

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

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 (FIP) 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. This document, the *CDE/ECE Faculty Initiative Project Instructional Guide for the California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3*, is the latest installment of these practical, user-friendly resources.

The preschool learning foundations are at the center of the CDE's preschool learning and development system. Created by leading experts, the foundations are based on research and evidence-based information. Volume 3 provides descriptions of young children's learning and development at around 48 months of age and at around 60 months of age in the domains of history-social science and science. Important areas of learning and development during the preschool years, these domains complement others such as language and literacy and mathematics. The history-social science and science domains comprise key components of the essential domain of cognition and general knowledge as designated by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, the preschool learning foundations in the history-social science domain work hand in hand with those in the social-emotional domain. The foundations in the science domain relate directly to the *Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) for California Public Schools, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*, which were recently adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE).

Higher education faculty will easily recognize the content of the learning foundations, for it focuses on many concepts they already teach. In the history-social science domain, the foundations address, for example, the development of group participation skills, responsible conduct, a sense of fairness and respect for other people, and conflict resolution. The science foundations include children's developing to engage in observation and investigation to explore questions about objects and events in their environment. In general, the foundations identify key areas of preschool learning and development that teachers and programs intentionally support. The CDE's curriculum framework and its Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessment instrument will be aligned to the foundations. Through infusing the foundations into their course work, faculty will be able to introduce resources and tools that are intended to facilitate their students' work as early childhood educators.

This instructional guide is designed to meet the needs of faculty in a wide variety of situations. Following a broadly used teaching and learning sequence, it offers open-ended activities that can be used in their current form or adapted. In a nutshell, 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 having the opportunity to partner with the Faculty Initiative Project advisors and consultants from higher education. We are excited about this collaborative effort to create resources that are designed specifically for faculty. It is our hope that this instructional guide will contribute to the efforts of our colleagues in higher education to 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 childhood education.

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