



**CORPS AA 2006-2010
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS**



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OVERVIEW

Program Overview

First 5 Alameda County Every Child Counts (F5AC) initially launched the Child Development Corps in May 2000, as a systems change initiative. It was designed to build a network of Early Care and Education (ECE) providers, to advance professional development through both formal and informal educational opportunities and to increase retention of ECE teachers in Alameda County. Most county First 5 Commissions replicated the program with support from First 5 California through matching funds, CARES.

Program Evolution – Review and Re-design

F5AC conducted an intensive review of the first four years of the Corps in 2005 and 2006, which included a survey of students to understand the barriers towards completing a degree, and convening community input and workgroup sessions to address the limitations of the Corps. Data showed that while many providers re-enrolled annually over the first four years of the program, new memberships at entry and lower levels declined despite the vast majority of the county's providers being qualified for only these levels. In addition, there were concerns around a lack of intentionality in student course selection and disproportionately low representation of family care providers and graduates representing linguistic and cultural diversity of the general county population. Additional factors in the redesign included declining revenue to support the program and concerns around the program's sustainability, in particular the level of commitment of community colleges to early childhood degree programs.

In 2006, the program was re-designed and re-named the Corps AA Degree Program. This new program model sought to:

- A) increase the number of ECE professionals with an AA degree, particularly family child care providers;
- B) increase the diversity of Corps graduates to reflect the population; and,
- C) increase community college commitment to early childhood degree programs.

In the current Corps AA Degree Program, a participant may receive between \$650 and \$1,600 per year upon initial enrollment and between \$650 and \$2,500 per year thereafter in incentive stipends. Stipends are awarded based on the number of units earned toward an AA degree and the provider's Child Development permit level. The program also provides students with individual education and professional development advising from Corps-funded Community College Professional Development Coordinators (AA PDC) on college course selection and the Child Development Permit. Students may also receive support from the Corps funded Resource & Referral Agency Career Advocates who provide foreign transcript evaluation, career advising and additional informal training opportunities. Additionally, Systems Professional Development Coordinators (Systems PDCs) with a focus on addressing institutional factors were added to support integration of the program at each college.

To be eligible for Corps AA, participants must have:

- Current employment of at least 15 hours per week in an eligible child care program in Alameda County
- Employment at the same child care program for at least 9 months at time of enrollment
- At least 6 ECE units and a valid Child Development Permit (with less than 6 ECE units, a permit is not required) OR
- A degree in an unrelated field and less than 32 ECE units

During the same time, F5AC piloted a variation of supports for ECE providers in the Community College systems, including a cohort model. Cohort strategies intentionally directed resources to address programmatic barriers such as tutoring and support for basic skills, English language learners and time of classes.

College Cohorts

Since 2005, a small portion of the Corps investment was targeted toward piloting student cohorts as an alternative to the Corps AA Degree Program model. Three cohort models have evolved with more specialized focus on targeted students and/or the overall role of the program within a particular college campus. Non-traditional students who may be older, non-native English speakers and who work and attend school at the same time find it difficult to complete general education requirements necessary for a college degree. To support English-language learners and enhance workforce diversity, there was greater emphasis on their recruitment and retention in the program. Not all cohort participants were Corps AA members.

Merritt College Emerging Teacher Program Cohort

F5AC funded the Merritt College Emerging Teacher Program (ETP) beginning in 2005 to increase the number of ECE providers who speak the languages and represent the cultures of children in Alameda County.

The Merritt College ETP program supports students who work in ECE with academic counseling, peer support in a cohort learning model, weekend classes and tutoring. Additionally, some participants receive Child Development Corps incentives and some receive incentives through Head Start employment. To be eligible to participate in the cohort, students must have a minimum of 9 ECE credits upon entry and an ESL assessment score at the level 4 (intermediate) on the CELSA test of English-language proficiency.

Chabot English-Language Learner Cohort

In 2002, Chabot College launched a bilingual class in child development for Spanish-speaking ECE students. This class has been offered every year since. In 2009, the college required students to take an additional class in ESL for ECE students. Currently, the Chabot Spanish Cohort offers the four core early childhood development classes in Spanish. Once they've completed the core courses, Cohort members will be eligible for support to complete additional units required for the Early Child Development major. Students will be integrated into the regular Early Child Development classes, and will receive bilingual tutoring as needed.

Las Positas English-Language Learner Cohort

In 2009, Las Positas College implemented a new English-Language learner cohort with 21 Early Childhood Development students. The goal of this cohort was to address barriers to student success by providing English-language support, by assisting students in accessing programs on campus such as Admission and Records, Assessment, Counseling, Financial Aid and English as a Second Language. The program also provides textbooks for students.

DATA SOURCES & METHODOLOGY

The goal of this report is to provide a synthesis of existing data sources to speak to the overall effectiveness of the Corps AA Degree Program 2006-2010, including ways in which the cohort models differed from the larger Corps AA program. Primary data are in the table below. In general, these consist of data previously collected and summarized by First 5 Alameda County (i.e., no new data were collected to specifically inform this report). A set of questions developed in collaboration with F5AC staff guided this synthesis.

