

Annual Report 2015-2016



Early Childhood Council of Kern

Planning for quality early care and education.

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Early Childhood Council of Kern Report of Accomplishments 2015-2016



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 and 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 30 member 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, 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 child care services for all families;
- Develops and carries out a strategic plan to be proactive and responsive to changing early childhood trends.

During the 2015-2016 year, the Council continued to work toward the goals outlined in its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. This plan addresses 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:

<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.

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.

2015-2016 Council Activities



Quality Enhancement

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

The full implementation of the Kern Early Stars program was the Council's primary focus in the 2015-2016 year. Initiated in the 2014-2015 year, this program was expanded to reach all corners of the county and providers of all types. 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.

During the 2015-2016 year, the Kern Early Stars program had three funding sources; Prop 98, Infant/Toddler QRIS and IMPACT funds through the First 5 California. These combined funds provided the opportunity for California State Preschool Programs, state-funded Infant Toddler programs, private centers and family child care providers to participate with training, coaching and assessments to measure current levels of quality and work towards achieving higher standards to improve child outcomes. Nine staff members were recruited including six Early Learning Coaches. In total, the Kern Early Stars had an operational budget of \$2,432,832 to implement the QRIS program throughout Kern County. Currently there are 100 licensed family child care providers and 66 child development centers participating at various levels with the QRIS program. A portion of the funds are being used to train local individuals to be trainers and assessors thereby increasing the local capacity to continue the program without the need to contract for these services outside of Kern County. These ongoing funds will 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.

Early Care and Education Retention Project

The Council completed the 15th year of the Retention Project by awarding more than \$275,700 to 381 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 765 college-level child development or general education units and participated in 5,379 hours of professional development workshops, seminars and conferences. In addition, five workshops were organized through this project on topics focused on science and language development. More than 198 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 April 16, 2016 event included workshops in English and Spanish for 204 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 Luncheons

The Council has been offering the Center Director Luncheons since 2005 providing four to five events each year. During the 2015-2016 year, five presentations were provided with a focus on the Classroom Assessment and Scoring System (CLASS). Each session 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.

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 Council has state funds through March of 2020 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. These funds, in the amount of \$480,176 (for the total grant period), 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 community members requesting data resources 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. The Council approved minor changes to the 2015 Priorities which were then approved by the Kern County Board of Supervisors and the Kern County Superintendent of Schools before being submitted to the California Department of Education. The 2016 priorities can be found 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 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. The current Public Policy Platform can be found at:
<http://earlychildhoodkern.org/about-the-council/scope-of-work>

Community Involvement

2015-2016 Community Service Projects

The Council contributed more than 216 volunteer hours through participation in the following local events:

- Coordination of 31 Celebrity Readers to visit child development centers for the National Read Across America event;
- Donation of more than 1,000 candy-filled eggs for the Bakersfield Homeless Center's Eggstravaganza children's event;
- Provision of "goodies" for the children and informational flyers for parents at the two-day Safe Halloween event held at the Kern County Museum;
- Donation of ornament materials to the Kern County Network for Children's Christmas celebration at the Dream Center;
- Parade entry with the North of the River annual Christmas Parade.



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;
- 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 County Child Development Conference Steering Committee;
- Kern County Network for Children Governing Board;
- Kern Early Stars Consortium;
- Mentor Teacher Selection Committee;
- Taft College Child Development Advisory Committee.

Collaborations

During the 2015-2016 year, the Council collaborated with the following agencies and organizations to offer local trainings and/or events:

- California Mentor Director Program/Bakersfield College;
- California Preschool Instructional Network;
- Community Action Partnership of Kern;
- First 5 Kern;
- Kern Association for the Education of Young Children.

Communications

Consumer /Community Awareness

- *Put Down the Phone Campaign*

The Council continued its 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 are 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 revised its website which maintains a wealth of information 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 2014-2015 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 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 – 2015-2016

Jerri Alvarado, Community Member – Bakersfield Homeless Center

Vienna Battistoni, Public Agency Member – Bakersfield College

Myetta Beavers, Discretionary Member – Child Haven Preschool

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

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

Lisa Duncan-Purcell, 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

Endee Grijalva, Community Member – Fresno Pacific University

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

Alesha Hixon, Child Care Provider – The Wonderful Company

Jo'L Jackson, Public Agency Member – Bakersfield College

Casey Knaak, Community Member – United Way of Kern County

Virginia Layland, Child Care Provider – Community Action Partnership of Kern

Veronica Munoz, Public Agency Member – Kern County Department of Child Support

Everlie Murillo, Child Care Consumer – Parent

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 Philley, Public Agency Member – Bakersfield Adult School Children's Center

Betty Phillips, Discretionary Member – Former Preschool Teacher

Courtney Purcell, Community Member – Bakersfield Behavioral Health Hospital

Lupe Sanchez, Child Care Provider – Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo

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, Discretionary Member – California State University, Bakersfield

Danell Ward, Child Care Consumer – 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
- 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 its 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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