



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # CA-5003

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: **Reviewed**
Date/Time: 11/17/2011 - 7:00 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--

- (a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;
- (b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;
- (c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and
- (d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The applicant presented documentation which supports that they have a strong history of promoting early learning and development programs. State funding through legislation supporting early education has been strong and indicates a commitment for raising the bar on education for California's children with high needs. Proposition 10 provides 650 million annually to support early learning and healthy development of young children in California. From 2007 to the present, 8.9 billion dollars has been spent on early learning and development programs. State funding has increased the number of high needs preschool children who attend preschool by 14% from 2007(87,706) to 2011 (101,414). The number of high needs children attending in programs funded under Title 1 increased from 14, 329 in 2007 to 24, 389 in 2009.--In 2006 RAND'S California Preschool Study evaluated early care and education for preschool aged children and made recommendations on how California could most effectively and efficiently spend its early childhood funds. House Bill 1440 grew from this study. House Bill 1440 supported the creation, Proposition 10 which created 58 county level commissions and one state level First 5 Commission. Two major initiatives that support professional development, education and effectiveness of early childhood educators, passage of Assembly Bill 212 and First 5 California's Comprehensive Approach to Raising Education Standards (CARES). The state presented evidence that shows a past commitment to early education that appears to be high. While not all practices are fully implemented, some such as Health Promotion Practice standards are in the process of finalization, distribution and training on their use. California has in place Preschool Learning Foundations and Infant/Toddler Learning and Developmental Foundations. These have been in place since 2008 with domains in social-emotional, language, cognitive, perceptual/motor for Toddlers and Language, literacy, English Language Development, mathematics, social-emotional. Many of the building blocks that will be imperative for delivering a quality early learning system through grant activities appear to be in place although not consistent across the agencies that deliver service. Currently some Early Learning Programs, such as Head Start require developmental screening, other programs do not. The Desired Results Developmental Profile -School Readiness is used as an observational assessment for Kindergarten Readiness which indicates they have had a Kindergarten Entry Assessment in place to inform policy and instruction. Health Promotion Practice has been part of some programs but was not observed to be part of the CAEL QRIS that is used by some programs. Family

engagement practices exist and are part of the CAEL QRIS, increasing as they proceed to the next level. The applicant indicates that there are currently 6 credentials under Child Development. Information was provided that seem to indicate that community colleges and universities have made a commitment to align curriculum but it is still not fully implemented. The current data system contains information on CCDF, California State Preschool Program, Cal-SAFE Children that can be used to track information on children. A separate system is used to collect the comprehensive assessment information on children with disabilities, using a unique identifier, is in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System. Quality is high for historical commitment of early learning and development.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The plan identifies the heart of their reform as focusing on the local level and making changes at that level to make effective change in their state. The applicant indicated that all the areas they are proposing are important for them to make. The plan proposed by California is a high quality, interesting and innovative plan. Innovation resides in the proposal to work through 16 Consortia that will provide change at the local level rather than the State level. Local control and support would enhance the probability that successful programs will be sustained. The applicant set as goals improving program quality, improving outcomes, and closing the readiness gap. California plans to build on their Infant/Toddler Learning and development Foundations and Preschool Learning Foundations which have been developed through nationally known researchers and expert practitioners. The foundations are developmentally appropriate culturally, and linguistically appropriate across age groups. The State plan indicated that they have the following goals: 75% of the children in Early Learning and Development Programs will participate in the local QRIS. 75% of the lead teachers will develop professional growth plans based on teacher effectiveness scores with 50% showing improved effectiveness over the four years of the grant. 75% of the Early Learning Programs will be assessed using the appropriate ERS with 90% showing improvement over the time of the grant. 50% of Early Learning and Development Programs will report that their ECE accessed grant related resources. 50% of the children in programs participating in the local QRIS process will be screened using valid tools. Of those screened 80% will receive appropriate follow up services. 75% of the teachers would incorporate grant related resources into their Professional Growth Plan. By the end of the grant, 75% of LEA's within the local QRIS would be trained on the School Readiness instrument. Given the decision making control at the local level, it is not clear how the state will achieve these goals if the Consortia do not choose the same targets for implementation.-- The applicant indicated that focus areas are : promoting early learning and development outcomes for children ; identify and addressing the health , behavioral and developmental needs of children with high needs to improve school readiness; a great early education workforce; and measuring outcomes and progress. The change that will be necessary to make ambitious changes requires state guidance that appears not to be present as many decisions are deferred to local Consortia. An example of this is whether they will enter Kindergarten Entry Assessment data into the developed data system since it will be voluntary. The quality of the data reported will be impacted by the data received. If no local Consortia elect to enter data, no information will be available. In the application it was indicated that a common state TQRIS system would not work and instead provided a vague local QRIS framework requirement. Currently in 8 of the Consortia there is some form of tiered QRIS although no examples were provided of the ones that currently exist. The applicant did state that the local TQRIS developed would need to meet some specific elements and basic state requirement would be the bottom level that you would need for state licensing. The CAEL TQRIS was the only QRIS provided with the application to judge if the TQRIS was robust enough to provide progressive upward movement through the tiers. The CAEL QRIS addresses environment, standards, family, education, staff education, and program leadership. Health practices are not addressed in the old model but the applicant indicates that it will be addressed in the local TQRIS. Each local consortium is required to develop an action plan with baseline, target data, alignment and incorporation of common elements and tools, local benchmarks and tiers, quality improvement process, key personnel, resources, timelines, how RTT ELC funds will build capacity building activities and how existing funds will be redirected. Each consortium will be responsible for bringing together organizations in their region to encourage networking, inform parents of quality improvement process. When looking at other elements, the State does have goals that would close the gap in education of their workforce but the plan is vague in some areas which lessens the quality of the plan. The plan does not seem to suggest that they will take the lead; rather the local Consortia will be the leaders. The plan for focus areas appears to be feasible in building a local support for educating young children. The State indicates that they have chosen a local focus to reflect the assets and the unique characteristics of the State's early learning system and a high priority on sustain improvements. The plan builds on existing strengths and policies to achieving their goals to improve social and emotional development for

their children. How local consortium will add or adjust the tiers, since there is a variety of levels to choose from, is not clear and existing different tiered models were not provided in the application. The plan indicates that children with high needs will be prioritized for receiving services in RTT ELC programs. Monitoring will be provided by external evaluators who have passed inter-rater reliability. As local consortium will determine monitoring times, this part of the plan appears weak as there is little information and it will be left to local control to decide what equals quality monitoring. Technical assistance will be provided through mentoring. The applicant indicates that a web site would be available for parents to look at ratings and explain what they mean but did not indicate if parents would be made aware of health and safety violations.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State | 10 | 8 |

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The Governance structure is based on interagency collaboration. The State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care will make policy decisions and the Early Learning Challenge Integrated Alliance Team will provide active coordination for implementation. It is questionable if the outlined governance structure is detailed enough to address resolution disputes that are sure to arise when working with 16 different Consortia. Evidence presented did not indicate if the State Advisory Council on Early Learning has the power and authority to settle disputes that will arise. Signatures were from authorized representatives of each participating state agency were included. The applicant indicated that the stakeholders will be involved in the decision making process as part of local control. Communities with supports in place will have buy in to find ways to keep excellent programs for young children in their community. A "Scope of Work" description appears to be vague as many of the activities will be completed at a local level rather than at the State level. The applicant indicated that First Five's role will be to facilitate training and technical assistance, provide leadership, and share information. It is clear that the applicant contacted and received written agreement to participate in the applicant's plan from a wide variety of stakeholders. The State has strong commitment from the Early Learning Community based on the MOU's, Letters of Intent, and letters of support from key stakeholders included in the application. The 115 letters of support received in a short time is outstanding. The MOU's outlined by participating State Agencies roles and responsibilities. Many of these partnerships appear to be in place with no need to be developed. The plan builds on current inter-agency councils and teams, such as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care as well as planning to establishing an RTT-ELC implementation team. The State appears to have a working plan for commitment across the state for its application. Quality and implementation are high.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. | 15 | 13 |

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The budget appears reasonable and adequate to support the state plan in most areas. Information provided appears to indicate that state agencies are committed to supporting the activities of the grant. CCDF Quality improvement will be contributing 278,010,000 during the life of the grant. First 5 California will provide 310,837,430 during the four years of the grant. The ARRA State Advisory Council funding, 9,600,000. Local funds will be 330,852,303 over the 4 years. The State, federal, and local funds pledged to achieve the outcomes of the State Plan are significant. The funds budgeted into the plan appear adequate to support the activities described in the plan. The budget detailed costs that are reasonable and necessary for the scope of work in the plan and the number of children impacted. Each participating state agency completed a budget table that details specific activities and that are consistent with the State plan. Evidence of this is table 1-3 which lists \$250,000 for licensing the website and professional development for Early Start at 4387,267 each year of the project. Having only two consultants in a state the size of California is questionable when looking at impacting programs. The use of consultants appears to be reasonable but not the numbers suggested in the grant. The applicant has used information from similar funding to determine the cost of each area. The amounts detailed are those outlined in the state plan. 86% of the funds in the budget will be implemented at a local level. Many of the initiatives involve areas that would be a onetime expense, which would provide for the ability to sustain the activities after the grant. Examples of this would be the DVD training, screening tools, and maintaining the data base after the initial costs of development. While a mentoring/coaching piece is included, it appears to build on an existing system and would be sustainable after the life of the grant. The local Consortia are strength in that they understand the needs of their area. The funding plan's weakness is that a large piece of the sustainability appears to be at the local level. There is no clear evidence that Consortia in the most challenged areas will be able to rise to the challenge.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 10 | 5 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The State proposes a TQRIS with a variety of tiers, ranging from two levels to five levels. The rationale given for this approach is that California is a large state and there is no one size fits all approach that will work for the State. The applicant believes that providing the option of tier levels ranging from 2-5 will best meet the needs of the state rather than a State TQRIS. Additional information was absent. The applicant indicated that all Consortia have agreed to use a common set of elements. While no single TQRIS is to be developed, the State will provide a framework for the Consortia to use when designing their specific TQRIS. The Consortia have agreed to use the same Early Learning Standards, assessment, monitoring and program improvement tools. Each of these are part of a quality TQRIS and would assist the State in providing a high quality program. Each Consortium has agreed to use early childhood educator qualifications, qualifications that include Common Core, professional development, CDE Competencies, Self-Reflective Tool and Professional Growth Plans. The use of varied tiers with no examples provided, impacted the ability to judge the quality of the TQRIS. The CAEL TQRIS that was included in the application is a five tiered program that included Early Learning Standards, family involvement, staff education and training starting at 12 units of ECE instruction moving toward a Bachelor's or Master's Degree, and requirements for professional development. No Health promotion practices were listed in the CAEL QRIS; however it was listed as part of the Quality Continuum framework. It was also indicated that it would be a QRIS element for Consortia. Every QRIS will be expected to have California Licensing as the basic level. Timelines for these activities were not included as the 16 Consortia are expected to develop the timelines. Consortia will be required to report every 6 months on their action plans that will include the progress on the TQRIS. More evidence/or examples on how progressive levels could be built into a two or three tier system was needed. It was not clear how this would be achieved and did not seem to indicate a progression that would lead to high expectations of program excellence. Based on the CAEL QRIS, if a consortium chose a two tier system similar to the model given, education would stop at 24 units. In Table (B) (4) (c) (1) it was indicated that eight of the consortia have 8 current consortia have different tiered QRIS. One has five tiers, four have 4 tiers, one has three tiers and two have two tiers. Having examples of what is currently in place, recognizing that there would be changes would address differentiating at a two tier level. Implementation appeared to be voluntary and would not be indicative of full implementation of the TQRIS. There did not appear to be a plan to require its implementation for publicly funded programs. The applicants plan is medium quality, partially implemented

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 15 | 7 |

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;

- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
 - (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
 - (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
 - (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;
- (b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and
- (c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The goal of having all publicly funded early learning and developmental participate in the TQRIS system will be achieved through local Consortia. The State believes that the use of local engagement will increase the alignment through the sharing of resources, access to staff professional development and alignment of services as families transition out of home visiting programs and into early learning programs. The engagement at the local level and mobilization of the local early learning program community is a strength in this grant application. The local communities will work hard to continue successful programs for their children. The applicant indicated that the funds it provides through the grant to engage in mentoring activities with other peer communities is a strength. They believe this approach will increase the number of publically funded early learning programs involved in the state plan. Each local Consortium will be responsible for setting ambitious yet achievable goals for expanding programs in their local areas. The State indicated that it expects each consortium to include all children in publically funded preschool programs and children who have been identified as having high needs. However, involvement appears to be voluntary. The State plans to address this by working at the local level to recruit centers into choosing to participate in the TQRIS. They indicated they would use this same method for having publically funded preschool programs to participate in the TQRIS system. –The plan has ambitious expectations for the work expects the Consortia to do at the local level. The applicant indicates that Consortia will expand access to early learning programs for their families, increase opportunities and break down barriers including continuity of services and transportation issues. This will all be accomplished with action plan that will be designed in the future. The ability of every Consortium to deliver all the plans promised seems to be one that could be challenging and may not result in quality programs despite their commitment to improving services for their young children with the highest needs. The use of a professional Learning Community to share information and resources regarding a Tiered System and promote the system at a grassroots level appears to be one that would produce the desired result of increasing participation in a tiered system for those providers who may be reluctant. While exact targets were not given since those will be determined locally, an example of the First 5 California Power of Preschool implementation that expanded access to quality learning from 9,600 children to 26,000 children from 2008 to 2011, as an example of what could be achieved using this model. The narrative indicates that the Consortia will explore incentives and support mechanisms to increase and continue access to quality services but does not indicate what those might look like in order to evaluate for quality and implementation plan. The plan is mid quality, partially implemented.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs | 15 | 9 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and
- (b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

Rating and monitoring of the Early Learning and Development Programs plan is one that shows some gaps. It is not clear how inter-rater reliability will be established. The applicant indicates that at the county/regional level, independent monitors will be used to address inter-rater reliability but does not have a plan for how that will be achieved. The State indicates that one Consortium will be designated as lead Consortia in the process. No information was given as to the amount of monitoring that would be conducted each year of the project; instead it was to be set at local levels. The plan indicated that the action plan would work at the local level to streamline the number of different types of monitoring a program might have in a year and share that information. The lack of guidelines and variability allowed does not seem to indicate the investment that would be needed to assist Consortia in developing quality programs for their children. --The proposed website for parents to make informed decisions lacked a blueprint of how this information will be made available to second language families, families without access to the internet or those that are not able to read. A quality plan would need to have these considerations addressed. The applicant indicated that a current website (DSS CCLD) which parents are familiar with will be used so that parents can make decisions about choosing a program for their child. The applicant indicates that the following types of information will be available to the families: local TQRIS scores, ratings for local programs, information on the effect of quality programs on school readiness and healthy development. The plan did not indicate that licensing history that included health or safety violations would be included. Other implementation strategies were using a draft communication plan of the CAEL-QRIS committee that would provide implementation strategies, sample messages, and ideas for templates. The absence of specific detail and the partial level of implementation are weaknesses in the proposed plan. The plan is mid quality, partially implemented.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs | 20 | 12 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The State has in place or is launching several programs that will provide extended services to families. Evidence was provided that full day, extended day and wrap around services are available to families. The State indicated that Head Start and California's State Preschool combined funds will be used to extend opportunities for children. Educare was cited as a program, when operational, will provide high quality, full day, full year services for children with high needs. The plan indicated that they will subsidize ELD programs serving infants/toddlers, dual language learners and children with disabilities and other special needs. Evidence was provided that full day, extended day and wrap around services are available to families. The State indicated that Head Start and California's State Preschool combined funds will be used to extend opportunities for children. The applicant indicated that they will subsidize ELD programs serving infants/toddlers, dual language learners and children with disabilities and other special needs. The two methods proposed by the State to support developing and implementing policies and practices were to use the California Department of Education as a technical resource and the ELC Consortia Professional Learning Community to assist them in developing local goals for providing support and incentives for early learning and development programs to continuously improve. The State does have in place resource that will be available to assist the Consortia in developing their plans for continuous improvement. The ELC Professional Learning Community will work with the consortia to provide various resources including experts to provide support. The applicant indicated that ELC programs will be the first to receive training and incentives, such as those from CCDF quality improvement professional development projects. The types of incentives was not provided specifically in the application as it was indicated that those would be determined by the local Consortia to meet needs at the local. The number of early learning and development programs in the top tiers of the quality rating and improvement system. There is no specificity for local targets and no way to interpret how this will promote set ambitious goals in for programs to move to the top tiers of the program. Table (B) (4) (c) (2) does not list any numbers or targets for the state as the plan indicates this information will be completed by each individual consortia. The plan indicated that the California Department of Education would work with each consortium to set ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing early learning and education programs in the top tier. The absence of local targets made it difficult to evaluate if the targets were ambitious or achievable. The state did provide some statewide targets but given that local Consortia were to develop their local TQRIS it is not clear how these targets would be used. Those targets that were provided in table (B)(4)(c) (1) did not appear to be ambitious for example in the two tiered QRIS, the total number of programs involved is 109, the increase in numbers year to year from a

baseline of today (38), 2012 (43), 2013 (49), 2014 (55), 2015 (61). In comparison to a 5 tiered system where the goal for tier four moves from today (43), 2012 (70)2013 (97), 2014 (132), 2015 (140). the progression for tier 5 is today (1), 2012 (2), 2013 (3) and 2014 (3). Local programs that have only 2 or 3 levels have more ambitious targets but it is not clear what would be in a 2 or 3 level tier as each local consortium determines the tiers and what is in them. The quality of the plan is mid quality, partially implemented.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. | 15 | 8 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

