

Annual Report 2018-2019



Early Childhood Council of Kern

Planning for quality early care and education.

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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.

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 Superintendent of Schools.

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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.

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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;
- 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 child care services for all families;
- Develops and carries out a strategic plan to be proactive and responsive to changing early childhood trends.

Although the Council continued to work toward the goals outlined in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan, time was also spent revisiting the current plan and making updates to reflect current need and appropriate strategies. The 2018-2021 plan can be found under the Data and Resources tab of the Council’s website at: <http://earlychildhoodkern.org> .

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



Quality Enhancement

Kern Early Stars - Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

The Kern Early Stars program was expanded and primary focus for the Council. Established in the 2014-2015 year, this program now reaches all corners of the County and providers of all types. The core principles of the Kern Early Stars 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.

The Kern Early Stars has four funding sources: Prop 98 for State Preschool Programs, Infant/Toddler and Migrant QRIS through the California Department of Education and IMPACT funds through First 5 California. These combined funds provide the opportunity for State and Federally funded programs, private centers and family child care providers to participate with training, technical assistance, coaching, resources and assessments to measure current levels of quality and work towards achieving the program's goals and ultimately improving child outcomes. The Kern Early Stars has sixteen staff members including 10 Early Learning Coaches. In total, the Kern Early Stars had an operational budget of \$1,800,632 to implement the QRIS throughout Kern County. Currently there are approximately 67 licensed family child care providers and 63 child development centers participating at various levels. 125 CLASS and Environment Rating Scale assessments were conducted during the year. These ongoing funds allow Kern County to work with providers of all types 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. Twenty-seven trainings, including 4 multi-session series were provided on such topics as positive provider/child interactions, Environment Rating Scale, child observation and assessment, topics specific to working with infants and toddlers etc.). To date, the Kern Early Stars has provided ratings for 47 family child care providers and 28 centers throughout Kern County. State-funded programs must have their ratings posted on the Kern Early Stars website while private centers and family child care providers have the option of waiting until their second rating to be posted. A brief video was developed to help both early childhood providers and parents understand what a QRIS is and how it can be of benefit to the early childhood field and the children being served in out of home settings. An annual "Rating Celebration" is held for those providers achieving a Star rating for the first time to celebrate their accomplishments and commitment to their quality improvement journey. Additional details can be found on the website at: www.kernearlystars.org

Early Care and Education Retention Project

The Council completed the 18th year of the Retention Project by awarding more than \$273,282 to 391 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 769 college-level child development or general education units and participated in 6,162 hours of professional development workshops, seminars and conferences.



Kern County Infant Toddler Seminar

This annual half-day seminar has been coordinated by the Council for the past 18 years and is designed specifically for early childhood professionals working with children birth to three years of age. The March 9, 2019 event included workshops in English and Spanish for 130 participants. Center based staff, family child care providers and early childhood education students participated to obtain new information and skills to improve the quality of the care our youngest children receive in out of home care settings. This event is a collaboration with the Kern Early Stars with the Infant/Toddler QRIS providing resources for participants to enhance their learning experience.

Center Director's Professional Learning Community (PLC)

The Council partners with the Mentor Director Program and Kern Early Stars to offer the PLCs (which have been offered since 2005) by providing five sessions each year. During the 2018-2019 year, the focus was on helping Directors support their staff in the area of social & emotional development in young children. Based on the Teaching Pyramid Modules, each session included opportunities for directors throughout Kern County to network, learn from each other and share resources. An average of 30 directors attend each session.

California Transitional Kindergarten/ California State Preschool Program Stipends

Funds for this program are designed to assist Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Teachers with meeting the Education Code mandate that they obtain 24 units of child development/early childhood education if they are assigned to their positions on or after July 1, 2015. The Council has these State funds through March of 2019 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. Funds 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. Reimbursements totaling \$23,890 were distributed during the 2018-2019 year.

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 individuals and organizations requesting data and information related to developing programs in the early childhood field. Supply and demand estimates, supporting documents and referrals to other agencies are provided as appropriate.



California Department of Education Contractors Meetings

The Council convenes meetings for agencies and school districts that hold contracts with the California Department of Education (CDE), Early Learning and Care Division to provide subsidized child development services in Kern County. These meetings are an opportunity for contractors to network and share challenges and solutions, discuss state and local issues related to the provision of early childhood services in Kern County and to mentor newer administrators. During the 2018-2019 year, one session was dedicated to a presentation from the California Department of Education Field Services Consultant for Kern County. This session provided updates and the opportunity for contractors to ask questions.

