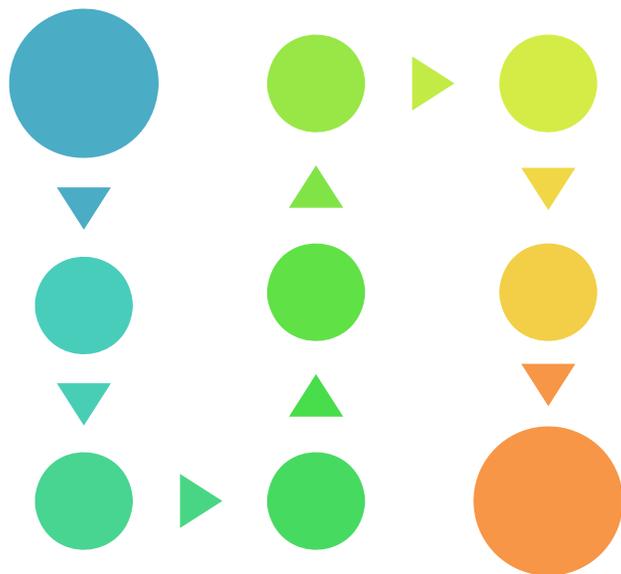


Pipelines and Pathways: The Current Status of ECE Professional Development in Los Angeles County

Paper 3 - Identifying Pathways to a Bachelor's Degree: The Current Status of ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs In Los Angeles County



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¹ Explanations of the acronyms used for the organizations/agencies are provided in the reference section.

PEACH Paper 3



Identifying Pathways to a Bachelor's Degree: The Current Status of ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County

PEACH

Partnerships for Education, Articulation and Coordination through Higher Education (PEACH), is the higher education component of the Los Angeles County Early Care and Education Workforce Consortium. PEACH is funded by the First 5 Commission of Los Angeles County (First 5 LA) for a 5-year period (2011-2016) and administered by Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP). PEACH currently includes Early Childhood Education/Child Development faculty representatives from fourteen Los Angeles county community colleges, 4 California State University (CSU) campuses, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and 2 private universities (University of La Verne and Pepperdine University).

The mission of PEACH is to strengthen existing, and support the development of new and enhanced, academic professional development pathways and related education programs for both the current and future early care and education² (ECE) workforce in Los Angeles County. The goals of PEACH focus on supporting the establishment and/or improvement of (a) the articulation of ECE-related³ courses and academic degree programs from high school to community college, from community college to 4-year campus, and from a baccalaureate program to graduate study in ECE/Child Development; (b) the alignment of ECE-related courses with similar content from one institution of higher education (IHE) to another (e.g., course content, level of content, and similar course numbering); (c) existing and new ECE-related BA/BS programs; (d) advocacy for the development and approval of an ECE credential for

² There is a current shift in the field from using the term early *childhood* education when referring to ECE, to using early *care and* education. While ECE is used throughout the PEACH Papers all efforts were made to accurately reflect each program, agency or IHE's use of the term.

³ ECE-related refers to disciplines that may address similar topics (e.g., child development, human development, developmental psychology, child and family studies) but are not directly focused on early childhood education or care and education. ECE professionals may receive degrees and/or training in these related disciplines.

professionals working with the youngest children, 0 to 8-years-of-age); (e) support for the development of an ECE-specific doctoral program in Los Angeles County; and (f) recommendations for increased codification of professional preparation of ECE trainers.

PEACH Paper Series

PEACH Paper 3 - Identifying Pathways to a Bachelor's Degree: The Current Status of ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County is one in a series of six developed by the PEACH partners to describe the current status of professional development programs in IHEs in Los Angeles County as well as other elements of the professional preparation of the current and future ECE workforce.

The entire series includes the following related topics:

PEACH Paper 1 - Preparing the Foundation: Strengthening the ECE Workforce through the Professional Development System and Early Childhood Educator Competencies

PEACH Paper 2 - Joining Pipelines: Articulation and Alignment Between and Among the California Community Colleges, the California State University System, and Private Universities in Los Angeles County

PEACH Paper 3 - Identifying Pathways to a Bachelor's Degree: The Current Status of ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County

PEACH Paper 4 - Constructing New Routes: Considerations for the Development of an ECE Credential

PEACH Paper 5 - Completing the System: The Current Status of ECE Doctoral and Master's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County

PEACH Paper 6 - Checking for Flow: The Current Status of ECE Training and ECE Trainer Competencies

PEACH Papers have been developed to provide background information to guide PEACH's work. The research, preparation and analysis for each paper in this series has been designed and conducted by PEACH partners. It should be noted that the information provided in the PEACH Papers represents a "snapshot in time" and are reflective of the PEACH authors' knowledge and understanding as of July

2014. Our hope is that the information and analysis contained in the papers will serve to inform and inspire those involved in current systems efforts related to ECE workforce development in Los Angeles County, throughout California and beyond.

Purpose of PEACH Paper 3

With increasing attention to the quality of early care and education (ECE) programs and the related quality of teaching, researchers, practitioners and policymakers alike have explored the value and benefits of ECE teachers completing a four-year university degree. *PEACH Paper 3 - Identifying Pathways to a Bachelor's Degree: The Current Status of ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County* reviews the purpose and intention of ECE-related (e.g., child development, human development, developmental psychology, child and family studies) bachelor's degree programs, presents information about existing ECE-related bachelor's programs in the greater Los Angeles area, and describes the various pathways students might follow toward the achievement of a bachelor's degree.