It is of concern that not all tiered systems will be evaluated, since each local consortium is developing its own tiered system and criteria, although based on common agreements. The applicant indicates that it would not be practical or the best use of funds to evaluate all 16 QRIS systems, instead it is proposing to use an experimental design with random sampling. This is a weakness as it does not appear that it would generate the type of information that could be generalized to inform the effectiveness of the TQRIS system and child outcomes of the different tiers. As all local tiered programs are not included, it will not provide a complete picture if the system is working accurately and reflects program quality at the local level given that a two tiered system in one consortium may be different from another two tiered system. The applicant stated that they would need to check with statewide evaluation experts to see if an experimental design with random assignment was feasible, if not they would direct evaluators to propose designs that would assess association. The applicant indicated that the specific consortia studied would be proposed by the evaluator as part of the application and determined by California Department of Education when choosing the evaluator. The applicant indicated that the RFP would include what research methods would be used to validate the tiers of selected local QRIS models, what research design and measures of progress they will use to determine the extent to which the quality ratings correspond with specific child outcomes. Given that all the QRIS are not the same and each local consortium can adapt or add to the QRIS it does not appear that the proposed evaluation will yield high quality, useable data/information about the relationship between the TQRIS and learning outcomes for children. The applicants response is medium-low.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. | 30 | 30 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

The applicant has in place a solid foundation for their Early Learning Standards. Much thought has been invested in ensuring that they are appropriate across age and are aligned with the state standards for k-3 areas, beyond just literacy and math. The State has researched that they are developmentally, culturally and linguistically appropriate. The standards have been woven throughout the curricula, comprehensive assessment, workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and professional development activities. An example of this are program guides and provided Kindergarten Entry Assessment which was aligned to the standards The Kindergarten Readiness tool aligns with their preschool standards, California K content areas and national core standards. Some supports are at the publishing stage but not yet available. Documents provided indicated that English Language learners were considered. Evidence was in the application that the standards are incorporated into all areas. The assessment tool is developed and validated over several years. Some supports will be coming out this year or the near future. Part of the RT ELC plan for this State is to strengthen the understanding and commitment of Early Learning Standards across programs by using this grants funds to produce a DVD that provides examples of the standards. Quality and implementation is high.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. | 30 | 18 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

Information provided by the applicant indicates that health; social and emotional areas in specific programs have been addressed and can be spread to a broader base as they are part of the Early Learning Standards. Health was not included in the original standards but will be in Volume 2 of the standards that will be released this year. The state included experts in working with children with disabilities to make sure all population's needs were addressed. The skills taught are built on what children know and progress to higher levels. Professional development will target early educators working with children with high needs to provide training. Providing numbers and existing percentages as well as projected numbers of Early Childhood Educators who receive training in health standards would have painted a clearer picture of what presently exists and the state's plan for the future. Healthy eating, nutrition and expanding physical activity will be promoted through the California for Healthy Kids which empowers students and families to make healthy food and activity choices. The state plans to leverage funds through First 5 Association of California Early Childhood Mental Health Project and the California Statewide Screening Collaborative to promote and coordinate health, development and early mental health. The State has a well-developed plan that will make a significant difference for children. There are gaps that need to be addressed when looking at how health practices are embedded into the TQRIS that was provided with the application. The applicant indicates that this screening will be part of the local TQRIS but did not indicate how it would fit in with each local chosen TQRIS of different levels. No local TQRIS was provided and the CAEL-QRIS provided did not have screening indicated in its tiers. More information on how this would be implemented into the local TQRIS was needed. Given the 2% of children 0-5 presently receiving special education services, these screening would assist in identifying children in need of early intervention. Evidence of documents and standards with training materials were provided, indicating the State has done work in this area. the applicant provided a medium quality response with partial implementation.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. | 40 | 35 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

Professional development is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. Evidence of this is the evidence based courses that are the foundational core for early educators receiving professional development. California has a history of providing support for their early childhood educators. In 2000, the California legislature passed AB212 which created the Child Development Staff retention program provides compensation, benefits, tutoring, mentorship, and financial aid for school, career counseling, professional staff development and access to higher education. There is also available to staff working with young children a Career Incentive Grant. -- The applicant provides no specific plan that addresses progression of education for their Early Childhood Educators. Table (d)(2)(d)(2) indicates baseline percentages and target percentages for six credentials. Only in one credential, Credential Type 1 (CDA) was an increase targeted. The target was the same, 3%, for years 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. All other credentials listed the baseline and the target percentage as the same. More explanation in the narration of the requirements of each type of credential in order to make a judgment that a

1 % increase is an ambitious goal for the state. The plan does increase the total number of aligned institutions from 31 to 104 by 2013, which is ambitious. The plan takes into account the great differences in availability of education in the state and the plan addresses that by looking at building a web based training resource for centers and those providing care in their homes that are not close to educational resources. The three new courses will be added to an eight course early childhood program that has been agreed upon by the majority of community colleges in California to be implemented by 2014 and can be transferred using an Early Childhood Transfer Degree. The plan has incentives for those who may need supports to go back to school, including financial, academic and childcare. It did not appear that there would be one data gathering and reporting system used. Furthermore, it does not appear that the criteria of reporting to the public will be addressed from all Consortia. An example was given of two counties reporting but that would not equal all the state reporting or give a clear picture of where the state is regarding improving knowledge, skills and abilities of the early education workforce. Quality is high with substantial implementation

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. | 40 | 35 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

| Comments on (E)(1) |
|--|
| <p>The quality and implementation of the applicant's Kindergarten Entry Assessment is high. It is aligned to the research based Early Learning and Developmental Foundations. The State reported that the validity and reliability for their assessment is high. The State developed the assessment using researchers from WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies along with the University of California. The applicant indicates that it is appropriate for the target population, including English Language learners and children with disabilities. The state indicated that it intends to make reporting of the results of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment voluntary. Making reporting voluntary raises concerns about the ability of the State and local Consortia to fully implement the plan as required by the grant by 2014-2015. The State plan indicates that it will use state funds to report voluntarily submitted data starting in 2014. The plan lacked information regarding requiring all L.E.A.s to enter results of the Kindergarten Entry Assessment. Information provided was unclear on what data would be required to be uploaded and who would be able to retrieve data from the system. While the components are high quality, the plan appears to be substantially implemented.</p> |

| | Available | Score |
|--|------------|------------|
| Total Points Available for Selection Criteria | 280 | 214 |

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

| | Available | Yes/No |
|--|----------------|------------|
| Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry | 0 or 10 | Yes |
| To meet this priority, the State must, in its application-- (a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or (b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion. | | |
| Comments on (P)(3) | | |
| The applicant addressed criterion (E) (1) and earned a score of at least 70%. | | |

Absolute Priority

| | Met? Yes/No |
|--|----------------|
| Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. | Yes |
| To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success. | |
| Comments on Absolute Priority | |
| The State's application has many components and existing scaffolds that indicate a strong support of improving outcomes for its youngest learners. The State plan includes an innovative multi-tiered system that can be made flexible to respond to local needs which they believe will promote better outcomes for their young learners. In place are strong, research based early learning standards. They propose developing local Consortia that will develop TQRIS, practices and strategies specific to the needs of the area in developing high quality early learning programs for high needs children. The State has a clearly articulated plan to align colleges and universities so that the workforce that interacts with young children will be better educated. The plan includes building on their strong statewide early learning standards for infant/toddlers and children ages 3-5. Their second focus area addressing health, behavioral, and developmental needs of children will provide California's youngest children with the healthy start to enter kindergarten ready to learn. The applicant has developed a plan that it believes will assist young children in having better outcomes, inform parents on what a quality program looks like and prepares children to enter Kindergarten. | |



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # CA-5003

Peer Reviewer:
Lead Monitor:
Support Monitor:
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/18/2011 - 1:48 AM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development | 20 | 18 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

A 1 California has a history of commitment to early learning that is clearly demonstrated in this section of the application. The completed tables in A 1-13 support state's intent to serve children with high needs in pre-school programs. A 1 a – Financial investments reflect high commitments to children with high needs. State investments remain consistent. California exceeded the match to the Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) and contributions were increased under this program. The remainder of the programs providing preschool learning indicate some spending cuts, but the number of high needs children has increased. The budget for the first five programs increased significantly over the past five years. A 1 b - California's commitment to high needs children is clearly demonstrated in the increasing number of children served in the past seven years. Programs reflecting significant increases include the state funded preschool, programs funded under Title 1, and program under California First 5. A 1 c – California's legislation to improve services to pre-school children is responsive to an independent study focusing on California's pre-school services. The state responded to the study and passed legislation to fund, as well as consolidate, preschool services. Commissions were established to work on program improvement and develop learning standards for the birth through age five population. A 1 d – California's Early Learning standards (Foundations) are intended for use with infants, toddlers, and preschool populations to clarify for educators and the stakeholders what children know and are expected to learn in preschool programs. The evidence submitted on Foundations is located in the appendices. Table A 1 6 is evidence that all essential learning domains are covered in the foundations. The Foundations provide resources and suggestions for professional development for early childhood programs. The standards cover curricular frameworks and include an assessment system. The evidence indicates that the standards provide a strong foundation on which to base Early Learning Development (ELD) program reforms. The state has developed the Desired Results Developmental Rating Profile to assess the children's progress on standards based instruction. California promotes Health Standards across programs in the state. The state is developing the DRDP-K readiness assessment. A wide array of parent engagement strategies and programs are included. These strategies are driven by program requirements, as are the professional development activities. California plans to use Foundations in planning professional development across the ELC grant. The state does not implement effective

data practices to capture the essential and common data across the programs.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. | 20 | 16 |

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

A 2 a California has provided the one overarching goal for the Early Learning Development reform effort. Narrative Table A-2 provides the strategies and targets for ensuring that this goal is met. The targets are built around program quality, improved outcomes for children, a great early education workforce, and closing the readiness gap. The goals are achievable, but only 75 % of the children in ELD programs participating in the TQRIS will be assessed with valid observational assessment tools. 75% of the lead teachers participating in the TQRIS will develop a teacher professional development plan. 50 % of the programs teachers are expected to show improved teacher effectiveness over the term on this grant funding. 75% of the programs participating in the TQRIS will be rated with an environmental rating scale and 90% of the 75% are expected to show improvement over the life of the grant period. 75% of children served in local TQRIS programs will be screened for behavior, sensory, and developmental delays, and 80 % of those screened will receive follow-up services. By the end of the grant period 75% of participating TQRIS teachers will have incorporated grant-related sources into their professional growth plans. By the end of the grant period 75% of the LEA's within the local TQRIS communities will be trained on the readiness assessment, DRPR-K. These goals are reflective of the data submitted in A -1. The goals are achievable, but the targets are low. With the support provided by ELC, it would be expected that 25% of the children would be assessed and screened using reliable and valid tools. Over four years of intensive professional development provided at the local level, 50% is a low number to show improvement in teacher effectiveness. A 2 b California is relying heavily on its Local Consortia strategy to provide leadership and implementation of the strategies submitted in this grant. This is a strong strategy and will make a difference in reaching a geographically challenged population and a culturally diverse population in areas of children with high needs. The fifteen local consortia over 16 counties have signed letters of commitment to lead this effort for California. A weakness in this strategy is the lack of leadership California provides in providing benchmarks for the goals and targets set. The Local Consortia is left to determine and set the individual benchmarks within the area. The local consortia will provide the common language and tools across a newly organized TQRIS. The weakness in the organization of this TQRIS appears to be the tiered system. The organization of the tiered system is left at the local level. Some consortia will measure quality across two tiers and others will have three, four, or five. This does not seem to provide equity in the provision of services to children with high needs. It would be difficult to determine how a high quality "2" and a high quality "5" would be understood by parents, staff, and stakeholders. A 2 c The comprehensive assessment of current preschool services is reflective of the gaps in the tables in section A. California has selected C-1 and C-3 as the criteria. California's standards are in place, but are not required for use. Strategies are selected to ensure the use of the standards across the TQRIS and the state. The health, behavioral, and developmental needs of children will be addressed to ensure that the lack of screening and follow-up do not interfere with school readiness. California is writing to D-2. With the majority of California's workforce in credentialed in the lower three credentialing levels, the state chooses to support educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. California's efforts in Focused Investment Area E are centered around the development and the use of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. California is awarded 16 points for the development of a reform effort built on the assessment of the current preschool services for high needs children. The strategy of the Local Consortia constitutes a strength, but the lack of articulation of benchmarks and the decision to leave benchmarks to the local programs is a weakness in this section. Another weakness is the proposed TQRIS tiers. It is not clear how these tiers represent quality across the target consortia communities.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State | 10 | 10 |

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant.

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

A 3 a California has submitted a strong organizational chart. The Department of Education and the State Board of Education share the leadership. The State Advisory Council is in place. The MOU's are signed and the scope of work for participating agencies is explicit. These are included in the appendices. An Action Team to oversee the activities of the grant has been established from the partnership agencies. The Action team will solve disputes as needed if not solved at the local consortia level. The decision making rests with the Local Consortia for the use of funds and the grant activities to be implemented. The local intermediary agencies have signed letters of support. Parent groups, participating agencies, and programs from a diverse group of stakeholders have committed to support and provide services to carry out the initiatives in this plan. A 3 b California has submitted budgets for partnership that will contribute funds from their respective agencies to support the work of this reform effort. The scope of work descriptions are provided in the MOU's and in a table for each section of the ELC application. This table organizes the agencies and the scope of work by each section A thru E of California's application. This is a strength. The agency leadership has signed each MOU submitted in the appendices A 3 a California has 115 letters of support from important stakeholders throughout the State. The state has provided strong evidence of public and private support of this reform initiative.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. | 15 | 13 |

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

California's budget reflects the intention of supporting this reform initiative. Budgets from partnerships indicate the ELC funds they will receive and other partners have included budgets from their own funding streams. All pre-school programs will be lending financial support the the provision of child care services and the coordinating activities such as professional development using their own budgets to align and support these initiatives. ELC will not supplant services provided by other state funds. A 4 b The ELC budget is reserving 85% of the funds for the local consortia. This is a strong strategy. The funds are kept close to the intended beneficiaries, children with high needs and the early childhood educators and caregivers provides strong support for the activities to be implemented. The budget tables are aligned with the purposes, goals and activities in the grant. This is a strength in California's budget. A 4 c California's plan for sustainability is for the Consortia to mentor other systems wishing to participate. California hopes the positive outcomes for children will persuade private enterprise and foundations to support and expand the reform across the state.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|----------|
| (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 10 | 9 |
| <p>The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--</p> <p>(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Early Learning and Development Standards; (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System; (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications; (4) Family engagement strategies; (5) Health promotion practices; and (6) Effective data practices; <p>(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and</p> <p>(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

B 1 a California's current QRIS does not include evaluation of ELD programs across the programs standards. The plans for revision include: the use of Foundations in participating centers, the companion CDE Framework Documents, and the Preschool English Learner (PEL) guide. Plans to provide assessments include the use of the Classroom Language Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) and the use of Environmental Ratings along with the Environmental Ratings Scales (ERS) and/or Program for Infant Toddler Care - Program Assessment Scale (PIT-PARS) as well as the DRDP 2010 and the Ages and Stages (ASQ) screening tool. Health Promotion Practices will be assessed by a valid and reliable mental health screener, the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) pyramid model. The Early Childhood Educator Qualifications will be evaluated by the Common Core 8, Professional Growth Plans, and CDE Competencies Self-Reflection tool available 2012-2013. Licensing and Regulatory Requirements will also constitute the program and environment quality. Family Engagement will be assessed by ERS and the Effective Data Practices by the National Data Quality Campaign's Framework. These revisions are strong and reflect strong changes in the TQRIS comprehensive assessment. B 1 b The standards of the TQRIS are measureable, but the descriptors between the tiers, Level 1 -5 across the consortia are inconsistent. This is a weakness in California's TQRIS. B-1 c. State licensing will occur at tier 1 in all levels. California has exhibited evidence that is strong in it's intent to reform the TQRIS rating system across all of the program standards.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 15 | 12 |

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

B 2 a California's strategies for encouraging all publicly funded programs participate in the TQRIS include: local engagement and recruitment, orientation sessions, incentives, and mentoring. These are more fully described in the narrative, but are geared toward encouragement and not mandated. B 2 b California intends to assist families of children with high needs to participate in ELD programs by eliminating barriers such as transportation issues using public funds. Families will be supported as centers are provided with stipends and per space reimbursements for serving children with high needs. B 2 c There is no way to evaluate the ambitious or achievable goals in this section. The state has included the baseline data needed, but the targets for each year will be set by the local consortia.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs | 15 | 11 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

