

# Yours, Mine and Ours: *Barriers to Preschools and Child Development Programs Located on School District Sites*



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from: [www.earlyeducation.org](http://www.earlyeducation.org)*

# Acknowledgements

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## Survey Results of Preschool Providers Operating Programs on School District Facilities

Kidango, with the generous support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and in partnership with the Office of Assemblymember Wilma Chan, the California Child Development Administrators Association (CCDAA) and the California Head Start Association (CHSA), conducted a survey of preschool providers operating programs on school district facilities. The purpose of this survey was to identify challenges and successes in preschool provider/school district partnerships in order to look at legislative and regulatory policy and practices, as well as policies and practices within schools and districts that will be mutually beneficial to the provider and district and better serve children and families now and in the future as numbers of children enrolled in preschool programs increase.

The survey was posted online and a link sent to members of both CCDAA and CHSA, who had one week to respond. 61 providers responded to the survey. 46 percent of the respondents have operated preschool programs on school district facilities for five years or more. Three percent of the respondents have operated a program for less than one year, and 88 percent have operated a program for five years or more. The majority of programs have been in operation between two and five years (37%). The percentage of programs in operation for more than five years is 28 percent, and 25 percent of programs have been in operation less than 1 year.

### Barriers

When asked to identify barriers encountered in the school district partnership program, preschool providers identified traffic concerns as number one (58%). This was followed by “our kids” vs. “their kids” (44%). School districts lack of understanding regarding licensing issues; different drop-off or pick-up times, and janitorial issues all tied for third with 42 percent each.

Barrier	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Conflicts with school calendar	25	42%
School districts lack of understanding regarding licensing issues	25	42%
Traffic concerns	34	58%
Different drop-off or pick-up times	25	42%
Security issues	10	17%
“Our kids” vs. “Their kids”	26	44%
Utilities	7	12%
Janitorial	25	42%
Bathrooms	22	37%
Rent/Cost	11	19%
City requiring use permit	2	3%
Extreme incidents, hazards, lock downs	9	15%
Other (please specify)	17	29%

**Barriers encountered by preschool providers in school district partnership programs**

Responses of the seventeen providers who listed other barriers could be categorized in the following groupings:

- 1) Food services (not applicable to all programs)
  - food of poor nutritional value
  - food not served “family style”
- 2) Facilities
  - lack of available slots or inadequate space
  - poorly maintained facilities
  - fire clearance issues
- 3) Communications
  - lack of articulation with kindergarten and transition from preschool
  - lack of understanding about requirements of the program
  - the need for more reports
- 4) School Culture or Relationships
  - lack of acceptance of preschool teachers as “teachers”
  - being part of the campus, fitting in
  - participating with the school in all aspects of professional development

### **Relationships between preschool providers and school district/site staff**

Preschool providers strongly believe that the relationship with the principal of a school site is most critical to the success of the program, with 80 percent of respondents listing this relationship as “Very Important” (96% listing it as important or very important). The relationship with the kindergarten teachers received 71 percent of respondents ranking it as “Very Important” (88% listing it as important or very important), followed by the relationship with the superintendent at 57 percent (and 83% listing it as important or important).

It is very interesting to note that the relationship with the school secretary garnered a 74 percent share of respondents feeling this was an important or very important relationship in the program. Not only do school secretaries provide a critical role in the day-to-day operations and communications within a school, they often serve as gatekeepers to the principal, which is considered the most critical relationship.

Custodial crew received 73 percent as important or very important.

	<b>Not Very Important</b>	<b>Somewhat Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Superintendent	7%	10%	26%	57%
Principal	3%	0%	16%	80%
Kindergarten Teachers	2%	10%	17%	71%
1-3 Grade Teachers	9%	47%	36%	8%
4-6 Grade Teachers	49%	40%	6%	6%
School Secretary	3%	22%	26%	48%
School Nurse	20%	20%	36%	24%
Custodial Staff	14%	12%	33%	40%
Kitchen Staff	25%	11%	25%	38%

**Perceptions of how relationships with the above-mentioned school district staff contribute to the preschool program’s success**

Not surprisingly, when asked what relationships with school district staff most contributed to challenges in the preschool program, respondents cited the principal as number one with 60 percent saying it was important or very important. Relationships with kindergarten teachers received 74 percent response as important or very important in program challenges, and the superintendent received 60 percent share.

