



HEAD START



Write Start

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LACOE HEAD START AND EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Executive Director's Message: Five More Years!

Great news to close out 2017-18: the Office of Head Start informed us that we will not need to recompet! Those of you who were around for our last recompetition know what a blessing this is. Barring any unforeseen problems, at the end of this grant cycle next June, we can continue into the next one without competition.



Keesha Woods

This achievement is a validation of the past four years of hard work. Not only did we ace the reviews that determined our status, but the actions we took to prepare—such as all the facilities improvements and the concerted efforts to strengthen classroom interactions—will continue to benefit children, families, and teachers into the next grant cycle and beyond.

Now, we're in the midst of planning for the next five-year grant, beginning with a strategic planning kick-off in March that was well attended by delegate agency directors and Policy Council executive members. I am thrilled that we are able to bring so many important voices into our strategic planning process. But we need more. Please help us ensure that all stakeholders are engaged and contributing. That's how we can plan to meet all the diverse needs of our community.

Please also remember that while the OHS letter represents a tremendous accomplishment (and allows us to breathe a brief sigh of relief), we cannot let our guard down even for a moment. All of the recompetition triggers still apply. If we neglect care and supervision, fiscal oversight, enrollment, or any other aspect of our program, we may still be forced to recompet. Our babies deserve our best every day. Please continue to provide excellent services and oversight so that we can focus all our effort and energy on serving them and planning for their future, instead of recompeting for our grant.

Early Care & Education Resource Center

The Early Care & Education Resource Center is available for more than just quiet reading and borrowing early childhood resources. It is also an interactive, relaxing space for class field trips, monthly socializations, and small meetings. In addition, there are a variety of supplies that can assist parents and staff with projects, such as laminators, die cut machines, book binders, arts and crafts supplies, etc.



Interactive guided activities. Marcela Orozco, a Plaza de la Raza Home Visitor, interacts with children during a March 2018 socialization at the Early Care and Education Resource Center.

For ECE Resource Center hours or if interested in setting up a class field trip or scheduling a monthly socialization, please contact Andres Ortiz at (562) 401-5332.

LACOE Immigration Resources

LACOE has created a web page that provides resources regarding immigration issues that affect our school communities. Information will be updated regularly.

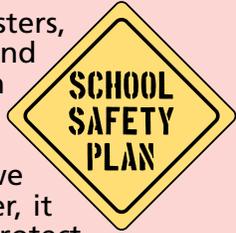
To access the LACOE immigration resources web page, go to: <https://www.lacoe.edu/Home/ImmigrationIssues.aspx>

Resources are also regularly shared on social media at www.facebook.com/immigrationLACOE/ and twitter.com/lacoeresources



Stay Prepared: School Safety Plan

Recently we've seen a lot of disasters, both natural—such as wildfires and mudslides—and man-made—such as school shootings.



While we all hope the children we serve will never experience disaster, it is vital that we are prepared to protect and support them. Fear is a normal, natural human response to disasters and chaotic times, but in our preparation, we must remain level-headed and vigilant.

In a recent Exchange article, "Child Care in Disasters: Why It's Best to Prepare for the Worst," the author noted, "Not only do children need to return to care to help them get back to a familiar routine with caring peers and adults, but a community's resilience is dependent on child care as parents cannot return to work without it."

The author shared tips to help providers plan and prepare for both natural and man-made disasters:

- Make a written plan
- Maintain current health and safety information for children and staff
- Develop and implement family communication and reunification plans and backup plans
- Identify emergency team and procedures for evacuation, sheltering, and lockdown
- Assemble emergency equipment and supplies
- Practice your plan
- Include children and adults with all levels of abilities in your plans
- Protect program information and assets

It is also vital that all programs emphasize staff wellness, include safety training plans and regular site security assessments to build comfort and familiarity with practices, as well as consistent, intentional efforts to safeguard mental and emotional health for all staff.

