

Annual Report 2014-2015



Early Childhood Council of Kern

Planning for quality early care and education.

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Early Childhood Council of Kern Report of Accomplishments 2014-2015



LOCAL PLANNING

The Early Childhood Council of Kern is a 30-member, appointed advisory board working together to increase and enhance the quality of early childhood programs in Kern County. It is comprised of parents, early childhood professionals, employers, educators, public agencies, advocates—all with a common interest—increasing the availability of high quality early childhood services for young children birth to 12 years of age.

With literally hundreds of years of combined experience, the Council is a liaison between local government, parents, early education providers and the community. Designated as the Local Child Care and Development Planning Council for the county, the Council is responsible to the California Department of Education, Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL DO?

The scope of the Council's work includes promoting and supporting efforts to improve quality early care and education services for all children and families in the communities of Kern County. The Council:

- Coordinates the Kern Early Stars Program (quality rating and improvement system-QRIS);
- Conducts child care needs assessments, used to determine local priorities and for the development of strategic plans;
- Informs the community regarding the importance of high quality, early learning experiences for all young children;
- Distributes educational stipends through the Early Care and Education Retention Project and the California Transitional Kindergarten Stipend Program;
- Coordinates trainings for professionals in the early childhood field;
- Works with the County and its 11 incorporated cities to bring high quality early childhood services to local communities;
- Collaborates with groups such as the business and faith based communities to address local, early childhood needs;
- Advocates for children and early childhood professionals;
- Strives to expand the availability of, and access to, quality early childhood services for all families;
- Develops and carries out a strategic plan to be proactive and responsive to changing early childhood trends.

During the 2014-2015 year, the Council continued to work toward the goals outlined in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. This plan addresses the areas of Quality, Access and Capacity, Advocacy and Community Awareness, and Council Accountability. The 2014-2017 plan can be found under the Data and Resources tab of the Council's website at: www.earlychildhoodkern.org.

The Early Childhood Council of Kern is funded by a Planning Council Grant from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division.

IN MEMORIAM

This past year brought great losses to the local early childhood field with the passing of Geneva Woertz, Irene Cook and Armida Bermudez. Each of these individuals were wonderful advocates for children and families and contributed to our field tremendously. They will be truly missed.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Childhood Council of Kern is dedicated to promoting and supporting a community-wide effort that results in a high quality child care system that meets the needs of all Kern County children and families.

2014-2015 Activities



Quality Enhancement

Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

In 2014, California's Governor added \$50 million per year to his permanent budget for counties to implement a QRIS program. These Prop 98 funds provide the opportunity for California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) to participate with training, coaching and assessments to measure current levels of quality and work towards achieving higher standards to improve child outcomes. In year 1 the Council received \$1,651,258 to create the QRIS program for Kern County now called Kern Early Stars. These ongoing funds will allow Kern County to work with CSPP classrooms to raise the bar on quality while providing parent education and community awareness regarding the importance of high quality early childhood programs for young children.

Early Care and Education Retention Project

The Council completed the 14th year of the Retention Project by awarding more than \$285,000 to 344 early childhood professionals working directly with children in State-funded child development centers in Kern County. Stipends are based on several factors including an individual's length of time in their position, continued educational accomplishments or professional development attainment. In total, stipend recipients completed 590 college-level child development or general education units and participated in 5,121 hours of professional development workshops, seminars and conferences. In addition, five workshops were organized through this project on topics including social emotional development, numeracy, English language development, the Desired Results Developmental Profile, and how to obtain and maintain a child development permit. More than 225 participants attended these sessions.

Kern County Infant Toddler Seminar

This annual seminar has been conducted by the Council since 2000 and is designed specifically for early childhood professionals working with children birth to three years of age. The February 28, 2015 event included workshops in English and Spanish for 223 participants. Center based staff as well as family child care providers participated to gain new information and skills to assist them in providing high quality care for our youngest children.