	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Superintendent	21%	18%	21%	39%
Principal	16%	5%	22%	56%
Kindergarten Teachers	15%	11%	32%	42%
1-3 Grade Teachers	47%	31%	18%	4%
4-6 Grade Teachers	75%	22%	4%	0%
School Secretary	29%	16%	25%	29%
School Nurse	44%	20%	24%	12%
Custodial Staff	34%	13%	26%	26%
Kitchen Staff	45%	18%	14%	22%

**Perceptions of how relationships with the above-mentioned school district staff contribute to the preschool program’s challenges**

### **Strengthening and building relationships: kindergarten and preschool teachers**

With kindergarten teachers receiving a 96 percent response as being important or very important to the programs success and a 74 percent response as contributing to the challenge, strategies to strengthen and build on this key relationship is a significant way to provide a quality program for preschool children and a seamless transition into kindergarten.

The survey gave respondents several options to strengthen and build relationships that had been identified previously in focus groups with preschool teachers. These choices included things like sharing common spaces, playground space, bathrooms and outdoor equipment. It also included joint trainings for teachers, joint field trips, planning meetings, and joint curriculum planning.

Preschool providers believe that the most important way to strengthen relationships between preschool and kindergarten teachers is through joint trainings (83%). This was followed by planning meetings prior to the start of the new school year (75%) and joint curriculum planning (67%).

Although a few respondents did suggest sharing common space, such as playgrounds and bathrooms, as well sharing outdoor equipment, the low numbers are believed to reflect stringent licensing requirements that make such arrangements too difficult for most districts and preschool providers.

### **Recommendations**

The survey revealed three areas needing improvement in the preschool provider / school district partnerships: training, relationships, and policies and procedures. Listed below are recommendations in each of these three areas:

### **Training**

1. Training of school district principals and facilities directors on licensing requirements for preschool programs *(to better understand and accommodate the needs of preschool children)*
2. Training for principals on research concerning brain development *(to facilitate understanding and support of Pre-K programs at their school sites and how Pre-K benefits K-12 learning)*
3. Increasing the understanding of school district staff and preschool staff on the importance of seeing all children as “our kids” *(also improves relationships)*
4. Joint trainings for kindergarten and preschool teachers *(also improves relationships)* (e.g. developmentally appropriate practices, professional development, best classroom practices)
5. Joint curriculum planning *(also improves relationships and outcomes for children in both programs)*
6. Support the development of training and the provision of technical assistance to private providers working with the public sector on rules and regulations

### **Relationships**

1. Joint field trips, assemblies and special events *(also improves outcomes for children in both programs)*
2. Joint trainings and curriculum planning *(also improves outcomes for children in both programs)*

### **Policies and Procedures**

1. Make language modifications in education code where appropriate (e.g. “pupil” changed to “children served”)
2. Make modifications in education code so that school districts are not penalized for use of school facilities for infant, preschool, or school age children (i.e. these uses should never be classified as a non-school use)
3. Modify licensing requirements to more easily permit sharing of playgrounds and bathrooms between preschool and K-3 (would make preschool space at school sites more available)
4. Developing school calendars that are not just district-wide but are county-wide under the authority of the County Office of Education
5. Planning meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers before the start of the new year *(to provide a more seamless transition from preschool to kindergarten)*
6. Incentivize food service delivery to be “family style” and more nutritionally appropriate

### **Working towards the same goal—successful students**

Forty four percent of respondents listed “Our Kids versus Their Kids” as a major barrier in the partnership between preschool providers and the school district. How do we make the shift to “Our Kids,” where preschool is viewed as part of the

continuum of learning provided at the school district site? By implementing the above recommendations, the preschool provider/school district partnership will be enhanced and strengthened and do much to shift the current philosophy to an inclusive “Our Kids” model. This is a model that views preschool children and teachers as part of the continuum of education, and all benefit.

As was mentioned earlier, it is the experience of many preschool providers that several of the challenges in the partnership stem from this *ours versus yours* philosophical difference. Providers noted that there is often a lack of acceptance of preschool teachers as “teachers” and that they often feel excluded from participating as part of the school in all aspects of professional development. In some programs there is a problem of articulation with kindergarten and transition from preschool. Children and families would feel supported as they transition from the more nurturing and developmentally appropriate preschool classroom into the more rigorous kindergarten environment.

Preschool teachers and kindergarten teachers would share best practices and strategies for helping children reach their full potential, as well as information about individual children. This will support and enhance children’s development and learning, and the elementary schools benefit by having children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

# Addendum

## Phone Interviews

In July 2005, Paul Miller, Executive Director of Kidango and his staff, in partnership with the Office of Assemblymember Wilma Chan, conducted a series of phone interviews to identify challenges and issues that occur when school district facilities are used by child development programs that are either part of the district or provided by a nonprofit funded by the state or through Head Start.