1. Is Corps AA increasing AA degree attainment of ECE practitioners?
2. What are the most successful components of Corps AA? What are the most successful components of the Cohort Model?
3. What are the barriers/challenges to attaining AA degrees among Corps AA members? In what ways do Cohorts differ with regard to barriers/challenges?
4. What are the barriers/challenges to systems-level institutionalization of support?

Table 1. Corps AA Degree Evaluation Data Sources

Primary Data Sources	Year
a. Corps AA Student Enrollment and Tracking Data	2006-2010
b. Corps AA Year-End Student Surveys/Focus Group Summary (N = 52)	2010
c. ETP Cohort Year-End Student Survey/Interview Summary (N = 9)	2010
d. Chabot and Las Positas Student Survey/Interview Summary (N = 52)	2009
e. Professional Development Coordinator Technical Assistance Log Summary	2009-2010
f. Professional Development Coordinator Interviews (N = 5)	2008
g. Program Accountability and Summary Information from ECC Databases	2006-2010
h. State ECE Licensing Data	2008
i. General Education Survey Summary (N = 397)	2006

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Corps AA Degree Program

This section presents the key findings regarding the overall effectiveness of the Corps AA Degree Program organized by three primary outcomes of the re-design. Within each outcome, the factors identified in the 2006 re-design and the key program components focused on these factors are presented, as are the results to date based on available information.

The primary desired outcomes of the 2006 re-design were to:

- A) increase the number of ECE professionals with an AA degree, particularly family child care providers;
- B) increase the diversity of Corps AA graduates to reflect the population; and,
- C) increase community college commitment to early childhood degree programs.

A. Increase the number of ECE professionals with an AA degree, particularly family child care providers

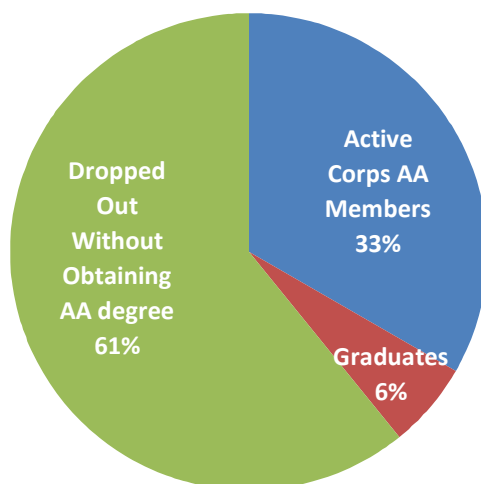
FACTOR TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2006 REDESIGN	KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS of REDESIGN
<p>Declining student enrollment in the Corps program and high drop out rate of entry and lower level Corps members</p> <p>Low percentage of Family Child Care participants in Corps</p>	<p>Full-time AA Professional Development Coordinators (AA PDCs) – one at each of the 4 colleges – to provide educational and professional advising to Corps participants and recruitment of ECE students to the Corps AA program.</p> <p>Career Advocates at the Resource and Referral Agencies to provide career advising and referrals to the Corps AA program</p>

RESULTS: 2006-2010

The full-time AA PDCs at each campus worked with both Corps AA members and other students pursuing ECE studies. Working with both Corps AA and non-Corps students allowed the PDCs to assist in recruiting eligible students, including providing support for completing the Corps AA enrollment application as well as Child Develop Permit applications. **While approximately 54% of Corps AA participants remained eligible and re-enrolled in the program for more than one year, of the 989 students who have participated in Corps AA over the last four years, 61% dropped out without obtaining an AA degree.**

Figure 1. Percentage of Corps AA Participants

(n=989)



While the review and re-design of the Corps program indicated a need to increase the number of family child care providers, as these represent the majority of ECE sites in Alameda County¹ (75%), only **15% of the 989 Corps AA participants were employed in family child care centers. 74% of graduates were center-based providers.** See Figure 2 for graphical representation of available data. The number of providers at each site are not available, so a comparison of individuals within each setting in relationship to Corps AA participants is not possible at this time. Further inquiry to determine the nature and success of outreach efforts to encourage participation among family child care providers and consideration of Head Start continuing education requirements² for Center-based providers as a factor in participation and graduation rates should be considered. While Head Start requirements do not impact family child care sites, with the passage of SB 1629 in 2008, it is possible that the early learning quality rating system and funding model to help existing and future programs reach and maintain higher levels of quality aligned with the rating scale, could foster increased numbers of family care providers to seek an AA degree.³

¹ Alameda County Licensed Child Care Sites, 2008

² reference with Head Start requirements

³ Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee 2009 Interim Report

Figure 2. Types of Child Care Setting for Corps AA Graduates, Corps AA Participants, and Alameda County-Wide