The Case for the Bachelor's Degree

Recent research and policy have focused on the question: What is the optimal level of education for early care and education professionals? Decades of research on the effects of early care and education on children's development has clearly indicated that "high quality" early education experiences are linked with children's positive development (e.g., Burchinal, Kainz, & Cai, 2011; Howes et al., 2008; NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2003; Peisner-Feinberg & Burchinal, 1997; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). However, research has also consistently suggested that the quality of many early childhood education programs is not as high as it could be, and in some cases is quite marginal (e.g., *Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes in Child Care Centers* report: Helburn, 1995; Early et al., 2005; Mashburn et al., 2008; Whitebook, Howes, & Phillips, 1989). The current focus on professional preparation and educational pathways for early educators addresses this concern by examining the effects of teachers' level of education on the quality of their teaching and on the learning and development of the children in their care.

One theoretical position argues that a bachelor's degree in an early childhood-related field prepares teachers to provide higher quality learning environments than cohorts with less formal education can provide, due to their (a) deeper understanding of child development and learning, as well as (b) increased ability to exercise critical thinking skills that are generally promoted in a bachelor's degree program of study (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001; Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009). Moreover, research has specifically pinpointed the quality of teacher-child interactions as influential in enhancing children's language, cognitive, and social development (Mashburn et al., 2008), and has linked teachers' completion of a bachelor's degree with higher quality teacher-child interactions (Barnett, 2011; Bowman, 2011).

In the policy arena, many states and agencies have moved toward requiring a bachelor's degree for lead teachers in state ECE programs. Research results that support such a requirement find that completion of higher levels of education improves teaching quality and child outcomes (e.g., Barnett, 2004; Pianta et al., 2005). By requiring an increased level of higher education, proponents also believe that the status of the ECE profession can be elevated through broad agreement upon professional standards and practices, as well as by ensuring adequate and commensurate financial compensation and benefits to encourage ECE degree graduates to both join and stay in the profession. Others fear that focusing on ECE teachers' completion of a four-year degree as a guarantee of teaching quality ignores the role, positive value, and impact of other sources of professional training (such as in-service professional development, supervision, and mentoring delivered outside of unit-bearing academic programs). These researchers conclude that requiring a BA/BS degree could be wasteful of financial and human resources in the absence of a clear and confirmed correlation to improved quality and child outcomes (Mead & Carey, 2011; Fuller, 2011).

A wide range of related research studies have been reviewed and synthesized extensively by several scholars in the ECE field. While some researchers have determined that a BA degree is conclusively linked to higher quality teaching (Barnett, 2011), others have argued that the evidence linking higher education

to higher teacher quality does not clearly indicate that a bachelor's degree is the necessary or appropriate standard (Bowman, 2011; Fuller, 2011).

There are several additional factors that make interpretation of the research evidence more complicated. Some research supporting the importance of four-year degree completion finds that a combination of completing a bachelor's degree along *with* specific coursework in early childhood development predicts higher teacher quality outcomes more than the completion of a four-year degree *without* specific coursework in early childhood development. Other research finds that completion of a four-year degree more strongly predicts higher quality teaching in early education work settings with minimal resources and support than it does for teaching quality in settings where more resources and greater supports are afforded (Vu, Jeon, & Howes, 2009). Researchers often cite the need for additional research on the impact of other factors, including the background of faculty members who teach in four-year ECE degree programs, an examination of the content and quality of the higher education curriculum and pedagogy. Still, others note that the effectiveness of bachelor's degree programs offered in early childhood education needs to be examined in order to identify the aspects of the program which contribute most to teacher candidate effectiveness in the ECE program setting (Mead & Carey, 2011; Whitebook & Ryan, 2011; Whitebook et al., 2012). In addition, some researchers indicate that challenging work environment factors that often plague early childhood education settings (e.g., lower educational attainment by one's staff colleagues, low compensation, lack of paid preparation time, high rates of teacher turnover) mediate the optimal impact of a teacher's holding a BA degree (Karloly, 2012; Whitebook et al., 2012).

Although related debate continues about the interpretations of research findings that are reflected in ECE policy, there is clear movement in the policy arena to expand the application of the requirement of a bachelor's degree for ECE teachers. Given that Head Start has mandated that increasing proportions of teachers have a BA degree over time, and tiered quality rating systems provide financial incentives for teachers having a bachelor's degree, it is important to consider what the existing options are for current professionals and pre-professionals to obtain a bachelor's degree in early care and education.

Existing Bachelor's Programs

Students with career goals in early care and education seeking a bachelor's degree will find that programs in Child Development typically offered in southern California public universities are quite varied. It is rare to find an academic department or four-year degree program that is focused specifically on ECE at the bachelor's level. Instead, degrees tend to be offered in a wide gamut of departments (e.g., in Child Development, Human Development, or Family Studies) where ECE may be offered as a specialization, concentration or option within a major; in these cases, programs may also offer specializations focusing on working with different age groups of children and adolescents, or in preparation for working in other types of service provisions, such as family life education or parenting education.

It is important to establish upfront that universities are typically organized into units called "colleges" (e.g., College of Health and Human Development) and departments (e.g., Child and Adolescent Development or Family and Consumer Sciences) are housed within the colleges. Often times, there may even be a more specific program/minor/specialization within a department as well. These organizing factors add to the complexity of the discussion of existing ECE-related bachelor's programs.

