




Alameda County Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program Pilot

Early Care and Education (ECE) is critical for children and families and provides meaningful supports to employers, communities, and local economies.

For each dollar spent on ECE, studies estimate a return on investment to the community ranging from \$7 to \$17, with long-term benefits including greater educational and professional attainment for children who attend preschool.¹ According to a 2019 study by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education:²

 **Insufficient access to ECE costs businesses \$1,150 per working parent each year**

 **Reliable access to ECE reduces employee absences by 20% to 30% and reduces turnover by 37% to 60%, with women disproportionately impacted by lack of access to ECE**

 **Each dollar invested in ECE generates as much as \$1.88 in increased economic activity in California's current landscape**

The Landscape of Alameda County's ECE Workforce

The ECE workforce in Alameda County faces a variety of challenges:

- **Aging Educators:** 24.2% of teaching staff and 50% of child center directors are over the age of 50. As an aging workforce retires, the child care field faces a shortage of prepared and qualified teachers.
- **Lack of Diversity:** At higher professional levels of teaching, there is less diversity among staff. Assistant teachers are more likely to be people of color (78%) than teachers (64%), resulting in assistant teachers more closely reflecting the race/ethnic composition of children served. Career pipelines that allow for credentialing are important public policy investments to create a more diverse ECE workforce at all levels and a pathway to higher earnings for early career teachers.
- **Workforce Attrition:** The workforce is shrinking. In 2016, one in five teachers and one in four assistant teachers left their jobs

A Three-Fold Return on Investment: Alameda County Early Childhood CalWORKs Apprenticeship Program

The Early Childhood Apprenticeship Program provides a three-fold return on investment: (1) a successful workforce strategy for CalWORKs participants, (2) a recruitment, training, and credentialing approach for

¹ Meloy, B., Gardner, M., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2019). *Untangling the evidence on preschool effectiveness: Insights for policymakers*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

² Jacobs, K., Powell, A., & Thomason, S. (2019). *Investing in Early Care and Education: The Economic Benefits for California*. Berkeley, CA: UC Berkeley Labor Center.

the child care field, and (3) increased knowledge of child development for the participating parent. The program, administered by YMCA of the East Bay through a funded partnership of Alameda County Social Services Agency, First 5 Alameda County, and Tipping Point, is a replicable model.

The ECE apprenticeship model educates and trains CalWORKs parents for a career in ECE and beyond. It has already celebrated some early successes that suggest its promise as a two-generation strategy to bolster children, families, and communities.

Apprenticeship Program Design

The program is aligned to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing targets, as well as Title 5 and Head Start requirements. At the end of the program, apprentices earn a California Child Development Associate Teacher Permit. Apprentices have the opportunity to continue in a second and third tier of the apprenticeship, in which they attain an AA and BA degree, respectively, as well as Child Development permits at higher levels.

Apprentices are provided with:

- On the job training and mentorship
- No-cost college courses and tutoring
- Stipends and wages tied to professional milestones
- Soft and hard skills training
- A cohort learning environment
- Transportation and child care
- Resume and interview support



My journey to being a toddler teacher... I'm a single parent of two children. The YMCA Apprenticeship offered me the assistance I need to complete my dreams and goals... My children are my motivation and happiness – what keeps me going. This fall, I will have the opportunity to work in my own classroom as a result of this program. I'm beyond excited to meet the children and families."

-Parent Participant

Apprenticeship Program Outcomes

Participant Retention

- 10 of the 18 CalWORKs apprentices in the 2020 cohort **passed all of their classes** with a C or better.
- The program was able to **pivot rapidly amidst the pandemic**, with only two apprentices leaving.

Participant Completion

- **The 16 apprentices who completed the program in 2020 were successfully assigned to field placements** while pursuing the education to obtain their Associate Teacher Permit.

Job Placement

- **11 of the 16 apprentices were hired full-time by the YMCA at \$16.82 per hour, with planned increases to over \$18 per hour once they receive their permits (69% job placement rate).**

Budget

- Total cost of the 2020 Cohort effort is approximately \$330,000, roughly \$18,500 per CalWORKs apprentice.

Return on Investment

- Depending on family size and length of time on aid, CalWORKs families would otherwise pose an ongoing cost of \$230,000 per year (nearly \$13,000 per participant) to the social safety net.
- For apprentices that complete the program and obtain employment, **policymakers can expect to see a return on investment to the social safety net after 17 months.**