In addition, as we continue to hear about frequent incidents of violence at schools across the country, remember, **IF YOU SEE SOMETHING** that seems out of the ordinary, **SAY SOMETHING:**

What Parents Can Do

- Drop off and pick up children according to the regular school schedule
- Alert school staff or administrators of any suspicious activity
- Sign in and out when visiting school sites
- Update emergency card
- Inform site staff of the adult who will be picking up your child when you are unable to do so (make sure that person is listed on the emergency card)
- Make a safety plan for walking to and from school
- Practice safety procedures and talk to your child about adults who can help them stay safe (teachers, site staff, police officers)

What Site Staff Can Do

- Follow administrative regulations and board policies regarding safety
- Follow written protocols for before, during, and after-school supervision (transition)
- Implement sign-in/sign-out procedures
- Verify emergency contact and pick up information with parents/care providers
- Create a written schedule for opening and locking gates
- Require all guests, including parents, LACOE staff, and volunteers, to sign in at the front office and wear name tags while at the school site
- Alert police of suspicious activity
- Conduct an assessment of all school sites and advise how the building and grounds can be optimized for safety
- Educate staff, children, and families on child-appropriate safety and prevention strategies
- Increase collaboration with law enforcement and neighborhood organizations focused on safety
- Provide counseling and facilitate community meetings on safety issues and concerns

These suggestions will not only help our schools and communities prepare for both natural and man-made disasters, but also help us meet the requirements in Head Start Program Performance Standard 1302.47(b)(8).

Policy Council Highlights

March 13th: Alongside LACOE staff, members of the Policy Council Planning and Development Committee presented the LACOE Head Start funding application to the Board of Education.

March 16th: 157 LACOE parents attended the 22nd Annual Parent Involvement Academy. The Parent Involvement Academy is a joint effort between LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division, Bassett USD, El Monte City SD, El Monte Union High SD, Garvey SD, Montebello USD, Mountain View SD, Rowland USD, and USC Head Start.

Conference Objectives:

- Raise awareness of the importance of parent involvement
- Support school readiness
- Support districts/schools in building capacity for parent involvement
- Increase opportunities for male involvement in communities and schools

April 12th: Approximately 200 parents and community members attended the 3rd Annual LACOE/LACMEC Father Involvement Parent Conference. LACOE hosted the event at the LACOE Conference Center in partnership with LA County Male Engagement Collaborative (LACMEC). Other partners included LA County Child Support Services, Children’s Institute, Inc., Pacific Oaks College, Child360, and Para Los Niños.

Conference Objective: To provide a fun and interactive conference for fathers by fathers.

September: Policy Council parent Elizabeth Arreola, Garvey School District, will begin her tenure as the new LACOE office assistant. She will be following Theresa Miranda, who has taken a job with Bassett USD.



2017-18 Policy Council Executive Committee: From left to right: Dr. Monte Perez (LACOE Board Member); Mireya Velazquez (Recording Secretary, Mountain View); Yesenia Aviles (Vice Chairperson, Plaza de la Raza); Candace Bond McKeever (LACOE Board Member); Elizabeth Arreola (Chairperson, Garvey); Jeanie Drummer (PTA President, Community Rep); Cecilia Prudencio (Treasurer, ABC); Arturo Valdez (LACOE Chief Academic Officer); Anna Mojica (Parliamentarian, Community Rep); Tajauta Gilbert McLaine (Sergeant at Arms, Community Rep).

Parent Spotlight:

Cecilia “CeCe” Prudencio,
ABC Unified School District,
Parent and LACOE Head Start Policy Council Treasurer

Prior to enrolling her four-year-old son, Enzo, in Head Start, Cecilia “CeCe” Prudencio was in a relationship that adversely affected Enzo and led him to exhibit disruptive behavior. But after Prudencio consulted with a family service worker at Niemes Head Start (ABC USD), Enzo started counseling and his conduct improved. In addition, Prudencio stated, “Enzo is very smart and intuitive, and school has brought it out even more.”



Cecilia “CeCe” Prudencio

Although Prudencio has been a part of Head Start for less than a year, she has found the access to resources invaluable. She credits the advice that she received from other parents in helping her successfully navigate the regional center process and advocate for her two-year-old son. Based on information from the program and support from other parents, she realized early on that he had a speech delay and was able to access support including speech classes.

Prudencio has also found support for herself. Before she enrolled Enzo in Head Start, the relationship that had affected Enzo had also left her depressed. In Head Start, she found that volunteering gave her an outlet for staying productive and busy by being actively involved in Enzo’s school. Additionally, the mental health consultants from the school referred them to parent and child therapy—which has been helpful for them both.