PEACH BA/BS Working Group Review

In 2011-2012, the PEACH BA/BS Working Group conducted an in-depth review of local university website information to begin to construct a description of ECE-related undergraduate programs in Los Angeles County. During the 2012-2013 program year, members of the PEACH BA/BS Working Group visited each of five CSU campuses in Los Angeles County (including Dominguez Hills, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge, and Pomona) to meet with faculty members and university-level administrators who prepare students for entry into the early care and education workforce. The purposes of these meetings were (a) to share information about the work being conducted by PEACH and (b) to gather information from each campus regarding their programs and activities relevant to ECE workforce preparation. In each campus visit, the PEACH BA/BS Working Group delegation asked campus program faculty and administrators to

describe the academic programs offered, the strengths and challenges of current program offerings and programmatic plans for the future, as well as any challenges they anticipate facing as a part of these efforts. These visits provided opportunities to confirm and elaborate upon the initial information the PEACH BA/BS Work Group had compiled the previous year. Findings from these campus visits are discussed in the following section.

During each campus visit, four prompts were used to guide conversation:

1. Please describe for us the *programs that you currently have* on this campus that support the development of the ECE workforce.
2. Please describe any *new ECE-related programs/options/specializations* that you are developing.
 - In what ways will these plans enhance ECE workforce development?
3. What *strengths* do you have that will support your ECE program development, and what *challenges* might you face?
4. How do your current plans interface with *statewide initiatives* (such as the Transfer Model Curriculum)?

Overall, the members of the PEACH BA/BS Working Group were impressed with the range and quality of the ECE-workforce-related programs and activities being conducted on these campuses. The majority of the campuses were engaged in professional preparation endeavors that cut across departments and disciplines. Several of these majors have practicum/fieldwork components that take students off campus into community-based programs where they observe and participate in real-world application of their emerging skills in the field. In these visits, it was also revealed that several of the academic programs had established working relationships between related undergraduate programs and graduate programs on their campuses; students' transition between undergraduate and graduate programs was facilitated in a variety of ways.

Findings from campus visits to ECE-related undergraduate programs. Consistent with what the PEACH BA/BS Working Group had documented in their initial 2011-2012 research, undergraduate majors related to ECE across campuses have different names, are housed in different departments, and are located in different colleges within each university campus:

- CSU Los Angeles' Department of Child and Family Studies is located in the College of Health and Human Services.
- CSU Long Beach's Child Development and Family Studies Area is housed in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences in the College of Health and Human Services.
- Cal Poly Pomona has recently received a significant endowment and has hired a faculty member currently developing an undergraduate major in Early Childhood in the College of Education and Integrative Studies
- CSU Northridge has a Department of Child and Adolescent Development, as well as a Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, and both departments are in the College of Health and Human Development.
- CSU Dominguez Hills has a Bachelor of Science Child Development program in the School of Health and Human Services, which is located in the College of Professional Studies.

While this program diversity is a reflection of the evolution of the field and the specific history of the discipline on different campuses, the multiple labels and program focus makes it more difficult for an ECE-interested student to understand where the appropriate major is to be found. A further complication is the fact that the most relevant major at the Community Colleges in California is the Child Development (CDEV) or Early Childhood Education⁴ (ECE) program, but transfer students do not typically find a comparably named bachelor's program at their local transfer campus. Within a Child and Family Studies or a Child Development major, a student may find a major, option, concentration, specialization, or minor

⁴ As previously noted, ECE (in this case and others throughout the paper) refers to *Early Childhood Education* as that has been the prevailing use of the term in IHEs and broadly in the field. *Early Care and Education* is a more recent term being used in the field though it is still not applied to many academic program names.

more specific to working in early care and education, but its course content and name differ widely from one campus to another.

Across campus visits, the PEACH BA/BS Working Group found that department faculty seemed to understand ECE workforce needs in California. Faculty members demonstrated their commitment to preparing students to enter the ECE workforce. There was evidence in the faculty and administration's description of current and potential programs that most had given careful and thoughtful consideration to the question of how they could best prepare the ECE workforce. However, the PEACH BA/BS Working Group delegation heard in several instances about various *administrative obstacles* that block best efforts.

Administrative obstacles. One obstacle is *the constraints imposed on the CSUs by the current state budget*. Campuses have not been allowed to add new programs in recent years, regardless of the demonstrated need and justification for these programs. In the current situation, adding options is administratively quicker and easier than developing and shepherding a proposal for a new degree program through the curriculum approval process on campus and through to the CSU Chancellor's Office. However, even when new courses and programs are proposed and approved, it still takes time and effort for faculty to develop these new courses and there are not the necessary resources to provide release time for faculty members to accomplish this. Program faculty also may be required to drop one class to add another to a major program of study, something they may be reluctant to do from a program integrity viewpoint. Another budget-related issue is the fact that the type of experiential learning that is such a critical component of students' professional preparation in ECE is more expensive to offer than strictly lecture coursework. Because of the expense involved in maintaining laboratory facilities (e.g., supervised practicum experience at a campus-based child development center or at a community-based ECE program, the cost of these program elements often come under scrutiny and must be continually and vigorously defended).