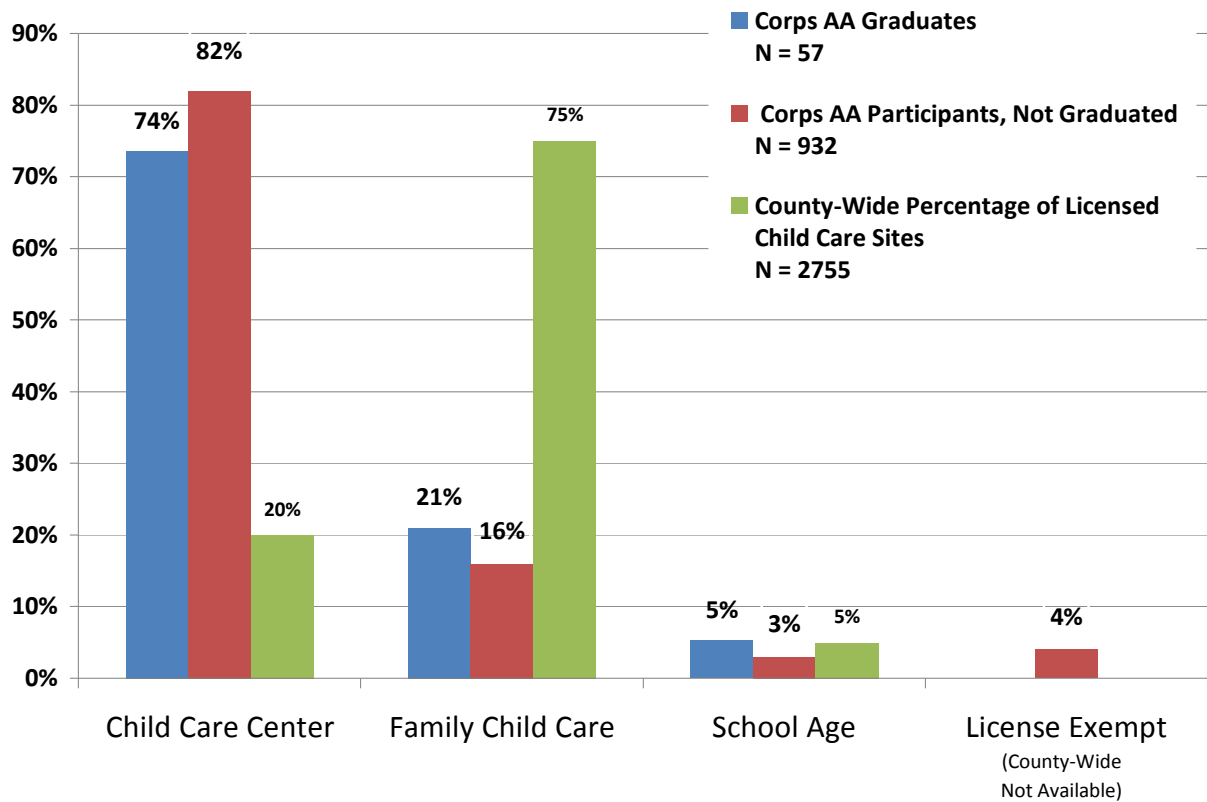
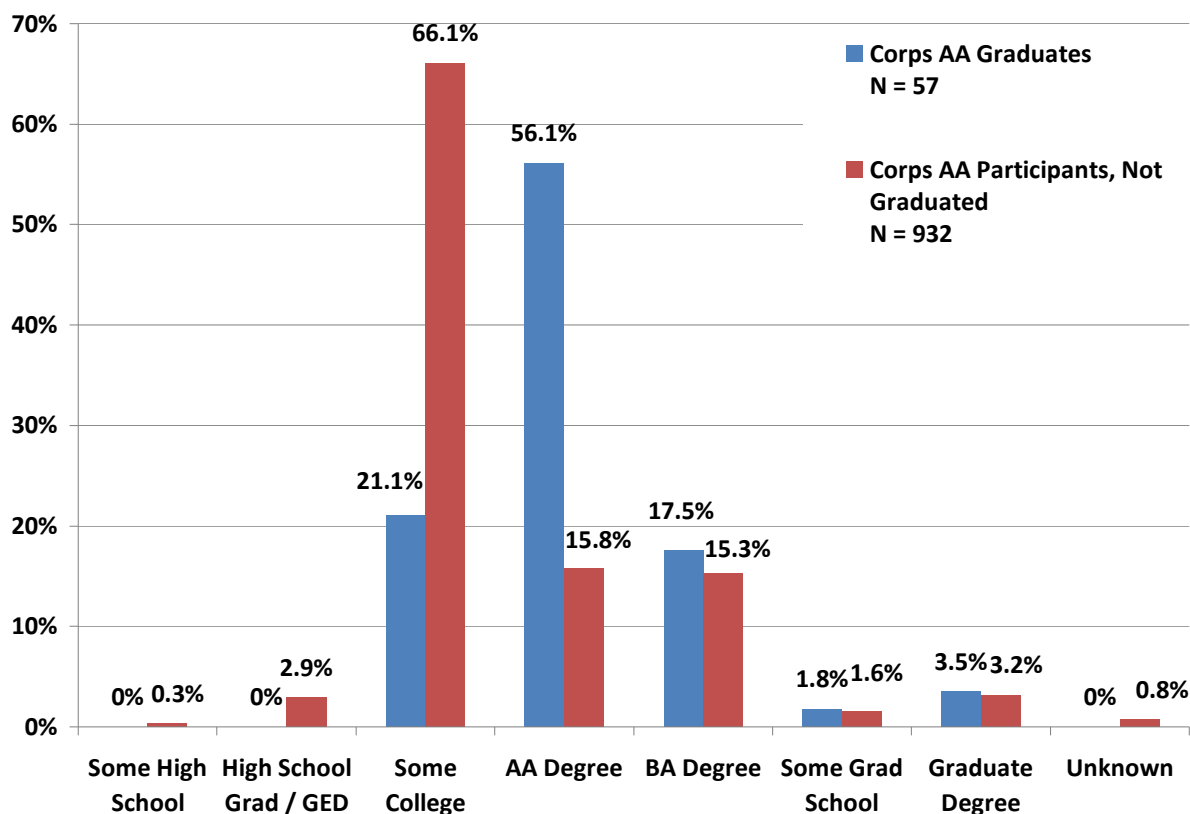