She also found it comforting to be able to talk to people who can relate to her challenges. “I made friends that I didn’t think that I would have been friends with under other circumstances,” Prudencio stated. And in addition to broadening her social contacts, “Head Start gives me knowledge and exposure to more experiences,” Prudencio added. Already volunteering for leadership roles at Niemes, when the opportunity to represent ABC at Policy Council arose, she signed up instantly.

Prudencio credits her experience with Head Start with helping her regain a positive mindset. Grateful for the support and encouragement she has received in Head Start, Prudencio’s goal is to go back to college in the near future and continue to build a stable life for her and her two sons.

School Readiness Section Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

Head Start (HS) has always been at the forefront of providing parents and legal guardians various activities to enhance their parenting skills. New Head Start Performance Standards effective in 2016 state that programs must offer parents the opportunity to participate in a research-based parenting curriculum. Ahead of the curve, LACOE began implementation five years ago, allowing agencies to choose from Abriendo Puertas, Incredible Years, and Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

CSEFEL is a user-friendly parenting curriculum that promotes social and emotional development as well as school readiness for children from birth to five. Over the past five years, LACOE has trained over 200 delegate agency staff and parents with the CSEFEL curriculum.

The program is bilingual (English/Spanish) and consists of four training modules that are offered over five sessions. CSEFEL has proven to be effective due to the abbreviated length of the curriculum and the tools and skills that families may readily apply with their children in promoting positive behavior.

According to CSEFEL, its guiding principles are:

- Supporting young children's social and emotional development to **prevent** challenging behaviors
- **Individualizing interventions** to meet children's and families' unique interests, strengths, and needs
- Promoting **skill building with enough intensity** of effect change
- **Implementing strategies in the context** of naturally occurring routines and environments
- Ensuring fidelity of use through a **systematic change process**
- **Modifying strategies** to meet the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and children



Run Your Own Race: Theresa Miranda



As Theresa Miranda, former Bassett USD Head Start parent and LACOE office assistant, reflects on her past few years of volunteering and working at LACOE Head Start and the many lessons that she has learned along the way, she cannot help but be proud of all her accomplishments.

Theresa initially began volunteering at her daughter's school and the LACOE Policy Council as "a way to pay Head Start back" for her daughter's schooling and to help give to those who helped her and her daughter, but she found that the more she gave to the program, the more the program gave in return. Theresa not only regained her confidence after a bad breakup, she was also given a job opportunity as a LACOE office assistant.

While at LACOE, Theresa completed the Family Development Credential class and earned an associate degree in human resources. She also learned many invaluable lessons like how to be an impactful speaker, because she learned how to influence other parents and "how it is not just for your child but for other children as well." She learned "how to talk parents into taking the next step to being better advocates for their children."

Theresa believes that if you run your own race by setting your own goals and remaining open to new answers, you will find success. This principle and her positive attitude led Theresa back to Bassett USD, where she was recently hired as a clerical assistant II. Her two-year goal is to use her new degree to move into a human resources position. She would also like to continue her schooling to earn a BA in human resources management.

Beat the Heat

Heat-related deaths and illnesses are preventable, yet around 618 people in the United States are killed by extreme heat every year.

What Is Extreme Heat?

Extreme heat is defined as summertime temperatures that are much hotter and/or humid than average. Because some places are hotter than others, this depends on what's considered average for a particular location at that time of year. Humid and muggy conditions can make it seem hotter than it really is.

BEAT THE HEAT:
Extreme Heat

Heat related deaths are preventable

<p>WHAT:</p> <p>Extreme heat or heat waves occur when the temperature reaches extremely high levels or when the combination of heat and humidity causes the air to become oppressive.</p>	<p>WHO:</p> <p>Children More males than females are affected Older adults Outside workers People with disabilities</p>
<p>WHERE:</p> <p>Houses with little to no AC Construction worksites Cars</p>	<p>HOW to AVOID:</p> <p>Stay hydrated with water, avoid sugary beverages Stay cool in an air conditioned area Wear light-weight, light colored, loose fitting clothes</p>

Some factors that might increase your risk of developing a heat-related illness include:

- High levels of humidity
- Obesity
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Prescription drug use
- Heart disease
- Mental illness
- Poor circulation
- Sunburn
- Alcohol use

Who Is Most at Risk?

