

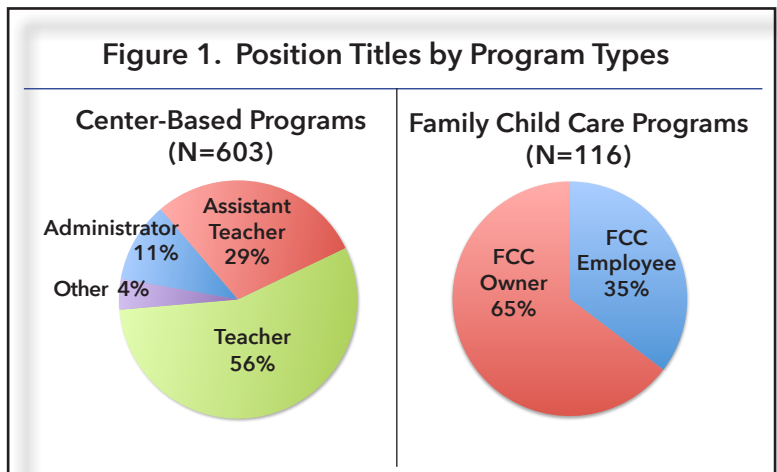
# CARES Plus Year 3 Highlights

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

The Santa Clara CARES Plus Program provides financial awards to early educators based on their educational achievement and the completion of professional development activities. These financial stipends have proven to be significant incentives to early educators towards furthering their education and enhancing their professional development. This report provides highlights from the third year of CARES Plus in Santa Clara County. Professional development activities and the pursuit of college degrees are critical components to providing high-quality care to children. Increasing scientific evidence shows that early educators can significantly influence early childhood learning<sup>1</sup>. When early educators are well educated, the children they teach are more successful in school and life<sup>2</sup>. Not only are well-educated early educators a key component to providing high-quality care to children, but better-educated teachers contribute to professionalizing the early education field.

The CARES program is funded through several sources, each with its own conditions on program requirements and use of funds. This often requires local CARES programs to adjust their design in order to receive the funds. A notable change to the CARES Plus program during Year 3 was the decision to fund the Training Component with only local funds. This change allowed CARES Plus to offer more trainings to participants completing this component.

A total of 719 participants received a stipend in Year 3 of CARES Plus program implementation. There were no major shifts in the demographics of the participants from all three years<sup>3</sup>. Although there was a decline in the total number of recipients from Year 2, the percentage of participants from family child care programs remained about the same as last year, 16% versus 17% of recipients respectively.



The pie chart shows the position titles of the CARES Plus recipients in Year 3 by program types. The majority of participants in both center-based and family child care programs are teachers and family child care owners who are responsible for the daily curriculum in the classroom.

1 Shonkoff, J, Phillips, D., Eds (2000). From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The science of early childhood development. National Research Council Institute of Medicine Board on Children, Youth, and Families. National Academies of Science, National Academy Press, Washington, DC

2 Sammons, P. Elliott, K., Sylva, K., Melhuish, M, Siraj-Blachford, & Taggart, B. (2004). The impact of preschool on young children's cognitive attainments at entry to reception. British Education Research Journal, 30(5), 691-712

3 CARES Plus Year 1 Highlights, CARES Plus Year 2 Highlights: <http://www.e3institute.org/pub/htdocs/cares.html>

The bar chart to the right shows a comparison of CARES Plus from all three years listed by program components.

### Observations

#### Training Component Increase

Although the College Coursework component remained the most popular choice in all three years, participation in the Training component continues to rise—doubling from 17% to 34% from year 1 to

year 3. Early educators who choose the Core Only or MTP™ components can only complete that component once, and then they must choose from the Training or Coursework component for the subsequent year. The majority of these participants move to the Training component, which has led to that component's growth over the past three years.

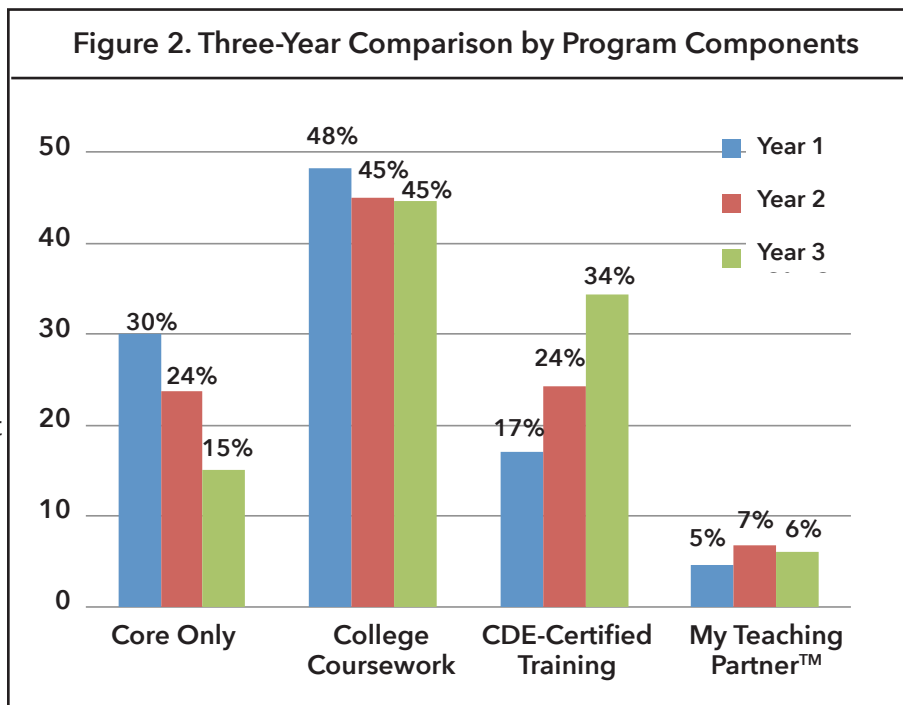


Figure 3. Year 3 Participants' Education Level by Program Components

	Core Only	College Coursework	CDE-Certified Training	My Teaching Partner™
Some College or less	47%	56%	28%	37%
Associate's Degree	19%	27%	24%	16%
Bachelor's Degree	24%	14%	39%	40%
Master's or above	9%	3%	8%	7%

