

Annual Report 2016-2017



Early Childhood Council of Kern

Planning for quality early care and education.

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Early Childhood Council of Kern Report of Accomplishments 2016-2017



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.

This 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 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 2016-2017 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: www.earlychildhoodkern.org. This plan will undergo review and revision during the 2017-2018 year.

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

2016-2017 Council Activities



Quality Enhancement

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

The Kern Early Stars was a large component of the Council's scope of work in the 2016-2017 year. Established in the 2014-2015 year, this system has been 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 2016-2017 year, the Kern Early Stars had 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 provided the opportunity for State and Federally funded 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. The program maintained nine staff members including 7 Early Learning Coaches. In total, the Kern Early Stars had an operational budget of \$2,793,323 to implement the QRIS program throughout Kern County. Currently there are approximately 107 licensed family child care providers and 82 child development centers participating at various levels with the QRIS program. A portion of the funds were used to train local individuals to be trainers and assessors thereby increasing the capacity to continue the program with less need to contract for these services outside of Kern County. 110 CLASS and Environment Rating Scale assessments were conducted during the year. 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. Sixteen trainings, including 4 multi-session series were provided on such topics as Trauma Informed Care, Teaching Pyramid, Making the Most of Classroom Interactions, Environment Rating Scale, Family Engagement, etc. To date, the Kern Early Stars has provided ratings for 45 family child care providers and 57 centers throughout Kern County. Additional details can be found on the website at: www.kernearlystars.org

Early Care and Education Retention Project

The Council completed the 16th year of the Retention Project by awarding more than \$285,773 to 372 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 670 college-level child development or general education units and participated in 5,099 hours of professional development workshops, seminars and conferences. In addition, one workshop was provided on the topic of Active Physical Play. Due to changes in the State budget, this program has been reduced by 25% for the 2017-2018 year.



Kern County Infant Toddler Seminar

This annual seminar has been coordinated by the Council for the past 17 years and is designed specifically for early childhood professionals working with children birth to three years of age. The March 18, 2017 event included workshops in English and Spanish for 149 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. The Infant/Toddler QRIS provided additional resources for participants to enhance their learning experience.

Center Director's Professional Learning Community (PLC)

Formerly called the Center Directors Luncheons, the Council joined with the Kern Early Stars to expand this program, which has been offered since 2005, by providing four to five events each year. During the 2016-2017 year, five sessions were provided with a focus on Leadership presented by Dr. Christine Wilson. 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 session and is a partnership with 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 October 22, 2016 at the Rabobank Convention Center in Bakersfield with 448 participants from throughout the Central Valley. Keynote speaker Mike Longoria began the day followed by 39 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.

California Transitional Kindergarten/California State Preschool Program Stipends

Funds for this program are designed to assist Transitional Kindergarten (TK) Teachers with meeting the mandate that they obtain 24 units of child development/early childhood education if they were 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. Reimbursements totaling \$15,140 were distributed during the 2016-2017 year. 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.

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 those in the community requesting 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. Documents to guide the development of new child development centers were made available to several entities in the community interested in opening a center.

California Department of Education Contractors Meetings

The Council continues to convene meetings for agencies and school districts that hold 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, 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 determined that the 2016 Priorities were still accurate therefore no changes were adopted for the 2017 Priorities. The Priorities were submitted to the California Department of Education and 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 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 on the council's website under About the Council/Scope of Work.



Community Involvement

2016-2017 Community Service Projects

- The Council contributed more than 153 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;
- Parade entry with the North of the River annual Christmas Parade;
- Constructed more than 25 tie blankets which were donated to the United Way of Kern County’s Homelessness Project;
- Donation of more than 800 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;
- Cerro Coso Community College Child Development Advisory Committee;
- 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;
- Mentor Teacher Selection Committee;
- Taft College Child Development Advisory Committee.

Collaborations

- During the 2016-2017 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 and Twitter 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

An informational brochure was 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. *Preschool or Transitional Kindergarten: Making the best choice for your child* can be found on the council's website under For Parents.

Information Distribution

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

Website

The Council houses all of its 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 and updated regularly. The Council's website can be found at: www.earlychildhoodkern.org.

Annual Report

The 2015-2016 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 – 2016-2017

Jerri Alvarado, Community Member - Bakersfield Homeless Center

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

Tina Cox, Public Agency Member, Kern High School District, ROP

Lisa Duncan-Purcell, Discretionary Member, California State University, Bakersfield

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

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

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

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

Betty Phillips, Discretionary Member – Former Preschool Teacher

Courtney Purcell, Community Member – Bakersfield Behavioral Health Hospital

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

Jessica Sloan, Child Care Consumer - Joyful Junction Preschool

Jennifer Thompson-Solis, Public Agency Member - Kern County Department of Mental Health

Amanda Tumblin, Discretionary Member – California State University, Bakersfield

Danell Ward, Child Care Provider – Bakersfield College Child Development Center

The Council was deeply saddened this year by the passing of current and past members Vienna Battistoni and Danell Ward. Their contribution to the early childhood field will be cherished for years to come.



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. (dark in January and July). 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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