Another administrative obstacle for students is *the CSU Tier1/Tier 2 policy that determines the priority transfer students from a particular community college receive in the admission process to a particular CSU campus*. A transfer student's Tier 1 CSU campus may not offer the most appropriate program for someone interested in ECE. For example, a Mt. San Antonio College (Mt. SAC) transfer student's Tier 1 CSU campus is Cal Poly Pomona; however, Cal Poly Pomona has not yet finalized their Early Childhood Development major thus leaving this student without a Tier 1 option in their desired field of study. This transfer student may then choose to apply to CSU, Fullerton (CSUF) to complete the BA program in Early Childhood Development at CSUF but because CSUF is the student's Tier 2 campus admission requirements are more stringent (e.g., GPA requirements are lower for Tier 1 students). Some of these transfer-related issues have made ECE-related majors at local private colleges and universities look more attractive to transfer students than the local CSU campus.

A further administrative obstacle is *the current state legislated cap* on the total number of units in which a bachelor's level student may complete in a degree program. This has necessitated changes to the core curriculum of some degree programs and curtailed curriculum modifications, as well as dropping formerly required courses, as ECE-related degree programs work to stay current with policy and research.

Faculty on several campuses also mentioned potential *"turf wars"* on their campuses over new programs or anticipated ownership issues if an ECE credential or Transitional Kindergarten (TK) certificate become realities. Colleges of Education traditionally maintain control of credential programs on CSU campuses; as noted above, ECE-related/Child Development bachelor's programs are typically housed in colleges other than the College of Education. Significant concern was expressed by some about the extent to which bachelor's level program faculty members in child development would be welcomed or involved in the planning of a new credential curriculum with an increased emphasis on child development knowledge in early care and education.

Focus on advisement. Also observed across campuses was faculty members' strong desire to provide high-quality advisement to students, with the goals of (a) helping to ensure students' timely graduation and (b) helping students find the best fit between their career and professional interests and the options available on their chosen CSU campus. Faculty members at both CSULA and CSUN described involving undergraduate student mentors as a part of a peer advisement process in their bachelor's level program.

Additional findings. Conversations with campus faculty revealed noteworthy aspects of the bachelor's programs that were visited:

- Strengths described by faculty members from several departments and campuses included the strong commitment of faculty to the success of their students, a spirit of cooperation and collaboration both within their department and with other academic units on campus, good relations with community college partners, a campus-wide commitment to community engagement, and strong institutional support for their programs. While these faculty members prepare students for a well-qualified ECE workforce, another strength cited is that these departments are also preparing students for a range of related careers. This range of professional preparation enhances graduates' employability and continues to attract students to ECE-related majors. There was a general sense that other faculty and administrators on campus recognized the significance of the workforce issues related to child development and ECE and that this understanding was a strength that ECE-related departments could draw upon to support their efforts and future plans.
- At one CSU campus, program collaboration with a local community college Child Development program supports students' obtaining their Child Development Permits and their smooth transfer so they can work in ECE centers while earning their bachelor's degree.
- There are a variety of minors or specializations offered within ECE-related programs such as an Early Childhood Program Administration option, a minor in Child Development, or a certification to become a Family Life Educator.

- In undergraduate programs across the five campuses, a fieldwork component was required in four of the five programs. This required fieldwork ranged from a minimum length of 120 hours to a maximum of 180 hours. In the fifth undergraduate program, completion of a fieldwork component was an elective option that the department chair reported 80% of student majors completed.
- Several campuses have developed collaborative programs with other academic units on their campus or in the surrounding community. One CSU campus' undergraduate program is working with the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) to offer courses to Head Start teachers so LA County Head Start programs can meet the federal mandate to increase the proportion of their teachers at the bachelor's level. This campus department also received a grant with Children's Hospital Los Angeles to develop an interdisciplinary minor that involves students from Nursing, Education, Social Work, Child and Family Studies, and Child Development to prepare students to work with children with disabilities in a variety of settings.
- ECE-related bachelor's and master's programs are structured in a variety of ways. To explain, some bachelor's programs are connected with graduate programs in their same academic department; other undergraduate and graduate programs are offered in two academic departments within the same college; or two undergraduate ECE-related majors may be located in two different departments within one college, with the corresponding master's program housed in another college.

Based on the PEACH BA/BS Working Group's review, details of some of the CSU ECE-related bachelor's programs in the greater Los Angeles area—as it includes a few CSUs outside of Los Angeles County—are presented to follow. A description of some private colleges and universities in Los Angeles County are also described.

Greater Los Angeles Area California State University Campuses

Each of the California State University (CSU) ECE-related undergraduate programs across the five CSU campuses located in Los Angeles County has its own curriculum, and typically early care and education is neither the only nor the primary academic focus. In Table 3.1, some basic information is presented about the ECE-related CSU bachelor's degree programs on greater Los Angeles area campuses, identifying the program that most closely addresses the content areas and skills related to ECE. Table 3.1 also provides information regarding two CSU campuses outside Los Angeles County (Channel Islands and Fullerton) that offer ECE-related bachelor's programs representing promising programs. In particular, CSU Channel Islands is currently the only CSU campus with a dedicated department and BA degree in Early Childhood Studies, with coursework explicitly focused on training ECE professionals. Karoly (2012) identifies the CSU Channel Islands BA program in Early Childhood Studies, as well as the Child Development/Elementary Education/Liberal Studies Program at CSU Humboldt (not detailed in this paper), as the two California bachelor's programs that offer "the most robust descriptions of the emphasis on ECE teacher preparation" (p. 55).

