

# Proposal to Evaluate and Build a Successful Health and Safety Training Program For Childcare Workers in California

## Introduction

There are over 100,000 childcare workers employed in California.<sup>i</sup> These employees work in a variety of settings, including childcare centers, preschools, public schools, and private homes. The demand for childcare workers in the state is expected to increase by 10% by 2024.

Childcare workers perform a variety of tasks including supervising and monitoring the safety of children in their care; preparing meals; helping with hygiene; changing the diapers of infants and toddlers; organizing learning, physical and recreational activities; and watching for signs of emotional or developmental problems in children and bringing the problems to the attention of their parents. These activities, along with other issues that may be relevant to a particular setting, can expose childcare workers to a number of work-related hazards, including heavy lifting, other ergonomic risks, chemicals, blood borne pathogens and other body fluids, and stressful situations.

While child care work on its surface may not seem like a dangerous job, consider this:

- Back injuries are by far the most common, occurring at nearly double the rate of the general working population.<sup>ii</sup>
- Child care providers come into contact with hazardous chemicals and infectious diseases at a higher rate than the general public.<sup>iii, iv</sup>
- In an early study, 95% of providers reported job-related stress.<sup>v</sup> Prolonged stress can and does lead to other physical and mental health complications for providers.

To address this problem, there is a need for an effective training program that will prepare childcare workers to identify and address hazards in their workplace. Towards this end, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), with funding from the California Community College Chancellor's Office and the California Workforce Development Board, developed a curriculum in 2015-16 for teaching childcare workers in family day care settings about workplace health and safety. This training is conducted by trained child care professionals who have participated in an intensive train-the-trainer workshop and understand the challenges and needs of child care professionals. Trainings and materials are provided in English and Spanish and groups are limited to 20 participants to make sure there is enough time and interaction to get the most out of these trainings.

There is a need to assess the effectiveness of this curriculum, and to build on that program to develop and pilot-test a training program that can be expanded to center-based and school-based child care centers in California and serve as a model for other states around the country.

## Proposal

The Labor Occupational Health Program at UC Berkeley proposes to develop a two-year pilot program that involves the following activities:

1. Reviewing and assessing the effectiveness of existing health and safety curriculum, including the family day care training developed by SEIU;

2. Working with SEIU to adapt the SEIU curriculum and training model for center- and schools-based settings;
3. Pilot-testing the adapted curriculum in English and Spanish in collaboration with SEIU;
4. Conducting two training of trainers programs to teach trainers to conduct the class in center- and schools-based settings; and,
5. Working with SEIU and other stakeholders to develop and initiate a plan for rolling out the trainings for childcare workers state-wide.
6. Implement a limited roll out by supporting new trainers in conducting at least 2 classes with center and school based child care workers
7. Assess effectiveness of TOT and of dissemination/outreach plan in preparing trainers to teach and in reaching targeted population

## **Budget**

\$212,000 over two years.

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Careers/Occupations/occupation-profile.aspx?keyword=Childcare%20Workers&onetcode=39901100&location=CALIFORNIA>

<sup>ii</sup> "Health and Safety in the Child Care Setting: Prevention of Injuries—A Curriculum for the Training of Child Care Providers" (pp. 99-100) at [http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/Prev\\_Injuries\\_052407.pdf](http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/pdfs/Curricula/Prev_Injuries_052407.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> Per 2014 BLS statistics

<sup>iv</sup> McGrath, Belinda J. "Identifying health and safety risks for childcare workers." *Workplace Health & Safety* 55.8 (2007): 321.; [http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15\\_m\\_staff\\_health.pdf](http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15_m_staff_health.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> McGrath, Belinda J. "Identifying health and safety risks for childcare workers." *Workplace Health & Safety* 55.8 (2007): 321.; [http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15\\_m\\_staff\\_health.pdf](http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15_m_staff_health.pdf) and [http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15\\_m\\_staff\\_health.pdf](http://www.ncemch.org/child-care-health-consultants/Part2/2-15_m_staff_health.pdf)