

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Corps campaigns for better pay for more qualified teachers and providers



TAMARA DOBSON

Tamara Dobson with a child in her program

I strongly feel that ECE professionals are underpaid," says long-time Corona family child care provider Tamara Dobson. A stipend from CARES gave her an incentive to continue her education, she says, but "providers are (increasingly) required to have degrees and permits. When you have more education, you're more qualified, which means more pay."

The California Child Development Corps is kicking off a postcard campaign calling for better compensation for early care and education teachers and providers who have gotten more training. Participants also plan to urge policymakers to include early care and education teachers and providers in discussions on this issue.

"I understand ECE more"

"I've taken courses in ECE development," says Dobson. "(They) changed the way I care for children—to work smarter and not harder." Dobson, president of the Riverside County Family Child Care Association, runs the Dobson Christian Preschool and Child Care.

"We're standing together"

"We are committed to getting 1,000 postcards signed by early care and education professionals, parents, and students in Riverside," says Dobson, who plans to get other Riverside providers involved in the campaign. "The postcards will ask for better compensation for ECE professionals and let legislators know that we're all standing together to make a difference. I'm also going to start circulating the *Children's Advocate* Corps page at our workshops and take them to our Resource and Referral facilities," she adds.

"Given me more confidence"

"The Corps has given me more confidence on how to advocate and has helped me network and meet new friends as well," says Dobson. "I love the fact that we're all advocating for ECE professionals."

"We all have to work together," she says, "because the greater the number, the more attention will be given to our issue. I do this because I love children and I want to make a difference in their lives."
— Amanda Montague

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ANNOUNCEMENTS (Call 415-808-7327 for details)

- ❖ Tell legislators that early childhood teachers need to be paid for their education and experience:
 - ▲ Collect Corps postcards at local ECE events
 - ▲ Attend a Bay Area speaker training
 - ▲ Take your story to Sacramento.
- ❖ Save CARES! On January 24 the First 5 California Commission will be voting on temporary funding to extend the state match to CARES programs. Send a letter to The Corps telling us how CARES helped you work with children and families. We will bring it to the commission meeting.
- ❖ The Corps will send early childhood teachers to a January budget response meeting organized by the VOICE coalition.

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