B 3 a California has selected valid and reliable tools to monitor the TQRIS programs across the standards. These instruments have been described previously. The state plans to train and use independent raters. One consortia will be responsible for contracting the services for training and selecting the raters. This represents a strength in the plan. A weakness is that the Local Consortia covers a wide geographic area, and the plan for recruiting and training raters must take place across all of the Local Consortia. The state acknowledges that the monitoring focus across the Consortia may differ. This also weakens the plan. B 3 b California is relying on previous practice to provide quality ratings and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in ELD programs. The TQRIS rating and the license will be posted in the center. California will draw from existing drafts and templates to provide information to parents. The brochures with the information will be distributed to stakeholders, inclusive of parents. The state also intends to use a website for the dissemination of information. This practice may not be easily accessible for a high poverty, population. The access to computers and the internet may be limited in many of these communities. Strategies need to be developed to reach low literacy populations and English Language Learners. California has developed some ideas for informing the public and has identified an array of strategies to accomplish this.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs | 20 | 12 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

B-4 a California describes strategies to provide high quality programs for children with high needs. The incentives are not fully described, but include technical assistance for centers, problem solution forums around systems and evaluations, sustainability and expansion plans for quality centers, and subsidy rate improvements. Greater access to coaching programs, professional development activities, and incentives for participation are considered to be a strategy for improving the quality and providing more programs with higher quality ratings on the TQRIS. B-4 b Provisions to increase support to families will be improved by the policies and practices implemented by the Integrated Action Team. Strategies include leveraging state and federal funds for full day care to children with high needs, providing transportation, and providing wrap around services for families of children with high needs. The state plans to prioritize the provision of subsidies to provide services for dual language learners, children with disabilities and other special needs. The local consortia will participate in the selection and implementation of these strategies. B-4-c The goals and targets are not complete and cannot be evaluated. The state has provided baseline data, but has not completed tables with the targets and the benchmarks for each year of the grant for the increase in the number of high needs children in the top two tiers. The goals and targets for increasing the numbers in the top tiers have been set, and may be considered achievable and ambitious.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. | 15 | 8 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(6)

B-5 Contributing to the strength of this proposal is California's ongoing Pilot QIS study in San Francisco. The results of this study will be shared with the consortia. The design of the Quality Continuum Framework has been improved by this study. Independent evaluators will be contracted to complete the validity and the reliability of the TQRIS. The design is intended to provide an accurate reflection of the quality of the tiers. The study will be conducted on a local level. The multi-tier level differences across the consortia may prove challenging in providing an accurate reflection. The design of the studies have not been created. This criterion cannot be evaluated. The TQRIS validation and reliability study is in the planning stages.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. | 30 | 27 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

California has developed strong learning standards in the Foundations Volumes for infants, toddlers, and preschool children. These standards are developmentally appropriate. These standards cover all of the essential domains of school readiness. The science and social studies standards are in the development stages. These standards have been aligned with the K-3 standards. Further information is provided in the appendices. All other domains are included. The Learning Standards are incorporated into the Program Standards as discussed and assessed by the DRDP. Comprehensive Assessment Systems have been addressed. The assessment of individual children using screening and formative assessment for the purpose of informing instruction is dependent in its entirety on the DRDP. California has incorporated the Early Learning Standards into the Workforce development strategies through the professional learning and credentialing systems. The Core 8 classes added at the technical college level is a strong strategy within this plan. Professional Development activities are aligned with the Foundations and companion volumes suggest activities to develop understanding and the use of the standards in the classroom. The state has developed partnerships with the Universities and the Colleges and the Foundations are being incorporated into the credentialing course work at this level. The plan proposed is strong and substantially implemented.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. | 30 | 25 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity, and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)3)

The evidence provided for C3 contributes to the high quality rating given. The state's proposal is innovative and targets the weaknesses identified in charts in Section A, but builds on the strengths of the partnerships in place. The state has goals with activities, timelines and responsible parties in place supported by MOU's. Technical assistance will be provided as needed and are indicative of a strength in identifying and addressing the health, behavior and developmental needs of children with high needs. The state's plan addresses the sharing of responsibilities of state agencies. The plan addresses health, behavior, and developmental needs in Foundations, Curriculum Framework, Desired Results, professional development and TQRIS. The plan uses an integrated approach and is woven into other domains ensuring that Health and Behavior Screening and Follow-up will occur. The plan will be implemented through QRIS. The goals are addressed in Early Childhood Educator Competencies and aligned with initiatives within in the early care and education field. All resources will be included in the QRIS. The plan uses ERS health related subscales, items which support social and emotional development. The plan uses CLASS for adult/child interactions already in use by Head Start. Increasing the number of Early childhood educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting health standards is a strength evidenced by professional development offered to educators working with children having high needs. There is strong commitment to strengthening the work of the early childhood educators in the state. Educator competencies now include: Observation, screening, assessment, and documentation, Relationships, Interactions and Guidance, Health, Safety and Nutrition. The state Community Colleges Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) addresses nutrition and physical activity. Funded strategies on social and emotional development include: State Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning funded by Head Start and Child Care Bureau, discontinued but will be continued by the State. Strong strategies are included for increasing health and nutrition for children and families. These strategies also include educational projects for children and parents. The parent/child education activities are provided by the partnerships and include: Team California for Healthy Kids – (TCHK) –building home, school, and community environments empowering families and kids to make healthy food and activity choices. The target for 2015 is 95% of participating children are up to date on schedule of well child care (a strength in the implementation). The evidence is supported by the targets which include increases in the number of children with high needs referred for services who receive follow-up treatment by 7000 + and further increase the number of high needs children screened by 133,000+. The strategies included in the provision of health services to children with high needs include: health, dental and vision coverage to uninsured, local

coverage of ineligible children through citizenship or immigration, county based Medical Home Projects, infusing Health Care in education settings. Screening results will be forwarded to child's physician upon consent of family. These strategies will ensure that high needs children have the appropriate screening and follow-up care that will support normal development and support improved achievement.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. | 40 | 36 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--</p> <p>(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;</p> <p>(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;</p> <p>(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and</p> <p>(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--</p> <p>(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and</p> <p>(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (b)(2)

The state has established goals, activities, timelines and responsibilities for the early education workforce section. The performance measures for this indicator seem low in terms of the Credential Types 3, 4, and 5 given the level of support in the application. Child Development Teachers and Master Teachers would seem to be motivated to move up at least one level. In addition, the Local Consortia will be providing professional learning through coaching and mentoring at the local level. The state has partnerships with the local colleges and universities to provide instruction with the state's early learning Foundations. Educator competencies have been incorporated in ECE programs at colleges with improvements made in university course work and training. The Local Consortia will be sharing trainers to deliver the professional learning at the local level. Plans to expand infant/toddler course work by 3 classes to include: Children with special needs, Program administration, Infants and toddlers. A strength is evidenced by a variety of training resources provided by partnerships and agencies, expand existing program quality promotion materials, train mentors to provide program guidance, promote equitable access to higher education. The resources include materials for coaches, mentors for directors and the support of academic needs through an ECE cohort for teachers and caregivers. These activities will assist the workforce in obtaining higher credentials, and the encouragement to continue their education by meeting needs around finances and work schedules. The consortia will provide the following: advisement, financial aid guidance, weeknight and weekend coursework and training, one-on-one coaching and feedback in classroom childcare tutoring. A strength in that this type of mentoring program should facilitate a self sustaining program model. The state has implemented some policies and legislation to encourage the early childhood work force to increase the credentials and incentives (strength of application). California will comply with the data reporting and the transparency and accountability requirements of the ELC grant. California will work with the existing databases and the registry to ensure that all data fields are entered into the data base on the early childhood workforce. California has established targets based on the existing data on teacher credentials in the state. These targets are reasonable, but seem to be low since there are so many supports and incentives in place for educators to improve their skill level and credential level.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E) which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|------------|------------|
| (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. | 40 | 32 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p> | | |
| Scoring Rubric Used: Quality and Implementation | | |
| Comments on (E)(1) | | |
| <p>California has established goals, activities, timelines, and responsible parties for this section (a strength, because timelines, goals, and responsibilities, are not included throughout the application). The state will expand the school readiness assessment tool, the DRDP, including adding additional domains. Participating programs through the Consortia will be trained and demonstrate the use of the school readiness assessment tool. CALPADS will store school readiness data directly into the system. Understanding School Readiness (a strength if the reliability and validity are established for the instrument) will be enhanced by the use of the DRDP. Evidence provided includes: The DRDP-SR is aligned with the foundations and covers all essential domains of school readiness. The DRDP is reported to be valid and reliable for the target population including English learners and children with disabilities. The DRDP-SR is currently in being piloted in the state. West Ed and Berkely Evaluation Assessment Research Center have run reliability and validity tests on the assessment and are reported as: Domains most predictive of school success: Self and Social Development Self-Regulation Language and Literacy Development Mathematical Development. The DRDP is administered not later than the start of the 2014-15 school year to children entering the public school kindergarten. A weakness is that it is a voluntary use of the instrument. The state may propose a phase in plan: DRDP-SR will be available for the 2012-13 school year for an early adopter group. Training on the assessment will be conducted starting in the spring of 2012. The DRDP will be reported to the state longitudinal data system (a strength if accessed by schools.) In 2012-2013 - CALPADS will be modified to accommodate reporting of DRDP results. The readiness reports will inform teachers of transition K students and K students about the developmental progress of their children, assist with planning for groups, and assist with individual instructional planning. ELL funds will be used in 2013-14 to provide incentives to programs in Consortia to adopt and use the DRDP-SR for Transitional K and K students and enter the results into CALPADS. In 2014-2015 CALPADS adaptations to support DRDP-SR data will be complete and will not need support from the early learning challenge fund. The state acknowledges that the entry of data and the accessibility of data on the migrant population in this large geographic area may be hard to maintain. The state assures that to the extent possible, the migrant populations will be assessed, and the data will be entered into the longitudinal data system.</p> | | |
| Total Points Available for Selection Criteria | 280 | 230 |

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

| | Available | Yes/No |
|---|-----------|--------|
| Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry | 0 or 10 | Yes |
| <p>To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--</p> <p>(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or</p> <p>(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.</p> | | |
| Comments on (P)(3) | | |
| 32 points were awarded for E1. | | |

Absolute Priority

| | Met? Yes/No |
|---|----------------|
| Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. | Yes |
| <p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p> | |
| Comments on Absolute Priority | |
| <p>California has submitted a comprehensive plan of reform to build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development programs for Children with High Needs so they enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The state has created partnerships with local, state, and federal, providers of childcare in the state to align policies and resources to create the Tiered Quality Rate and Improvement System. The System provides up to five tiers of quality, beginning with state licensing on Tier 1. Some programs only have two tiers identified. The validity of the tiers and the quality across the programs may be suspect, and children attending programs in tier 2 (top tier for one program) and tier 5 (top tier for another program) may not demonstrate the same level of quality for high needs children. The state addresses the gaps in section A charts in their Focused Investment Area. The plan is ambitious and achievable. It will serve approximately 65 % of the 0-5 population in the state. Sustainability is demonstrated throughout the plan.</p> | |



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # CA-5003

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 9:19 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development | 20 | 20 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--</p> <p>(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;</p> <p>(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;</p> <p>(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and</p> <p>(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

From 2007 to the present, the State of California has invested \$8.9 billion dollars in a comprehensive, early learning and development system of services. State early childhood funding includes, state-funded preschool, state contributions and match to the Child Care and Development Fund, TANF spending earmarked for early learning and development programs, and First 5 California's Power of Preschool Program. In the application, historical funding data is provided which tracks recent state government cutbacks in funding due to "the state's dire fiscal circumstance". Overall, the applicant presents funding information (Table (A)(1)-4) to support its position that the State of California presently maintains a proportional high level of EC funding and demonstrates its strong financial commitment to fund early learning and development services for children ages 0-5. Table (A)(1)-2 provides data that addresses the number and percentage of children participating in Early Learning and Development programs, including, children with disabilities or developmental delays; English learners, children residing on Indian lands; migrant children, homeless, children in foster care; and children at-risk of developmental delay. Data is derived from national and university-based studies. One of the most significant reported findings is the percentage of 0-4 year olds designated as English Language Learners (35%)—a special population with unique early intervention needs. Expanded footnotes that detail Table (A)(1)-5) information is derived from a variety of primary sources. Applicant notes that a "grand total" of number of children with high needs is not available since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs. Application presents solid evidence of a steady growth in the number of Children with High Needs participating in its vast network of Early Learning and Development Programs. Applicant cites recent passage of legislation establishing California's Transitional Kindergarten program (SB 1381—2010). Proposition 10 funding for early learning and development services for children ages 0-5 (1998); the California State Preschool Program Act (2008) which streamlines the administration of the state's early learning system in order to bridge the achievement gap between children with high needs and their peers; The Early Learning Quality Improvement System Act (2008) which designed and wrote the state's plan to align early learning quality improvement resources with local efforts—this plan was submitted to the Governor in December 2010. The applicant addresses its strength in pushing through early learning and development legislation, policies and practices, as a threshold for continuing support of local

QRIS efforts. Applicant articulates the historical development of Infant, Toddler and Preschool standards (Learning and Development Foundations), which describe the knowledge and skill children develop, the behavior they learn, and their developing social and emotional competency. Standards have been in place since 2008, and are "complementary with Kindergarten Core Standards". The State of California is beginning the process of delineating developmental expectations for Transitional Kindergarten and traditional school readiness programs that will inform teachers and administrators on how to bridge the Kindergarten Common Core and the Preschool Learning Foundations. The Learning and Development Foundation has four integrative parts: Curriculum Frameworks, Desired Assessment System, Professional Development, and Program Guidelines and Resources. All parts meet the threshold of the RTT-ELC expectation that the existing system is comprehensive, crosswalks local and statewide efforts and systems, and is multidisciplinary (health, family engagement, workforce development, data collection). Various child observation tools have been aligned with the federally funded Head Start Outcomes Framework. Applicant is clear in its narrative that current gaps in its current statewide system will be priorities for RTT-ELC Regional Consortium members.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The proposed design of the State of California's RTT-ELC application consists of a large, interdisciplinary, scalable, multi-centered Regional Leadership Consortium charged with "developing and implementing local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which will initially serve an estimated 76,000 children" (Table (A)(1)-7). The application promotes an ambitious allocation of state, regional and local resources to build lasting infrastructures for use in multiple parts of California's distinct political, economic and demographically diverse regions. It strives to achieve the appropriate balance of central and local control by framing a regional strategy that will "maximize access to high quality early learning programs for children with high needs". The benefits of this approach and model are evidenced by the success of long-standing networks of 58 county-level Early Childhood Commissions, and one state-level First 5 Commission. Regional and State level accomplishments are provided throughout the application. The state justifies its decision to focus on 16 of 58 California Counties by supplying data to support a substantive overall impact in the combined effort—Regional Leadership Consortium members participating in the RTT-ELC will represent an opportunity to ultimately improve the school readiness of 1.8 million children, 49% of whom meet low-income/poor classifications and 60% are classified as being English Learners under the Age of Five (Narrative Table A1). The selection criterion for the 16 Early Learning Challenge Regional Leadership Consortium was voluntary, therefore, not limiting its proposed experience to "top" First 5 achievers. Strengths in the proposed Regional Consortium design include, (1) access to diverse, local programs that include high needs participation in a variety of program options, sponsors, funding streams and demographic locations, (2) large-scale commitments by private sector, philanthropic and nonprofit investors in early childhood initiatives during the course of the funding opportunity, (3) proven pathways of collaboration between State Departments interfacing with early childhood initiatives and services, (4) cohesion of existing relationships that strengthen the State's existing Early Learning and Development network, (5) the potential of shared expertise in the Quality Rating and Improvement System at the local level; (6) economy of effort in expanding innovative practices to early adopters; and (7) standardization of new practices, services and Consortia outcomes to other members of the California Early Learning and Development community. The application did not specifically address challenges to the model that are common to consortium or network designs. Prevailing research in this area typically references weaknesses, such as, (1) challenges in models that have complex organizational structures that risk either too much or too little central organization of control (the proposal offers a complex, multi-layered governance model (although it can also be said that the Consortia governance starts at the local level and works it way up the chain); (2) challenges associated with a monitoring system that centers around one consortium member assuming greater responsibilities than other network members—in this model a non-identified member will assume a major role in being the lead for its inter-rater reliability plan; and (3) accountability for local variations—a common challenge in network evaluation where pattern practices at local programs may lead to lack of standard interventions and protocol violations. Lastly, because the funding for RTT-ELC is finite, aspects of transitioning local programs and Regional Consortium members to long-term funding streams—after the funding cycle is completed—is vitally important, yet minimally discussed in the application.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant.