Table 3.1

ECE-Related Bachelor's Degree Programs at Greater Los Angeles area CSU campuses

CSU Campus	College/Department	Degree and program/option/minor
Los Angeles county area campuses:		
Dominguez Hills	College of Health, Human Services, and Nursing/Division of Human Development	BS, Child Development
Long Beach	College of Health and Human Services/Department of Family and Consumer Sciences	BA, option in Child Development and Family Studies
Los Angeles	College of Health and Human Services/Department of Child and Family Studies	BA, Child Development, option in ECE Administration
Northridge	College of Health and Human Development/ Department of Family and Consumer Sciences & Department of Child and Adolescent Development	BS, Family and Consumer Sciences with option in Family Studies, Pattern A: Childcare Administration & BA, Child and Adolescent Development

CSU Campus	College/Department	Degree and program/option/minor
Pomona	College of Education and Integrative Studies/Department of Education	BS, Early Childhood (program currently being developed)
Other Southern California campuses:		
Channel Islands	School of Education/Department of Early Childhood Studies	BA, Early Childhood Studies
Fullerton	College of Health and Human Development/Child and Adolescent Studies	BS, Child and Adolescent Development with emphasis in Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Furthermore, Table 3.1 illustrates the diversity of programs with respect to the location of the program within an academic college and department within the university. In addition, the structure of each ECE-related specialization or option is detailed.

While an in-depth analysis of the specific coursework required in each program is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to acknowledge key course content areas originally identified in the Whitebook, Bellm, Lee, and Sakai (2005) report. These content areas may be incorporated into course(s) within ECE-related bachelor's degree programs as part of a required or elective course and include:

- Education and care of infants and toddlers
- Education and care of preschool-age children
- Working with families
- Working with children and families from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Working with bilingual children or children learning English as a second language
- Assessment/observation of young children
- Emergent literacy and literacy strategies
- Numeracy and math for young children
- Social and emotional development for young children
- Physical health and motor development of young children
- Appropriate learning environments and activities for young children

- Classroom or behavioral management of young children
- Early childhood program administration
- Collaborating with professionals in other disciplines
- Professional knowledge
- Adult learning and development
- Leadership and advocacy
- Research and evaluation methods

Through an initial scan of program course content, the PEACH BA/BS Working Group observed that the extent to which the content areas were reflected in elective or required coursework in ECE-related bachelor's programs varied widely.

Recognizing program variation. The information presented in the Table 3.1 and description of course content areas reveal that although there are many bachelor's degree programs in ECE-related fields offered in Los Angeles County CSUs, they are not particularly comparable. Whitebook et al. (2012) have also identified the wide range of these baccalaureate programs statewide, characterizing four-year California degree programs loosely as "ECE-related." Specifically, the programs vary in the extent to which they provide and/or require courses focused on teaching and curriculum in early childhood settings as well as the extent to which they focus on the science of development, including treatment of developmental theories, related research, and critical thinking skills. Many programs (not described here) address "child development," "human development," or "developmental psychology" by focusing on the science of development, with little or no emphasis on the implications of this information for practice (e.g., early care and education curriculum, teaching, or working with children and families). However, even within programs that do aim to prepare ECE professional there is variation in the amount of coursework dedicated to the science as well as to the practice, and variation in the extent to which the development of additional professional skills are emphasized, such as ECE program administration,

professional ethics, or working with families from diverse backgrounds and with unique and/or special needs (Whitebook et al., 2012).

Los Angeles County ECE-Related Programs: Sample Private Institutions

There are several private IHEs in the greater Los Angeles area that offer bachelor's degrees for students interested in the early care and education profession. Many of these campuses provide extensive online course offerings and/or face-to-face course offerings at satellite campuses, convenient for students living and working in the greater metropolitan area. Although tuition and fees tend to be higher at private institutions than public institutions, the location of courses offered and flexibility of taking online courses is appealing to students working full-time while completing their bachelor's degree. Students may also prefer enrolling at private universities that provide academic program delivery specifically designed for working ECE professionals. To follow, three sample undergraduate programs in private universities are described. This work was conducted by the PEACH BA/BS Working Group through a review of the university websites; please check websites for the most up-to-date information.

Pacific Oaks College. Pacific Oaks College is a private college in Pasadena, California (with satellite programs in several locations, often near partnering community colleges), specializing in a small number of related fields: Education, Human Development, Early Childhood Education, and Marriage and Family Therapy. Pacific Oaks is known for offering a curriculum focused on reducing bias in the nation's education system. In addition to the standard BA in Early Childhood Education, students may choose to complete a program of study in ECE combined with a Preliminary Multiple Subject Teaching Credential, or a Dual Credential. The program is a bachelor's degree completion program; students are required to complete 60 units of college general education (GE) credits prior to transferring into the Pacific Oaks program. Practicum and fieldwork experiences are offered as part of the BA program, and many courses can be completed online (http://www.pacificoaks.edu/Schools_Programs/Bachelors-Completion_Programs).

National University. National University is a private university based in San Diego that also has satellite campuses throughout California including Los Angeles and Woodland Hills campuses. The BA in Early Childhood Education (BAECE) is a four-year (180 quarter units) program requiring 45 units taken in residence at a National University campus. Students in the BAECE program may take a selection of upper-division electives at the end of their major undergraduate coursework, or, in lieu of elective courses, they may choose from among three upper-division concentrations, including Early Childhood Administration, Infant and Toddler, or Teacher Education. Students complete a minimum of one required fieldwork course

(<http://www.nu.edu/OurPrograms/SchoolOfEducation/TeacherEducation/Programs/EarlyChildhoodDevelopment.html>).