Those interviewed included key administrators from an urban school district, a county office of education serving a rural area, a child development provider from that same county, and the California Department of Education. What follows are summaries of key considerations uncovered during the interview process. The information is presented in a bulleted format. We tried to capture this information faithfully and take full responsibility for any errors or omissions.

### Background on Agencies Interviewed

#### ***California Department of Education (CDE)***

California's public education system serves more than six million students in approximately 9,000 schools, governed by almost 1,000 elected school boards regulated by a complex Education Code and a finance system that is largely controlled by the Legislature and governor.

Currently, about 9% of California students attend private schools. For more information, please visit the California Department of Education web site at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov) or Ed Data at [www.ed-data.k12.ca.us](http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us)

#### ***Child Care Resource and Referral (R&R)***

R&R agencies are located in every county in California. Over the last two decades, R&R services have evolved from a grassroots effort to help parents find child care, to a well-developed system that supports parents, providers, and local communities in finding, planning for, and providing affordable, quality child care. The state, through the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, has supported these efforts since 1976. To learn more about the Child Care Resource and

Referral, please visit:  
[www.rrnetwork.org](http://www.rrnetwork.org)

#### ***Child Development Services, Kern County Superintendent of Schools***

Child Development Services operates 16 child development centers located in Bakersfield, Lamont, McFarland, Shafter, Tehachapi, Wasco and Weldon; serving more than 1,200 preschool children from low-income families. An employer-sponsored child care program also is available in downtown Bakersfield. For more information on Child Development Services, Kern County Superintendent of Schools, please visit:  
<http://kcsos.kern.org/kdfs/>

#### ***Kern County Superintendent of Schools***

The Kern County Superintendent of Schools is a County Office of Education that provides support, assistance and oversight to Kern county's 49 school districts which serves a total of approximately 165,817 K-12 students. Located at the southern end of the Central Valley, Kern County is the third largest county in California. For more information on the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, please visit:  
[www.kern.org](http://www.kern.org)

### ***Kern Local Investment in Child Care project (LINCC)***

LINCC was established in California in 1997 to conduct leading-edge work in the fields of child care and economic development. With seed funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, key innovative nonprofits collaborated with seven counties to address the child care needs of their communities by ensuring that the appropriate economic resources, policies and expertise are generated to support the growth of a sustainable and vibrant child care sector. LINCC is currently active in Alameda, Monterey, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Ventura counties, as well as Kern County. To learn more about Kern LINCC, please visit:

**<http://kcsos.kern.org/cccc/lince>**

### ***New Haven Unified School District (NHUSD)***

The New Haven Unified School District, located in Alameda County, serves approximately 13,200 children in Union City and part of south Hayward. New Haven is proud of the accomplishments of its diverse student population which is 75% minority. All of New Haven's schools have been recognized as "Distinguished Schools" by the state of California and the district has received five federal "Blue Ribbon" awards. The district's motto of Equity, Stability, and Quality symbolizes New Haven's commitment to provide the finest education possible for every student. New Haven was the first district in California to achieve district wide preschools available to all students. Kidango operates these centers which have a capacity of serving 581 children at eleven sites. For more information on the New Haven Unified School District, please visit: **[www.nhusd.k12.ca.us](http://www.nhusd.k12.ca.us)**

### **Participants**

Brooke Antonioni, *Kern Local Investment in Child Care*

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Kathleen Moore, *Director of Schools Facilities Planning Division, California Department of Education*

Randy Rowles, *Consultant, Kern County Superintendent of Schools*

### **Barriers and Issues Impacting Child Development Programs on School District Facilities**

#### ***Lack of Space / Facility Funds***

- Most schools do not have available facilities except for some urban school districts that have had declining enrollment
- Needs to be viewed in context of overcrowding problem in California
- Problems for existing campuses – overcrowding
- Difficult to add acreage onto a campus – doesn't exist, and can't seize existing housing in order to start preschool program

- Particularly in urban areas – this is what Prop 82 the Preschool for All Initiative is targeting, yet urban areas will have the most difficulty in accommodating the Initiative’s intent
- Complex laws governing amount of a school site that can be used for buildings
- Districts receive additional money for impacted spaces
- The state does not provide facility funds specific to preschool except the modular facility fund for child development
- School districts can receive bond fund dollars from the state
  - Eligibility is based on un-housed K-12 students
  - Preschool children housed in non-modular buildings are counted against the application for school bond funding. For example, if 95% of space is used for k-12, the school scores higher and is available for more funding. Pre-K is not considered part of the student population.
- The school receives a break for portable classrooms, as they do not count for bond facility funds’ calculation of need
  - However, the amount is still not enough funding to provide anything
- The most a school can receive is a 50% match, unless the school is in hardship
- There is a requirement of a deferred maintenance fund of 3%
  - Too complex, as it is based on the district’s total budget and the replacement fund
- Currently, preschools work against schools; space to house preschool programs makes schools less eligible
  - This is the result of legislation which established the state allocation board; politics involved (bond every few years to fund their distribution of money to local school districts)