Center Director's Luncheons

The Council has been offering the Center Director Luncheons since 2005 providing four to five events each year. During the 2014-2015 year, five presentations were provided on a range of topics and included opportunities for directors throughout Kern County to network, learn from each other and share resources. This event draws 25 to 35 directors each event and is a partnership between the Council and the Mentor Director Program.

Kern County Child Development Conference

The Council was a co-sponsor of the bi-annual Kern County Child Development Conference which took place September 20, 2014 at the Rabobank Convention Center in Bakersfield with 425 participants from throughout the Central Valley attending. Keynote speaker Bev Bos began the day followed by 33 workshops for participants to choose from, including three in Spanish. This conference is a partnership of multiple organizations and financial supporters. The volunteer planning committee is made up of representatives from local early childhood organizations and private providers.



Family Engagement training of the Trainer

The Council continued its partnership with the Kern Council for Social Emotional Learning to offer a family engagement training of the trainer session utilizing the Positive Solutions program. Twenty-three center directors from throughout Kern County participated with this 2-day training which provided the materials and instruction on how to implement this 6-session parent education series within their programs.

Child Signature Program

In 2015, the Council completed the third and final year of the Child Signature Program. This program was a collaboration with First 5 Kern with funding from First 5 California to implement several key goals targeting children, teachers, and families with the ultimate goal being that children at greatest risk for school failure will enter kindergarten with the skills to be successful. Thirty-four early childhood classrooms in Bakersfield and six outlying communities participated with classroom and staff assessments and the implementation of a quality improvement plan. Council staff continued to serve as 40% of a full time position to this project with a Child Development Consultant providing the remaining 60% of the position. This program provided the opportunity for local capacity building in the area of Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) and Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). This project concluded on June 30, 2015.

Quality Rating and Improvement System Pilot

The Council continued their partnership with the Fresno County Office of Education and Community Connection for Child Care to coordinate a pilot Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Kern County for two private child development centers. The core principles of the QRIS are to address:

- Child development and school readiness - through child observation, assessments and developmental and health screenings;
- Teachers and Teaching - through early childhood educator qualifications and effective teacher/child interactions and competencies;
- Program and environment - through the Environmental Rating Scales, ratios, group size and director qualifications.

Staff and consultants continued to work with the two sites to provide training and technical assistance to advance them on the QRIS matrix.

California Transitional Kindergarten/California State Preschool Program Stipends

In 2014, the California State legislature approved legislation that requires Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Teachers assigned to their positions on or after July 1, 2015 to obtain 24 units of child development/early childhood education. The State budget included funds to provide reimbursements for TK teachers, as well as California State Preschool Program (CSPP) teachers, for educational expenses they may incur in obtaining these units. The Council is responsible for the distribution of these funds until June of 2017. These funds, in the amount of \$480,176, can also be used to reimburse TK and CSPP teachers for costs incurred while obtaining professional development hours in the area of early childhood/child development.



Wendy Wayne Scholarship

The Council continues to coordinate the application process for the annual Wendy Wayne Scholarship. This scholarship is an educational stipend for an outstanding individual working in the early childhood field and continuing their education.

Training Calendar

Local and state-wide professional development opportunities are posted on the Training Calendar page of the Council's website to assist early childhood professionals with identifying trainings relevant to their position. A current listing of Professional Growth Advisors in Kern County is also maintained on this site.

Capacity Building / Policy Development

Technical Assistance

The Council serves as an information resource to callers who request data and materials related to the early childhood field. Supply and demand estimates are calculated, supporting documents provided and referrals to other agencies are made as appropriate.

California Department of Education Contractors Meetings

The Council continues to convene meetings for those agencies and school districts holding contracts with the California Department of Education (CDE), Early Education and Support Division to provide subsidized child development services in Kern County. The meetings are an opportunity to network and allow contractors to share challenges and solutions, discuss state and local issues related to offering early childhood services in Kern County, and mentor newer administrators.

