

THE California Child Development CORPS

Early childhood teachers and providers organizing and advocating for better pay, benefits, job conditions, and professional respect.

MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Including family child care in universal preschool

When Los Angeles County began planning for universal preschool, members of the California Child Development Corps campaigned to make sure that family child care providers were included. Now the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) program is a leading model for including family child care providers as full partners.

Uniting for a cause

Karen Spinosa got involved when she attended a meeting about LAUP and discovered that family child care wasn't in the plan. "I felt we needed and deserved to be a part of it," she says. "The California Corps kept us abreast of what was happening and gave us access to their membership list so we could (contact) other family child care providers."

The providers made a plan for participating in LAUP, says Spinosa, director of Just Like Home Family Child Care/Learning Center, then campaigned for their plan.

"We created a work group that sometimes met four or five times a week for over a year. We wanted to make sure there was representation from family child care on every task force," says Catherine Scott, director of Scott Family Child Care.

The providers successfully argued that they could meet LAUP standards. "The majority of us have our Associate's degree or above," says Scott. "And those that didn't meet the requirements were willing, with assistance, to get the necessary education."

"What made it a success," Scott says, "was to have many people from different communities and educational backgrounds coming together." Spinosa adds, "Everyone was willing to compromise in order to come together. We were advocating for all family child care providers, not just for some of us."

Lasting effects

"Once we made a presence and made it clear that we weren't going to back down, people involved in universal preschool started to respect what we do," says Scott.

Working on the campaign, says Spinosa, "has given me a lot of self-esteem. I really take pride in the fact that I overcame my fear of public speaking—knowing I was able to make a difference in the lives of other providers and parents really makes me feel good."

Sara Hicks-Kilday, staff support to the Corps, comments, "Making sure that family child care and center teachers are at the table making policy decisions is part of the Corps mission. This is what Catherine and Karen successfully did in their campaign to get family child care providers included in LAUP."

—Amanda Montague



Sara Hicks-Kilday and Catherine Scott

SUSAN JEONG

Come to our 5th annual statewide meeting Saturday, October 21, San Leandro.

Meet with other teachers and family child care providers! Join together to promote better compensation, more training opportunities, and a voice in policy decisions!

RSVP required.

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