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

In several sections of the application, the State of California identifies a State to local governance structure—detailing how the State Department of Education and its selected Consortium will work together to facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision-making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainable outcomes. The organizational design of the application centers around a Regional Leadership Consortium, comprised of sixteen counties that "volunteer" to strengthen their existing systems, align their systems with a common framework, and serve as leaders and mentors to other peers in different localities throughout the state. The governance framework and scope of work outlines a complex system of coordination across early childhood initiatives; including, coordination and collaboration "issues and opportunities". The proposal outlines a strong project administration framework: The California Department of Education, serves as the Lead Agency; a comprehensive list of State Departments and State Initiatives serve as members of the State Advisory Council and the Early Learning Challenge Integrative Action Team. Teams members and the 16 Early Learning Regional Leadership Consortia (comprised of multiple local stakeholders), ensure that the QRIS and QIS systems are aligned with common elements and sustained by local resources. The proposal offers a rich array of support from a wide range of representative groups. The challenge to the proposed governance structure is that it does not offer examples of projected consensus methods, processes, and conflict solutions. In such a complex, multi-agency (internal State Departments, External government agencies, regional organizations, local programs and associations), it difficult to envision a system devoid of institutional weaknesses, such as: periodic breakdowns in communications, conflicting policies and regulations, potential lack of ownership and commitment

at any level, and potential disagreements between any level within the multi-tiered governance structure. The application did not address such pitfalls that may hinder forward and sustained progress within or outside of the Consortia. Additionally, another underdeveloped concept in the narrative is the expectation that Consortia will reach out and mentor other programs and organizations during and after the Consortium experience. While this holds the potential of a promising practice, it is not evident as a strategy or budgeted resource allocation to the Regional Leadership Consortia or local programs responsible for "sustainable quality improvement efforts". The Plan includes significant opportunities for involvement of multiple stakeholders, including parents, in RTT-ELC activities in all program options and auspices (School Districts, Early Head Start/Head Start, migrant programs, etc.) The State of California offers in its proposal (Appendix 3) an extensive list of signed and dated Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and Scopes of Work for participating agencies. Each of the individual MOUs certifies and represents an agreement with the Lead Agency to be a participating partner responsible for implementing portions of the State Plan. Additionally, the MOU outlines agreements to (a) a set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards; (b) statewide Program Standards; (c) a statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and, (d) a statewide workforce knowledge and competency framework and progression of credentials. The MOUs are uniform and consistent—leveraging the strength of the Lead Agency, State Interdepartmental Early Childhood Network, and the Regional Consortia pilot program. Terms and conditions are also outlined and adequately reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency. The MOUs also state terms and conditions—designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan. The signature of the Governor of the State of California is present in the application. Additional signatures of each Participating State Agency including, the California Department of Education, First 5 California, the Early Learning Advisory Council, Department of Social Services, Department of Developmental Services and the Department of Public Health are also present in the application. The depth and breadth of organizations submitting commitment letters demonstrates a strong network of agencies working unilaterally to support early childhood initiatives, programs, and the RTT-ELC application. Individual Letters of Intent from the applicant's proposed sixteen (16) County Consortium are present (Appendix 4) to document each member's commitment to develop a local consortium of organizations that will share in a design and implementation features of the State's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) and support the needs of families and children for high-quality child care centers and family child care programs. Additionally, 135 Letters of Support (Appendix 5) were present in the application, covering a wide span of Early Childhood and community stakeholders required, or suggested in the RTT-ELC application instructions (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders, parent groups/individuals, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, and community-based organizations). A letter of support from United States Senator, Barbara Boxer, as well as three United States Congress Members, expressed strong support for California's RTT-ELC grant proposal.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. | 15 | 13 |

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The strength of the State of California Budget Plan is its commitment to invest 85% of all RTT-ELC funds directly to the Regional Leadership Consortia. The Budget Plan parallels the applicant's decision to focus on strengthening local Early Childhood initiatives and programs—that are, according to the Narrative, linked to local sources of support. By pushing Federal RTT-ELC funding to the local level, the State is encouraging Regional Leadership Consortia members to support the ongoing implementation of the plan's key initiatives and leverage state, federal and philanthropic funding to extend promising practices to other non-participating County systems. The level of importance in obtaining RTT-ELC funding is found in Table (A)(4) which represents funds for state, private foundations, county and city general funds, as well as from federal ECE grants. It appears as if funding levels have been sliding downward and in the represented years of RTT-ELC funding, "not all Consortia have approved funding past the current 20110 -2012 Fiscal Year". The State is, therefore, projecting that "Once RTT-ELC grant funds are obtained, Consortia will work on obtaining future funding commitments from multiple local funding sources" p68 (Table A)(4)-1. It is readily apparent that today's weakened governmental funding base will require substantial support to "administrators in their business practices". The State plan is vague in its description regarding how it will allocate resources towards that end; although, there are casual references to improving the "administrative skills of center directors" through community college coursework and using the Consortia Director Mentors to encourage sound administrative practices to "help create high-quality learning settings for children".

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 10 | 10 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The state's narrative provides evidence of all elements of the RTT-ELC requirements, including reference to its legislatively created California Early Learning Quality Improvement System (CAEL QIS, a five tier system linked to the National Institute for Early Education Research quality benchmarks). The California proposes using funds to support a 16-member Consortia and provides evidence of all six areas of a High Quality Plan, including evidence of: Early Learning and Development Standard; a comprehensive system; early childhood educator qualifications, family engagement strategies, health promotion practices; and effective data practices. The State provides information and examples regarding links between the High Quality Plan, Quality Framework Continuum, and its Title 22, Department of Social Services (DSS) and Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), licensing standards. The proposal indicates that each Consortium's Action Plan will address how to develop or increase communication with local CCLD and DSS child care licensing staff—an indicator of a comprehensive system. All participating Consortium members have signed a letter of intent agreeing to utilizing the State's Framework which includes three core areas: Child Development and School Readiness, Teachers and Teaching, and Program and Environment. Narrative Table B2 provides details to support the State's integration of core elements into its High Quality Plan and QRIS system, including addressing the following in the California Quality Continuum Framework: (1) Early Learning and Development Standards; (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System; (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications; (4) Family engagement strategies; (5) Health promotion practices; and (6) Effective data practices. The State's Framework includes specific tools that Consortia member must incorporate into their local QRIS and the requirement that participating Consortia set "differentiated quality levels based on the measurements taken with these tools". State endorsed tools and resources are aligned with California's kindergarten learning standards, the Kindergarten Common Core Standards and the Head Start child outcomes framework. The State Plan requires participating Consortia to incorporate Title 22 (DSS) licensing standards as the base tier of the local QRIS.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 15 | 8 |

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The Regional Leadership Consortia is required in written agreements to demonstrate that it must include all of the types of Early Learning and Development Programs identified in the grant application. In addressing the quality of its proposed plan, the State provides assurances that its Consortia approach will be supported financially and programmatically to meet RTTC-ELC requirements. The applicant provides demographic information and data on the targeted 16 California Consortia to verify inclusion of all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs required in the application. All expectations in the application criteria were provided with examples and evidence of quality and current implementation. The applicant states that, as a component of its proposed Action Plan, it will expand access for children 0 – 5, especially services to children with high needs. Baseline and annual targets were not presented Table (B)(2)(c), as the applicant projects that tiers will be established at the local level using a continuum of indicators. The proposed plan is, therefore, a projected goal driven by an assumption that CDE and local Consortia leaders will reach a consensus on setting annual targets for increasing the number and percentage of programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. This partial response lends itself to a medium-level response and a minimal level of implementation since targets are yet to be determined or projected in Consortium Action Plans. The absence of detail as to how California will measure the quality of collaboration and engagement between Consortia members is a weakness in this section of the application.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs | 15 | 12 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

In its application, the State of California proposes a regional strategy of voluntary school districts serving highly populated regions with High Needs Children. The applicant provides ample evidence that it has developed and implemented a High Quality Plan that includes common program assessment and monitoring practices based on local and state efforts, as well as evidence-based research. The Regional Leadership Consortia participating in the proposal represents the opportunity to impact 1.8 million children--over 65% of the total number of children under age five living in California. The Plan also incorporates common elements, specified in the RTT-ELC Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, which will be an integral part of the Consortia agreement. Specifically, at the local level, each member has agreed to use a common rating and monitoring system for its local QRIS that is outlined in the Consortia's Quality Continuum Framework. The Plan also calls for "the utilization of a combination of local and state oversight to best maximize expertise and resources of the local QRIS rating and monitoring process". In this system, the CDE will provide Lead Agency oversight and work with a Lead Consortium member to ensure that each Consortium has a comprehensive system for rating and monitoring that meets a high standard for inter-rater reliability in relation to application of the common elements and utilization of common tools and supports. It is important to note that the applicant is also proposing that the Lead Consortium selected for this task will contract for the services of a researcher, who will in turn "conduct activities across the Consortia that assist all of them in maintaining an appropriate degree of rigor in their rating process. This approach has inherent strengths and challenges. Its strength is in offering local programs interdependence on the Consortia's collective monitoring system, over individual program autonomy. A challenge to this monitoring system is the lack of clarity as to how the Lead Consortium member will be selected, and how the Lead Consortium member's programs will be monitored with the same vigor and completeness as other Consortium members. The State provides a plan for objective ratings of early learning and development programs to families. The plan targets three groups: families, programs and providers; and, ECE stakeholders and the general public. A strength of the plan is its commitment to develop and present multiple strategies to reach target groups with information that will increase awareness of the characteristics of early learning program quality and promotes better outcomes for children.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

The applicant indicates that the California Department of Education, Lead Agency within the Consortia design, will be responsible for providing Technical Assistance (TA) and resources to support the Consortia and local participating programs. The scope of this assistance plan includes providing TA in each member's/program's continuous improvement process. The plan also includes an ELC Consortia Professional Learning Community that will engage relevant experts and ensure discussions of challenges and effective solutions in addressing federally mandated grant requirements. TA is identified as being strengths-based and will employ coaching and mentoring "for continuous quality improvement". Other resources are also identified and explained, including a comprehensive incentive system. A weakness in this section is the State's failure to provide specific governance steps that will be taken if a Consortium member falls behind in meeting target goals or fails to address key compliance requirements. Incomplete tables indicate a possible challenge in setting ambitious or achievable targets for increases in the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs. This data is not available at the local level. The California applicant notes that it did not receive 100% response from all 16 identified Consortia members. Table (B)(4)(c)(2) represents performance measure data submitted by eight of the sixteen Consortia members. Additionally, members of the Consortia are at different stages in adopting a five-Tier Quality Rating and Improvement System. The proposal notes that "one Consortium has 5-tiers, four Consortia have 4 tiers, one Consortium has 3 tiers, and two Consortia have 2 tiers. Variances in the number of tiers reported by individual Consortia members calls to question whether California truly has a statewide system and plan.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
|--|-----------|-------|

(B)(6) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

15

9

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(6)

The State of California stresses in this section its unique Consortia design. Throughout the application California's RTT-ELC application has emphasized its desire to create sustainable capacity at the local level--proposing a regional strategy "with the resolute belief that this is the best approach for California". In addressing RTT-ELC approach to validating the effectiveness of the state tiered quality rating and improvement system, the applicant describes its methodology as a plan in which "Consortia will set tiers, not the state, and therefore the validation of the tiers will happen at the local level, in select Consortia. California will seek bids from independent evaluators to propose through a competitive bid, a research design to study local QRIS implementation in a subset of Consortia. The application further states that the specific Consortia studied will be proposed by the evaluator (as part of its application) and determined by the CDE when it chooses the evaluator. Succinctly stated, this process is creating individual experimental evaluations to be created through an external RFP, a significant shift in previous commitments to use Consortia and stakeholder inputs to achieve a "balance of central and local control". The applicant does not provide examples of how this process has been used in other Consortia designed efforts. Additionally, after detailing the RFP process, the application suddenly shifts to a discussion about how the "evaluation" will address "other broader research questions about local QRIS implementation. This process is more inclusive--inviting consultation with the State Advisory Council and Consortia leaders. It appears that the outcome of this process will be added to the researcher/evaluator's responsibility. The proposed method for evaluation, including its competitive process to define the evaluation method, appears to be counter to the RTT-ELC's requirement to create an evaluation process that sets realistic outcome measures that can be adequately captured and measured uniformly across various programs.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E).*

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. | 30 | 30 |
| The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that-- | | |
| (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness; | | |
| (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics; | | |

(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

The State demonstrates solid and convincing evidence that it has a well established Learning and Development System that covers all essential domains of school readiness. The California model is especially strong in its inclusion of home language and cultures—citing the need to respond to the needs of over 39% of birth to five year old children and approximately 40% of kindergartners who fit the definition of dual-language learners. California, rich in cultural and linguistic diversity, has aligned resources to support its early childhood educators in understanding dual language development, as well as emphasis on "honoring children's home cultures and connecting children's experiences at home with their experiences in the myriad of early learning classroom and child development settings". A considerable strength to the State's approach is its inclusion of academic and practitioner voices in the development of its California Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines. The applicant lists an impressive group of experts called upon to participate in the development of the Preschool and Infant/toddler Foundations and curriculum frameworks. These resources, described in depth, include research and evidence-based expectations for dual language and cultural diversity in the Foundation's core principles. The State of California provides evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards and include early literacy and mathematics in its Preschool Learning Foundations, and the Kindergarten Standards for the State of California. The State cites core documents to provide evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards have been incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities. A sampling of those documents include, The California Prekindergarten Learning and Development Guidelines, Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Workgroup, the Desired Results Developmental Profile, the Preschool Instructional Network Resources, and the Faculty Initiative Project. In addition to meeting all of the Subpart requirements in this section, the State of California is offering innovative solutions to augment early educator resources and supports. Its use of multimedia supports (e.g., DVD's and web-based presentations) for Foundations Guides deepens the capabilities of staff to engage in robust dialogue and discussions at Consortia sponsored activities, or within professional learning networks and communities of practice. The Foundation Preschool Volumes (1-2) address seven critical and mandated domains; its 2012 Volume will address an additional three domains—including Science. The Infant/Toddler Social-emotional Development Foundations address Language and Literacy, Cognitive Development, Perceptual and Motor Development and Social-Emotional Development. All Foundation materials are aligned with Kindergarten Standards for the State of California. The application offers a crosswalk of various resources targeting the professional development of early childhood educators. California is a national model for its publication of key ECE resources, including, the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Foundation Guides, Preschool English Learners: Practices to Promote Language, Literacy and Learning, EC Educator Competencies, Desired Results Developmental Profile, the California Preschool Instructional Network Resources, and many other materials produced by inter-related initiatives sponsored by key EC stakeholders.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. | 30 | 25 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--</p> <p>(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;</p> <p>(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;</p> <p>(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and</p> <p>(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--</p> <p>(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);</p> <p>(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and</p> <p>(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

The California RTT-ELC response to this section is thorough and complete. The applicant outlines its progression of standards which is inclusive of comprehensive, integrated tools and resources for promoting health in a number of areas, including wellness, safety, oral health, mental health and nutrition. It documents how health is infused into the California Learning and Development System, Foundations for Learning, Curriculum Frameworks, Desired Results system, professional development, and in its local Quality Rating and Improvement systems. A particular strength is its workforce development efforts with a focus on mental health and obesity prevention. This is accomplished through the California Community Colleges Curriculum Alignment Project, which is developing a lower-division program for early care, and education teacher preparation that will be implemented in 102 of the 105 community colleges in the state with child development or early childhood education programs. Another cited example of CDE's collaborative outreach efforts is the adoption and planned implementation of Head Start's, I am Moving, I am Learning training—a national, federally funded approach for addressing childhood obesity. Similarly, First 5 California, the source of Consortia membership, promotes children's healthy eating habits and activity by providing parent education resources. The applicant notes its plan to work jointly with state agency partners and the Consortia to "weave together prevention, early identification and treatment services for children. The applicant cites numerous efforts in California counties to increase knowledge of the importance of increasing the number of children screened for developmental, behavioral, and health needs. The proposed plan offers a locally designed approach to promote best practices within the EC network generally, and the Consortia, specifically. The state will work jointly with agency partners to ensure that training, best practice guidance and protocols are provided to Consortia members. Documents provided in the applicant's Appendices support the State's claim that health and behavioral screening and follow-up are presently incorporated in Head Start, Early Head Start, and Power of Preschool program standards. There are challenges to the statewide system, however. The current system is complex, involving multiple funding streams, regulatory standards, and layered reporting mechanisms. A current weakness in this system is California's lack of state-wide data on screening, referrals and ongoing health care. One of the stated goals of the applicant is to use RTT-ELC funds for training, best practice guidance and protocols to ensure that quality screening and referral activities are in place and formalized linkages are in place with existing local systems of screening, referral and treatment. Given complexities in the Consortia design, this area of the proposal is critical in its need to explain in detail how data collection activities and practices will likely help to coordinate training, practice and coordinated data management. A partial explanation and plan is provided. While the ideas and activities generated in this section are substantive, developmentally appropriate, inclusive of activities for children and families, and complementary to the Consortia's proposed framework and Action Plan there are areas that are vague and not fully linked to QRIS standards and expectations. Health is infused into California's Early Learning and Development System, including the Foundations, Curriculum Frameworks, Desired Results system, professional development and in the local Quality Rating and Improvement System.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. | 40 | 37 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--</p> <p>(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;</p> <p>(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;</p> <p>(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and</p> <p>(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--</p> <p>(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and</p> <p>(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

