Arnaiz, AFT ECE Organizer; Susan Torbohn, Berkeley Federation of Teachers; and Elaine Merriweather, United Educators of San Francisco, all participated in the Alameda ECE forum.

## Governor Signs Pre-K Legislation

Last month, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed legislation that increases access to Pre-Kindergarten programs and works to improve the quality of child development programs. SB 1629, by Senator Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento), would develop a ratings system on the quality of early education programs and AB 2759, by Assemblymember Dave Jones (D-Sacramento), which streamlines funding to expand preschool availability throughout the state.

"Pre-Kindergarten education is the first formal step a child takes toward academic success and California's children deserve the highest-quality programs that put them on track to a successful future," said Governor Schwarzenegger. "This leg-

islation will help to ensure early education programs are available to the children who need them most and that the state continues to achieve higher quality child development programs."

SB 1629 establishes the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee to propose recommendations on how to evaluate and improve the quality of child development programs providing services from birth to age five, including preschool. The bill also establishes a framework for future resources necessary to achieve and maintain higher quality programs.

AB 2759 establishes the California State Preschool Program (CSP), which consolidates all the early childhood education programs in the state. Specifically,

CSP streamlines funding which will expand preschool options, increase program availability and reduce administrative costs.

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These key preschool reform bills, which received strong bipartisan support,

represent a major step forward in creating a more rational and higher quality preschool system. These bills lay the groundwork for a future when all of California's children, especially those who need it most, have access to high-quality preschool that gets them ready to learn and succeed.

Your hard work helped make this happen! The signing of these bills is the culmination of months of advocacy by California preschool supporters. Preschool advocates sent more than 4,000 letters to legislators and the governor on the bills. More than 50 organizations, representing early care and education, business, K-12 education, labor and law enforcement signed on in support of one or both of the bills.

# Targeted Investments in Early Childhood Educators Gain Labor Support

Stating that “access to high-quality education is the right of every student and the responsibility of us all,” the California Labor Federation and the Alameda County Central Labor Council passed resolutions this month registering their support for further investments in early childhood education (ECE).

They’ve joined the California Federation of Teachers and a growing chorus of policymakers, advocates, academics and business leaders in making it clear that effective early care and education programs not only help working families today, but pay long-term dividends by helping California meet its future economic and workforce development needs.

Coming on the heels of the wasteful state budget process, the labor organizations cite the compelling information contained in the 2007-08 RAND California Preschool Study, and call for “significant targeted investments in expanding access to quality preschool education by prioritizing the recruitment, retention and the professional development of quality early education center staff.” This is a sensible approach since what families and communities receive in return on ECE investment far exceeds what we get on most private or public investments.

Educating our young children well is, indeed, a very important investment in our state’s future, and the California Labor Federation and

the Alameda County Central Labor Council resolutions make clear that, “the extent of preschool education’s positive impact depends on both quality resources for students and the professional development of teachers, paraprofessionals and staff in early education centers.”

Quality preschool gives parents peace of mind knowing that their children’s social and cognitive development needs are being met; it also helps families by enabling parents to work, attend school, or get job training, all of which can translate to higher earning potential. Additionally, boosting the quality of early childhood educators underpins all these benefits.

To see the resolutions in their entirety go to [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)

## Organizers from Around the Country Assist Local 1475

Early Childhood Education Organizing Project (ECEOP) staff joined American Federation of Teachers (AFT) ECE organizers from around the country, Local 1475 staff and leaders and CFT ECE member activists to carry out a house visit “blitz” to Local 1475 represented workers on July 23 – July 26. The blitz was intended to help Local 1475 build the union in preparation for their contract campaign next year – all four of their agency contracts are up.

Early Childhood Federation, AFT Local 1475 represents close to 1,000 workers at four Head Start agencies

in the Los Angeles County area. This house visiting campaign was an opportunity to help strengthen the AFT’s historic early childhood local by accomplishing the following goals:

- significantly boosting membership in the local
- identifying leaders and potential leaders
- building an activist core by worksite

The blitz was very suc-



AFT ECE members and organizers who helped make house visits to local 1475 workers.

California Federation  
of Teachers   
AFT, AFL-CIO  
A Union of Professionals

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The *CFT Early Educator* is produced by union workers in the CFT Field Representatives Union and the Office and Professional Employees International Union.



cessful with over 35 new members joining the union and many new activists and leaders being identified and agreeing to get more involved.

Congratulations to Local 1475 leaders and staff for helping to coordinate this important effort, and thank you to all of those volunteers who knocked on over 650 doors in four days!