

# NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA CALIFORNIA NCLR AFFILIATE NETWORK

## PRESCHOOL FOR ALL: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**T**he educational status of Latino children is a major concern for the Latino community. Throughout the entire "education pipeline," Latino children lag behind their peers in access, achievement, and attainment. Moreover, improving the academic outcomes of Latino children is a critical issue for California. Latino children are the fastest-growing population in the state. In fact, researchers noted earlier this year that more than one out of every two babies born in California is Latino. Unfortunately, at the beginning of the "pipeline" Latinos are not adequately served. In California, 47% of all children 0-5 years old are Latino, yet less than 37% of these children attend preschool. In addition, early education initiatives often fail to adequately address the quality of early education services for Latino and English language learner (ELL) children, who require linguistically and culturally responsive services to meet school readiness goals.

As policy-makers look to early education as a means to reverse negative trends in our nation's public schools and promote school readiness for all children, they should understand that the success of these initiatives largely depends on the implementation of policies that address access to and quality of early education and care programs for Latino children. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Task Force of the California NCLR Affiliate Network (CNAN) support access to high-quality early education for Latino children. However, we urge policy-makers to move forward on Preschool for All (PFA) proposals that address important access barriers and quality issues for Latino children. To achieve this, NCLR and CNAN recommend the following:

### **Promote access to PFA for Latino and English language learner children by:**

- ▶ Including an outreach strategy, which targets Latino, immigrant, ELL, and geographically isolated families.
- ▶ Prioritizing PFA implementation to school districts with underserved neighborhoods that have a high proportion of schools with the lowest Academic Performance Index (API) rankings.
- ▶ Ensuring that PFA programs are full-day, or at a minimum are linked to ECE services for the full day, and available to parents with nontraditional work schedules.

### **Support culturally and linguistically appropriate high-quality services by:**

- ▶ Ensuring that the curriculum and assessment tools used in the PFA program are not only developmentally appropriate, but also available in primary languages and are culturally sensitive to the needs of the children.
- ▶ Allowing for a mixed service delivery system of PFA services (public/private, center-based, and home-based), which leverages the expertise of community-based organizations to provide and expand PFA services, as well as training and technical assistance, for Latino and ELL children.
- ▶ Increasing the pool of highly-qualified bilingual teachers and personnel with expertise in working with Latinos and ELLs by including a bilingual ECE teachers career ladder program.
- ▶ Requiring parent involvement and meaningful parent participation in PFA governance functions, in order to enhance parents' capacity as advocates for their children's development.
- ▶ Ensuring that PFA parent activities and materials are culturally sensitive and provided in their primary language.
- ▶ Establishing an ongoing system for monitoring the supply and demand of PFA throughout the state (according to regions, ethnicity, socioeconomic factors, etc.), and for linking and disseminating current ECE research on Latino and ELL issues.
- ▶ Ensuring the opportunity for community-based sector involvement by making resources available for facility renovation and/or acquisition, with priority to underserved neighborhoods.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ENROLLMENT IN CALIFORNIA