The State of California has since 2001 invested \$450 million dollars in its Child Development Staff Retention Program to support the state's complex and diverse early learning workforce. A significant accomplishment cited in the applicant's narrative is the implementation of an ECE core curriculum of eight evidence-based courses that have been adopted by 103 of the state's 105 community colleges offering ECE programs. This curriculum is also being aligned with the California State University 4-year curriculum. The RTT-ELC Plan will seek to increase the size, quality and retention of the state's early learning workforce. Key elements of the plan include: (a) incorporation of the Early Childhood Educator Competencies into ECE coursework and training, (b) core curricula alignment across the state's Community College system in the subject areas of infant/toddler learning and development, children with special needs, and administration. The plan also includes providing teachers in the Consortia with training on the California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the California Preschool Learning Foundations—pivotal intercepts with the States Regional Leadership Consortia Action Plan and the RTT-ELC Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework. The Registry pilot, a two county effort that will be used to report aggregated data on EC educators professional development to the public, is still under development. Since 2000, the State of California has invested over \$150 million dollars in the Child Development Staff Retention Program, administered by the California Department of Education. The program seeks to improve the retention of qualified child development employees who work directly with children in state subsidized child development programs. Funded incentives for staff who directly work with children include, compensation and benefits support, tutoring and mentoring, school financial aid assistance, career counseling, and, professional development. Additionally the California First 5 initiative also supports early educators with incentives, training and higher education access. California CARES program is described as being a critical link to the RTT-ELC Consortia—and will directly support the professional development needs of early educators serving those children most at risk of falling into the achievement gap in K-12 education. California will require the Consortia to meet all RTT-ELC requirements pertaining to accountability, transparency, and reporting. The applicant provides assurances that program data is reported and professional development, advancement and retention outcomes are specifically addressed for stakeholders and the public. The applicant proposes to use its existing CARES Plus database, hosted and funded by First 5 California. This database has been aligned with the California Registry Alliance, which provides California with key data that supports the State's effort to promote a high-quality, coordinated, documented and accessible state career development system—a strength in this section of the application. The applicant lists and describes training resources, curricula, processes, and materials that contribute to high-level study content for workforce professionals. Strategies are multi-layered, including traditional course work, multi-media content, and local infrastructure supports, "designed to educate, train, mentor, build leadership skills, and adequately compensated the early care and education workforce along the continuum for infant/toddler care providers through preschool teachers. The current strategy for ECE professional development is outlined in the state-sponsored Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) and CARES Plus which are underwritten by First 5 California and supports 40,000 ECE professionals in their professional development with stipends, academic support and peer counseling and mentor advising. The state has set targeted performance measures to increase the number of EC educators receiving credentials aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework at a range of 2% to 4% (CD Assistant), or in numerical terms from 4,459 EC educators in 2012 to 4,732 Educators in target year 2015. In the category of increasing the number and percentage of EC educators progressing to higher levels of credentials, the target (CD Teacher) ranges from 1% to 2%, or from 3,858 educators in 2012 to 4,094 educators in 2015. The table presented (D)(2)(d)(2) does not provide explanatory narrative to fully understand how targets were set to determine (1) entry credentialing levels; (2) challenges that make targets ambitious or conservative; or, (3) how programs will implement and sustain credential targets at the local level. The strength of the applicant's approach to achieve a professionally competent and expanded EC workforce is the State's pragmatic assessment of methods, practices, incentives and approaches that will further develop the EC field of practice. The proposal is a mix of innovative techniques (e.g., proposing as a condition of cohort program development participation, applicants must agree to mentor new participants for one year once their participation in the cohort is complete), incentives for non-traditional adult learners (e.g., child care during non-working hours, access to weeknights and weekends coursework, professional growth and career advising, peer learning communities); and, monetary support (e.g., financial aid and financial support upon completion of self-directed educational milestones). Evidence-based research on evaluating training effectiveness notes intentional change, through personal transformation (mentorship, coaching, peer-interactions, and support of localized learning communities) leads to sustained and measured effectiveness, versus mere "classroom seat time". Another strength is the California State Department of Education's new data collection methodology for participants participating in statewide, quality improvement professional development activities. The State's professional development data management system is currently hosted and funded by First 5 California. The proposed Budget for the RTT-ELC application contains funding support for Training of Mentors, development of electronic training materials, funding a comprehensive system of personnel development, train-the-trainer mentors, home visiting program professional development, and grantee technical assistance.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. | 40 | 36 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

In its application for RTT-ELC funding, the State of California proposes to use grant funds to expand its existing school readiness assessment tool—the Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness (DRDP-SR). This instrument was developed in 2010, as an extension to CDE's Desired Results System—a comprehensive assessment system that has been in operation with several iterations, since 2001. The measures, that make up the DRDP-SR are domains that are aligned with the Preschool Learning Foundations, Common Core standards for kindergarten. An area of strength in the DRDP-SR assessment is that it has been found to be reliable and valid with diverse populations, including children who are dual-language learners and children with Individualized Education Plans (IEP). Another strength—worth national recognition and attention—is the field data testing that suggested a "floor effect" for many measures. This finding resulted in a modification to the instrument that added additional earlier levels to the DRDP-SR instrument to "reduce likelihood of a floor effect"—a statistical Type II error. Identification and response to this finding has strengthened the reliability and validity of the DRDP-SR instrument and its applicability to the target population. The applicant indicates that in 2012-2013, with support from the RTT-ELC grant, the State will make modifications to its California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) to accommodate reporting of the DRDP-SR results. A strength to the application is that those interface changes in California's reporting system will be beneficial to all 58 counties, including the 16 Regional Leadership Consortia. A weakness is that the instrument will be voluntary within the Consortia; there is a phase in process that will meet the RTT-ELC requirements, however, the State has not made a definitive statement that the DRDP-SR will be implemented beyond the life of the grant.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Total Points Available for Selection Criteria | 280 | 242 |

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

| | Available | Yes/No |
|---|-----------|--------|
| Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry | 0 or 10 | Yes |

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

The State of California addressed fully the selection criterion (E)(1) by providing evidence that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)1-12 are addressed.

Absolute Priority

| | Met? Yes/No |
|---|----------------|
| Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. | Yes |
| <p>To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.</p> <p>The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.</p> | |
| Comments on Absolute Priority | |
| <p>The State of California addressed fully the selection criterion by providing full and complete responses to each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare Children with High Needs for kindergarten success. The strength of the State's response is its rich history of developing integrated frameworks; a comprehensive scaffold of Early Learning and Development Outcomes at the local, regional and state levels; and, public and private partnerships and funding that promote the development of a high-performing ECE workforce.</p> | |



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review



Technical Review Form Page

Application # CA-5003

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/15/2011 - 4:50 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 19.

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's--

- (a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;
(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;
(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and
(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The applicant demonstrates a significant history of funding early learning development programs dating back to 1944 with the establishment of public preschools. As a result, a system has been developing over these years that include a broad range of early learning and development programs, a comprehensive assessment tool, three volumes of standards, Volume 1 has been released with 2 and 3 to be available by 2012 and an early childhood professional development Workforce Credentials plan. Since 2007, the state has invested 8.9 billion into several early learning and development programs such as public preschools, First 5 California's, Power of Preschool, Early Head Start and Head Start, programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B section 619, Programs funded under Title 1 of ESEA and the state CCDF programs. The number of children with high needs participating in several of these programs has increased. State funded preschools have increased by 14% from 87,706 in 2007 to 101,414 in 2010. In First 5 California's Power of Preschool the program has grown from 14,329 in 2007 to 24,389, by 2010, under Title 1 of ESEA the number of children grew by 12% from 23,762 in 2007 to 26,580 in 2009. Early Head Start has added 5,729 slots in 2010 due to ARRA funding. The total number of children with high needs served in 2007 was 441,560. In 2010 the number increased to 456,426 in spite of the fact that funding to some of these programs has decreased over the five year period by approximately one million dollars. The total number of children with high needs in the state is 1,345,469. An important piece of legislation in 1998 created a state-wide system of 54 County Commissions called First 5 California that has contributed over 17 million in 2011, an increase from 2007 of 14 million that provides funding to community based organizations and local education agencies to support the early learning and healthy development of young children. Assembly Bill 2759, the California State Program Act of 2008 consolidated the administration of the state's early learning system. As the result of this efficiency, more than 19,000 additional young children have been served. Senate Bill 1629, the Early Learning Quality Improvement System Act established the CAEL QIS Advisory committee which submitted a plan to the legislature in December 2010 to design and implement a QIS building on the work of the counties QRIS. The latest piece of legislation, using K-12 funds, is to create transitional kindergarten programs for over 120,000 by targeting four year old who have birthdays between September and December. This demonstrates continued commitment to establishing a more coherent and coordinated early learning system to serving children

with high needs and promoting kindergarten readiness. All of these examples of legislation demonstrate the steps the state is taking to build a high quality early learning and development system. The applicant clearly documents the development, over several years, of components of a high quality early learning and development system that include Foundations (Standards) three volumes, for Infants and Toddlers and Preschool children that include all the domains of developmental appropriateness in the cognitive, social-emotional, language, and perceptual-motor development of children birth to 36 months. The Preschool Learning Foundations show domains for increasing social-emotional capacity, language, literacy English language development and mathematics, tools for assessing child development and kindergarten readiness for teachers, health practices, family engagement activities and an extensive workforce development program. A final component, a data system, is maintained by the Department of Education, the Child Development Management Information System, to collect and report data from the CCDF, state preschool programs and CAI Safe. Another data system, DRDPtech that collects and shares information with teachers and families on observational assessments. State funding for Early Learning and Development programs has decreased by one million since 2007. If this pattern continues, it could have an impact on making sure all the building blocks are supported for a high quality ELD program that serves children with high needs.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The applicant has set an ambitious goal of improving the lives of 1.8 million children under five, of which 1,094,000 are language learner children and 892,000 are low income children. The plan proposed will target 15 counties out of 55 counties, through 16 Regional Leadership Consortia that have been selected based upon their success in delivering high quality early learning programs and have well developed goals and work plans to utilize the existing state-wide assessments to improve the quality of early learning and development programs for high needs children. Sample key goals and targets include seventy-five percent of the children will be assessed using a validated observational assessment tool, 75% of the master teachers will develop professional development plans based upon teacher effectiveness rating scores, 75% of the programs will be assessed using the Environment Rating scale with 90% of them showing improvement over the grant cycle. By the end of the grant 75% of the local education agencies within local QRIS communities will be trained on the School Readiness instrument. The overarching goal that unites the Consortia is to ensure that children in California have access to high quality programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten. The state is on its way to achieving these goals having successfully developed tools for assessing the quality of early learning and development programs, assessing child development, delivering a program for improving workforce credentials, piloting and ready to implement a kindergarten readiness tool and creating data bases to house all the above data. All consortia have agreed to continue to operate or develop a Quality Rating and Implementation Plan with goals of program quality, improved outcomes, workforce and closing the readiness gap. The state plan appears reasonable and achievable and is ambitious based upon the number of children to be served and the funding that has been allocated in the budget to the Consortia to achieve the plan. Eighty five million of the 99 million requested will go directly to the 16 Consortia over the four year grant period. There are no benchmarks or targets at the Consortia level. The fact that the plan is a state plan, it does not provide clear direction to the Consortia for developing benchmarks or targets. The applicant has chosen C1 and C3 in the Focused Investment Area. C1 will build on the success of the work that the state has done in the development of the Foundations (Standards) which are aligned with the preschool curriculum frameworks, the observation tools for assessing children's development and professional development programs for early childhood educators. The next step is to help local communities implement the Foundations and the aligned tools. In choosing C3, the state will build upon a strong infrastructure such as integrated health promotion tools and address health, behavioral and developmental needs of high needs children to improve school readiness. Consortia members will develop strategies to conduct developmental screenings and put health teaching into the educational domains. In choosing D.2, the state plans to build on the progress it has made in aligning preservice and in-service trainings with the Foundations by expanding the number and alignment of ECE courses offered through the community college system, creating learning communities to support staff to complete their degrees and train mentors on the program administration and business administration scales. In choosing E 1, the state plans to pilot and then implement a DRDP-SR, building upon the DRDP for Infants and Toddlers and Preschool children, which is an observation tool that will be used to measure kindergarten readiness. The state will also modify the CALPADS to accommodate this new data. These selected criterion will achieve the goals because the activities identified under each criterion builds upon the work that the state has accomplished in creating and implementing the building blocks of standards, assessments, professional development and a data system that are aligned to create a high quality system.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State | 10 | 9 |

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

A.3. The state's proposed governance structure builds upon a structure that fosters collaboration and governance at the County and State levels and will continue to facilitate interagency collaborations. For example, the First 5 California and the California Department of Education have several collaborative efforts with joint programs such as teacher competencies and CARES/CARES/Plus. State agencies will be members of the State Advisory committee on Early Childhood Education whose responsibilities will be to make policy recommendations that will facilitate interagency coordination. The second body, the Early Learning Challenge Integrated Action Team will be responsible for the coordination at the implementation level. The Regional Leadership Consortia made up of LEA, First 5 and other key ECE stakeholders will work directly with the ELC Integrated Action Team. Attached are detailed MOU's from participating state agencies that include commitments to carry out the state plan and individualized scopes of work, building on existing school readiness initiatives. Over 115 strong letters of support are included from diverse people including Assembly representatives, First 5 Commissions, the National Association of Early Child Education, school districts and local citizens that describe the specific contributions their agencies will make to the state plan. The decision making process will be defined at the first meetings of the Consortia. The decision making process nor a conflict resolution process is not yet implemented thus it cannot be evaluated. The Consortia will be responsible for reaching out to early childhood educators and parents and

families as described in their detailed scope of work and is adequate. The detailed MOU's describe the terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the state plan. There is a signature from an authorized representative of each participating agency.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. | 15 | 13 |

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant, TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The applicant documents the use of over \$330,852 contributed from federal and private funding to support this quality improvement effort over the four year grant cycle. Funding will come from CCDF, First 5 California, ARRA State Advisory Council funding and private funding. The applicant does not provide enough detail on how the quality set asides in CCDF will be used other than to say that 80 million will be leveraged. One hundred and forty million dollars from the Consortia and their partners are being invested in 2011-2012, alone, for quality improvement efforts and to serve children with high needs, from local funding sources which supports a sustainable pathway. Once RTT-ELC funding is received, Consortia will work on obtaining future funding from local funding sources. Eighty-five percent of the RTT-CEL funding will go to the Regional Learning Consortia, the locally identified groups that will design and deliver the high quality Early Learning and Development Programs to children with high needs in local communities. This funding will support the specific activities provided in the Scope of Work. The budget is adequate to support the activities. The costs are reasonable and necessary and support the design and activities along with the number of children serve which will be 1,792,489. 65 %, of the children under five in California. The budget details the funding for each participating agency, state and the local Consortia. The narrative describes how the funding will be distributed. The fact that the state has contributed over eight billion to early learning programs over the past five years is a strong indicator that early learning and development programs are a priority and are sustainable. The RTT-CEL funding is designated for funding one time activities like improving the QRIS initiatives and networking local QRIS which is another sustainability strategy. It may be a challenge for the individual consortia to develop sustainability plans. An important strength of the budget is that the majority of the funds are going to the local communities through the Consortia. .