Data Collection

Geographical Priorities

As required by California Education Code (EC 8499.5), the Council provides the California Department of Education with annual geographical priorities for Kern County, based on current local data and input from local, funded child development agencies. The priorities are used by CDE in the event that funds are made available for new state funded child development programs. Based on a review of the 2014 priorities, current data on the supply of, and demand for, subsidized early childhood education programs, the Council determined that no modifications to the priorities were to be recommended. The 2015 priorities can be found at on the Council's website under Data and Resources.

Advocacy

Public Policy Platform

The Council maintains a Public Policy Platform addressing specific areas of the early childhood field the Council feels are of great importance including licensing, workforce development, access to child development services and community infrastructure. This platform permits the Council to provide timely responses to proposed legislation or policy changes at the state level when appropriate. This document is reviewed annually



Public Policy Platform, continued from page 5

by the Council and modifications are presented to County Counsel and Schools Legal Service then approved by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and the Kern County Board of Supervisors. Two statements were submitted to the legislature in the 2014-2015 year. The 2015 Platform can be found on the Council's website under *About the Council / Scope of Work*.

Community Involvement

2014-2015 Community Service Projects

- Construction of children's tie blankets which were donated to the Ronald McDonald House;
- Provision of "goodies" for the children and informational flyers for parents at the two-day Safe Halloween event held at the Kern County Museum;
- Provision of materials and volunteer time at the Kern County Network for Children's 12 Days of Christmas at the Dream Center;
- Filled and donated candy-filled eggs for the Bakersfield Homeless Center's Eggstravaganza children's event.

Local Board/Committee Participation

The Council participates with numerous community organizations addressing issues related to young children and families including:

- Bakersfield College Child Development Advisory Council;
- Bakersfield Police Department Crisis Intervention Team;
- Behavioral Health Board - Housing Services Committee
- California Child Care Coordinators Association Executive Board;
- Cerro Coso Community College Child Development Advisory Committee;
- Community Action Partnership of Kern Advisory Board;
- Community Connection for Child Care Foundation Board;
- Eastern Sierra Association for the Education of Young Children;
- First 5 Kern Technical Assistance Committee;
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children Board of Directors;
- Kern Council on Social Emotional Learning;
- Kern County Child Development Conference Steering Committee;
- Kern County Homeless Collaborative
- Kern County Mental Health
- Kern County Network for Children Governing Board;
- Kern Early Stars Consortium;
- Mentor Teacher Selection Committee;
- Taft College Child Development Advisory Committee;
- United Way of Kern County.



Collaborations

During the 2014-2015 year, the following agencies, organizations and businesses collaborated with the Council to offer local trainings and/or events:

- California Mentor Director Program/Bakersfield College;
- First 5 Kern;
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children; and
- Kern Council on Social Emotional Learning.

Communications

Consumer / Community Awareness

- *Put Down the Phone Campaign*
The Council launched a new campaign designed to help parents understand the importance of talking to their children. In an effort to get their message out, the Council designed and produced table tents that are available free of charge to Kern County restaurants, food courts, lobbies, office reception areas, pediatrician offices, etc. that would like to display them. The table tents provide information on the importance of conversation and encourages families to “Put Down the Phone” during meals and talk. Posters with the same message were printed and displayed in 85 GET buses throughout Bakersfield and have been distributed to child development centers in Kern County. Spanish versions were also created.
- *Social Media*
The use of Facebook and Twitter increased in an effort to distribute informational messages to the early childhood field and parents. Tips, resources and event announcements are shared with a broad audience on a regular basis.

Information Distribution

Email notices are distributed regularly to provide relevant information to early childhood educators and community partners, encouraging them to share with the families they work with. Information included grant and training opportunities, health and legislative updates, and current best practices.

