

# Overview and Calendar

## The Early Childhood Education Alliance

Convened by The California Teachers Association  
Institute for Teaching

CALIFORNIA  
TEACHERS  
ASSOCIATION



INSTITUTE for TEACHING



## Overview

We live in a world where no one knows what the next headlines might bring: Further budget cuts to education in California? Release of funds from Washington (but with what strings attached and for which programs)? New legislative propositions about approaches to early childhood education? School board and school district re-prioritizations?

How are we as teachers, parents, and community members to contribute positively in such an unsettled environment?

### Going Beyond “Classroom as Usual”

Those with the most direct, most personal connection with our youngest children – preschool teachers, instructors, parents, and others – naturally look for guidance from expert policy makers and school and union staff for addressing long-term educational issues. But in this time of flux, where can they turn to address the daily challenges they face in creating and sustaining nurturing experiences for the children under their care? Continuing to just ride the roller coaster of budget negotiations and political wrangling over educational priorities is distracting, if not discouraging.

### Strengths-Based

#### Teacher-Student-Family Driven Change

Strengths-based approaches to teacher-student-family-driven change and school improvement encourage us to reclaim our knowing, our energy, and our creativity and step forward to do more than be “counted” – pro or con – on the issues of the day. Strengths-based approaches show us ways to join together with others to form *collaborative action communities*.

***Collaborative action communities help us discover our shared strengths and begin working together to initiate positive changes in our classrooms -- today, tomorrow and the next day -- not waiting for Sacramento, Washington, or even our own Districts to come forward with funds or proposals.***

Of course, funding is important; well-considered, broad programs and initiatives are helpful; but strengths-based teacher-student-family driven change is a call to come together with our own colleagues, with the families of our children, and with others in our immediate community to make classrooms more wholesome and nurturing environments for the children, parents, grandparents, neighbors, and colleagues who enter our doorways.

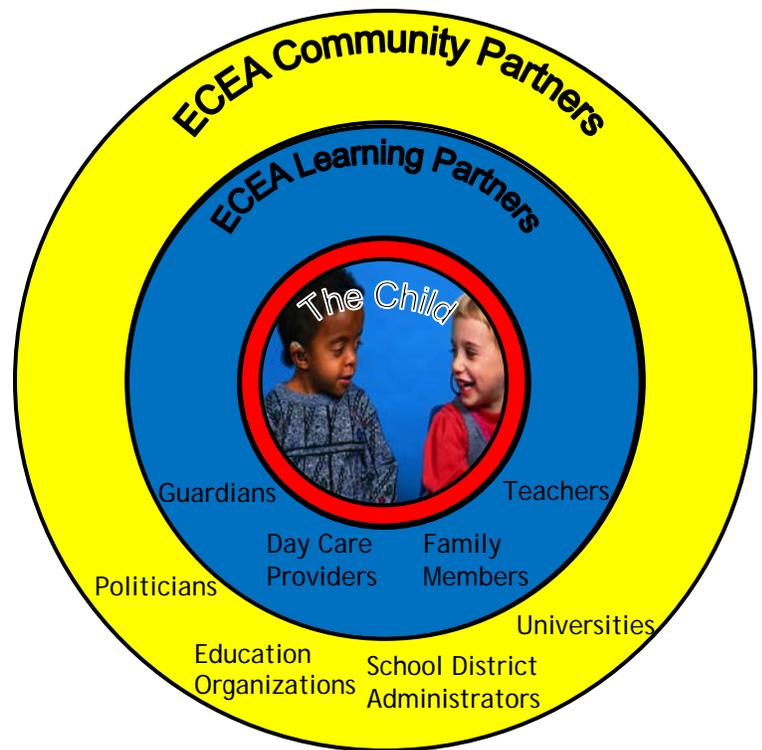
## An Opportunity to Discover, Dream, Design, and Shape Our Destiny

The Early Childhood Education Alliance (ECEA), with the support of the Packard Foundation and the Institute for Teaching, is prepared to provide preschool and daycare teachers and aides, as well as parents, grandparents, and others who care for young children with the skills and understandings to co-create local collaborative action communities in your school or city. Through the ECEA you will learn:

- How to identify and leverage your own strengths, as well as those within your students and your school community
- Methods for creating positive change in your classroom and school community
- New strategies for collaborating with parents and families to help enrich all aspects of our children’s education
- Tools for connecting with other early childhood education providers to share ideas and support each other in creating positive change in our classrooms

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

*~ Margaret Mead*



*IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES...*

**LEARN HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ALLIANCE AND HELP CREATE TEACHER-STUDENT-FAMILY DRIVEN IMPROVEMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION!**

