

# Interim Evaluation Results: 4Cs Child Care Connections (C3)

February 2009



## Fit with First 5 Sonoma County's Strategic Plan

- **Strategic Plan Goal Area:**  
Early Care and Education
  
- **Priority Outcome:**  
Early childhood education will be of the highest quality.
  
- **Pathways to Results Indicators:**
  - Increase in providers participating in professional growth
  - Increase in providers who receive training for children with special needs
  - Increase in Harms Clifford scales/scores

# Program Overview

The C3 program works directly with a single set of licensed family child providers over a 12-month period with the goal of raising the quality of care in their child care sites, with an emphasis on environment.

- **Training and support services include:**

- Monthly trainings,
- Weekly site visits by a Resource Specialist,
- Provision of a baseline and follow-up quality assessment using the ECERS-R, conducted by an outside assessor,
- Support in developing a Quality Improvement Plan and First 5 Sonoma mini-grant application to respond to the results of the ECERS-R assessment,
- Resources and referrals, and
- Networking opportunities.

# Evaluation Methods

- Evaluators used data from progress reports submitted to First 5 Sonoma County as well as analysis of the following :
  - Provider Intake Forms
  - Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) Assessment Scores
  - Training Follow-Up Surveys
  - Staff Interviews

# Process Evaluation Findings

Ten licensed family child care providers, serving a total of **66** children aged 0-5 years, participated in the first of the C3 program.

- **Characteristics of the ten providers:**
  - **All ten** participants were **female**,
  - **Five** identified **English** as their preferred language and **five** identified **Spanish**,
  - **Five** reported their race/ethnicity as **White** and **five** as **Hispanic/Mexican**, and
  - **All ten** providers served families in the First 5 Sonoma County School Readiness Zone.

# Process Evaluation Findings

## Participation in C3 Activities

### C3 Program Completion, Criteria, Targets, and Achievements

	Target	Achieved
Attend 8 of 10 trainings	8	10 providers attended all 10 trainings
Remain in program all 12 months	8	10 remained in the program
Participate in approximately 40 weekly site visits	8	10 participated in all site visits
Complete a baseline and follow-up assessment	8	10 completed both assessments*

\* The tenth follow-up assessment has been completed to date, however not in time to be included in the analysis of assessment data presented in this report.

- The C3 program was designed to serve eight providers, however high interest in the program allowed for ten. All ten providers successfully completed the program.

# Process Evaluation Findings

The C3 program offered a total of ten trainings, each focusing on a sub-scale of the ECERS-R assessment tool, and facilitated by local experts in the field.

- **Family Child Care Provider Trainings:**
  - Program Welcome and Introduction to ECERS-R Tool
  - Space and Furnishings/Child Care Environment
  - Personal Care Routines/ASQ-SE Tool
  - Language-Reasoning
  - Activities/Developmental and Culturally Appropriate Practices
  - ASQ-SE Tool/Serving All Children with Inclusive Practices
  - Child Care Program Structure
  - Mini-Grant Application
  - Parents and Staff/Family Partnerships
  - School Readiness: Connection to Local Schools

# Key Outcomes: Improved Child Care Environments



## Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS-R) Average Scores Ordered from Lowest to Highest Baseline Average Score (n=9)

ECERS-R Subscale	Baseline (7-point scale)	Follow-Up (7-point scale)	Change
Activities	3.31	5.64	+2.33
Personal Care Routines	3.71	5.97	+2.26
Language-Reasoning	3.86	6.03	+2.17*
Space and Furnishings	4.96	6.69	+1.73**
Program Structure	5.19	6.51	+1.32
Interactions	5.75	6.78	+1.03**
<b>Total Average Score</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>6.20</b>	<b>+1.87**</b>

\* =  $p < .1$ , \*\* =  $p < .05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < .01$

# Key Outcomes:

## Increased Family Child Care Provider Knowledge

The C3 program aims to increase providers' knowledge of family child care practices.