### ***Other Facilities Issues***

- Title V
  - Regulations and standards adopted by the California State Board of Ed
    - Preschool is not addressed in these standards, whereas Kindergarten is
- Prop 82 has a facilities fund for use during ramp-up phase
  - Prohibition that it can only be used by public agencies – school district, county
- Some school districts have planned for preschool/kindergarten, but not all
- Would be easier to work with new schools under construction, rather than existing schools, especially those without space or those dealing with overcrowding, busing students out to other schools, etc
- Schools are typically more adverse to mandated things rather than those that give them flexibility
- Not clear whether PFA would be exempt from the Field Act

### ***Impacts of the Indirect Rate (see glossary of terms)***

- classroom unit calculations factor in:
  - How many classrooms are on every single site
  - How many classrooms are used for K-12 instructional program
  - How many classrooms are used for other purposes
- Classrooms you use for non-k-12 purposes affect the indirect rate more (this includes principal’s office, cafeteria, staff room, etc.)

- The district office, board room, media center, everything counts as well
- Looking at the indirect rate is the main place to start in order to have universal preschool on all campuses
  - Fear that schools will get into another K-3 class size reduction situation and there will be no facilities
  - Districts eventually did get facility dollars, but not 100% of what was needed
- Proposition 82, the Preschool for All Initiative, has up to \$2 billion set aside for facilities in the first ten years
  - Is this enough?
    - There is no money set aside for deferred maintenance and future facility needs after the ten year period is up
  - What happens if the district must compete with itself to serve preschool, K-12 and special education?
  - Districts will have some say on facilities but money from Prop 82 will come from the California Department of Education
- State figures - half of 1% of total budget (GF) (\$568k) state matched it at 97% (deferred maintenance)
- Only permitted to use that money on facilities that house K-12 services
  - Can't use it at adult school, preschool, etc.
- If a school district were to build preschool facilities, not sure deferred maintenance dollars could be used
- The district is required to put aside 3% of its budget for routine restricted maintenance
- Allowed to put deferred money into calculation to reduce how much is placed in routine restricted account
  - Artificially reduces amount of money you can spend on maintenance
- In order to spend the money in deferred maintenance, you need to have a 5 year plan
  - Not realistic because you can't use money if emergency comes up – must be pre-planned
- Anything that can be direct charged is
  - Often a policy decision
  - Some programs that need more subsidy have a higher indirect
  - Some districts waive the indirect; others see it as a revenue source (cost to preschool)
  - Space used for preschool may be included in indirect rate

### ***State Bond Financing***

- Districts are not willing to share bond money - lots of competition over facility dollars
- Disincentives to offer low cost or no cost space for preschool

### ***Leroy Greene Act (see glossary of terms)***

- Preschool program vs. after school program
  - After school programs easier to implement
  - Primarily directed at K-12
- Exists in school facilities bond
  - State offers incentives for sharing of facilities by multiple agencies?
- Caveat – have to get a 50% match
- May not be as big of an advantage to the non profit organization, who has to supply the match

- Near zero cost to district, except
  - Licensing says restrooms and playgrounds cannot be shared (California Department of Education is silent on this issue)

### ***Licensing Conflicts***

- Playgrounds, restrooms, parking\*
  - \* (nothing in Health and Safety code about parking)
- Licensed facilities not subject to local building and planning codes
- Licensing does not have capacity to license \$2 billion dollars of new construction and may need to seek alternatives to lessen their burden on the licensing of additional facilities
- Falls on individual personalities
  - For some, if it isn't required, they won't do it ; therefore you need incentives
- Square Footage requirements are different
  - K-12 - 960 sq ft for 30 children and one door exit required
  - Preschool -1000 sq ft for 20 children and two door exit required

### ***Union Issues***

- Non-profits and for profits would be under the same umbrella as charter schools under the proposed initiative
- Initiative indicates providing a diversity of services
- Many for-profits will not want to take the money if unionization is a threat to their business

### ***Logistical problems***

- Different drop-off times, traffic
- According to licensing, preschool kids cannot be in the yard at the same time as the kindergarteners
  - Playground needs to be scheduled
  - Sharing playground with kindergarten is positive if a waiver can be obtained from licensing
- Different fire alarm and intrusion systems and differing fire drill schedules cause conflict

