



## **Child Care Access for English Language Learners**

San Mateo County Mini Grant

December 8, 2015

Funded by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation



## **CONTEXT**

### **ALLIES**

Since 2010, The Alliance for Language Learners Integration, Education and Success (ALLIES) has brought together adult schools and community colleges to meet the needs of adult English language learners in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Supported by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, ALLIES has worked to help students achieve economic self-sufficiency by equipping them with language and other needed skills and providing crucial workforce development support.

ALLIES' purpose is to accelerate student academic and economic success through collaboration and alignment across the two systems. We also promote partnerships with community organizations, workforce development, public agencies and employers.

### **ALLIES Mini Grants**

ALLIES Mini Grants are intended to fund information sharing, brainstorming and small tests of collaboration and alignment. The purpose of the mini-grants is to:

- Explore potential collaborative solutions to create a 'no wrong door' collaborative network for immigrants
- Develop mutual understanding and working relationships between and among CBOs, community colleges and adult schools, and other partners within Adult Education Block Grant consortia boundaries to support development of seamless transitions and pathways for adult English Learners
- Identify action projects involving CBOs along with their colleagues in Adult Schools and Community Colleges

### **Adult Education Block Grant**

The 2015-2016 State Budget appropriated \$500 million to the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) and the California Department of Education to allocate funding for adult education. The funds will be provided to eligible consortia for the purpose of implementing regional plans for adult education. The intent of the Adult Education Block Grant was to expand and improve the provision of adult education via these consortia.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

### **Interviewees**

<i>4Cs of San Mateo County</i>	David Fleishman, Executive Director Andi Bales Molnar, Director of Programs
<i>Family Connections</i>	Renee Zimmerman, Executive Director
<i>San Mateo Adult School</i>	Patty Villar, ESL Transition Specialist
<i>SMC Office of Education</i>	Nirmala Dillman, Coordinator, Child Care Partnership
<i>Council</i>	Soodie Ansari, Coordinator, Early Learning Dual Language Support
<i>Sequoia Adult School</i>	Lionel de Maine, Director Soledad Campos, HSD/GED
	Melissa Martinez, College Transition Advisor
<i>Toddle</i>	Heather Hopkins, Owner and Administrator

### **Workshop Attendees (November 5, 2015)**

#### Child Care Providers

<i>4Cs of SMC</i>	Angela Cabrera, ECE Program Manager
<i>Cañada College</i>	Patty Hall, ECE Faculty
	Jamie Hui, ECE/CD Retention Specialist
	Liz Schuler, ESL/ECE Faculty
<i>IHSD</i>	Hilda Izaguirre, San Mateo Head Start Family Advocate
<i>Job Train</i>	Lois Marshall-Ward, Senior Grant Writer
<i>Peninsula Family Service</i>	Nora Espinoza, Family and Community Engagement
<i>Manager</i>	
<i>Skyline College Child</i>	
<i>Development Lab Center</i>	Tina Watts, Child Development Services Coordinator

#### Adult Schools

<i>Jefferson Adult School</i>	Kay Johnson, Distance Learning Coordinator/Citizenship
<i>San Mateo Adult School</i>	Tim Doyle, Assistant Director
	Marina Kravtsova, Student and Parent
	Patty Villar, ESL Transition Specialist
<i>Sequoia Adult School</i>	Soledad Campos, HSD/GED
	Ana Escobar, ESL/ABE
	Lionel de Maine, Director
<i>South San Francisco</i>	
<i>Adult School</i>	Seemaa Prasad, ESL Coordinator

#### Policy Organizations

<i>Building Skills Partnership</i>	Christian Valdez, San Jose Program Coordinator
	Ariana Hoyt, San Jose Program Assistant
<i>Redwood City</i>	Kristen Anderson, Child Care Coordinator
<i>SMC Office of Education</i>	Diana Harlick, Coordinator, Early Learning Quality
<i>Improvement</i>	
	Initiatives (ELSS)/The Big Lift

## RESOURCES

### Landscape of Child Care for English Language Learners

#### Existing Conditions

- ❖ 4Cs provides a database of child care providers and can offer information sessions to students in English and Spanish.
- ❖ The Big Lift is a collective impact organization with the goal of increasing reading skills by targeting districts whose reading levels are below average. Initial funding supports about 900 preschool spaces.
- ❖ The Child Care Partnership Council is meant to be an organization that coordinates different groups, but it is not an implementation body.
- ❖ There is not a lot of employer-provided child care in San Mateo County: fewer than ten employers in SMC provide child care for employees.
- ❖ Building Skills Partnership brings ESL and other types of classes to worksites, but does not provide child care to students.