Website

The Council maintains a wealth of information on the website including all documents created by the Council. This allows documents to be updated in a timely and cost efficient manner and reaches a broad audience. Meeting information, resources, professional growth opportunities and links to other relevant websites are also posted and updated regularly. The Council’s website can be found at: www.earlychildhoodkern.org.

Annual Report

The 2013-2014 Annual Report was distributed electronically to early childhood educators, elected officials, county departments and community organizations, and is posted on the Council’s website under the Data and Resources tab. Prior year’s reports can also be found on the Council’s website.



Reporting

Quarterly written and verbal reports were submitted to the Council's governing bodies, the Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools. Written reports were submitted to the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division and the Kern County Department of Human Services on a quarterly basis. Additional reports were submitted based on contractual requirements.

Early Childhood Council of Kern – 2014-2015

Jerri Alvarado, Community Member - Bakersfield Homeless Center
Vienna Battistoni, Public Agency Member - Bakersfield College
Myetta Beavers, Discretionary Member - Child Haven Preschool
Armida Bermudez, Child Care Provider – Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo
Mike Bledsoe, Child Care Provider - Delano Union Elementary School District Child Development Programs
Lisa Brum, Child Care Consumer – First Steps Family Child Care
Irene Cook, Public Agency Member - California State University, Bakersfield
Lisa Duncan-Purcell, Family Child Care Provider - Morning Star Early Learning
Linda Eberhart, Community Member - Eastern Kern County
Marilyn Golleher, Community Member - Clinica Sierra Vista Adolescent Family Life Program
Sarah Gossage, Child Care Consumer – First Nazarene Christian School
Endee Grijalva, Community Member – Fresno Pacific University
Meghan Hall-Silveira, Discretionary Member - Taft College Children's Center
Casey Knaak, Community Member - United Way of Kern County
Virginia Layland, Child Care Provider - Community Action Partnership of Kern
Christine Lollar, Discretionary Member – United Way of Kern County, Kern County Homeless Collaborative
Autumn Marler, Child Care Consumer – Foster Parent
Yvonne Munoz, Child Care Provider - Richland Healthy Start
Cheryl Nelson, Public Agency Member - Community Connection for Child Care
Shannon Oastler, Public Agency Member – Kern County Department of Human Services
Linda Oates, Discretionary Member – Omni Family Health
Kathy Phillee, Public Agency Member - Bakersfield Adult School Children's Center
Betty Phillips, Discretionary Member – Former Preschool Teacher
Courtney Purcell – Good Samaritan Hospital
Jennie Sill, Public Agency Member - Kern County Department of Mental Health
Jennifer Slayton, Child Care Consumer - Lamont School District Pre-K Programs
Jessica Sloan, Child Care Consumer - Joyful Junction Preschool
Amanda Tumblin – California State University, Bakersfield
Danell Ward – Bakersfield College Child Development Center



About the Council

The Early Childhood Council of Kern meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The public is welcome to attend and actively participate with general and committee meetings, typically held in Bakersfield. However, locations may vary so please call the Council office or visit the Council's website to verify meeting date, time and location.

How can you get involved?

- Attend a meeting;
- Participate with a committee;
- Provide input at meetings; and/or
- Apply for membership.

Council Membership Opportunities

The Early Childhood Council of Kern recruits members interested in serving as an appointed member. The Kern County Superintendent of Schools and the Kern County Board of Supervisors are the formal appointing entities. State legislation that governs the Council is specific in regards to composition, stating that membership should consist of these percentages:

- 20% Child Care Consumers;
- 20% Child Care Providers;
- 20% Public Agency Representatives;
- 20% Community Representatives; and
- 20% Discretionary.

Additional information regarding appointments to the Council can be obtained from the Council's website or by contacting the Council office.

Early Childhood Council of Kern Contact

(661) 861-5274

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www.earlychildhoodkern.org

Facebook: facebook.com/earlychildhoodcouncilofkern

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