- **Increased Knowledge**

- Nearly all providers **responded correctly to at least 70% of questions on the Training Follow-Up surveys**, which were developed to measure their retention of the child care topics from the trainings.
- **All participants received training** in using the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to identify children with special needs, followed by **one-on-one technical assistance** in screening the children in her family child care.

# Key Outcomes:

## Improved Family Child Care Provider Practices

Learning for Action



GROUP

The C3 program supports family child care providers in improving their practices in order to build high quality classroom environments.

### ■ Improved Practices

- **All ten** providers completed a **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** with the support of the C3 Resource Specialist and weekly site-visits throughout the year.
- Providers report making **changes to their child care on all ECERS-R subscales**, with particular emphasis on changing the physical space. The number of changes on the Space and Furnishings and Activities subscales far outnumbered the changes reported on other subscales.

# Key Outcomes: Improved Family Child Care Provider Practices



**Types of Child Care Changes Reported by Participants, by ECERS-R Subscale**  
(n=10)

ECERS-R Subscale	Average Number of Changes Reported	Types of Changes Reported
Space and Furnishings	5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rearrangement of furniture</li> <li>Centers created</li> <li>New child-sized tables and chairs</li> <li>More display of children’s artwork</li> </ul>
Activities	5.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New fine motor materials, such as wood sewing cards</li> <li>Art cart or center created</li> <li>Musical instruments purchased</li> <li>Music time included in curriculum</li> <li>New or expanded drama area with clothes</li> </ul>
Language-Reasoning	1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New books</li> <li>Books placed within children’s reach</li> </ul>
Program Structure	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newly posted schedule</li> <li>Group/circle time more regularly</li> </ul>
Personal Care Routines	1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“Toothbrush time” for brushing teeth begun</li> </ul>
Interactions	1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hired assistant</li> <li>Speaking more with each child</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.9</b>	

# Reflections on the C3 Program

Reflections on the first session can help inform ongoing changes in program implementation for future cohorts, whether in Sonoma County or if replicated in other counties.

- **Lessons Learned as Observed by Resource Specialist:**

- Intensive support and consistent contact is fundamental to the effectiveness of the C3 program.
- Previous participant cohorts can serve as mentors and further sources of support for future cohorts.
- Using outside field experts to facilitate each training, rather than the Resource Specialist, allows for direct contact with other community resources and sources of support for providers.
- Establishing strong connections with schools has been difficult, but it is important that the Resource Specialist take the needed steps to build these relationships.

# Additional Questions and Next Steps

Additional Questions for Exploration	Recommended Next Steps
<p>1) When measuring the quality of child care, what is driving the emphasis on the Space and Furnishings and Activities subscales versus the other subscales?</p>	<p>First 5 staff will work with C3 staff and the Child Care Committee to identify the critical components of high quality child care.</p>
<p>2) What are the long-term effects of the program on participants?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have providers increase their ability to identify professional development needs and to measure own practices?</li> <li>• Are providers continuing to use training facilitators as resources for support?</li> </ul>	<p>LFA and First 5 staff will work with C3 staff to develop and administer a participant Exit Form that will measure the long term impact of the program in these areas.</p>
<p>3) How many more children will continue to be served by the C3 program?</p>	<p>This is currently unknown but important to consider for future funding decisions.</p>

# Additional Questions and Next Steps

Additional Questions for Exploration	Recommended Next Steps
<p>4) To what extent does the C3 program serve children and families living in the School Readiness zone?</p>	<p>First 5 will work with C3 staff to put in place a consent process to collect these data from all future cohorts of providers.</p>
<p>5) How can the C3 program strengthen its partnerships with local elementary schools?</p>	<p>First 5 will work with C3 staff to understand the difficulties in working with some schools. If these schools are in the School Readiness Zone, First 5 can help establish positive connections.</p>
<p>6) How can C3 staff ensure the validity of data collected on the Harms Clifford rating scales?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the ongoing FCCERS Assessor truly an outside third party not connected with 4Cs?</li> <li>• How are providers meeting the impressively high scores reported on the follow-up assessments?</li> </ul>	<p>First 5 will discuss these questions with C3 staff.</p>