Program History
The California Community College Foster & Kinship Care Education (FKCE) program was established in 1984 with the passage of Senate Bill 2003 (Chapter 1597, Statutes of 1984). The purpose of the program is for community colleges to provide high quality education and training to foster parents and kinship care providers throughout the State, to prepare them for working with the specialized needs of foster children and youth in their care. The Chancellor’s Office administers this statewide education program in conjunction with 62 colleges. Our office provides leadership, funding, oversight and technical assistance; maintains interagency agreements with the California Department of Social Services; and collaborates with key State and local agencies to ensure effectiveness of the program.

Description
The FKCE Program supports statewide training requirements for preparing and retaining well qualified foster parents and kinship caregivers. This specialized training helps address the statewide shortage of foster homes. FKCE delivers education and training for foster care providers to meet the educational, emotional, behavioral and developmental needs of children and youth in out-of-home care. In 2012-13, the colleges provided over 37,000 hours of education throughout the State to more than 27,000 participants caring for foster children and youth.

Students Served
In 2012-13 the FKCE program served over 27,000 foster and kinship care providers.

Appropriation for 2013-2014
The FKCE program was budgeted for $9.8 m in 2013-14, a decrease from $10.3 m budgeted for 2012-13 (fewer federal match dollars received due to federal reimbursement funding formula). The overall budget is based on a dedicated amount of Proposition 98 funding (about 52%) and matching federal funds (about 48%). The average college allocation is approximately $150,000 per participating campus, but varies depending on the size of the program provided. These funds pay for direct training costs.

Eligibility Criteria
The target populations for FKCE are licensed and approved foster parents, kinship care providers and other resource families caring for foster children and youth placed in out-of-home care.
Critical Issues:

1. The federal match (Title IV-E SSA) funds that support the FKCE program have decreased over $1.5 million since 2006 and State funds have not yet been provided to backfill this loss, causing loss of training opportunities to meet requirements for foster and kinship providers;

2. FKCE programs are actively involved in many new State and federal initiatives, such as the implementation of the CA Fostering Connections to Success Act that allows foster youth to continue getting foster care services up to age 21 (they may stay in foster care placements also). Education and training for the care providers is essential for the success of these older foster youth;

3. Needs and demands are growing for enhanced care provider skills and knowledge to work with extremely abused children and youth in foster care (Commercially sexually exploited youth and foster teen parents in care with their young children are two growing populations in our foster homes). We need to backfill the lost federal funds through a combination of increased Prop. 98 funds and federal match in order to have the resources to meet these training needs;

4. Local FKCE programs are key partners in working with counties and the State as part of California’s plan to make improvements and meet federal Children and Families Service Review (CFSR) requirements in the area of training, recruitment and retention of care providers;

5. Database and website improvements are a high priority for the FKCE program.