Figure 3. Prior Educational Attainment of Corps AA Graduates and Corps AA Participants Who Have Not Graduated



Although a small percentage of participants graduated, 538 students participating in Corps AA for more than one year did demonstrate progress. The Corps AA program requires that all returning students complete a Student Education Plan that charts their required AA degree coursework and that they apply for or maintain a Child Development Permit. The Child Development Permit verifies fulfillment of requirements established by the Commission on Teaching Credential for assisting, teaching or supervising in a child development program in the state of California. Providers must have a permit to be eligible for child care and development teaching or administration positions funded by California Department of Education/Child Development Division. Other programs may choose to require the permit to document educational progress. There are six levels of permits with requirements tied to education, experience, and on-going professional development:⁵ Enrollment records indicate that **forty-eight (8.9%) of these students obtained their Child Development Permit for the first time, and 30% (148 of 490) who already had a Child Development Permit moved to a higher permit level.**

⁵ <http://www.santarosa.edu/childdev/permit.html>
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/CREDS/child-dev-permits.html>

FACTOR TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2006 REDESIGN	KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS of REDESIGN
Barriers to completing coursework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Basic skills ○ Tutoring ○ Course availability/scheduling ○ Intentionality of student course selection 	Colleges implemented varied strategies to address barriers Corps AA members are required to complete and update an annual student education plan

RESULTS: 2006-2010

Various barriers to completing coursework were identified prior to the re-design. The lack of student intentionality in course selection was addressed in the re-design by mandating the completion of an individual education plan strengthened through the availability of career advisors and technical assistance resources to help students develop career goals. **100% of Corps AA participants completed the required education plan. However, there was not a standardized format for these educational plans so some may have only focused on a single year and did not necessarily chart the path through courses all the way to graduation.**

In a 2010 survey of Corps AA participants (N = 52), respondents indicate that the **Corps AA supports they most: a) needed, b) accessed, and c) found helpful include support from the AA PDCs to assist with their annual Child Development Permit applications, counseling about education and career goals, and information about what classes to take and when.**⁶ Other forms of support such as financial aid, career guidance, tutoring and ESL supports came from a wide range of sources.

2009-2010 AA PDC logs indicate that the majority of students met with an AA PDC once during the year. AA PDCs met somewhat more with non-Corps AA students (63% of students meeting with AA PDCs were not Corps AA participants) than with Corps AA participants. Given Corps AA participants were completing their required annual educational plans with AA PDCs, and AA PDCs report only meeting once with most students (73% had one TA session and 20% had two), it appears unlikely that many Corps AA students accessed direct support from the AA PDC after completing their educational plan each year. While direct contact was limited, as noted above, students responding to a survey and participating in focus groups were positive in their assessment of the support provided. *As one student noted, "PDC support has been helpful in walking me through what classes to take; the fact that they reach out to us is a real benefit."*

Colleges differed with respect to the ways in which the other barriers were addressed. Anecdotal student and PDC descriptions vary in nature and extent about challenges encountered and the ways in which availability and accessibility of tutoring, flexible class times, and whether the basic skills level of ECE students were or were not addressed.

A summary of focus groups held in 2010 at each of the four community colleges, showed that many students from each of the colleges are unaware of AA degree requirements. In these focus groups, **students often discussed problems related to college systems coordination issues, such as course alignment among colleges and transferability as well as the availability of support on evenings and weekends and the accessibility of**

⁶ Asked to select the three most helpful supports received from a list of twelve, at least 61% and up to 72% selected those mentioned.

tutoring in terms of both schedule and language. Few at any college knew that 75% of classes had to be completed from one campus to count toward their degree.

Overall, students (via survey and focus groups) and AA and systems PDCs (via interviews and program reports) have continued to report similar barriers and challenges identified prior to the re-design. California's current financial crisis has affected community colleges and non-traditional students. Particular impacts on the community college during 2009-10 include section cuts across all disciplines; decreased evening and Saturday classes; increased under-enrolled classes; increased costs of textbooks; enforcement of enrollment caps; and cuts to academic counseling. It is unlikely that the state's financial situation is the sole contributor to the continued existence of challenges and barriers identified before the redesign given consistent findings since program inception. Consequently, this is a key area for further investigation and for future program planning.