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 data analysis depicting the current, estimated supply and demand of early childhood services for income-eligible families, the Council determined that minor edits to the 2018 priorities were necessary. Therefore a public input session was held and revisions approved by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and the Kern County Board of Supervisors before being submitted to the California Department of Education. The current priorities can be found on the Council's website under Data and Resources.

Child Development Center Survey

The Council conducted a survey of child development centers in Kern County to collect information on the workforce such as educational attainments, salaries, benefits, longevity, etc. This data is used to monitor improvements in working conditions and identify areas of need that the Council may be able to address. Survey results can be found on the Council's website under the Data and Resources tab.

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 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. During the 2017-2018 year, the Council provided a statement to the legislature which included suggested modifications to current policies governing Transitional Kindergarten classrooms. The current Public Policy Platform can be found at: <http://earlychildhoodkern.org/about-the-council/scope-of-work/>



Community Involvement

2018-2019 Community Service Projects

The Council contributed more than 104 volunteer hours through participation in the following local events:

- Provision of “goodies” for the children and informational flyers for parents at the two-day Safe Halloween event held at the Kern County Museum;
- Constructed more than 19 tie blankets which were donated to the Bakersfield Homeless Center;
- Donation of more than 1,000 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;
- California Child Care Coordinators Association Executive Board;
- Eastern Sierra Association for the Education of Young Children;
- First 5 Kern Technical Assistance Committee;
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children;
- Kern Council for Social Emotional Learning;
- Kern County Child Development Conference Steering Committee;
- Kern County Network for Children Governing Board;
- Kern Early Stars Consortium;
- California State University Bakersfield Advisory Committee;
- Taft College Child Development Advisory Committee;
- Cerro Coso Community College Child Development Advisory Committee

Collaborations

During the 2018-2019 year, the Council collaborated with the following agencies, organizations and businesses to offer local trainings and/or events:

- California Mentor Director Program/Bakersfield College;
- California Preschool Instructional Network;
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children.



Communications

Consumer /Community Awareness

Social Media

The Council continued to use Facebook 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.

Informational Brochure

The informational brochure, developed by the Council to help parents with understanding the difference between Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten and resources to help them make informed choices for their child, was reprinted in English and Spanish and distributed to centers and family child care providers. Preschool or Transitional Kindergarten: Making the best choice for your child can be found at: <http://earlychildhoodkern.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/17/2015/04/TK-or-Preschool-trifold.pdf>

Information Distribution

Email notices are distributed regularly to provide relevant information to early childhood educators and community partners, encouraging them to share with staff and the families they work with. Information includes training opportunities, health and legislative updates, and current best practices as well as job opportunities within the early childhood education field.

Website

The Council houses its current documents on the website. This allows documents to be updated in a timely and cost efficient manner and reaches a broad audience. Meeting information, resources, professional growth and employment opportunities and links to other relevant websites are also posted. The Council's website can be found at: www.earlychildhoodkern.org .

Annual Report

The 2017-2018 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, First 5 Kern, First 5 California and the Kern County Department of Human Services as required. Additional reports were submitted based on contractual requirements.



Early Childhood Council of Kern 2018–2019

Myetta Beavers, Child Care Provider – Child Haven Preschool

Kevin Bartle, Community Member – First 5 Kern

Mike Bledsoe, Child Care Provider – Delano Union Elem. School District Child Development Programs

Jo'L Braden, Public Agency Member – Bakersfield College

Lisa Brum, Child Care Consumer – First Steps Family Child Care

Rosita Curry, Child Care Consumer

Linda Haddadin, Child Care Provider – Bethany Services, Inc. / Discovery Depot

Meghan Hall-Silveira, Discretionary Member – Taft College Children's Center

Alesha Hixon, Child Care Provider – The Wonderful Company

Manpreet Kaur, Community Member

Carlos Lara, Community Member

Christine Lollar, Community Member

Shannon Oastler, Public Agency Member – Kern County Department of Human Services

Shirelle Perez, Public Agency Member – Community Connection for Child Care

Betty Phillips, Discretionary Member – Former Preschool Teacher

Jennifer Slayton, Child Care Consumer – Lamont School District Pre-K Programs

Stephanie Teodosio, Child Care Consumer

Amanda Tumblin, Discretionary Member – California State University, Bakersfield

Carrie Eveland, Community Member

Maria Aleman, Public Agency Member – Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services

Megan Gretona, Discretionary Member – CPIN



About the Council

The Early Childhood Council of Kern meets on the first Wednesday of each month (except for July and January) 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
- 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

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