# An Invitation to Community Partners: 3 Ways to Connect

## Am I an ECEA Community Partner?

Community partners are the individuals and organizations that provide support for teachers, families, and others who are working directly with children. In other words, Community Partners support the adults who have a significant role in a child's life. By providing this support, Community Partners ensure that all children are given the best opportunities and the best physical, financial, and human resources possible. Because of their role in the development and learning of children, Community Partners are an essential part of all efforts to improve schools and school communities. There are a wide variety of Community Partners at the Early Childhood level. Teacher associations, politicians, and even elementary school teachers who provide support to early childhood teachers can be considered Community Partners. Other examples of Community Partners include:

- Faculty and Staff at Universities and Colleges
- Education Organizations
- Political Agencies
- School Board Members
- Non-profit organizations

Because of their importance to the learning and development of children, Community Partners have special opportunities to get involved

## Opportunity #1:

### Attend the Early Childhood Education Alliance Introductory Webinar

This one-hour online webinar is designed for Community Partners and includes an introduction to using strengths-based practices in the schools and an overview of the Early Childhood Education Alliance Project. This introductory webinar is being offered at three different times at no cost to participants on:

- **April 22 and 23 at 7:30PM Pacific or April 27 at 4:00PM Pacific**
- To register, visit the Institute for Teaching at: <http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>

\*Participation is free, but limited. *Required* registration is due 3 days before each Webinar

## Opportunity #2:

### Enroll in the ECEA Online Course: Positive Strengths-Based Change Processes

This free three-week course includes more in-depth knowledge and training of strengths-based change processes, how these processes can be applied to education, and the role of these processes in the Early Childhood Education Alliance. It also provides hands-on experience with online collaboration tools and how these tools can be used to enable teacher-student-family driven change in schools. The course is designed to be 'on-demand,' meaning that the materials are available online 24/7 to accommodate your schedule, with an additional one-hour weekly "Live Meeting" with the course leaders (which will be recorded and archived).

- Registration is free
- Course begins Tuesday, May 12, 2009
- Live sessions are **May 12, May 19, and May 26 at 7:30PM Pacific**
- To register, visit the Institute for Teaching: <http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>

## Opportunity #3:

### Help Identify Potential ECEA Learning Partners

Community Partners have unique knowledge about early childhood educators and early childhood education schools and programs in their school communities. After learning about the Early Childhood Education Alliance, if you know of individuals or programs that would like to be active participants in the ECEA, please tell us! Potential Learning Partners can be suggested to the Institute for Teaching by visiting [www.teacherdrivenchange.org](http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org).

# An Invitation to Learning Partners: Ways to Connect

## Become an ECEA Learning Partner!

All individuals and organizations connected to early childhood education that are interested in participating in the ECEA are invited to join at <http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>.

A certain number of Early Childhood Education Learning Partners will be invited to be the initial active participants in the collaborative action communities that are the heart of the Early Childhood Education Alliance. These Learning Partners will be among the first to learn how to begin applying the ideas of teacher-student-family driven school improvement and strengths-based change to their own school communities.

### **Opportunity #1: Attend the ECEA Introductory Webinar**

This webinar is especially designed for Learning Partners and includes an introduction to using strengths-based practices in the schools and an overview of the Early Childhood Education Alliance. This one-hour online event is free and provides a more comprehensive introduction to the ECEA and the ideas that drive student-centered strengths-based school improvement. This webinar will be scheduled shortly after the 2009-2010 school year begins. Details will be made available by the Institute for Teaching (<http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>).

### **Opportunity #2: Enroll in the ECEA Strengths-Based Training**

This free, online, multi-week course includes more in-depth knowledge of the ECEA and trainings in strengths-based change processes and how Learning Partners can apply these ideas to their work with their students. It also provides extensive experience with online collaboration tools and how these tools can be used to enable teacher-student-family driven change in schools. Participants will take part in a weekly one-hour online live session and complete weekly activities. The course is scheduled to begin in October 2009. Details will be made available by the Institute for Teaching (<http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>). Be sure to visit this website today and join the ECEA so that you will receive more details about this event.

### **Opportunity #3: Participate in ECEA Inter-Community Summits**

This is a one-day face-to-face summit within selected communities where Learning Partners can get together as local stakeholder groups and begin to put into practice plans for using strength-based methods at their local level in whatever ways best match the needs of their individual students and schools. These individual community summits will be virtually connected online to each other to create this Inter-Community Summit. The first of these summits is currently being planned for December 2009. Join the ECEA to get future details (<http://www.teacherdrivenchange.org>).

