California Early Childhood Mentor Program Secures Funds for Expansion

The California Early Childhood Mentor Program, one of the oldest and largest mentoring programs in the child care field, co-founded by NCECW, is expanding from 28 to at least 50 community college sites statewide this fall, with the help of federal block grant funds for child care quality improvement. A mentoring component for child care directors, to be phased in gradually throughout the state, is also underway with a series of two-day director mentoring institutes to be conducted by the Child Development Training Consortium.

The program, which expects to have 454 mentors by the end of the year, will also begin providing an additional stipend of $500 to mentors so that they can keep working with their protégés (offering up to 25 hours of assistance) after the protégé's college practicum class ends. Ongoing support for protégés was a major recommendation from NCECW's recent assessment of the program, released in 1995 in a report entitled *The Potential of Mentoring*.

The block grant funds are administered through the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education, whose current leadership has voiced a strong commitment to the program's continuation—providing it with a current total of $1.5 million in public support. "A major reason why the Mentor Program has been able to grow this way," notes Director Peyton Nattinger, "is that it's grafted onto the existing community college structure. Since the program has helped the colleges make their training programs more responsive to their communities, the colleges in turn have been willing to take the lead in making mentoring happen." Activism from mentors themselves has also been essential in saving and expanding the program over the years. Congratulations to this landmark program which has been leading the way since 1988 and continues to break new ground! ■

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Come to NCECW's Mentoring Institute, March 11-15, 1997!

The Mentoring Institute, March 11-15, 1997, at the Jack London Inn in Oakland, California, will be a five-day intensive seminar for mentors, program developers and trainers, offering a choice between two tracks of study: how to start and refine a mentoring program, and how to become certified to use the Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum in mentor training. The Institute will begin on Tuesday afternoon and extend through Saturday, with a half-day break during the week to enjoy the San Francisco Bay Area.

The program track will include: designing and evaluating mentoring programs, securing funding, collaborating with community groups, mentor training, and building programs that reflect the diversity of our field and our communities.

The curriculum track will be a "training of trainers" focusing on NCECW's newly-released Early Childhood Mentoring Curriculum, which addresses the goals and principles of mentoring programs; adult development; teacher/provider development; peer coaching and other mentoring skills; respect for diversity; mentor/protégé relationships; and mentors as leaders and advocates for quality early care and education.

Leadership opportunities for mentors will be an important focus of both tracks. Mentors will have the chance to expand their leadership skills in advocating for better child care *and* better child care jobs—including public speaking, working with the media, influencing policies in the work place and at the state and federal level, and organizing other teachers and providers for change.

The Institute will be taught by NCECW staff and consultants who bring years of experience in mentor training, mentor program development, curriculum development and leadership training. Scholarships for mentors are available, and all participants will have the option of receiving college credit from Pacific Oaks College or Wheelock College.

We hope you'll join us for an exciting week in California! Please contact NCECW for more information, to register, or to apply for a scholarship by phone: 202-737-7700; fax: 202-737-0370, or e-mail: ncecw@ncecw.org.