	Percent of Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten) by County	Number of Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten)	Percent of Eligible Children Enrolled in Preschool or Nursery (Public and Private)	Number of Eligible Children Enrolled in Preschool and Nursery (Public and Private)	Percent of Latino Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten)	Number of Latino Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten)	Percent of Eligible Latino Children Enrolled in Preschool or Nursery (Public and Private)	Number of Eligible Latino Children Enrolled in Preschool and Nursery (Public and Private)
Alameda	3.8%	44,744	55.8%	24,988	25.9%	11,589	39.4%	4,566
Butte	0.4%	5,108	43.9%	2,242	18.0%	919		
Contra Costa	2.9%	33,376	58.5%	19,516	26.1%	8,711	46.6%	4,059
El Dorado	0.4%	4,791	54.3%	2,600	13.9%	666		
Fresno	2.8%	32,672	36.9%	12,070	58.6%	19,146	31.4%	6,012
Humboldt	0.3%	3,409	56.8%	1,937	12.0%	409		
Imperial	0.4%	4,919	45.3%	2,229	82.4%	4,053	44.4%	1,800
Kern	2.2%	25,965	37.3%	9,691	50.9%	13,216	32.4%	4,282
Kings	0.4%	4,334	33.3%	1,443	57.7%	2,501		
Los Angeles	28.9%	337,509	47.0%	158,594	59.8%	201,830	38.6%	77,907
Madera	0.4%	4,273	32.0%	1,369	65.6%	2,803		
Marin	0.5%	6,161	75.2%	4,634	16.6%	1,023		
Merced	0.8%	9,127	37.7%	3,438	55.3%	5,047	30.8%	1,555
Orange	8.8%	102,545	47.0%	48,221	44.4%	45,530	30.5%	13,887
Placer	0.7%	7,909	62.1%	4,910	16.3%	1,289		
Riverside	5.0%	58,190	36.4%	21,177	50.5%	29,386	27.6%	8,111
Sacramento	3.8%	43,942	43.6%	19,146	22.7%	9,975	40.9%	4,080
San Bernardino	5.8%	67,836	40.1%	27,175	53.1%	36,021	34.1%	12,283
San Diego	8.1%	94,024	50.0%	47,032	39.2%	36,857	39.4%	14,522
San Francisco	1.1%	13,168	64.4%	8,480	23.9%	3,147		
San Joaquin	1.7%	20,192	44.4%	8,957	42.3%	8,541	37.6%	3,211
San Luis Obispo	0.6%	6,649	54.0%	3,593	26.1%	1,735		
San Mateo	1.8%	21,032	64.6%	13,593	31.9%	6,709	47.7%	3,200
Santa Barbara	1.0%	12,122	48.9%	5,932	52.4%	6,352	37.2%	2,363
Santa Clara	4.8%	55,630	52.8%	29,386	32.4%	18,024	40.0%	7,210
Santa Cruz	0.6%	7,227	45.8%	3,310	47.7%	3,447		
Shasta	0.4%	5,207	51.5%	2,681	10.7%	557		
Solano	1.2%	13,468	44.8%	6,035	26.2%	3,529		
Sonoma	1.2%	13,618	55.4%	7,547	30.2%	4,113	36.5%	1,501
Stanislaus	1.5%	17,658	38.8%	6,848	44.8%	7,911	31.4%	2,484
Tulare	1.3%	15,202	39.4%	5,982	66.2%	10,064	37.5%	3,774
Ventura	2.3%	26,924	50.4%	13,572	41.8%	11,254	32.4%	3,646
Yolo	0.5%	5,483	55.7%	3,054	42.9%	2,352		
Monterey and San Benito	1.3%	15,562	45.6%	7,095	61.9%	9,633	36.9%	3,555
Lake and Mendocino	0.3%	3,956	41.3%	1,633	24.6%	973		
Del Norte, Lassen, Modoc, and Siskiyou	0.3%	3,172	48.0%	1,523	14.2%	450		
Colusa, Glenn, Tehama, and Trinity	0.3%	3,581	38.4%	1,374	35.7%	1,278		
Sutter and Yuba	0.4%	5,125	39.1%	2,005	25.3%	1,297		
Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Toulumne	0.4%	4,367	51.1%	2,233	18.5%	808		
Statewide	99.5%*	1,166,112	47.2%	550,234	45.9%	535,245	36.8%	196,970

Source: Lopez, Elias S. and Patricia L. de Cos, Preschool and Childcare Enrollment in California. California State Research Bureau, January 2004.

Note: Blank cells indicate a sample size of less than 200; therefore, estimates were not produced. Percent of Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten), Latino Children Eligible for Preschool (Ages 3-5 Not In Kindergarten), and Eligible Latino Children Enrolled in Preschool and Nursery (Public and Private) amounts and percentages were calculated by NCLR.

\*Percentage does not add up to 100% due to rounding.