Unit 2: The California Early Learning and Development System
Key Topic 1: Getting to Know the California Early Learning and Development System

Focus Statement
Students become familiar with the California Early Learning and Development System as developed by the California Department of Education.

Getting Ready for the Unit

Unit 2 has one key topic and no motivator. It is very short and relates exclusively to Chapter 2 (pp. 29-36) in the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 1 (PCF, V1). The key topic is intended to support students in becoming familiar with the California Early Learning and Development System as developed by the California Department of Education. It is fairly straightforward, but it is important for students to understand the context for the curriculum framework and its intended use within this system. Unit 2 is not intended to provide extended work with the other components of the system. In this unit the components are briefly defined and explored as a system.

There will be opportunities to see how these components work together in Unit 7, where students are guided through using the PCF, V1 in the curriculum-planning process with a look at the role of the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1 and the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) in that process.

When describing the components of the system, it is essential to not only work with the definitions that follow but also to make sure that students know what these components are not. For example, the learning foundations are not an assessment and should not be used as such. Neither the DRDP nor the foundations should be used as curriculum, though they both have a role in curriculum planning. Helping students get working definitions of these system components will help them understand how these components are appropriately used.

Before You Start
The following exercise will work best if students have read through Chapter 2 of the PCF, V1 before coming to class. The active learning experiences are designed to
clarify and expand what is in this chapter. Students will have opportunities to briefly do a hands-on exercise, but this chapter is mostly explored through information delivery with handouts and PowerPoint slides.

**Important Note:** There is a graphic for this system on page 303 of the PCF, V1, and it contains an error. The middle box should say “Learning and Development Foundations.” A corrected graphic is included as Handout 1 with this key topic.

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**Information Delivery**

The following information and definitions are important to present to the students:

- The California Department of Education (CDE) has developed a system of programs, publications, and initiatives to support teachers in early learning and development settings in California.

- “Each component area in the system provides resources that focus on a different aspect of supporting preschool teachers and links to the resources provided in every other component of the system.” (PCF, V1, p. 30)

- A graphic has been developed to describe the system. Please see the note in “Before You Start” regarding this graphic.

- The California learning and development foundations are at the center of the system.

- The preschool curriculum framework addresses domains in the corresponding domain of the foundations and provides resources and strategies for curriculum planning.

- The Desired Results Assessment System consists of three parts:
  1. The Desired Results Developmental Profile is used to document the progress of individual children.
  2. The Desired Results Parent Survey is used to assess parent satisfaction with the early childhood program and to understand families’ strengths and needs.
  3. The Environment Rating Scale is used to assess the quality of the learning environment.
• Program guidelines and additional resources (PCF, V1, pp. 35-36) are also available in the system.

• Additionally, there are opportunities for professional development for the preparation of students in two- and four-year colleges and beyond, as well as ongoing development of current preschool teachers and staff (PCF, V1, p. 36).

The following information might be more appropriately addressed after students have done the following active learning exercise, but in any case it is essential information.

The foundations, DRDP, and curriculum framework are linked in the following way:

• The learning foundations tell us what children, with adequate support, typically learn and develop.

• The DRDP is an observational assessment that provides a structure and a tool for recording an individual child’s development and documenting progress.

• The curriculum framework provides an approach to support children’s learning as they grow and develop toward the foundations.

Note to faculty: the above definitions are taken from the PCF, V1 and from training materials for the DRDP that can be found online at this Web site:

http://www.wested.org/desiredresults/training/for_trainers.htm

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**Active Learning**

**Getting it started**
Using the corrected graphic provided as Handout 1 following this key topic, ask students to refer to it as you read through the information in the “Information Delivery” section.

**Keeping It going**
Using the handout with empty boxes, ask students to write the labels and definitions described into the empty boxes. Make sure they maintain the positions of the components of the system as they are in the CDE graphic. This handout is provided following this key topic as Handout 2.
You can also make a graphic of this on a larger scale that is visible to the whole class, such as on several sheets of chart paper or on a whiteboard.

**Taking it further**
If possible, assign students into groups of four. They could also do this in pairs if your class size is small. Ask them to designate one student in each group to the following text in Chapter 2 of the PCF, V1:

- Preschool Learning Foundations (pp. 30-31)
- Preschool Curriculum Framework (pp. 31-32)
- Desired Results Assessment System (pp. 32-34)
- Program Guidelines and Other Resources and Professional Development (pp. 35-36)

Ask students to briefly review the text and list a few things that are additional important information.

Provide an opportunity for sharing responses by topic rather than by group. This will enable students to compare responses across groups. Note any additional terms or definitions that could go into their graphic.

**Reflection**
Conclude the exercise with the following questions:

- What stood out for you in the text you read?
- What would you like to know more about?
- Where might you find more information?
- How will knowing about this affect your work now and in the future?