#### Prior Programs

- ❖ There used to be a centralized eligibility list for subsidized preschool in SMC; now families have to find spots on their own.
  - The list was funded by the state and administered by the 4Cs.
  - Child care programs agreed to feed into a centralized list, so there is alignment of activity.
- ❖ Even Start was a well-researched and well-known federally-funded program in SMC for many years that specifically linked ESL and child care.
- ❖ SAS had a partnership with Family Connections where ESL students could participate in the co-op and use it for child care needs.

### Opportunities

Build on Existing Resources: Identify existing care providers who could expand their offerings to meet the needs of adult learners

#### Link to Other Programs and Initiatives

- ❖ Explore partnerships with ongoing and allied initiatives:
  - Big Lift
  - Child Care Coordinating county initiatives
  - Community college ECE programs
- ❖ There is a great deal of synergy and opportunity at Cañada to pair ECE students needing internships with other students who need child care.
- ❖ A Business Enterprise group at Cañada is working on a child care swap for students to exchange child care.
- ❖ Parent-Teacher Organizations are a good resource and source of support.

### Challenges

### Major Gaps in Supply and Access

- ❖ There is a deficit of child care in San Mateo County and existing care slots are very expensive.
- ❖ It is difficult to make connections with the K-12 system, which is underfunded and can be reticent.
- ❖ Aligning child care schedules with adult ELL students' class schedules can be difficult and lead to missed classes.
- ❖ Students do not always have access to a computer or know how to navigate a website.
- ❖ Sometimes cultural differences mean that parents do not want to leave their children with strangers. Onsite babysitting may help alleviate these concerns.
- ❖ More education about subsidies is needed – this is a confusing area for parents.

## **STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

### Leverage Current Providers

- ❖ Adult schools could partner with agencies that already offer child care, such as JobTrain. JobTrain has available onsite child care and can provide transit subsidies.
- ❖ There is an opportunity to use K-12 school space at night with babysitting.
- ❖ Could create a network of family providers near the school that are willing to offer short-term, drop-in care.
- ❖ Reach out to existing child care centers and informal spaces such as churches to ask whether they have any excess capacity to provide child care.
- ❖ Can go through existing ECE workforce to request flexible/after hours child care; many providers want the extra work
- ❖ There should be a strategy to connect ECE providers who do not speak English to ESL classes, as learning English would help them earn certificates and advance in their careers.

### Success Factors

- ❖ When possible, child development programs are preferable to babysitting.
- ❖ Child care sites should be multi-lingual.
- ❖ Conversation about ECE pathways should be separate from conversation about child care for students – it may not always serve the needs of children to couple ECE education and child care services.

### Improve Referral Processes

- ❖ It would be helpful for referrers to know whether students are attaining child care – can there be a form or survey to see if and where students are accessing care?
- ❖ There is an opportunity to provide information/training to student intake counselors. If students develop a child care plan, this information can become a child care database.
- ❖ Create an online child care video to show students during orientation, preferably with student parents telling their stories about accessing care in order to persist in education.
- ❖ Should get adult school referrers together for trainings on how to easily access the right information, learn where there are child care openings, etc.

### Develop County-Wide Strategies

- ❖ ACCEL should look at county-wide needs, such as an updated database reflecting child care availability.
- ❖ There may be opportunities to link adult schools with The Big Lift initiative.
- ❖ Where possible, could go after funding opportunities as a county-wide group.

Assess Specific Needs of Existing and Potential Adult Education Students for Child Care: It would help to quantify care needs of adult school ELL students by location, time of day, amount of child care needed, age of children

Re-establish Parent Cooperative Child Care: Consider parent cooperatives as potential solutions. There are several models:

- ❖ Parent education with cooperatively provided child care (e.g., Little Hands)
- ❖ Exchange of baby sitting (though need to assess any potential liability issues if a coop is associated with an Adult School)

Explore New Strategy Options

- ❖ Assess options for ECE career pathways. Recognize that this is a challenging profession, requiring skills to work with infants through adults. Not all parents are predisposed or interested in ECE as a profession.
- ❖ Assess employer engagement options: Be aware that there is not much employer provided child care in San Mateo County

## **NEXT STEP**

In 2016, as San Mateo County's new adult education program is clarified, the ALLIES and ACCEL Steering Committees will assess high-potential strategies and define action steps to address child care needs for SMC ELL students.