## Am I an ECEA Learning Partner?

Learning partners are the driving force to child-centered strengths-based change. These individuals have the most direct contact with children and are most aware of the needs and strengths of each one of their students. At the early childhood level, examples of Learning Partners include:

- Early Childhood Teachers and Instructors
- Parents, Other Family Members, and Guardians
- Child Care Providers

The Early Childhood Education Alliance is dedicated to the idea that Learning Partners are the source and the inspiration for child-centered school improvement. Learning Partners know better than anyone else the unique characteristics of their students and their schools in their particular community. Learning Partners also have the biggest dreams for their children and students have many ideas about what it will take to help each of their individual children reach for their dreams, and they share the daily journeys with the children so that these dreams can become reality. The ECEA is designed to help empower Learning Partners and provide them with a support structure so that they can put their own ideas and dreams into action themselves.

If you are an Early Childhood Learning Partner and are interested in learning more about the Early Childhood Education Alliance, teacher-student-family driven school improvement, and strengths-based approaches to learning and development, you can begin getting involved in the ways listed here.

# The Early Childhood Education Alliance First Annual Celebration of Strengths & Community

Online, May 2010

- ECEA Learning Partners, Community Partners, and Other Community Members Join Together to Celebrate the Activities and the Progress of the ECEA and ECEA Members
- New ECEA Members are Identified and Invited to Join
- A Wide-Audience Learns About the Success of the ECEA, Teacher-Student-Family Driven Change, and Strengths-Based Practices in Early Childhood Education

## **Sustaining the Movement**

The Early Childhood Education Alliance is designed to facilitate and empower individuals within local communities to drive their school communities forward to realize new potential, maximize resources, and heighten child potential. In this spirit, the ECEA is also designed to empower the Institute for Teaching to be able to facilitate the ECEA and help it grow with only minimal need for any kind of outside specialized assistance or consulting. As the ECEA begins to have an active role in school communities, members of the IFT will also be trained in the same strengths-based methods and approaches that the ECEA members are learning. Furthermore, members of the IFT will also be trained how to facilitate ECEA activities and how to use online collaborative technology to help the ECEA create collaborative action communities and connect these communities across the state of California.

# ECEA Timeline

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Action Area</b>	<b>Notes</b>
April 22-27	Webinars for ECEA Community Partners (people who have currently expressed interest in ECEA and other potential partners)	Potential ECEA Community Partners will be invited to a one-hour informational webinar which will be provided three times (April 22, 23, 27) as well as archived. The purpose of this webinar is to: 1) provide a more detailed overview of ECEA, 2) introduce potential ECEA Community Partners to the idea of strengths-based change and Appreciative Inquiry, and 3) invite Community Partners to commit to participate in next steps and a more detailed training and outreach initiative.
May 11 - 25	Training & Outreach Workshop	This 3 week workshop (with 1 weekly live meeting each week) will help provide ECEA Community Partners with a foundation in strength-based change, as well as a process by which they can help identify Learning Partners that may be interested in being part of the ECEA and participating in a training on how they can use strengths-based methods with their children and students. Week 1 will include an overview of strengths-based theory and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Interviews. Week 2 will include more specifics on AI as an approach and philosophy with and activity on reframing problems into opportunity areas. Week 3 includes an outreach overview – how to identify and nominate people or groups to participate in ECEA and the upcoming training.
June - August	Extending Invitations to ECEA participants	Lead by IFT and supported by ECEA Community Partners, the summer will focus on extending invitations to Learning Partners from 4 of the communities identified in the Packard Grant and asking for them to commit to the ECEA Strengths-Based Training. A goal of getting 15-20 participants (mix of stakeholders) from each community to participate in the initial training.
October 6 – 27	ECEA Strengths-Based Training	A 4 week workshop (with 1 weekly live meeting each week) will be held for Learning Partners to provide strengths-based training focused on how early childhood teachers, parents, and others can apply strengths-based methods to enhance the development of their children and students. Week 1: Identifying & leveraging individual strengths Week 2: Identifying and leveraging school community strengths Week 3: Visions for our classrooms & kids Week 4: Moving toward action: Making our visions a reality
Early December	Inter-Community Summit	A one-day face-to-face summit will be held within each community where Learning Partners can get together as local stakeholder groups and being to put into practice a plan for using strength-based methods at their local level in a manner that best suits their individual students' needs. Individual community summits will be virtually connected to each other to create an Inter-Community Summit
January – May 2010	CTA – IFT ECEA Training	During the months while the first group of Learning Partners are developing their own initiatives and are seeking out Community Partners to help the development of these initiatives, the IFT will begin to repeat the process. Four different community areas across the state as identified in the Packard Grant will be identified and the process outlined above will repeat. However, instead of consultants taking lead roles in developing these activities, the goal is to build the capacity within the IFT to conduct these activities with minimal need for outside guidance.
May 2010	Online follow-up summit & launch of next training	An online summit, open to all ECEA stakeholders, will be held with the aim of celebrating and sharing of progress on the initiatives that have emerged following the Inter-Community Summit, inviting new participation into the ECEA, and discovering more ECEA members for the next round of ECEA trainings and summits.