The University of La Verne. The University of La Verne, based in La Verne, California with several satellite locations, offers a Bachelor of Science (BS) Degree in Child Development that is designed to prepare professionals in the early care and education field. The BS in Child Development is offered at the main La Verne campus, as well as several satellite campuses in Southern California including Burbank, Irvine, Oxnard, and Ventura. The four-year program can be taken exclusively at La Verne, or students may transfer into the undergraduate program from community colleges. The degree requires completion of a minimum of 52 semester units in the major of which at least twenty-four must be at the upper-division level (<http://laverne.edu/catalog/program/bs-child-development/>).

Pathways to Bachelor's Degrees

Some current policy discussions regarding mandating four-year degrees for ECE teachers are based on the assumption that prospective ECE professionals typically set out on the traditional four-year pathway when they make the choice to work in the field. However, in practice, many individuals who eventually seek a bachelor's degree in ECE follow a wide range of educational pathways. Students may begin working in the field before pursuing higher education; in these cases they may obtain initial ECE coursework and training at a community college and either transfer directly to a four-year institution, or

begin work in the field before seeking additional higher education (if they choose to do so). Alternately, some may hold a bachelor's degree in another field and return to study early care and education at the community college and apply to related graduate education and/or teacher credential preparation programs. Similarly, many ECE-related bachelor's degree programs are designed for the "traditional" college student who enters a community college, completes a transfer program of study and transfers to a bachelor's program or, after completing high school, enters a four-year institution and bachelor's degree level program directly. Bachelor's programs incorporate general education requirements as well as core courses in the major and each four-year institution typically has its own unique design and administrative placement for a BA or BS degree in ECE or a related field, as previously described.

However, many students do not follow "traditional" enrollment patterns towards degree completion. Increasing numbers of students are considered to be "non-traditional." Karoly (2012) has defined the "non-traditional" college student as "having four or more of the following characteristics: no high school diploma, delayed postsecondary enrollment, part-time school attendance, full-time employment while in school, financial independence from their family of origin, responsibility for dependents, or single parenthood" (p. 29). With this in mind, several higher education initiatives in California are working to (a) recognize that students take a variety of routes to attainment of their educational goals, (b) respond by making a variety of pathways explicit and accessible, (c) strengthen alignment of courses among institutions of a given sector of higher education, and (d) strengthen articulation of courses across higher education institutional sectors so that students' study experience is made smoother and completion of their course of study more likely. The following section begins by describing elements of the pathways from community college to baccalaureate programs and then describes some related initiatives.

California Community College Pathways to Baccalaureate Degree Completion

Los Angeles County is home to twenty community colleges, including: Cerritos College, Citrus College, College of the Canyons, East Los Angeles College, El Camino College, Glendale Community College, Long Beach City College, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles Harbor College, Los Angeles Mission College,

Los Angeles Pierce College, Los Angeles Southwest College, Los Angeles Trade Technical College, Los Angeles Valley College, Mt. San Antonio College, Pasadena City College, Rio Hondo College, Santa Monica College, and West Los Angeles College. Because California's current minimum qualifications for teaching in ECE settings require some higher education coursework, but less than a bachelor's degree, community colleges continue to be an ideal setting for students' initial ECE professional preparation. There are many reasons students may begin their higher education at a community college. To begin, many students cannot afford tuition at a four-year university and can complete all lower division requirements (major coursework as well as general education coursework) at a greatly reduced cost at a community college. Additionally, students whose high school academic record did not qualify them for freshman admission to a four-year university may enroll in and complete coursework at a community college where they can strengthen their academic knowledge and skills while they improve their academic record. Community colleges are typically more conveniently located for students, have more convenient (or more varied) course scheduling than four-year institutions, or offer more online courses. All of these features add to the appeal for students to pursue higher education in the community colleges. Furthermore, as described in *PEACH Paper 2 - Joining Pipelines: Articulation and Alignment Between and Among the California Community Colleges, the California State University System, and Private Universities in Los Angeles County*, the vast majority of California's community colleges have well-developed ECE-related academic departments, providing coursework for students entering and working in the ECE profession.

Curriculum Alignment Project

The Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) was initially a grass roots initiative developed by community college Child Development faculty members across California. The initial goal of CAP has been to identify, develop and align content standards and pedagogy of eight 3-unit core Child Development courses (known as the "CAP 8") across the state's community colleges. In addition, this curriculum alignment across community colleges continues to enlist community college partners, strengthening a common Child Development educational foundation of coursework. ECE-related undergraduate programs on CSU campuses have built upon this foundation and the foundation provided by widely-offered community

college AA and AS degree programs in Child Development. An additional three courses (collectively, with “CAP 8” now known as the “CAP 11”) have been proposed to be aligned. CAP has had significant success in making core Child Development courses accessible and clearly identified to students at a great majority of the state’s community colleges. Further, the alignment of Child Development courses between and among community colleges increases students’ access to enroll in common course offerings at more than one community college, increasing the likelihood of their finding course sections that fit in their daily schedules. Further information on the current status CAP alignment at Los Angeles County community colleges, and other relevant information, please consult the website:

https://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cdtc/print/htdocs/services_cap.htm.