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 10 | 7 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;

(3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;

(4) Family engagement strategies;

(5) Health promotion practices; and

(6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The applicant has created a Comprehensive Quality Continuum Framework that sets measurable standards and includes common elements of child development and school readiness, teachers and training, program environment and improvement tools and resources that assures local accountability by promoting local support and ownership and a set of research based common elements to achieve a high quality plan. The framework defines high standards of program excellence that are measureable based on national recognized standards like Head Start, Common Core Standards and other scientific knowledge. The state requires the Consortia to include specific tools into their local QRIS such as CLASS for measuring effective teacher-child interactions and requires that the Consortia set differentiated quality levels based upon the measurements taken with these tools. Detailed charts show the relationship among the QRIS elements, common tools and resources, and rationale. Sixteen Regional Leadership Consortia will form a network building upon their rigorous Quality Rating and Improvement Systems(QRIS). Not all the Consortia have implemented the TQRIS, only six of the sixteen selected Consortia have implemented QRIS. The first tier, of each local system, will start at California's Title 22 licensing standards. The Department of Social Services is facilitating stakeholder work groups to address licensing standards. The licensing standards are not fully implemented. The lead agency has included a detailed list of responsibilities for the Consortia. The Consortia members have agreed to provide a mentoring role to their peers and locations across the state to assure program excellence. A detailed chart lists all the common QRIS elements, common tools and rationale for common elements which include all the tiered Program Standards. The Consortia will be required to use these Program Standards and have signed a letter of intent agreeing to utilize the Framework.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|----------|
| (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 15 | 9 |

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The Regional Leadership Consortia is committed to include all publicly funded early learning and development programs including Early Head Start and Head Start programs, programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA, Title I of the ESEA and programs receiving funds from the state's CCDF programs in the implementation of effective policies and practices to help families afford high quality programs. They do not address those programs that are privately funded. The expectations are included in their scope of work. The Consortia will ensure priority participation of programs serving children and families with high needs by having rigorous standards for entry, along with incentives. The Consortia will address policies and practices that impede families' access to services and issues like transportation. However these policies and practices have not been implemented. The state is building on other models that are successful in scaling initiatives based upon local leadership such as the First 5 Power of Preschool Program and Help Me Grow, a National Replication Head Start project. The state has demonstrated an increased enrollment of children with high needs in high quality programs such as the First 5 California Power of Preschool which is located in eight of the 16 Consortia from 9,600 in 2008 to 26,000 children in 2010. Programs receive a per space reimbursement rate. The local Consortia will set goals and benchmarks for the grant period. However they have not been implemented. The baseline data is included for all the types of early learning and development programs in the state. Targets will be set by the local Consortia as a requirement of their Action Plans along with policies and practices that impede families' access to services. The Plan is ambitious and achievable in setting a target of serving 65 % of children under five in the state of California. However it is difficult to assess this goal because of the lack of targets for the individual Consortia. The applicant did not fully respond to this selection criteria as not all of the 16 consortia programs are currently utilizing all of the Program Standards. The applicant does not include baseline and annual targets for the individual Consortia.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs | 15 | 12 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and
- (b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

The plan includes the development of common program assessments and monitoring practices. Funding is included for the Consortia to train monitors. However there is no description included to describe what the training will include, specifically training, to assure inter-rated reliability. The Quality Continuum Framework includes the use of standardized evidence-based and validated assessment tools. The Consortia will build on an existing comprehensive communication plan developed by the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee's Engagement subcommittee that offers implementation strategies and other templates that will provide a clear and easy way to help parents, providers and stakeholders to better understand licensing and the components of a quality early learning program. The Communication Plan needs to be implemented. It is not clear how this plan will reach the diverse populations to be served.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs | 20 | 16 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

- (a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);
- (b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and
- (c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

B.4. California's plan improves quality improvement through technical assistance which will provide a strength based approach that uses mentoring and coaching. Again because this plan will be locally driven the Consortia will define what TA works for their community. However, the state has several resources through the California DOE and other programs for the community to select from. Local incentives will be designed by the Consortia and required as part of their Action Plans. Teacher education is another priority to promoting high quality programs and the state is working with community colleges and state universities to expand existing courses. Consortia have agreed to prioritize subsidized ELPD programs to children with high needs. The plan proposes a variety of effective strategies to support the needs of working families who have children with high needs. In addition to providing referrals to family support services, the Consortia may also extend hours and days, provide transportation or create scholarships for families who may not qualify for other subsidies. The state's plan to increase the number of high quality ELPD in the top tiers from 1,097 children to 1,895 by 2015 is achievable. Data is included for six of the sixteen because QRIS are not available for the other ten Consortia, the plan is not fully implemented. Consortia that have implemented Tier Quality Rating and Improvement systems showing increases in the number of programs in the highest tier and their targets by 2015. Consortia will complete the table for increasing the number and percentage of high needs children who are enrolled in top tiered program once funding is secured. Currently the Consortia are serving 76,000 children with high needs. Their goal will be to serve 1.1 million out of the 1.8 million children in the counties of the participating Consortia. Since many of the activities are future oriented, a weakness is the lack of full implementation.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. | 15 | 12 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

The applicant proposes a unique plan to measure the effectiveness of their tiers by selecting one Consortia and doing an in depth study. The Consortia that will be evaluated may not represent the diversity from all the Consortia. The evaluation will validate whether the tiers in the QRIS of select consortia accurately reflect differential levels of program quality and assess the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning. The state will seek bids from independent evaluators and select one with an established track record of rigorous program evaluation and demonstrated strengths in validation studies. The evaluation will address broader research questions in addition to the validation. The state will build upon a recent Rand study that was a rigorous study of a QRIS model.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E)

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points.

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. | 30 | 30 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--</p> <p>(a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;</p> <p>(c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and</p> <p>(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

| Comments on (C)(1) |
|---|
| <p>C.1.A The applicant has developed Foundations(standards) for Infants and Toddlers and Preschool children and demonstrates sensitivity by developing the standards in many different languages so that they are linguistically and culturally appropriate based on the fact that over one third of the families are dual language learners. The standards have been developed based on comprehensive research and evidence based understanding of young children's development and are developmentally appropriate for each age group The Foundations are aligned with the kindergarten content standards and address all the essential domains of school readiness. Supporting tools such as booklets and DVDs provide illustrations for each of the 28 infant/toddler foundations. C.1.B The applicant has aligned the foundations with the kindergarten standards. for example, the Preschool foundations cover the eight domains that the kindergarten standards address including language and literacy, social emotional development, English language development and Mathematics. An alignment study results will be available in early 2012 that maps the links between the infant/toddler, preschool foundations and Common Core Standards for kindergarten. The end result of all this work will be a cohesive 0-8 system. C.1.C The applicant has produced multiple publications that include early childhood program standards and guidelines based upon researched practices to help administrators and teachers work with families to develop high quality programs. The Desired Results Developmental Profile is aligned with the standards. The content of the foundations is being infused into early childhood education programs including in-services and preservices. The state has produced over twenty publication for professional development. C.1.D The applicant is working closely with several organizations that offer professional development programs to train and support early childhood educators, making sure that the standards are integrated into the curriculum. In addition, the state realizes the important role that families play in supporting their children's learning and are developing a project to increase families' awareness of the foundations by creating multiple modes of materials which will be offered in English and Spanish and other languages. The above strategies and actions represent a high quality program.</p> |

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. | 30 | 28 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--</p> <p>(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;</p> <p>(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;</p> <p>(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and</p> <p>(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--</p> <p>(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);</p> | | |

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

C.3.1 Volume Two of the California Preschool Learning Foundations, soon to be released, integrates health and health education into the eight other domains. The foundations provide progressive levels based upon the concepts that the children can understand at their level of development. The applicant currently offers screening and plans to expand screening and follow up through local QRIS. A newly released Early Childhood Educators competencies is Observation, Screening, Assessment and Documentation. This competency ensures that health and behavioral screening are integrated with the foundations. The state uses the Harms-Cryer-Clifford Environmental Rating Scale, one example of a tool that is required in the state funded preschools. Head Start uses CLASS. Consortia partners will receive training on the use of these tools which provides evidence that the applicant is addressing the health and developmental needs, particularly with children with high needs. Since Volume Two has not been released, the health and health education standards have not been implemented.

C.3.B. The state offers several programs to increase the knowledge of early childhood educators in meeting the health needs of the children they serve. One hundred and five of the 110 community colleges offer eight core courses, one of which is Health Safety and Nutrition. The programs serve 92,000 Early childhood students a year. Family Day care workers are offered free courses in health & safety. C.3.C Promoting Healthy Eating Habits is an example of a kit that First 5 California has developed for families. Several other programs support and promote healthy eating habits. A comprehensive website developed by CDE Nutrition Services offers on line resources to teachers to improve nutrition and physical activity in child care programs. I Am Moving I Am Learning seeks to increase daily physical activity and is used in Head Start programs. C.3.D County based local screening efforts are underway. Child screening agencies have aligned with state health departments to provide screening. There are two statewide initiatives LAUNCH and Help Me Grow that focus on the identification and promotion of young children wellness through early identification, linkages to services and cross agency coordination and collaboration. Both nationally funded initiatives along with state and county programs offer opportunities for high needs children to be screened and receive follow-up services, for example 20,000 children receive annual screening and follow up services through the Power of Preschool programs. First 5 Commissions have expanded healthy Families of California to over 850,000 children. The number of children with high needs that receive well child care and are up to date is 1,149,408 or 93.2 percent. Volume Two of the Standards has not been implemented yet. The above actions/plan represent a high quality plan to identify and address children's health

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. | 40 | 37 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--</p> <p>(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;</p> <p>(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;</p> <p>(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and</p> <p>(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--</p> <p>(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and</p> <p>(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

D.2.A The applicant demonstrates evidence of commitment to investing in an early learning and development system in presenting three components of its current early childhood professional development system. This system includes a framework of ECE and Infant Toddler foundations and newly released Early Childhood Educator Competencies which describe the knowledge and skills that early childhood educators need to know to provide high quality care and education to young children and their families. Extensive work has been accomplished to align a set of eight core courses throughout 102 of 105 community colleges. Further articulation with the four year state colleges will ensure that all coursework is aligned to the competencies. The applicant plans to expand the alignment of the eight core course to include coursework on infant/toddler development working with children of special needs and program administration. Additional training materials that will contribute to the creation of a trained workforce include the California Collaboration for Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CSEFEL), the Program for Toddler Care and the Beginning Together programs. The proposal also describes a mentor program in which mentors will be trained on Program Administration and Business Administration Scales. The plan for professional development will include the use of a cohort model or learning community. All of the above educational opportunities will be customized for delivery to the local communities through the local Consortia in order to offer flexibility and be responsive to local early childhood educators needs. These plans support the goal of the state plan especially by target early learning and development programs at the local communities. D.2.B California has two initiatives designed to improve the quality of early learning program by increasing the quality, effectiveness and retention of early educators AB 212 Program Staff Retention and First 5 California Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards, CARES and CARES Plus. Over forty thousand ECE professionals have been supported through stipends, academic support and advising. Over \$150 million has been invested through AB 212. The financial commitment and the number of ECE professionals served demonstrated the applicant's serious commitment to improve the quality of ECE educators. D.2.C. The CARES Plus data base provides information on the ECE workforce including CARES Plus and AB212 participants. The California Department of Education has also implemented a new data collection methodology for participants receiving CCDF quality improvement professional development activities. The applicant documents their plans to increase the number of ECE credentialed workers by an aligned institution along with the number of ECE workers that are progressing to higher levels of credentials. Data will be available across various stakeholder agencies through a repository that is being piloted in two counties ensuring transparency and coordination. D.2.D The applicant plans to increase the number of community colleges that are aligned to the workforce standards from 31 to 104, the number of Resource and Referral agencies from 0 to 71 and Professional Development agencies from 16 by 2013 and to increase the number of ECE Educators receiving credentials from 19,916 to 21,558 by 2014. A chart shows the increase targets of early childhood educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials. For each credential, there are increases in educators progressing that cover a range of 1 to 3% each year of the grant but the narrative does not explain how they are going to meet these percentage increases or if the progression is adequate. The level of implementation is a minor weakness, as the plan is not fully implemented because the data system is only being implemented in two counties and the Workforce Standards are not in aligned to all the community colleges or R&R agencies.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. | 40 | 36 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> | | |

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

E.1. The state has developed and begun implementation of a Kindergarten Readiness Entry Assessment that meets the selection criterion. The DRDP-SP instrument was delivered to the California Department of Education in August 2011 and will be available statewide fall 2012. The model developed allows for expansion of the instrument to all the essential domains including physical development and well being, and Health and Science. The Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness(DRDP-SR) includes a valid and reliable teacher observation tool that measures a child's developmental progress as its central component and is aligned with a preschool and infant toddler DRDP and is aligned with the Foundations. The linked assessment will allow kindergarten and preschool teachers to share information. The DRDP-SR has been developed, tested for validity and reliability by the West Ed Center for Child and Family Studies and the University of California Berkeley Center for Education and Research(UC BEAR.)The tool was found to be reliable with dual language learners and children with an Individualized Education Plan.(IEP) Based upon analysis of field testing data the researchers suggested that the "floor effect" may be present for many measures. This finding resulted in a plan to develop a fifth earlier beginning level. The School Readiness Profile will be administered no later than the 2014-2015 to children entering public schools. RTC-ELC funding will allow the California Department of Education to train an early adopter group of Regional Leadership Consortia in 2012-2013. These early adopters will be supported to mentor other local education agencies during full implementation. The results will be reported and stored in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data system(CALPADS) once modifications to the system are made. With technical support from UC BEAR Center, CALPADS will accept only SRSP-SR data. The vision for this project is to have the local educational agencies send DRDP-SR data directly to CALPADS instead of using a student test vendor who then submits to CALPADS. Grant funds will be used to incentivize the Regional Leadership Consortia districts to send their data directly to CALPADS and make any program modifications. Once the interface has been created with grant funds, existing CALPADS funding will support the collection of DRDP-SR data. A short coming is that the applicant does not indicate that the Kindergarten Readiness tool will be mandated statewide, only in the Consortia.

| | Available | Score |
|--|------------|------------|
| Total Points Available for Selection Criteria | 280 | 245 |

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

| | Available | Yes/No |
|---|----------------|------------|
| Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry | 0 or 10 | Yes |

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

The applicant will have the kindergarten readiness available statewide in Fall 2012. The applicant earned a score of 70 percent on E 1.

Absolute Priority

| | Met? Yes/No |
|---|----------------|
| Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. | Yes |

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The state's application meets the Absolute Priority in presenting a high quality plan that builds upon its comprehensive state-wide Early Learning and Development system that will expand its ability to offer high quality ELDP to children with High Needs with a goal of serving 1.1 million children with high needs. The plan includes comprehensive standards for infants and toddlers and preschool children that will be integrated with kindergarten core curriculum; an extensive workforce tiered system that includes professional development career ladder, competencies for early childhood educators, screening tools for infant/toddler, preschool and the piloting of a kindergarten readiness tool that aligns with the early learning already developed profiles. The plan will target local communities by selecting 16 Regional Leadership Consortia who will create action plans to implement the plan. State agencies will contribute their expertise related to sharing assessment tools, training approaches and data collection and most importantly leadership. All state agencies that serve the Early Learning community have signed MOUs that describe a participating State Agency Plan in detail. Over 100 agencies, commissions and individuals have provided letters of support. The budget of 100,549,068 dollars supports the ambitious and achievable plan to serve up to 1.8 million children under five of which 1.1 are children with high needs in a high quality early learning and development programs.



Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge Review

Technical Review Form Page



Application # CA-5003

Peer Reviewer: [Redacted]
Lead Monitor: [Redacted]
Support Monitor: [Redacted]
Application Status: Reviewed
Date/Time: 11/16/2011 - 6:56 PM

CORE AREAS (A) and (B)

States must address in their application all of the selection criteria in the Core Areas.

A. Successful State Systems

Table with 3 columns: Core Area, Available, Score. Row 1: (A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development, 20, 18. Includes detailed text description of the core area and sub-points (a) through (d).

Scoring Rubric Used: Quality

Comments on (A)(1)

The applicant identifies a strong body of evidence that demonstrates past commitment to, and investment in, high quality, accessible Early Learning and Development programs and services. Proposition 10, passed in 1998, funded the creation of First 5 California, a state agency focused on early learning and development services for children from birth to age 5 that has disbursed over \$650 million annually. SB 1381, passed in 2010, established the state's transitional kindergarten for 4-year-olds. The applicant identified key findings from the 2006 RAND California Preschool Study that provide insight and documents the need for academic achievement among socioeconomically disadvantaged groups in the state, including Latinos, African-Americans, English language learners, those whose parents have less than a postsecondary education, and those with low family income. The applicant has existing Commissions in 58 counties and one state-level First 5 Commission that began in 1998 with the passage of Proposition 10 and the First 5 California initiative. These Commissions have worked collaboratively with local systems and agencies to create support and services needed for children ages birth to 5. The applicant proposes to serve 1.8 million children under age 5, with 60% being English language learners and 49% being children in low income families. This represents 8.4% of all children under age 5 in the United States. The applicant has invested \$8.9 billion in early learning and development initiatives since 2007, including provision of one year of transitional kindergarten to 4-year-olds, state contribution and match to the Child Care and Development Fund, TANF spending on early learning and development programs, and First 5 California Power of Preschool. The applicant presents early learning and development legislative actions, including Bill 212, First 5 California's Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Education Standards (CARES), development of infant/toddler and preschool learning standards, and creation of statewide Early Educator Competencies, that demonstrate a commitment and focus on early learning and development standards and the development of Early Childhood Educators. In the last five years, California has increased enrollment in state funded preschools by 14%, increased the number of children with high needs participating in First 5 California's Power of Preschool program by 70%, increased the number of children with high needs participating in Title I funded programs by 12%, and added 5,729 Early Head Start slots in 2010 with stimulus funds. Data presented in Table (A)(1)-5 documents the consistent growth in enrollment for state-funded preschool, programs funded under Title I of ESEA, and First 5

California's Power of Preschool. These data provide evidence of the state's history and efforts to increase the number of children with high needs participating in early learning and development programs. The state established a Quality Improvement System Committee in 2008 which created a plan to design and implement a Quality Improvement System. The plan built upon significant efforts already enacted and the local and county levels, and was submitted to the Legislature and Governor in 2010. This allows the applicant to be well-poised to further develop initiatives to implement the plan for a Quality Improvement System. The applicant has already developed statewide standards for infants and toddlers that describe what children should know and be able to do in the social-emotional, language, cognitive, and perceptual/motor domains. The first preschool standards were published in 2008, and they addressed social-emotional, language/literacy, English-language and math domains. The second volume of preschool standards will soon be released and focuses on visual and performing arts, physical development and health. The state anticipates a third volume to be released by summer 2012 to address history/social science and science. The preschool standards compliment the Kindergarten Common Core Standards. These accomplishments demonstrate the state's accomplishments in addressing early learning and development standards. The state currently uses a valid and reliable developmental observation instrument in all state-funded programs serving children from birth through age 12. The instrument is aligned with the state's early learning and development standards as well as the Head Start Outcomes. Additionally, an observational assessment has been developed for kindergarten entry, but the kindergarten entry assessment does not address physical well-being and motor development. It will be available statewide for administration in fall 2012 (Table (A)(1)-12). The state department of education maintains required data on children receiving Child Care and Development Fund subsidies, the state preschool program, and Cal-SAFE children and families. Another data system is used to compile data on observational assessments conducted by teachers in state funded child development programs and in a majority of Head Start programs. Those children served by IDEA Part B funds and California Head Start are assigned a unique identifier (Table (A)(1)-13). It is not clear how these assessment data are analyzed, disseminated and used to inform instruction. The applicant provided evidence and information to document its current status in all the key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system as required in (A)(1d).