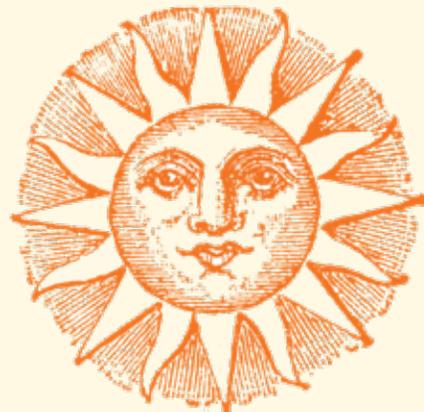
Older adults, the very young, and people with mental illness and chronic diseases are at highest risk. However, even young and healthy people can be affected if they participate in strenuous physical activities during hot weather.

Summertime activity, whether on the playing field or the construction site, must be balanced with actions that help the body cool itself to prevent heat-related illness. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website to learn more on how to stay safe in the heat this summer, including how to prevent, recognize, and cope with heat-related illness.

Adapted from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention article, "About Extreme Heat" https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html

What Causes Heat-Related Illness?

Heat-related illnesses, like heat exhaustion or heat stroke, happen when the body is not able to properly cool itself. While the body normally cools itself by sweating, during extreme heat, this might not be enough. In these cases, a person's body temperature rises faster than it can cool itself down. This can cause damage to the brain and other vital organs.



Fresh Perspectives and New Skills Gained at Latest Father Involvement Conference



Molding more than clay. Rowan Harrison teaches parents a pinch pot exercise to share with their children.

On Thursday, April 12, 2018, LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division hosted the 3rd Annual Father Involvement Parent Conference in partnership with the Los Angeles County Male Engagement Collaborative. A capacity crowd of approximately 200 fathers, mothers, and community members gained new skills and perspectives for raising their children.

Studies show that children who have positive male role models active in their lives achieve higher grades, maintain better school attendance, and are less likely to exhibit negative behavior. LACOE consistently encourages male engagement through initiatives including the Father Involvement Parent Conference, as well as the countywide Be a Hero: Take Your Child to Preschool Day held annually on the first Tuesday of October.

During this year's conference, fathers and other attendees participated in a variety of seminars on topics including maintaining healthy marriages, co-parenting, advocating for special needs children, transitioning to kindergarten, getting children to eat healthy, and the pros and cons of technology in education. Hands-on workshops included music and movement, pottery activities, and fun home improvement ideas.

Silvan Zavala, a father of three children in Head Start and Early Head Start programs at Plaza de la Raza Child Development Services, Inc., pointed to the active shooter training presented by Lieutenant Kevin Phillips as especially enlightening. "I was really impressed with the information," Silvan shared. "Run. Hide. Fight. It's simple and to the point." As with the majority of workshops, it was presented in both Spanish and English to be accessible to all participants.

This year, conference organizers made a more concerted effort to encourage couples to attend together. Workshops were open to all participants, though a special "man cave" was set aside for men only. Filled with sports and automotive memorabilia, the secluded room provided a safe space for more frank small-group discussions. Sessions alternated between English and Spanish, and were hosted by Project Fatherhood, Child Support Services, and fathers of former Head Start children.

At the end of the day, participants returned home with new skills, perspectives, and educational materials provided by event sponsors, encouraged and empowered to be better parents to their children.

Prevent Eyestrain from Digital Devices

You probably use screens for just about everything—to work, to relax, or just to keep up with daily life.

If your eyes feel dry and tired, your vision becomes blurry by the end of the day, or your head, neck, and shoulders ache, all that time on your digital devices might be to blame.

If you change how you use smartphones, computers, tablets, and other screens, you can keep from straining your eyes.

Why Do Screens Cause Eyestrain?

Normally, we blink about 15 times a minute. That spreads tears evenly over your eyes, which keeps them from getting dry and irritated. But researchers have found that people blink less than half as often when they're reading, watching, or playing on a screen. Also, the contrast of text against the background, the glare, and flickering from digital screens can be hard on your eyes.

Prevent Digital Eyestrain

No, you don't have to cut out all screen time. But a few changes to how you use your devices can be easier on your eyes.

- Make sure your computer screen is about 25 inches, or an arm's length, away from your face. The center of the screen should be about 10-15 degrees below eye level.
- Cut glare by using a matte screen filter. You can find them for all types of computers, phones, and tablets.
- Follow the 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at an object at least 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds.
- Take a longer break of about 15 minutes after every two hours you spend on your devices.
- Use artificial tears to refresh your eyes when they feel dry.