Community College Transfer Patterns

While CAP was in the process of being implemented at community college campuses, Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC) legislation (SB 1440) was approved in California with the goal of creating increased collaboration and articulation of coursework between community college academic programs and CSU baccalaureate programs. This legislation requires that campuses collaborate across sectors to develop and offer one or more TMC in each discipline to provide a more seamless transition for students transferring from the community college to the CSU (<http://www.c-id.net/degreereview.html>). To accomplish this, California’s Inter-segmental Curriculum Workgroup (ICW), with both community college and CSU representatives, was formed to address the state’s SB 1440 Transfer Model Curriculum legislation. As described in *PEACH Paper 2 - Joining Pipelines: Articulation and Alignment Between and Among the California Community Colleges, the California State University System, and Private Universities in Los Angeles County*, nineteen CSU campuses with ECE-related programs have developed a transfer degree with one or more local California Community Colleges (CCCs). The TMC in Early Care and Education was designed to support the professional development and degree attainment of the ECE workforce.

In 2014, a TMC in Child and Adolescent Development *in addition to* the TMC in Early Care and Education was approved at the state level. The development of these two TMC pathways—one in Early Care and Education as well as one in Child Development—reflects the different needs of students based on their career goals (i.e., students who plan to work in ECE settings versus those who may want to work with youth and families in other settings). While proponents note that the TMC in Child and Adolescent Development is designed for students who wish to pursue working with older children, critics of this TMC note that the use of the word “Development” in its title is misleading as only 6 units of development coursework appears to be required.

AA-to-BA Cohort Programs

For one or more of the reasons cited above, students may begin their undergraduate coursework at a community college. Typically, students who are interested in ECE will seek appropriate academic advisement and course completion to allow them to meet their initial educational and professional goals, whether that is to complete the minimum coursework to become certified to teach in the ECE setting, or to take all the appropriate lower-division general education courses and child development courses to allow for a smooth transfer process into a four-year institution. Students planning to pursue a bachelor's degree need to ensure that they fulfill all the requirements of a transfer degree. In some cases these differ from the requirements for obtaining a terminal AA or AS degree. Without high quality advisement and careful academic planning, students run the risk of taking classes that will not transfer to the four-year institution, leading to students' taking excessive units and/or not meeting transfer requirements. Again, please see *PEACH Paper 2* for further description and discussion of ECE curriculum alignment and articulation between community colleges and four-year institutions in California.

Therefore, some community colleges and four-year institutions form partnerships through which students are placed into cohorts, or grouped together, to take classes and receive academic advisement and support to enroll in and complete a prescribed pattern of coursework in the community college leading directly to transfer into the four-year institution. According to Kipnis, Whitebook, Almaraz, Sakai, and

Austin (2012), cohort programs have been found to make student persistence toward achieving a degree goal more likely. These programs also typically provide carefully designed academic and career advisement. These cohort programs often provide other student supports as well, including financial stipends. Such programs typically require an external grant funding source to provide these additional academic supports and advisement. In some cases, designated sections of required courses are offered for the students in a particular cohort, and often these sections receive additional grant funding.

Examples in Los Angeles County include the ECE cohort partnership between Los Angeles City College (LACC) and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA), in which some upper-division CSULA Child Development bachelor's degree courses were offered on the LACC campus, taught by CSULA faculty. Additionally, a partnership between Santa Monica College (SMC) and National University (NU) provides a pathway of ECE advisement and education beginning in local high schools continuing through lower division coursework at SMC and culminating in a bachelor's degree at National University. Kipnis et al. (2012) notes the positive effects of cohort four-year programs in four California counties, with results that reflect students' higher rates of degree completion.

Policy Related to Bachelor's Degree Completion

As an example of how policy can inform and support ECE professionals' achievement of a bachelor's degree, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE) Head Start has partnered with the CSU Chancellor's Office and CSULA Child Development faculty. The goal of this collaboration is to provide a pathway for Head Start and Early Head Start teachers that addresses the challenges they face. These teachers work full-time during the day, may have extremely varied educational histories, and/or have completed a range of related coursework. Steps in this process include (a) determining the specific educational/coursework needs of each participating Head Start staff, (b) designing place-based and on-site ECE professional development education as credit-bearing courses, and (c) identifying CSU courses that could be offered at the worksite or at other local locations to facilitate a cohort experience for ECE professionals who could benefit from both the support and the convenience of such course offerings (A.

Fulgini, personal communication, June 19, 2014). Challenges related to offering CSU courses on off-campus locations include determining which CSU campus should offer the courses and how these course offerings should be staffed and funded. Discussions have also considered the importance of providing elements of a typical academic experience that might not be provided by this educational experience, such as learning to navigate a college campus and engaging in class discussions and exchange of ideas with students from a range of non-Head Start backgrounds working with young children and their families.

Conclusions, Considerations, and Recommendations

Several themes emerged from the PEACH BA/BS Working Group CSU campus visits that can be used to guide efforts related to current and future ECE-related bachelor's degree programs:

1. It is recognized that there is potential for tension between Child Development or ECE-related programs/departments and the Colleges of Education on CSU campuses as statewide discussions of an ECE credential heighten.
2. It is also recognized that this concern is based upon historically-developed assumptions and relationship dynamics do not need to be perpetuated in future collaborative efforts. The development of a joint program on one campus attests to positive examples of emerging collaborations. The goal is to seek ways to collaborate effectively with Colleges of Education so that Child Development academic units have a meaningful role in the planning and implementation of an ECE credential and/or related certificates. It is apparent that there will be significant opportunities to develop or enhance existing relationships across disciplines due to current policy initiatives to increase higher education opportunities for ECE professionals.
3. The PEACH BA/BS Working Group campus visits highlighted several institutional issues related to program support and budget challenges:
 - a. Passage of Prop 30 and the improving financial climate in the state and nation may indicate a better financial picture over the next few years.