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (A)(2) Articulating the State's rationale for its early learning and development reform agenda and goals. | 20 | 17 |

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

- (a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;
- (b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and
- (c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(2)

The applicant proposes to improve school readiness for children with high needs by focusing its efforts on one-time investments, sustainable beyond the grant, by supporting sixteen (16) regional leadership consortia. The consortia will focus on development and/or implementation of a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) based on the state's early learning and development standards that encourages regional assessment, goal setting, and progress monitoring with strong local commitment. The state department of education will offer professional development and online materials to support workforce development and a training of trainers for the local consortia groups. The state has identified measurable and quantifiable goals and targets in the areas of program quality, improved outcomes, workforce development, and closing of the readiness gap. Key goals include use of a validated observational assessment tool and school readiness instrument, development of professional growth plans for teachers, use of the Environmental Rating Scale and provision of needed services and treatment as revealed by screenings (Narrative Table A-2). California identified Selection Criteria (C)(1) because the state already has well-developed early learning and development standards for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. The focus will be on helping local programs implement the standards and utilize available resources for meaningful program improvement. The local consortia will use the standards and an aligned sets of assessment tools. The state department of education has also identified specific activities it plans to accomplish in relation to Selection Criteria (C)(1), such as integration of the standards into early childhood curricula at two- and four-year colleges and provision of guides for the section of the standards related to English-language development in multiple languages for parents of preschool English learners. California selected (C)(3) and provided a strong, well-documented rationale for focusing on children from low-income families, health and wellness, and particularly social-emotional health. The applicant cited existing infrastructures and efforts that can support this particular endeavor. California selected (D)(2) and provided a clear rationale for its decision to focus on improving the knowledge, skills, and abilities of early childhood educators through expanded course options at the community college level, development of web-based training resources, and a "train the trainer" model for mentors on the Program Administration Scale (PAS) and Business Administration Scale (BAS). The applicant selected criterion (E)(1) and presents a clear rationale for implementation of a school readiness assessment for all entering kindergarten students. Data could be entered into the existing state data system with some modifications to the system supported by requested grant funds. The applicant proposed a one-time strategy that focuses primarily on

infusing supports and resources for the local consortia and expansion of existing initiatives. Explanation is given to support the one-time strategy based on current financial constraints within the state. The applicant identifies specific outcomes, such as creating the interface to allow proposed data collection on the new readiness assessment, to be entered into the existing state database. This one-time investment will result in a more comprehensive data collection system that can then be maintained and further developed without large infusion of capital. The overall plan is effective in that the majority of financial resources are directed to the regional consortia. Of concern, however, is the very thing that the applicant poses a strength. This concern is the flexibility proposed to allow each regional consortium to develop its own unique action plan. While this does allow for localized responses and community stakeholders to be involved, it makes it difficult to determine if the "high quality" plan in terms of goals and targets is something that can be accomplished, particularly given the fact that the outside evaluator and approach must still be determined. The consortium model allows for local stakeholders and community engagement, but the applicant does not clearly identify how assessments and communication between consortia members and the state level leadership would be managed to produce an effective statewide reform agenda. The state does not provide clear direction on outcomes and there are no benchmarks or targets at the individual consortium level.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(3) Aligning and coordinating early learning and development across the State | 10 | 8 |

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children's cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State's Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (e.g., business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (e.g., parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (A)(3)

The applicant has existing Commissions in 58 counties and one state-level First 5 Commission that began in 1998 with the passage of Proposition 10 and the First 5 California initiative. These Commissions have worked collaboratively with local systems and agencies to create support and services needed for children ages birth to 5. This existing structure should facilitate organizational structure and management of the grant. The consolidation of the state preschool, prekindergarten family literacy, and general child care and development program into one unit in 2008 increased the efficiency and effectiveness of the state's early learning system and allowed an additional 19,000 children to be served by the state preschool children and have greater access to full-day services designed for working families. This existing structure should facilitate organization and management of the grant. The applicant identifies the roles of the sixteen (16) local consortia related to the major focus areas of local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) with common assessments, program quality and improvement, evaluation and reporting, convening responsibilities and strengthening partnership across agencies, and mentoring other communities. The California Department of Education will serve as the lead agency and the sixteen (16) local consortia will be required to submit semi-annual and annual reports of progress on their Action Plans to the lead agency and their consortia members. The California Department of Education proposes hiring two salaried employees to manage and coordinate the RTT-ELC funds and initiatives. Given the existing structures and the staffing in place, this staffing should be sufficient since the majority of the proposed plan is dependent on implementation by regional consortium stakeholders. Each local consortium is charged with bringing together early learning and development organizations in the region to improve the quality of early learning. Organizations are identified as including county office of education, the First 5 County Commission, local institutions of higher education, the local Child Care Planning Council, local R&R agencies, Early Head Start and Head Start, child development programs, migrant child care programs, alternative payment programs, tribal child care, county Health and Human Services, and non-profit agencies. The applicant does not delineate how each local consortium should strive to accomplish this goal, but leaves that to the local consortia to determine. This is some cause for concern since the local effectiveness is dependent on the skills and commitment of individual stakeholders in each of the regional consortia and their ability to interface with a number of community agencies, entities, and individuals. The applicant proposes two distinct groups for governance. The State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (SAC) will be comprised of the current California Head Start State Collaborative Office Advisory Committee, and will make policy recommendations by key decision-makers from participating state agencies. The Early Learning Challenge Integrated Action Team would actively coordinate and implement the proposed key activities and initiatives and would be comprised of representatives from the state department of education and the regional leadership consortia. While the Early Learning Challenge Integrated Action Team seems well positioned and staffed for its implementation focus, it is not clear if the SAC has enough broad-based support and informed participants beyond the Head Start personnel involved to make policy recommendations for the entire state. The applicant proposes creation of a Race to the Top Implementation Team as part of its Child Development Division to assure federal reporting requirements are met, to support the work of the governing groups, and to contract with and support the statewide evaluator and the Early Learning Challenge Professional Learning Collaborative. Organizational chart clearly provides a visual depiction of the organization between existing entities and proposed new governance groups. California submitted 115 letters representing support from a wide range of agencies, including California Congress members, Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), private foundations, and business leaders and organizations across the state. Letters of support are provided from agencies and groups representing the varied geographic regions of the state and the ethnic and socio-economic diversity of the state. The letters demonstrate a strong commitment to the plan's priorities and the applicant's plan for governance and implementation. Table (A)(3)-1 and (A)(3)-2 provide a listing of all participating state agencies and intermediary organizations and local early learning councils that will participate in the proposed grant activity. Each has provided a letter of support that is included in the appendices. The applicant provides letters of support and memoranda of understanding in the appendices for all participating agencies. Letters of support represent a wide variety of entities, including legislators, private foundations, and existing agencies and collaboratives, and demonstrate strong support for the state's proposal and plans for the requested funding and implementation. Noted weaknesses of the applicant's response to this criteria are: status of implementation, which was evaluated as partially implemented and the lack of specificity or information provided concerning the proposed or current method and process for making different types of decisions (e.g., policy, operational) and resolving disputes among the regional consortia.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (A)(4) Developing a budget to implement and sustain the work of this grant. | 15 | 13 |

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program, State preschool, Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

- (1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;
- (2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and
- (3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be

implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (A)(4)

The applicant has chosen to focus on development and strengthening of local initiatives by investing over 85% of all funds directly in the sixteen (16) regional leadership consortia since the state does not anticipate the capacity to fund new early learning and development initiatives given the state's current fiscal challenges. The budget seems adequate to support the proposed plan and the majority of the funds are directed to the 16 regional consortia where most of the proposed activities would occur. The cost for the technological work for the interface seemed rather expensive, but it does result in a long-term solution for entering kindergarten assessment data for all the state's children. It is presented as a one-time investment. The Regional Consortia and their partners, including philanthropy, are currently investing over \$140 million in fiscal year 2011-12 in local quality improvement efforts. The grant proposes leveraging approximately \$80 million of state and federal funds currently spent on CCDF quality improvement and over \$36 million spent by First 5. The applicant reports that private foundations and philanthropies contribute over \$9 million in private funds annually. Local funding sources will identify multiple local funding sources and will seek to obtain future funding commitments for regional consortia. The applicant provides detailed budget narratives for the entire grant as well as for each participating agency and the specific activities to be implemented. The applicant has elected to invest in one-time improvements that expand services and capabilities that can be sustained after grant funding ends. Upon completion of the grant period, sustainability becomes the responsibility of each of the 16 regional consortia. This might result in some sustainability challenges if specific consortia are not as well-positioned in terms of funding or leadership to continue to support the grant's initiatives at the local level. The success of the budget and sustainability rests in the local leadership with facilitation and support provided by the state.

B. High-Quality, Accountable Programs

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(1) Developing and adopting a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 10 | 7 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;
- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(1)

The applicant proposes that all participating regional consortia will ensure that their local Quality Rating and Improvement Scales adhere to a Framework (presented in Narrative Table B-2) that identifies the common TQRIS elements, as well as common assessment tools and resources. Each of the participating consortia will create a local implementation plan to set local benchmarks and tiers, identify a quality improvement process, key personnel, resources, and a timeline. Each local implementation plan will be submitted to and reviewed by the California Department of Education. All required assessments and resources in the proposed Framework are aligned with California's kindergarten learning standards, the new Kindergarten Common Core Standards, and the Head Start outcomes frameworks. Both the Common Core Standards and the Head Start Outcomes provide nationally recognized standards. While the tiers and benchmarks will be identified and set by local consortia, each must adhere to the framework established by the state department of education. The framework identifies common elements, but it does not create a statewide set of tiered program standards that meaningfully differentiate levels of quality. The framework does require that participating consortia establish differentiated

quality levels based on the measurements taken with the specific tools and assessments required by the framework. The state licensing standards are mandated as the base tier of the TQRIS for all participating local consortia, and the state licensing standards are currently being updated by the Department of Social Services. The framework is based on the legislatively created California Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee's final report, published in December 2010, which outlined a five-tier system. The applicant does not propose implementing a statewide set of tiered program standards, but rather allowing each Local Consortium to develop its own based on the statewide guidelines with common components and assessments. The applicant incorporated standards and practices from Head Start, the Educare model, and the First 5 California Power of Preschool (PoP) programs. The applicant does not currently have statewide set of tiered program standards or a statewide scale, but it does seek to address each of the required components. While allowing each local consortium to develop its own unique tiered quality rating system, the state proposes that each must meet the same common components and assessments. The applicant provides information to demonstrate the wide range of TQRIS already implemented across the consortia, with some having only two tiers and other consortia having as many as five tiers. Given the wide variation in demographics, geography, and local needs, the state makes the argument for the need for latitude in development of the quality rating systems by individual areas to reflect the specific needs of local populations, resources, and priorities. While some areas have clearly begun implementation of some level of a TQRIS, it is clear that much further development and implementation is needed state-wide.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (B)(2) Promoting participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System | 15 | 10 |

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

- (1) State-funded preschool programs;
- (2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;
- (3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;
- (4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA, and
- (5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (e.g., maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(2)

The success of the plan is heavily dependent on the ability of each of the participating sixteen (16) local consortia to increase the number of participating programs in their specific area by recruiting additional programs to join and participate in the local QRIS. Incentives and support will be determined and implemented by local consortia. The state department of education's role is one of support, technical assistance, and provision of resources. Local consortia are charged with expanding access to high quality programs to local families, especially those with children with high needs. Additionally, local consortia must increase the quality of available programs and eliminate barriers to access. These goals must be addressed in the action plans submitted by local consortia. The applicant proposes creation of an ELC Consortia Professional Learning Community as a mechanism to allow the local consortia leaders and California Department of Education to discuss and exchange successful strategies for expanding access to high quality programs. Each consortium will be required to develop an ELC Action Plan with local goals and benchmarks for the four-year grant period that includes baseline and target data for program participation, alignment and incorporation of the Framework elements, assessment tools and resources, a quality improvement process, a timeline, key personnel, the amount of local or regional resources directed to this project, and targets and goals for the local QRIS. Each consortium will target the most needy children and communities at the local level based on needs assessment data and child care licensing and Resource and Referral agencies. The applicant does not address all elements of "high quality plan," but rather seeks to take its option to allow local or regional consortia to create individual plans and make it work within the requirements of the grant. It is not clear how the efforts of the 16 regional consortia toward planning and implementation of a TQRIS system would maximize participation statewide. The applicant placed the responsibility of helping more families afford high-quality child care and maintaining the supply of high-quality care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs back on the regional consortia, but did not present a clearly-articulated statewide plan for meeting this criterion. Quantitative targets were not provided on Performance Measures (B)(2)(c). Targets will be established by the local consortia when the action plans are created and submitted. The state did not provide minimal targets that local consortia would be required to meet.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(3) Rating and monitoring Early Learning and Development Programs | 15 | 9 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(3)

The applicant will provide monitoring through state child care licensing reviews and basic health and safety checks, as well as monitoring of how grant funds are implemented. Little information is provided by the applicant concerning how trained monitors will establish inter-rater reliability and monitor consistently and effectively statewide. Each participating consortium is required to implement common program assessment and improvement tools in the Framework, but data will be gathered and reviewed using local data systems. At the county/regional level, Consortia will utilize independent raters or assessors and action plans may include plans for consortia to train personnel to conduct assessments using the Framework core tools. Participating consortia will be expected to report results to the local systems and provide results to the ELC evaluator. The applicant proposes that local consortia will identify effective and cost efficient mechanisms to increase family and public awareness. Using grant funding, the Department of Social Services will expand its website to provide licensing information to parents and publicize professional development opportunities to providers. The applicant does not specify what type of information will be available on the updated and expanded website so it is not possible to determine if this criterion is adequately addressed. Consortia can draw from an existing draft of a communication plan developed through the CAEL QIS Advisory Committee that focused on families, programs and providers, as well as stakeholders and the general public, to support their efforts to provide quality rating and licensing information to parents and the public. Responsibility seems to be placed on the regional consortia and the state applicant has not adequately addressed implementation of a means of communicating statewide quality rating and licensing information to parents.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (B)(4) Promoting access to high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs | 20 | 16 |

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (B)(4)

Statewide supports for continued improvement will include technical assistance and the California Department of Education serving as a resource hub to all participating Consortia. The participating consortia will also participate in an ELC Consortia Professional Learning Community to discuss challenges and effective solutions. The applicant did not specify how this would be accomplished. Programs that participate in the ELC initiatives will receive first priority for training and technical assistance as a reward for engaging in continuous program improvement processes. The state proposes specific support to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high quality programs that meet their needs, including wrap-around services and extended school days. Local consortia will be responsible for developing and implementing incentives and supports that encourage and reward programs for improving quality. At the state level, the ELC Integrated Action Team will work to leverage state funds with federal dollars to support increased access to working families who need full day, quality care. At the local level, the Consortia will address policies, linkages and access to family support services, as well as other local issues such as program intake and eligibility forms to address the needs of working families who need full day, quality care. Performance measure data were listed for local tiered QRIS. One consortium has 5 tiers, four have 4 tiers, one has 3 tiers, and two have 2 tiers. These data are presented in Performance Measure Table (B)(4)(c)(1). Performance measure data were not provided by (B)(4)(c)(2). Lack of specificity for local consortia data makes it difficult to determine if targets are ambitious or achievable.

