

City College of San Francisco and San Francisco's Family Child Care Providers



Child care provider Milagros Acosta enjoying a rare quiet moment with some of her young clients



Child care provider Angela Siharath reading to some of her young clients

Working Together to Provide High Quality Child Care to San Francisco's Youngest Residents

During the past five years, **City College of San Francisco (CCSF)** has provided **30,000 hours of training to more than 1,000 San Francisco family child care providers**. The training has been delivered in **three different languages, at five locations, every day of the week, early in the day as well as late in the evening**. *“Our mission is to make high-quality training available to San Francisco’s family child care providers,”* says Stephen Rico, Department Chair of CCSF’s Child Development & Family Studies. *“Sometimes this means taking the training out to where the providers live and delivering it in their language. It also means that we work with the providers to stay on top of their training priorities. It is a lot of work, but the community’s response makes it all worthwhile.”*

Dating back to the late nineties, CCSF’s collaboration with San Francisco’s provider community was originally part of a national movement to improve the quality of child care and to help child care providers organize. With assistance from a High Quality Child Care Investment grant, CCSF hosted a series of community meetings that identified providers’ training priorities and scheduling preferences. Classes began and immediately took off, and when the grant ended CCSF had positioned itself to take the work to scale. The ensuing expansion was supported by San Francisco’s Department of Children, Youth & Their Families (DCYF) and encouraged by DCYF’s vision and interest in developing for San Francisco a highly trained and well-organized provider community.

As the menu of courses expanded, the local child care advocacy groups grew in membership and strength. A DCYF grant helped launch the local networks that connect and organize providers by neighborhood and cultural affinity. At this time, 60% of San Francisco’s providers belong to a network and three in four providers belong to The Family Child Care Association of San Francisco.

A 2003 survey of San Francisco’s family child care providers found that more than 75% of respondents had taken courses at CCSF. In other words, the provider community has come to view CCSF as a primary source of education and training. CCSF is responding to this vote of confidence by working with providers to expand the range of offerings and to prepare and position the community for new challenges such as universal pre-school. As an illustration, we presently offer 18 different one-unit courses compared to 9 in 1999.

With 1,000 providers trained, we think there is plenty of reason to celebrate. Just imagine this. You rise at 5 am every day to get started before your young clients begin arriving at 6 am. You spend the day tending to 8-9-10, or even 14 children, including a few infants who need constant attention. You teach, play, engage, change diapers, prepare meals, clean dishes, comfort those who need encouragement, and never run out of energy. Around 5 pm the first parents arrive for pick up. By 6:30 the house is finally quiet. What do you do? Fall into a comfortable chair? Not so.....you run out of the house, get into the car and drive to a three hour CCSF class on “Infant/Toddler Development.”

We cannot imagine a group of students more dedicated and committed to education. Please join CCSF in celebrating their achievements and their continuous commitment to education.