- b. Curricular policies are a potential challenge for the development of new degree or certificate programs, especially when the approval and offering of new courses or programs require the deletion of other course or program offerings.

Moreover, the description of undergraduate programs reviewed in this paper leads to several conclusions. First, there is great diversity in the coursework required across campuses in Los Angeles County to obtain a bachelor's degree that focuses on, or is related to, early care and education. Some programs offer a wide range of electives, enabling students to develop their own individualized academic program, whereas other programs contain a large number of required courses specifically preparing students for curriculum design, teaching, assessment, and/or administration in ECE program settings. In addition, ECE-related academic programs are currently housed in a wide range of departments (e.g., Child Development, Human Development, Developmental Psychology, Child and Family Studies) and colleges (e.g., Education, Health and Human Services, Human Development) further adding to the lack of commonality in content across ECE-related bachelor's level education. This situation likely challenges new students' ability to navigate the system to identify and follow their selected academic and career pathway.

Additionally, an examination of ECE-related academic program faculty reveals that their own professional preparation varies widely in knowledge, skills, and experiences with young children and their families in ECE settings (Please see *PEACH Paper 5 - Completing the System: The Current Status of ECE Doctoral and Master's Degree Programs in Los Angeles County* for more information). These and other related faculty profile factors contribute to ECE-related academic program variability (Whitebook et al., 2012). Therefore, a student's disparate experiences in any given ECE-related bachelor's program may be reflective of faculty characteristics, in addition to their course offerings.

Furthermore, recent reviews of ECE-related bachelor's level education have focused on the importance of teachers' critical and creative thinking, expert communication, and interaction skills to improve the quality

of early education. However, from the present PEACH research review, it is not apparent that existing ECE-related bachelor's programs consistently focus on the development of these skills as primary student learning outcomes. It is anticipated that students will increasingly seek ECE-related bachelor's-level education as requirements for ECE teaching and public recognition of the importance of the early childhood period rise. Review of the research also indicates that ECE-related professional development policy and planning reflect an appreciation of and support for maintaining multiple academic pathways to facilitate ECE teachers' bachelor's degree completion.

Limitations revealed in this review of research and in current academic programs also indicate that while a range of ECE-related programs are options for ECE professional preparation, a deeper examination is required of each program's curriculum and design to determine its degree of usefulness for the developing teacher. More specifically, core and elective course content (including treatment of language development, working with ethnically and linguistically diverse children, as well as working with families and supporting family engagement), clinical practice requirements, as well as targeted academic advisement and monetary supports, alignment with state ECE competencies, Infant-Toddler and Preschool Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks, and related professional preparation program standards and accreditation (e.g., NAEYC program recognition and NCATE program accreditation) should be considered as important aspects of any bachelor's program in ECE.

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Related IHE Websites

California State University, Channel Islands

BA in Early Childhood Studies: <http://earlychildhoodstudies.csuci.edu/index.htm>

California State University, Dominguez Hills

BS in Child Development:

<http://www.csudh.edu/catalog/Fall2011Addendum/ChildDevelopment.shtml>

California State University, Fullerton

<http://hhd.fullerton.edu/CAS/index.htm>

California State University, Long Beach

BA option in Child Development and Family Studies

http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/catalog/current/chhs/child_development/fcs_ba01.html

California State University, Los Angeles

BA in Child Development, option in ECE Administration

http://ecatalog.calstatela.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=4&poid=394

California State University, Northridge

BS, Family and Consumer Sciences with option in Family Studies, Pattern A: Childcare Administration & BA, Child and Adolescent Development:

<http://www.csun.edu/catalog/?s=family+and+consumer+sciences>

Cal Poly Pomona

BS, Early Childhood (program currently being developed):

<http://www.csupomona.edu/~ceis/departments.shtml>

National University

BA in Early Childhood Education:

<http://www.nu.edu/OurPrograms/SchoolOfEducation/TeacherEducation/Programs/EarlyChildhoodDevelopment.html>

Pacific Oaks College

BA in Early Childhood Education:

http://www.pacificoaks.edu/Schools_Programs/Bachelors-Completion_Programs

University of La Verne

BS in Child Development:

<http://laverne.edu/catalog/program/bs-child-development/>

Related Organizations and Agency Websites

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP 8)

https://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cdtc/print/htdocs/services_cap.htm

First 5 LA

<http://www.first5la.org/>

<http://www.first5la.org/About-Us>

<http://www.first5la.org/Workforce-Development>

Los Angeles County Office of Education

<http://www.lacoe.edu/Home.aspx>

LAUP – Workforce Initiative and PEACH

<http://workforce.laup.net/partnerships-for-education-articulation-and-coordination-through-higher-education-peach.aspx>

<http://workforce.laup.net/child-development-workforce-initiative-wfi.aspx>

<http://workforce.laup.net/about.aspx>

Transfer Model Curriculum (TMC)

<http://www.c-id.net/degreereview.html>

Explanations of Acronyms from List of PEACH Paper Contributors

LACOE: Los Angeles County Office of Education

LAUSD ECE Division: Los Angeles Unified School District, Early Childhood Education

LAUP: Los Angeles Universal Preschool

PEACH: Partnerships for Education, Articulation and Coordination through Higher Education

PITC: The Program for Infant/Toddler Care

West Ed – E3 Institute: Excellence in Early Education