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (B)(5) Validating the effectiveness of the State Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. | 15 | 12 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality**

Comments on (B)(5)

The applicant proposes that a bid process be used to select an independent evaluator to study local TORIS implementation in a subset of Consortia proposed by the evaluator. No explanation is provided by the applicant regarding why a subset of Consortia would be selected or how the subset would be identified. Given that only 16 consortia are participating, the rationale for only selecting particular consortia for in-depth assessment is not explained. The evaluation bids will propose evaluation designs to address the research questions identified in the grant. The applicant identified additional research questions that could be addressed by the evaluator that would be finalized with the State Advisory Council and Consortia leaders. Data collected during a recent Virtual Pilot study conducted by RAND might inform or guide data collection and research measures and design. The evaluation design is to be determined by the outside contractor or evaluator in consultation with the state so assessing the appropriateness of the design and measures of progress is difficult to determine given that little to no implementation of an evaluation has yet occurred. It is difficult to evaluate the extent to which the State has created a High-Quality Plan given the limited information provided and the proposal that an outside evaluator will be identified. Criterion (a) and (b) are addressed by the applicant, but little specific information can be provided given that an external evaluator or plan is not presented.

Focused Investment Areas (C), (D), and (E)

Each State must address in its application--

- (1) Two or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (C);*
- (2) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D); and*
- (3) One or more of the selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E)*

The total available points for each Focused Investment Area will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address in that area, so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points

C. Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children

The total available points that an applicant may receive for selection criteria (C)(1) through (C)(4) is 60. The 60 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address all four selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 15 points. If the applicant chooses to address two selection criteria, each criterion will be worth up to 30 points.

The applicant must address at least two of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (C), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|--|-----------|-------|
| (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards. | 30 | 30 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and
- (d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(1)

California has created infant/toddler and preschool standards that are aligned with resources, program guidelines, assessments, curricular framework, professional development, and targeted support. The standards address the major developmental domains and are used statewide in all state-funded and most Head Start programs. The infant/toddler and preschool standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group and they address all Essential Domains of School Readiness. These standards align with the kindergarten content standards as well as the Common Core Standards for Kindergarten across all domains. The state has completed a mapping to align the standards with kindergarten state standards as well as Common Core Standards for Kindergarten. The state has an observational assessment for kindergarten students, the DRDP-SR, which is aligned with the state standards for preschool, kindergarten and Common Core. The state has incorporated the Early Learning and Development Standards in program standards for infants, toddlers, and prekindergarten, a companion curriculum framework, the DRDP assessment instrument created by California. Additional efforts include the Faculty Initiative Project to incorporate standards into two- and four-year college courses. A variety of professional development resources and activities related to the standards are available, often through interagency collaborative efforts. The state currently offers supports for professional development related to standards through a variety of programs, including the Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC), California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), and Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards Plus (CARES Plus). A current statewide project funded by the State Advisory Council ARRA grant is focused on increasing parental awareness and understanding of the Early Learning and Development standards, including an online, parent-friendly version of the standards and guides to high quality early learning in multiple languages.

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness. | 30 | 28 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

- (a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;
- (b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;
- (c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and
- (d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--
 - (1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);
 - (2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and
 - (3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (C)(3)

The applicant has infused health into its Early Learning and Development standards, curriculum frameworks, Desired Results system (assessments), professional development, and in the local Quality Rating and Improvement Systems. Of particular focus is children's social-emotional health and development. Health and behavioral screening and follow-up already occur in Head Start, Early Head Start, and Power of Preschool program standards. Additionally, the state's Early Childhood Educator Competencies address observation, screening, assessment, and documentation, as well as relationships, interactions and guidance, and health, safety and nutrition. Screening and related follow-up for health are already part of California's System and will be more widely implemented through the local QRIS which must align with the state system. Use of the Environment Rating Scales and the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) will further integrate the health program standards into participating early learning and development programs. Programs must also meet licensing standards as a requirement of the local QRIS and to reinforce basic immunizations, health and safety trainings, and health screenings for children at program entry. The applicant has a statewide curriculum alignment project occurring across 102 of the 105 community colleges with child development and early childhood education programs to align 8 core courses, one of which is titled Health, Safety and Nutrition. The California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) will begin broader training on the I am Moving I am Learning (IML) program to address childhood obesity. The program is currently offered to Head Start educators, but CPIN training will make this program available to other programs beyond Head Start. The California Department of Education has developed a comprehensive website for early childhood professionals that offers online courses and resources related to children's nutrition and physical activity to provide support on an ongoing basis. California provides a number of other state initiatives and supports related to health and nutrition to provide resources to early childhood educators, including California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL), the California Inclusion and Behavior Consultation Network (CIBC), Family Child Care at Its Best (FCCIB), and a DVD on relationships, resilience, and readiness which California's Home Visiting Program is willing to use as the anchor for developing a curriculum and training module for home visitors and Consortia participants. The applicant identifies approaches for promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, and expanding physical activity, such as the Team California for Healthy Kids (TCHK) program created by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction which provide training through Child Care Resource and Referral Network, train the trainer opportunities through the California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), and training for family child care providers through the Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP). Additional efforts through First 5 California, CCHP, and child care licensing are also delineated. Screenings are already required as a part of California's Early Learning and Development System, Head Start, Early Head Start, and Power of Preschool (PoP) program standards. The applicant cites several county-based screening efforts funded by First 5 Commissions that focus on screening, assessment, referral and treatment activities. Additionally, California Project LAUNCH (funded by a five year grant from SAMHSA and administered by the California Department of Public Health) and Help Me Grow National Replication Project (California is one of 13 participating states; 4 counties are implementing, including Orange, Alameda, Fresno, and Los Angeles) are two state-level initiatives that focus on early identification, linkages to services and cross-agency coordination and collaboration. The California Statewide Screening Collaborative (CSSC) is a partnership between First 5 California and California Department of Public Health/Maternal, Child & Adolescent Health for the purpose of increasing the number of children with high needs who are screened and to increase capacity to promote and deliver health services to children from birth to age five. Children have access to well-child care through Medi-Cal, the state's child health insurance program, as well as low-cost insurance options through Healthy Families for children who do not qualify for Medi-Cal. Healthy Families is funded for over 850,000 children by First 5 California and county First 5 Commissions. Children who do not meet citizenship or immigration rules and are not eligible for participation in Healthy Families are often supported by county-based child insurance initiatives through the First 5 Commissions. A school health center is currently being developed at a preschool site inside an elementary school in the Oakland Unified School District as a collaborative project that will focus on incorporating mental health consultation in the school clinic setting. With family consent, results of screenings will be forwarded to the child's primary care physician along with any referrals made. Partnerships will be developed. A plan for accomplishing this objective is not provided. California does not collect data on screening, referrals or ongoing health care, and while a screening mandate is required for state-funded early learning programs and local QRIS initiatives, the applicant does not propose how such data in Performance Measure (C)(3)(d) might be systematically collected and analyzed for the state. Volume 2 of the state's preschool foundations will address health foundations, but is not yet released.

D. A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce

The total points that a State may earn for selection criteria (D)(1) and (D)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-------|
| (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities. | 40 | 36 |

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to improve the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs, with the goal of improving child outcomes by--

(a) Providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities that are aligned with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework;

(b) Implementing policies and incentives (e.g., scholarships, compensation and wage supplements, tiered reimbursement rates, other financial incentives, management opportunities) that promote professional improvement and career advancement along an articulated career pathway that is aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and that are designed to increase retention;

(c) Publicly reporting aggregated data on Early Childhood Educator development, advancement, and retention; and

(d) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for--

(1) Increasing the number of postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the number of Early Childhood Educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and

(2) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (D)(2)

The state created a list of Early Childhood Educator Competencies organized into twelve overlapping areas in a collaborative effort which were formally released in July 2011. The Competencies are aligned with the state's infant/toddler and preschool early learning and development standards. California developed eight core classes in early childhood education and child development that serve as a foundational core, and 102 of the 105 community colleges in California that offer Child Development programs have aligned with or have indicated their intent to align with this Core 8 Framework. These lower division Core 8 courses have also been accepted as the required major coursework for the new California Early Childhood Education Transfer Degree as delineated in Senate Bill 1440 in the 2010 legislative session to streamline mobility, alignment, and transfer among the community colleges. The state has initiated a Competencies Integration Project funded by the California State Advisory Council's ARRA funds, to assist community college and California State University faculty with integration of the Competencies in coursework and curriculum, and the project also seeks to identify competency training gaps. The applicant proposes expanding the Core 8 community college courses to include coursework on infants and toddlers, working with children with special needs, and program administration if the grant funds are secured. The applicant proposes creation of resources to assist programs in the local TQRIS with program quality improvement, including web-based modules and other electronic resources. Additionally, the applicant proposes use of ELC grant funds to train center director mentors on the Program Administration Scale (BAS) and family child care center mentors on the Business Administration Scale (BAS). A Cohort Model or learning community to provide targeted supports for early childhood professionals is also proposed that would include academic advising, career and professional advising, access to courses and trainings, individual coaching, child care, tutoring, and financial assistance. The Cohort Model would be designed by each local consortium to be responsive to the needs of the local early childhood workforce. Participants in the Cohort Model would be required to mentor new participants for at least one year after their participation is complete to create a mentor/mentee system, though very little information is provided regarding how the mentoring role would be accomplished. The California Department of Education's AB 212 Child Development Staff Retention Program was passed by the legislature in 2000, and has invested over \$150 million since fiscal year 2001/02 in child development staff retention activities for employees who work directly with children in state-subsidized Title 5 child development programs. AB 212 provides increased staff compensation and benefits, tutoring and mentoring, financial aid, career counseling, professional staff development, and access to higher education. The CARES Plus programs which is funded through fiscal year 2013/14 offers incentives, training, and high education access to early childhood educators in 34 participating counties. First 5 California has invested approximately \$72.5 million to fund the program through fiscal year 2013/14. The CARES Plus program is funded by First 5 California and Proposition 10 funding. The CARES Plus program offers CLASS observation training and assessment services, and the MyTeachingPartner coaching model is being piloted in 12 counties. California uses CCDF funds and quality improvement funds to assist early learning professionals with the cost of applying for the California Child Development Permit, fingerprinting fees, and other expenses. There is also support through the Career Incentive Grant program to assist early childhood professional pursuing BA and Masters of Administration (MA) degrees by reimbursing the cost of tuition, books, and other required fees. The state currently maintains a database of all AB 212 and CARES Plus participants. Los Angeles and San Francisco counties are jointly developing a coordinated workforce Registry pilot aligned with their local QRIS to gather and store workforce data regarding professional development and formal education and training for participating programs. It is not clear whether this database is available to the public or simply using a data entry and collection system for the state's internal use. The plan is not yet fully implemented, and is only being piloted in two of the state's counties. Participants receiving CCDF quality improvement professional development are also required to report information to the California Department of Education on a confidential reporting form. This serves as another point of data collection for the state. The applicant proposes a high-quality plan to continue its collaboration with postsecondary institutions and professional development providers, though all are already aligned with the framework. The state does not specifically identify how it plans to increase the number of early childhood educators who receive credentials from postsecondary institutions. While the applicant states its commitment to improving the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials aligned with the Framework, it is not clear how these goals would be achieved other than support of the regional consortia. The state demonstrates a commitment to

increasing the number of early childhood educators, but does not identify a specific strategy or procedure for accomplishing this goal. Data presented in Performance Measures (D)(2)(d)(2) indicate only a minimal percentage increase in Credential Type I. Additional information is needed regarding the credentialing levels referenced in the table to determine if the targets are ambitious yet achievable. The state has demonstrated a strong commitment to improving the effectiveness and retention of Early Childhood Educators who work with Children with High Needs. Examples of successful initiatives include The Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Competencies project, a joint project of the Department of Education and First 5 California, along with a team from the community colleges and the state universities, to create a cohesive plan for those involved in the preparation and professional development of the state's early childhood educators. The Competencies are aligned with the state's preschool and infant/toddler standards, and provide an evidence-based and research-supported foundation to build further supports. Points were deducted for implementation since many of the initiatives are proposed by the applicant, but have not yet been piloted or begun. Some of these, however, such as further development and alignment of community college courses and training on the infant/toddler and preschool standards should strengthen the knowledge of the workforce through professional development opportunities.

E. Measuring Outcomes and Progress

The total points an applicant may earn for selection criteria (E)(1) and (E)(2) is 40. The 40 points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria under this Focused Investment Area, each criterion will be worth up to 20 points. If the applicant chooses to address one selection criterion, the criterion will be worth up to 40 points.

The applicant must address at least one of the selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E), which are as follows:

| | Available | Score |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| (E)(1) Understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry. | 40 | 33 |
| <p>The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--</p> <p>(a) Is aligned with the State's Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;</p> <p>(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;</p> <p>(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and</p> <p>(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).</p> | | |

Scoring Rubric Used: **Quality and Implementation**

Comments on (E)(1)

In February 2011, the applicant contracted with WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies (WestEd CCFS) and University of California-Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research Center (UC BEAR Center) to develop and test the Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness (DRDP-SR) assessment in a process that paralleled the process used for the preschool version. The DRDP-SR is designed for use by kindergarten teachers to assess children's level of readiness using an observational assessment. The DRDP-SR was developed and piloted in Spring 2010, field tested in 16 counties to calibrate the scale and establish reliability and validity in Fall 2010, and the preliminary version and scale of measurement was produced by August 2011. A finalized version of the DRDP-SR instrument is expected by August 2012. The applicant proposes to train an early adopter group of Regional Leadership Consortia to implement the DRDP-SR during the 2012-13 school year. Training will begin in Spring 2012, with local LEAs in the Consortia having priority access to training as well as early adopters. A software application, DRDPtech, is being developed to facilitate the input of readiness data and the production of individual, classroom, and site developmental profiles. The DRDPtech will be available to all LEAs in the state. All Consortia will be required to use the DRDP-SR in their local transitional kindergarten and kindergarten programs during the life of the grant. Effective school year 2012-13, California will modify the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) to accommodate reporting of the DRDP-SR results. Reporting will provide data about class groups as well as individual children. The goal is for LEAs to voluntarily submit their DRDP-SR data directly into the CALPADS system from their school sites. The applicant proposes that CALPADS will be fully functional and able to receive DRDP-SR data from any LEA on a voluntary basis starting school year 2014-15. RTT-ELC funds will be used to provide incentives to regional consortia to report DRDP-SR results into CALPADS and to make programming adjustments for the interface with the existing CALPADS system. The applicant reports that the DRDP-SR was found reliable in field testing and pilots for

children who are dual-language learners and children with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The instrument will be finalized in August 2012 for voluntary implementation by early adopters in 2012-13. While a phased implementation is proposed, the applicant does not explicitly state how the DRDP-SR would be implemented as a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment. The applicant only states that consortia will be expected to use the DRDP-SR during the life of the grant. It is not clear how the state has planned to move the DRDP-SR to broader statewide implementation. Existing funding for CALPADS has allowed the state to create a database that the applicant proposes to adapt for submission and maintenance of DRDP-SR data. It is a concern that the LEAs will voluntarily submit data rather than being required to submit data to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System. The applicant does not propose use of additional funds to support the one-time investments proposed in the grant application, and attributes this to the state's limited resources given its current budget challenges. The state has demonstrated its ability to create the DRDP to assess preschool children's developmental progress, and now proposes to further its piloting and calibration of the DRDP-SR as a kindergarten entry assessment modeled after the successful approaches used with the preschool instrument. The DRDP-SR is aligned with the state's standards, and is valid, reliable and appropriate based on feedback from content experts, WestEd, and a pilot study in spring 2010 in Los Angeles County. The applicant only assures implementation on a voluntary basis by school year 2014-15, with implementation by a voluntary group of early adopters in school year 2012-13. These dates for early adopters seem to conflict with the proposed training dates on the instrument for spring 2012. An additional concern is the applicant's proposal that allows LEAs to voluntarily submit data. It is not explicitly stated that the assessment will be administered to all children entering public school kindergarten by school year 2014-15 and it is not clearly presented that all districts will report to a statewide longitudinal data system. Very little information is provided concerning the adaptations needed for CALPADS to accept the DRDP-SR data. While the state has a strong history of success with the DRDP, some of the implementation plan, as well as presentation of how data would be reported is not addressed by the applicant. Benchmarks for implementation of the common statewide kindergarten assessment are not clearly presented.

| | Available | Score |
|--|------------|------------|
| Total Points Available for Selection Criteria | 280 | 237 |

Priorities

Competitive Preference Priorities

Priorities

| | Available | Yes/No |
|---|----------------|------------|
| Competitive Preference Priority 3: Understanding the Status of Children's Learning and Development at Kindergarten Entry | 0 or 10 | Yes |

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

- (a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Status Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or
- (b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

Comments on (P)(3)

The applicant does address selection criterion (E)(1) and earned at least 70% of points available for that criterion.

Absolute Priority

| | Met? Yes/No |
|---|----------------|
| Absolute Priority - Promoting School Readiness for Children with High Needs. | Yes |

To meet this priority, the State's application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State's application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Comments on Absolute Priority

The state proposes to support the work of 16 regional consortia as they develop a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) that aligns with the statewide TQRIS which the applicant refers to as a "framework." Each of the required criteria for the absolute priority are addressed in the proposal. The regional consortia model is challenging given the criteria that must be addressed, but the state makes a solid argument that the model would improve quality of programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies. The framework to which all consortia would be required to adhere serves as the guidance for each consortium's TQRIS, in that, it assures the necessary and minimal elements are addressed. The state made a strong case for its focused investment areas based on the demographics and history presented by the applicant.