In addition, students report their own families and worksites are impacted by the economic crisis. This creates more tension balancing work, life and school, which is compounded by the difficulty of navigating the college system and is even more challenging for English Language Learners. However, some promising practices for better addressing these barriers are described in the discussion of alternative cohort models on page 14.

B. Increase the diversity of Corps AA graduates to reflect the population

FACTOR TO BE ADDRESSED IN 2006 REDESIGN	KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS in REDESIGN*
<p>Graduating ECE providers in Alameda County do not reflect diversity of the Alameda County population</p> <p>Corps AA members who attained degrees did not reflect the diversity of Alameda County's population</p>	<p>Bilingual AA PDCs at some colleges [Education plan's emphasis on helping providers get through basic skills, referral for English language supports, etc.]</p> <p>Career Advocates at each R&R</p> <p>Systems PDCs</p>

*Note: While not a Corps AA component, cohort models actively address barriers encountered by English language learners.

RESULTS: 2006-2010

A 2006 report⁷ on the early care and education needs in Alameda County highlighted the importance of a diverse, culturally competent workforce to meet the needs of the increasing ethnic and linguistically diverse population of children in the community. Further describing the importance of ECE providers that reflect the diversity of the community, the report states:

Relationships between adults and children in ECE are often intense and personal. Having such relationships with individuals who are diverse with regard to culture, race, language, gender, and special needs provides children with a rich, early experience. Further, when children see and work with adults who look like them and are part of their cultural group, they gain a sense of importance and belonging.⁸

The report indicates that Asian and Latino child populations are increasing and that more than one-third (37%) of children speak a language other than English at home (Whitebook, M., Sakai, L, Kipnis, F. et al CA Early Care and Education Workforce Study 2006). This diversity is also evident in recent demographics for the Alameda County CA Dept of Finance, 2007, which indicate that among children 0-5, 32% are Latino and 24% are Asian.

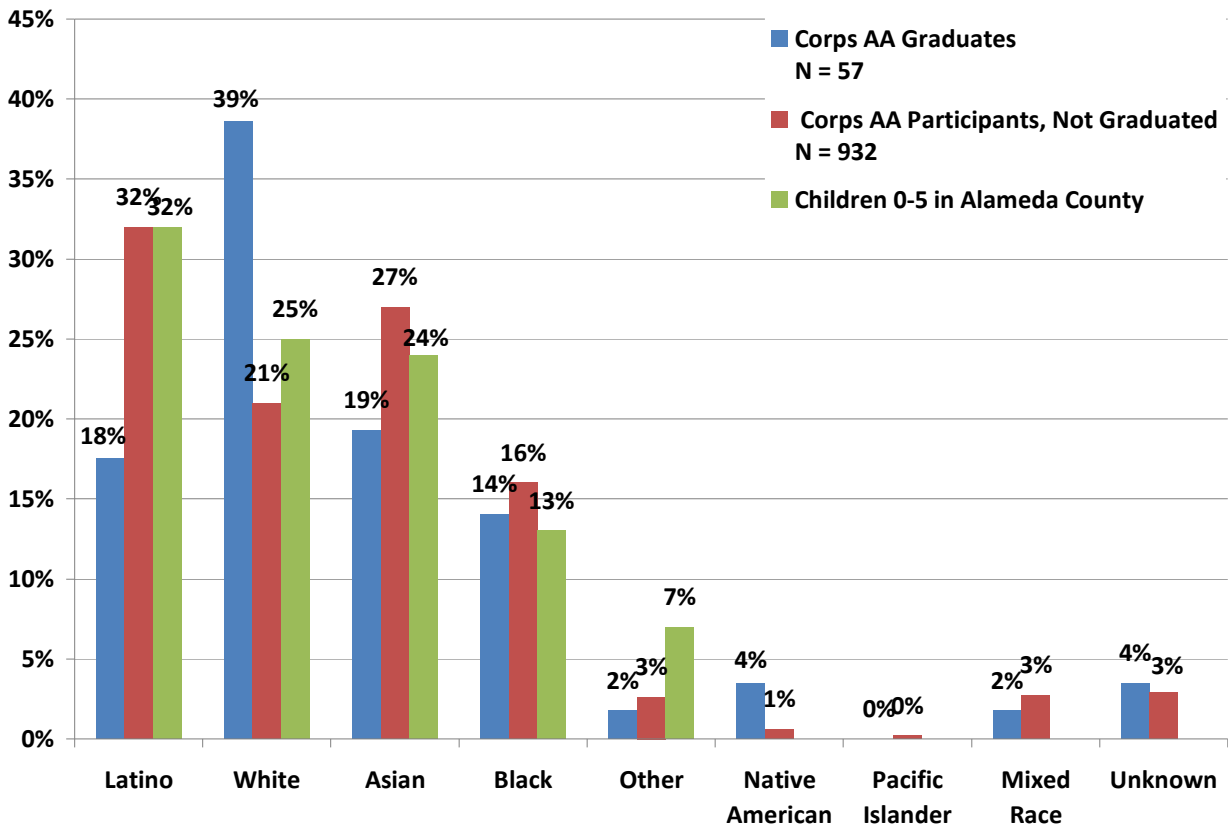
Efforts to recruit Corps AA participants to reflect the diversity of the population appear successful. However, **the race/ethnicity of graduates is less diverse as non-white participants are disproportionately under-represented. Also, the need for English language support may be important to the progress of students whose primary language is not English.** Corps AA participants indicating that their primary language is English represent 47% of all participants and 63% of graduates. Reflecting the variability of these findings, participants indicating their primary language is Chinese (including Cantonese, Mandarin, and non-specified dialect), account for approximately 11% of all Corps AA participants and 12% of graduates. The second largest primary language group, Spanish, accounts for 23% of all participants and 7% of graduates. Further inquiry and analysis regarding levels of English fluency upon entry into Corps AA and the impact of the various ways

