First 5 Alameda Every Child Counts: Corps AA Degree Program

Preliminary Findings 2006-2010

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Presented by: Jara Dean-Coffey and Jill Casey
Overview

• Background
• Study
• Core Findings
• Questions
Program Evolution

• In 2000, First 5 Alameda County launched the Child Development Corps to:
  • Increase professional development and retention of the ECE workforce
  • “Jump start” long range systems change
Program Evolution

• In 2005-06 an intensive review of the previous five years was conducted.
• The following issues were identified as priorities for program re-design:
  • Declining enrollment in Corps; Low % of Family Child Care in Corps; Higher drop out rate of entry and lower level members
  • Graduates did not reflect diversity of population
  • Students were not attaining AA degree
  • Barriers to completing course work: basic skills, tutoring, class times, lack of intentionality in student course selection
  • Lack of community college commitment to early childhood degree programs
In 2006 the Corps AA Degree Program was developed to:

- increase the number of ECE professionals with an AA degree, particularly family child care providers
- increase the diversity of Corps graduates to reflect the population
- increase community college commitment to early childhood degree programs
Corps AA Degree Program

Components

- Student stipends tied to progress toward AA degree
- Full-time AA Professional Development Coordinators (AA PDCs) – one at each of the 4 colleges – to provide educational and professional advising to Corps participants
- Full-time Systems PDCs – one at each of the 4 colleges - to integrate Corps program into college systems
- Full-time Career Advocates – one at each of the 3 Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies
Financial Investment to Date

2000 to 2005: $22 million in stipends
(does not include community college contracts, admin, and other program expenses)

2006 to Spring 2010: $8,399,396 total investment
The Study

Questions

1. Is Corps AA increasing AA degree attainment of ECE practitioners?
2. What are the most successful components of Corps AA?
3. What are the barriers/challenges to attaining AA degrees among Corps AA members?
4. What are the barriers/challenges to systems-level institutionalization of support?

Data Sources

- Enrollment Data (2006-2010)
- PDC TA Logs (2009-2010)
- Corps AA Participant Surveys & Focus Group Summaries (2010)
- Merritt Cohort Survey & Interviews Focus Group Summaries (2006-2010)
- Mid-Year and Annual Contract Reports (2008-2010)
- PDC Interviews (2006)
Program Factors & Data

Factor to be Addressed

- Declining student enrollment in program and high drop out rate
- Low percent of Family Child Care participants

Results 2006-2010

- Enrollment remained flat
- 40% dropped out
- 55% of 989 participants participated for more than one year
- 15% of participants were Family Child Care providers

Note: 1,140 have been in the Corps program for 5 years or more
Program Factors & Data

Factor to be Addressed

- Graduating ECE providers do not reflect diversity of population

Results 2006-2010

- Race/ethnicity of graduates
  - 18% Latino
  - 19% Asian
  - 39% White
  - 14% African American/Black
  - 10% Other

Note R.E of children 0 to 5 in Alameda County:
Latino 32%, White 25%, Asian 24%, Afr. American/Black 13%, Other 7%
Program Factors & Data

Factor to be Addressed

• Focus on students who do not have AA degrees

Results 2006-2010

• 79% of graduates entered the program with an AA degree or higher in an unrelated field

• 39% of all Corps AA participants entered the program with an AA degree or higher in an unrelated field
Program Factors & Data

Factors to be Addressed

• Lack of AA degree attainment

Results 2006-2010

• 6% attained AA degrees (57 of 989)

Note: National comparisons -
✓ Less than 1/3 of students who enroll in community college with intention of degree attain AA. (NYTimes, May 3, 2010)
✓ Only 11% of community college students graduate with a degree in 3 years across country (Achieving the Dream, 2007)
Program Factors & Data

Factor to be Addressed
• Barriers to completing course work:
  • basic skills,
  • tutoring,
  • class times,
  • lack of intentionality in student course selection

Results 2006-2010
• 100% of participants completed a Student Education Plan
• PDCs & students report that participants received support for
  • developing career goals
  • financial assistance
  • ESL support
  • tutoring
Program Factors & Data

Factor to be Addressed

- Lack of community college commitment to college degree programs

Results 2006-2010

- Advances in articulation across college systems
- Chabot college added ECE Spanish Cohort to course catalogue
The Cohort Model
Cohort Focus/Features

• Intense, customized support with peer learning
• Dedicated counseling
• Weekend courses
• Tutoring
• Learning and support groups
Emerging Teacher Program is designed to assist students to complete General Education classes.

- 62% (46 of 74) attained AA degrees
- 75% of ETP Cohort graduates participated in Corps AA Degree Program for at least one year
- 57% were Corps AA participants in their graduation year
- 55% are Head Start providers who are required to earn an AA degree for continued employment
Analysis and Conclusions
Is Corps AA increasing AA attainment of ECE practitioners?

- 6% of participants obtained AA degree
- Most of these graduates already possessed an AA degree in an unrelated field.
- Most of these graduates were center-based teachers.
- Non-White providers were disproportionately under-represented in the graduate pool.
What are the most successful components of the Corps AA program?

- Cohort models, which are correlated with significantly higher graduation rates than 6%, appear to be the most promising approach to the Corps AA Degree Program’s primary goal.
- Students report that stipends, dedicated college staff, bilingual college staff, tutoring and R&R career advising are helpful.
Secondary Impacts of Corps AA Degree Program

• Among 538 students participating in Corps AA for more than one year:
  • 48 obtained their Child Development Permit for the first time
  • 30% (148 of 488) who already had a Child Development Permit moved to a higher Permit level

• Increased student intentional course planning through mandatory Student Education Plans (SEPs)
What are the barriers/challenges to obtaining AA degrees?

- Students identify the same barriers and challenges that were identified in 2005

- Although students report that monetary stipends are helpful, stipends are not strongly linked to degree attainment

- Policies such as Head Start employment requirements may ultimately be linked to degree attainment

- Low rate of Family Child Care provider participation, along with disparate demographics between successful and unsuccessful students need to be explored
What are the barriers/challenges to *systems level* institutionalization of support?

Community College System
- Reduced student services teams
- Reduced course availability
- Community partners impacted by the state and local fiscal environment → limiting the availability of external supports for students.
- Increased demand → fewer overall resources.

Early Care and Education
- Compensation
- Range of course offerings
- Definition and standardization of quality
Findings

- Structural and systemic issues continue
- Although students report that monetary stipends are helpful, stipends are not strongly linked to degree attainment
- Policies such as Head Start employment requirements may ultimately be more linked to degree attainment
- Cohort models are a promising strategy
- Low rate of Family Child Care participation and disparate demographics between successful and unsuccessful students need to be explored