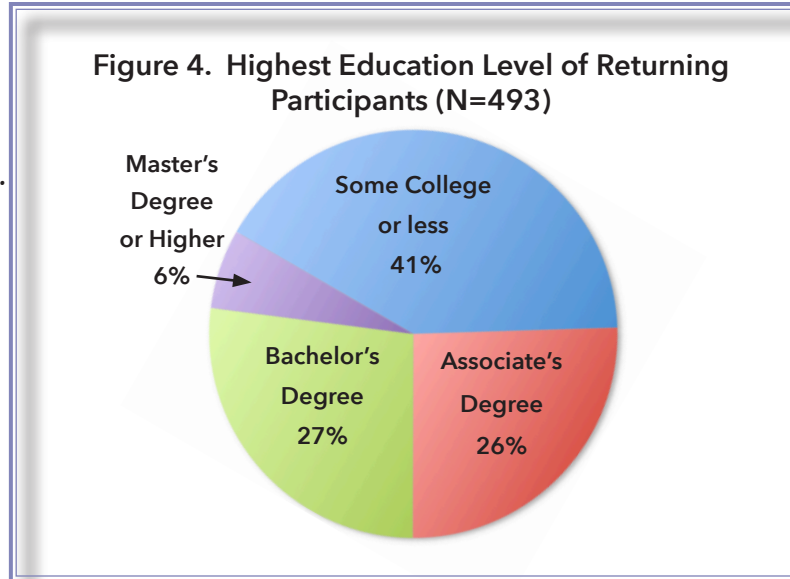
MTP™ appeals to a broad spectrum of early educators, attracting participants with varying levels of education.

*“The CARES Plus Program has greatly impacted me as a professional early childhood educator. What I appreciate most about the program is the wide range of possible workshops and topics and the diverse group of individuals who participate. I am excited to share these resources with the educators I work with in my program and school and others that I am connected with in the community.”*

— Teacher from Center-Based Program  
Who Participated in the Training Component

### High Retention

During Year 3, there were 493 returning participants from CARES Plus Year 1 and/or Year 2, which is approximately a 70% retention rate. The pie chart to the right shows the highest level of U.S. education of those returning. CARES Plus has retained participants of all levels of education with the highest percentage among those with some college or less.



### Unique Appeal of MTP™

My Teaching Partner™ offers a unique opportunity for early educators to receive direct feedback on their practice from a coach by utilizing videos taken in their own classrooms. This CARES Plus component provides early educators a personalized professional development experience that can not be achieved through a course or training.

*“ After working in the field for 20 years and participating in CARES every year since it was implemented, I became disillusioned with the CARES Plus offerings. I wished CARES would offer an option to participants with my knowledge and experience that would give new knowledge to use in my practice in significant ways or even, perhaps, knowledge I could use to mentor other CARES participants. It was suggested that I try the My Teaching Partner™ option. I am grateful that I was accepted into the MTP™ program for CARES Plus Year 3 because it was just what I needed at this time in my career.*

*The experience was both challenging and fun. I learned a great deal about myself as an educator and about the children in my care. I absolutely loved my MTP™ Coach and found the reflective component very powerful. After thinking about my coach’s comments and about the various recordings I made and reviewed, I began to look at things differently. I became much more aware of myself within my practice. This MTP™ experience motivated me in by offering just the right guidance at the right time in my career. I honestly wish I could sign up for it again and I highly recommend it to other CARES Plus participants who may be looking for even more than the training and coursework options offer. ”*

— Licensed FCC Provider Who Participated in the MTP™ Program

## Reflections

- CARES Plus participants took advantage of new online and in-person training opportunities offered during Year 3 of CARES Plus. It was an important step to offer more trainings in Year 3, since the majority of participants had taken all of the approved trainings offered in Years 1 and 2.
- Participants engaged in the Coursework component continue to struggle to complete the required minimum of six semester units within the required timeframe.
- There was a significant increase in the percentage of new CARES Plus participants who successfully completed their Core training requirements.



### Looking Ahead to CARES Plus Year 4

- First 5 California and the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education launched additional training opportunities.
- First 5 California has established a Training Approval process that will allow any training organization to apply to have their training approved for CARES Plus.
- First 5 California decided to only conduct CLASS™ observations for MyTeachingPartner™ participants rather than do a random selection with all participants.

*“ I have been a part of the CARES Plus program for 2 years and am extremely grateful that the program helps students in our field to become more professional childhood educators. CARES Plus helps to provide funding for my classes at San Jose City College, leaving me free to focus on gaining the knowledge that contributes positively to working with the children in my care.*

*This past year I learned and implemented activities that make it fun for children to understand why we choose healthy food. I am grateful for the knowledge CARES Plus has helped me gain this past year. Thank you to CARES Plus for supporting my educational journey.”*

— Assistant Teacher in Family Child Care Who Participated in the Coursework Component



CARES Plus is funded by First 5 California,  
FIRST 5 Santa Clara County,  
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