### ***On relationships school sites and districts***

- “Our kids” versus “their kids” problem
- City governments can be more difficult to work with to obtain approval for preschool programs
  - In terms of getting site visits before licensing
  - Communications; questions and answers
- Districts have been more security conscious
  - Creates more office staff frustration
  - Leads to different treatment
- Some sites have “buddy systems”
  - Depends most on teachers themselves to foster relationships
  - Bridge gap between preschool/kindergarten students

- From the provider's experience, it has been the preschool providers reaching out to schools more than the schools reaching out to the preschool staff
- Poor relationships undermine the programs

### **Other Issues**

- It is the perception of some school districts that anything with four walls can be licensed
  - Sometimes school districts want to give you rooms that look like storage areas, which is not the best for children
  - Preschool providers are often their own worst enemy because they make do and make it work
- Many School districts don't understand all that is involved in order to get childcare and preschool programs licensed
- Providers are at the mercy of school districts
- Each site has unique barriers; nothing is uniform
- One provider can have multiple sites at different districts that all follow different school calendars
  - Difficult to coordinate between schools and districts to accommodate the various calendars
- Use of certificated staff problematic
- Food program operates drives the preschool program rather than have the food program be determined by program needs
- The school districts' lack of understanding on licensing a big difficulty
  - Do not understand all the requirements and how difficult it is to make a move (example: one provider has been asked to move three times in three years)

### **Recommendations**

- Currently there is no mandate that a PFA program be on school district property, but it would make the most sense for articulation and transition; and such a priority would strengthen idea of preschool as support for the K-12 program
- Beginning with changes to how the indirect rate is calculated or paid for is a good way to make preschool programs on school sites more attractive to k-12
- Strengthen relationships between preschool providers and school districts so that this idea that "ours" versus "theirs" no longer exists and promote understanding that we all have the same objective: strengthening outcomes for children
- Change "pupil" to "children and adults served"
- Kindergarten and preschool are good ages to combine playground sharing – make obtaining waivers easier, look at existing code
- How can we incentivize for the adoption of preschool programs?
- Look at charter schools, perhaps use their language (existing legislative mandate for public schools to provide space for charter schools, should it be applied or extended to preschool?)
- Amend Title 22 licensing to eliminate the inflexibility of the use of district sites for preschool (e.g. allowing preschool and kindergarten to share playgrounds and bathrooms)

## *Glossary of Terms*

**Community Care Licensing** – The Title 22 Health and Safety code defines a community care facility as any building or location where non-medical care and supervision is provided to residents. The care services are custodial in nature and do not require the presence of skilled medical professionals. Help with all activities of daily living are provided in such facilities. In California these facilities are licensed by the Dept. of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. Community Care Licensing is responsible for child care and early education providers, day care facilities and small family homes for juveniles under the age of 13.

**The Field Act** - Governs design and construction, and reconstruction or alteration, of school buildings to meet seismic standards for the protection of life and property (note: until now, this provision has not been applicable to charter schools. However, charter schools have arguably always been subject to local building code requirements as locally enforced, and some charter schools have voluntarily complied with the Field Act requirements. Charter schools have until January 1, 2007, to come into compliance with either the California Building Standards Code (CBSC) or the Field Act.)

**Indirect Rate** - Refers to the method to allocate administrative costs associated with and between various programs.

**The Leroy F. Greene School Facilities Act of 1998** – Section 17070.10 of the Education Code. Outlines how funding is provided for public school construction that house and or serve students from kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) and are submitted to the Division of the State Architect for approval.

**The School Facility Program (SFP)** provides State funding assistance for two major types of facility construction projects: new construction and modernization. The process for accessing the State assistance for funding for these two types of construction projects is divided into two steps: 1) an application for eligibility, and 2) an application for funding. More information may be found at: [www.opsc.dgs.ca.gov/Programs/SFP\\_Main.htm](http://www.opsc.dgs.ca.gov/Programs/SFP_Main.htm)

**School Site Capacity** - School site capacity includes all teaching stations, including those created through class size reduction, minus portable exclusions allowed by sections 1859.32 and 1859.51 of the *State Allocation Board Regulations* relating to the Leroy F. Green School Facilities Act of 1998, approved and filed with the Secretary of State on December 3, 1998, and updated by the State Allocation Board on January 26, 2000. Excess capacity shall reflect only the additional capacity that has been generated as a result of using a multi-track year-round calendar and shall not reflect increased capacity generated by any other means. (*Education Code* Section 42263(b)). Portables purchased or acquired through special funding processes, e.g. child care (*Education Code* Section 17071.25(4)(b)), latchkey, and migrant education, and used for those purposes, would not be loaded.