⁷ ECE for All, 2006

⁸ ECE for All, 2006

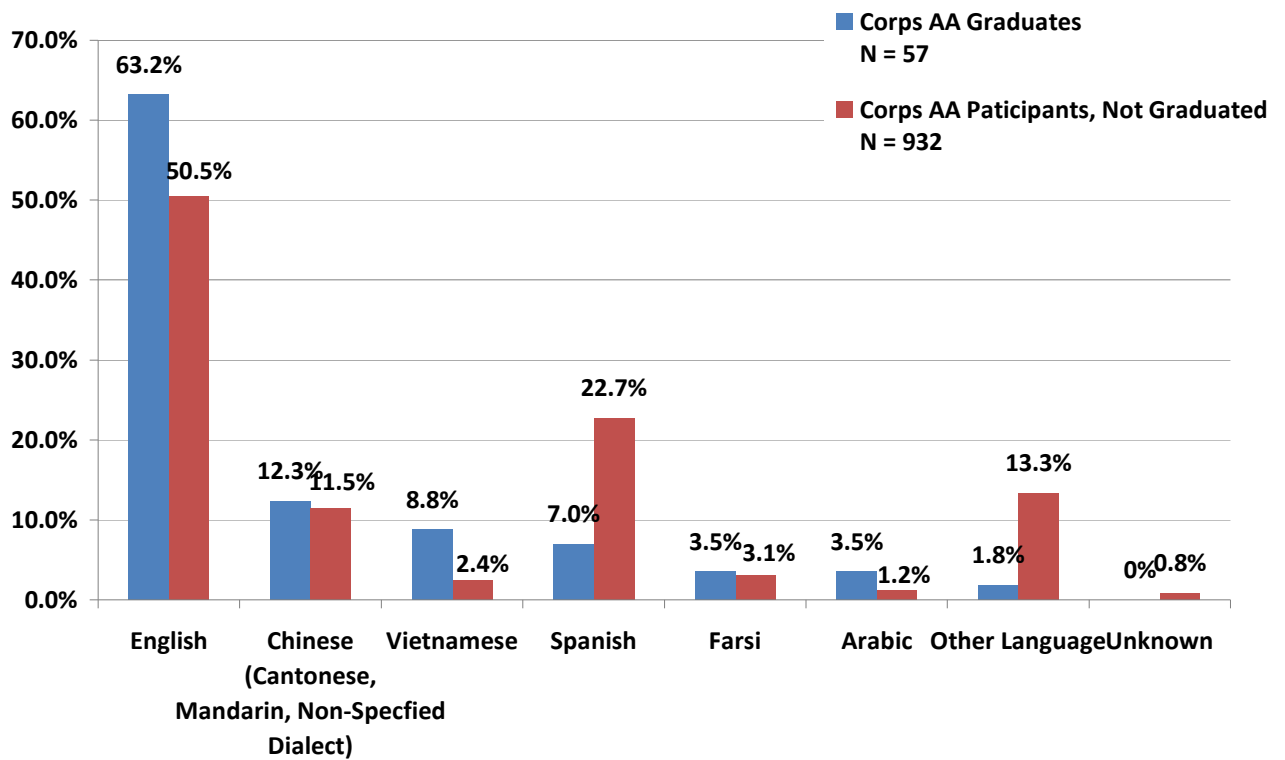
in which the cohort models address the barriers of English language learners, especially the impact of the most intentional support for Spanish speakers via the institutionalized Spanish language cohort at Chabot, could potentially inform the refinements to support the success of these students.

Figure 4. Race/Ethnicity of Corps AA Graduates, Corps AA Participants Overall, and Alameda County Children 0-5⁹



⁹ Race and Ethnicity of Children 0-5 from Alameda County CA Dept of Finance, 2007

Figure 5. Primary Language of Corps AA Graduates and Corps AA Participants Overall



C. Increase community college commitment to early childhood degree programs

FACTOR TO BE ADDRESSED IN REDESIGN	KEY PROGRAM COMPONENTS
Lack of Community College commitment to early childhood degree programs	Full-time Systems PDCs – one at each of the 4 colleges - to integrate Corps AA program into college systems.