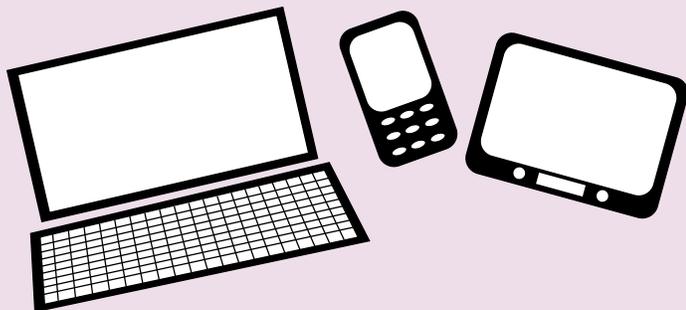
- Try putting a humidifier in the room where you most often use a computer or other device.
- Make sure the lighting in the room you're in is bright enough. You don't want your device to be brighter than the surroundings.
- If you wear contact lenses, give your eyes a break by wearing your glasses.
- Get regular eye exams. You might need to use a different pair of glasses when you're working on a computer.

Adjust Your Devices

You can also make sure your devices are set for eye health.

- Raise the contrast on your screen.
- Make text larger.
- Change the brightness of the screen. It shouldn't be lighter or darker than your surroundings.
- Lower the color temperature of your screen. That means it will give off less blue light, which is linked to more eyestrain.
- Raise the device's refresh rate. That will cause less flickering of the screen.

Adapted from "Prevent Eyestrain from Digital Devices" <https://www.webmd.com/eye-health/prevent-digital-eyestrain>



Important Dates to Remember

September - November 2018

Sept	National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
Sept	Fruits and Veggies—More Matters Month
Sept 10	2018 Annual Fiesta Educativa Conference, Los Angeles, CA
Sept 10	Mexican Consulate Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA
Sept 11	Policy Council Meeting
Sept 20	Directors Meeting
Oct	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Oct 1	Mexican Consulate Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA
Oct 2	National Child Health Day
Oct 8-11	NHSA Fall Leadership Institute, Arlington, VA
Oct 9	Policy Council Meeting
Oct 18	Directors Meeting
Oct 22-26	Region IX 2018 Family Engagement and Cultural Effectiveness Conference, Maui, HI
Oct 31	Halloween
Nov	National Epilepsy Awareness Month
Nov	National Child Mental Health Month
Nov 5	Mexican Consulate Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA
Nov 12	Veteran's Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Nov 13	Policy Council Meeting
Nov 14	ICAN NEXUS XXIII Training Conference, Universal City, CA
Nov 15-16	Region IX Early Impact: Quality Improvement Summit, Long Beach, CA
Nov 15	Directors Meeting
Nov 21	In lieu of Admission Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Nov 22	Thanksgiving Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Nov 23	The day after Thanksgiving Day—LACOE Offices Closed



Write Start Submissions

The Write Start welcomes your articles pertaining to Head Start activities and events. Please submit them to thewritestart@lacoedu.edu. The deadline for the next edition is **Friday, September 21, 2018**. You may also fax your submission to (562) 940-1740, Attn: Stephaney Roy.

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Head Start and Early Learning Division
is now on...

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Events, parenting tips, developmental milestones, and more... LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division is your reliable source for early childhood education and early care information.



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THE Write Start

An official newsletter of the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Head Start and Early Learning Division, 10100 Pioneer Blvd., Ste. 325, Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 (562/940-1770). **prekkid.org**. **Superintendent:** Debra Duardo. **Board of Education:** President; Thomas A. Saenz, Vice President; James Cross, Douglas R. Boyd, Sr., Alex Johnson, Gregory McGinity, Candace Bond McKeever, and Monte E. Perez. **Executive Director:** Keesha Woods. Produced by the LACOE Communications Department in partnership with The Head Start and Early Learning Division Write Start Team. **Contributing writers for this issue:** Danee Jones-Mitchell, Colin Legerton, Stephaney Roy, Guadalupe Villanueva, Keesha Woods, and Sandra Ybanez. **Editor:** Colin Legerton. **Graphics/layout:** John Paster.