

**A Foreword from the Co-Director of the
Center for Child and Family Studies, WestEd**

“Preschoolers’ understanding of history and social sciences naturally derives from their expanding knowledge of the world and their place in it”

California Department of Education, 2013, p. 44

“Children have a sense of wonder and natural curiosity about objects and events in their environment. Just like scientists, they seek information and actively explore and investigate the world around them, try things out to see what happens, and confirm or adjust their expectations”

California Department of Education, 2013, p. 136

The *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3* gives guidance on how teachers can support preschoolers’ growing understanding of history and social sciences and science concepts and scientific inquiry. It focuses on experiences, environments and materials that support children’s developing sense of self, knowledge of the larger social world, and basic concepts of time and place. In addition to offering strategies for planning learning experiences in the areas of history and social sciences, Volume 3 of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework* addresses curriculum planning in the science domain. With preschool teachers’ intentional planning and guidance, children’s explorations of objects and nature can become rich opportunities to engage in scientific inquiry and deepen their understanding of objects and events in the world.

This document, the CDE/ECE Faculty Initiative Project *Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume 3*, is the latest installment of practical, user-friendly resources developed by the Faculty Initiative Project. Seeking to forge a strong link between the California Department of Education’s (CDE) early care and education quality improvement activities and higher education in California, the Faculty Initiative Project has been supporting the efforts of faculty to infuse information from the CDE’s activities into their course work. The instructional guides, which are being created collaboratively with higher education faculty, are an essential component of the Faculty Initiative Project’s work.

Higher education faculty members will readily recognize the content of the preschool curriculum framework, for many of the principles, concepts, and strategies it presents reflect what they already teach. This instructional guide is designed to meet the needs of faculty in a wide variety of situations. Following a widely used teaching and learning sequence, it offers open-ended activities that can be used in their current form or adapted. In essence, the instructional guide provides an easy-to-use, ready-to-go set of comprehensive resources, including in-class activities and handouts, that relate to all instructional levels, from an introductory class to master’s level graduate study.

My colleagues and I at WestEd greatly appreciate our collaborative partnership with the Faculty Initiative Project advisors and consultants from higher education. It is our hope that this instructional guide will help faculty foster a broad and deep understanding of early learning and development in their students—tomorrow’s early childhood educators. Together with the CDE, we look forward to continuing our work with higher education to ensure that all young children have teachers who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to provide high quality early care and education.

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