RESULTS: 2006-2010

The state's financial budget continues to affect the community college system. Community colleges are shrinking their student services teams, cutting courses, and cancelling low enrollment courses. This presents additional challenges for all students and in particular, for those pursuing ECE related coursework as demand and supply are in a constant tension.

Several PDC's noted that the state and local fiscal environment has impacted community partners. As a consequence, the availability of external supports for students has decreased. This has led to increasing demand from across all populations resulting in fewer overall resources.

Each campus is unique with its own culture, staffing and infrastructure. They also tend to have slightly different student populations. Across campuses, **PDCs report themes related to lack of institutional and/or departmental level buy-in, and resources for staffing.** For example, one Systems PDC noted, "Colleges see ECE as vocational. We are trying to get them to see that we are both."

Related to these conditions are limited course availability and access to tutoring, which, coupled with increased size and needs of student populations continues to challenge integration of programs and services to support the advancement of students pursuing early childhood degrees. For example, Corps AA participants, many of whom are working students, reported the following: 1) tutoring wasn't available in Spanish, 2) course hours and/or scheduling often conflicted with their availability and 3) online courses were limited or unavailable.

While each campus reported challenges, the community college system overall has made advances in the articulation of the curriculum across the college system such that students are more easily able to transfer to a 4-year program. [Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP)]

Additionally, one college has demonstrated a further commitment to supporting the needs of Spanish-speaking ECE students. In 2001, Chabot College piloted a program for 30 Spanish speaking ECE students. Chabot now supports the bilingual classes in early child development for a cohort group of students each year and is now an official class listed in their course catalogue.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS – FINDINGS FROM COLLEGE COHORTS

Since 2005, the cohort models have evolved with more specialized focus on targeted students and on the overall role and nature of supports within the program at a particular college campus. Cohort participants may or may not be Corps AA members. Interestingly, the more intense and customized supports within these programs reflect specific ways of addressing several factors identified in the Corps AA re-design. Overall, the cohort models are different from the larger Corps AA program by the extent to which these models provide:

- Intense, customized support including peer learning
- Dedicated counseling
- Weekend courses
- Tutoring
- Learning and support groups

Established in 2005, the Emerging Teacher Program (ETP) at Merritt College provides data on student progress for the same years as the redesigned Corps AA program. While smaller scale in terms of the number of students served (74 students), remarkable differences are seen in the graduation rates of these cohort participants. **Nearly two-thirds (62%) of ETP participants have attained an AA degree (compared with 6% of Corps AA participants; 57% of ETP graduates were also Corps AA members in their graduation year).**

Interestingly, 55% of ETP graduates are Head Start providers who are required to earn an AA degree to maintain their employment. The effectiveness of this model is further supported by the research informed by strategies undertaken by Achieving the Dream, a multiyear national initiative designed to increase community college student success. Achieving the Dream initiatives employ learning communities, provide academic and social support for students as they progress through courses as a group, and promote enhanced advising, student services, and tutoring services.¹⁰

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the Corps AA Degree Program model and the similarities and differences in findings from the college cohorts are summarized below, framed by the inquiry questions that guided analyses.

Inquiry Questions

1. Is Corps AA increasing AA degree attainment of ECE practitioners?
2. What are the most successful components of Corps AA? What are the most successful components of the Cohort Model?
3. What are the barriers/challenges to attaining AA degrees among Corps AA members? In what ways do Cohorts differ with regard to barriers/challenges?
4. What are the barriers/challenges to systems-level institutionalization of support?

Question 1: *Is Corps increasing AA degree attainment of ECE practitioners?*

Given only 6% of participants obtained AA degrees, the program does not seem to promote increased degree attainment. Furthermore, those who do graduate tend to have demonstrated prior educational success (79% of graduates already holding degrees in unrelated fields). The program's stated intention towards increasing degrees among family-based providers and the increasing the ethnic and linguistic representation of providers relative to the diversity of the population of children 0-5 falls short. The majority of participants and graduates are center-based providers, and non-white providers are disproportionately under-represented among the pool of graduates.

¹⁰ *Achieving the Dream website:* www.achievingthedream.org

Interestingly, cohort models show significantly higher graduation rates (for example, 62% of participants in Merritt's ETP program have obtained their degree), and appear to represent a more promising approach towards the program's primary goal of AA degree attainment, particularly for English Language Learner ECE providers. The successful components of the Cohort models are described in the Question 2.

Question 2: What are the most successful components of Corps? What are the most successful components of the Cohort Model?

While participants are not necessarily graduating with an AA degree during their tenure in the Corps AA program, those who participate for more than one year demonstrate progress in their Child Development Permit levels, with nearly fifty participants obtaining their permit for the first time and 30% of those with an existing permit moving to a higher level. The role of the PDCs in supporting students' course selection and completing their permit applications has likely supported the progress seen in permit levels. Additional supportive factors identified by students in surveys and focus groups include the dedication of the college staff and having bilingual staff. While students and PDCs note barriers to accessing tutoring, to the extent that it is available, students note its benefit.

The cohort models, in addition to fostering supportive personal relationships, have also more explicitly addressed issues related to student's basic skills and the needs of English language learners. Given the high percentage of graduates who already have an AA degree or higher (79%), a model that directly addresses issues related to student success in general education courses may be a key factor in promoting increased degree attainment. Additionally, given the underrepresentation of graduates for whom Spanish is their primary language, further inquiry to determine the extent to which the cohort models are effective in promoting graduation among those for whom English is a second language could provide insight into more effective means of increasing the diversity of ECE providers to reflect the population.

Question 3: What are the barriers/challenges to attaining AA degrees among Corps members? In what ways do Cohorts differ with regard to barriers/challenges?

Overall, students continue to identify the same barriers and challenges identified prior to the redesign.

While each college has undertaken some steps towards addressing these barriers, access and availability of tutoring and flexible class schedules that better allow students to meet their school, work, and personal obligations remain. Students who graduate tended to hold degrees already, indicating that basic skills (or the accumulation of coursework units) were likely less of an impediment to their progress, compared to other Corps AA members.

The cohort models, with their smaller and more intense focus seem to better able to provide support that more directly addresses the barriers students encounter. These models, with their emphasis on fostering supportive, personal relationships among students and staff, as well as the specific provision of weekend courses, tutoring, and support for English language learners are more effective in moving larger percentages of students towards graduation. For example, the Emerging Teacher Program (ETP) at Merritt College is designed to assist ECE students in completing their General Education classes and has had 62% of its 74 participants graduate with an AA degree. Students in this program have access to peer-learning and support groups, dedicated tutoring and counseling, as well as weekend courses, which align with what students report needing, and what research has noted as effective in promoting persistence among community college students.

Question 4: What are the barriers/challenges to systems-level institutionalization of support?

The state's financial budget continues to affect the community college system and its ability to sufficiently support and resource programs such as Corps AA. Community colleges are shrinking their student services teams, cutting courses, and cancelling low enrollment courses. This presents additional challenges for all students and in particular, for those pursuing ECE related coursework as demand and supply are in a constant tension. Community partners are also impacted by the state and local fiscal environment, which is limiting the availability of external supports for students. This has led to increasing demand across all populations resulting in fewer overall resources. Related to the lack of institutional support and staffing resources are course availability and access to tutoring, which, coupled with increased size of and needs among student population continues to challenge greater integration of programs and services to support the advancement of students pursuing early childhood degrees. At one college, Chabot, a Spanish cohort was institutionalized, but it is not clear from the available data what factors supported the integration. It is possible that as cohort models with a more intentional focus on addressing identified barriers demonstrate higher levels of AA degree attainment, they are more likely to be supported and integrated. Individual efforts from the systems PDCs may be less able to 'make the case' for greater institutionalization without these demonstrated results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, structural and systemic issues impeding the integration of programs and services to support ECE degree attainment continue, and have likely increased due to California's fiscal situation. **While students report positively on experiences in the Corps AA Degree Program, the program has demonstrated limited effectiveness in achieving its primary goal of increased AA degree attainment among ECE providers.** This limited effectiveness suggests that stipends and limited individual advisement alone, while appreciated, are not strong factors in degree attainment. However, **the cohort models with more intensive peer and academic support for students show promise in more effectively promoting degree attainment.** It is not clear whether Head Start employment requirements as well as the state wide movement towards a quality rating system are driving factors in degree attainment. In addition, the low rate of family childcare provider participation and disparate demographics between successful and less successful students are not fully understood. Both these areas warrant further exploration.

The following set of recommendations are provided to support First 5 Alameda as it seeks to address the goals it identifies for children 0-5 and their families as well as the systems that support them.

Recommendation 1: Transition resources towards smaller scale, more intensive programs that offer peer and academic support, including specific provisions for ELL students and general education courses. The findings from the data strongly support a program design consistent with the cohort models. These have proven to be effective in relatively short, periods in terms of addressing the barriers to AA ECE attainment.

Recommendation 2: Further delineate the ways in which the cohort models align with research regarding promising practices. This will provide a helpful reference for program refinements as well as shed light on the areas in which the cohort models themselves can advance practice and improve effectiveness in the field of ECE and systems change.

Recommendation 3: Seek strategies effective in promoting institutional change, and consider how and in what ways F5AC investments can support these efforts given the Corps AA Degree program model. The topic of systems change as both a strategy and an outcome has evolved over the past 10 years and even more so, in the past 3-5 years as the public, philanthropic and social sector strive to make lasting change. A review of the most recent literature of "what works" and/or what appears to be most promising within community colleges as they are likely to remain a critical component in ECE workforce development and early learning quality-would inform continuing refinements to the program model.

Recommendation 4: Refine the conceptual framework for Corps AA Degree. As further refinements are considered, develop a graphical conceptual model that describes the relationship between strategies and program outcomes in the context of community colleges and the ECE profession. Undertaking this endeavor as part of shared process for drawing on what is known from the program implementation to date, including further inquiry into the factors influencing the effectiveness of the cohort models, could build a shared sense of what is most successful, providing a shared framework for stakeholders.