



Write Start

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LACOE HEAD START AND EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Executive Director's Message: A Chance to Learn

In August, the Sacramento Bee reported on the strange state of early learning in California: though there are only enough spots for half of preschoolers and one-eighth of infants and toddlers, many seats remain unfilled. In a way, it's nice to know we're not alone. Many programs throughout the country, and especially here in California, are facing the same difficulties in reaching full enrollment—different eligibility criteria for state and federal programs, federal poverty guidelines out of sync with California's cost of living, communities shifting due to gentrification, lack of awareness of early learning programs, and so on.



Keesha Woods

It may be comforting to know that this struggle is not ours alone, but it doesn't make our job any easier. We still need to fill every seat in each of our programs. The Office of Head Start expects every grantee to reach and maintain full enrollment this year, and this is what we owe to the children and families of Los Angeles County. Each empty seat means one more child missing out on a chance to learn. We don't want any more missed opportunities.

After all, despite these difficulties, the families and children who need Head Start are still out there. All the research shows that every child benefits from a quality early learning experience, and there is no lack of families struggling to make ends meet in LA County. But as communities shift and new challenges emerge, we may not be able to reach these families in the same old places in the same old ways. So, let's keep adapting and innovating our recruitment efforts together.

And for the children already in our programs, excellent care and supervision need to be the number one priority for every staff member every day. Our babies deserve a safe, supportive environment where they can learn and grow. Remember that any care and supervision issues at any of our sites could put our whole grant at risk, and with it the learning opportunities of more than 12,000 children. Please keep up your excellent work every day to give all these children the best head start on life!

Meeting to Support AB 605



LACOE and delegates meet with Assembly Speaker Pro Tempore Kevin Mullin, author of Assembly Bill 605, which creates a single integrated license for childcare centers.

From left to right: Riverside COE Staff, Rosa Macias (Program Development Assistant, LACOE HSEL), Pamela Gibbs (Director, LACOE Governmental Relations), Angela Capone (Director, Para Los Niños), Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Kevin Mullin, Keesha Woods (Executive Director, LACOE HSEL), Donna Sneeringer (Consultant, CHSA), Norayma Cabot (Executive Director, Plaza de la Raza).



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/Immigration-Issues>

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

Male Engagement:

Empowerment Is the Key to Success

All fathers have something extraordinary and beneficial to share. LACOE invites fathers and male role models from all delegate agencies to attend our annual male engagement empowerment event in April 2019. This will be an opportunity for fathers to mentor one another and explore ways to empower future generations by instilling values and principles that our children will carry with them throughout life. Children benefit from having engaged male and female role models in their lives. Together, fathers can pave the way for our children to have a seamless journey through early education and beyond.



For more information, please contact Ernest McCullough at (562) 940-1655 or McCullough_Ernest@lacoedu.



Not all heroes wear capes. Plaza de la Raza's Alayna Reyes and her hero—her father, Frank Reyes—at this October's Be a Hero: Take Your Child to Preschool Day.

Kudos for Full Enrollment!

Congratulations to Bassett, MAOF, Mt. View, Norwalk La-Mirada, PACE, Para Los Niños, Plaza de la Raza, and St. Anne's for reaching full enrollment in one or more programs in July and August!



Top (L to R): Rosie Ducoing (Bassett), Martha Mendoza (MAOF), Vanessa Tran (Mt. View), Laurel Parker (NLMUSD). Bottom (L to R): Kelly Konysky (PACE), Adeline Fernandez (PLN), Latonda Williams (Plaza), Deborah Paratore (St. Anne's).

Policy Council Highlights

- **September:** Policy Council parents Gerardo Laguna (Norwalk-La Mirada USD) and Elizabeth Arreola (Garvey SD) started as LACOE office assistants.
- **December:** Policy Council New Member Training was held on December 6 and 7, and the new council was seated on December 11.
- **Ongoing:** Governance Unit has updated the training manual and member verification process.
- **Ongoing:** The Planning and Development Committee participated on the Strategic Planning Team, including presenting the Community Assessment to the County Board of Education.
- **Ongoing:** Policy Council is going green by printing fewer documents for meetings.
- **Upcoming** March 2019 Parent Involvement Academy will include more father involvement workshops.

Honoring Our Parents: Yesenia Aviles

Congratulations to Policy Council parent Yesenia Aviles (Plaza de la Raza) for receiving the 15th Annual Patriot's Award for Whittier area residents. The Patriot's Award honors local citizens who have demonstrated humanitarian and community service.



Aviles earned the Patriot's Award because even though she faced many challenges as a teen mother, she stayed focused on being a positive influence in the lives of her children. She continued her education and earned her GED while tirelessly volunteering for a myriad of educational and community service causes, including South

Whittier Community Education Foundation, LACOE Policy Council, neighborhood watch, and LA CADA (a teen drug abuse program).

Parent Spotlight:

TaJauta Gilbert-McLaine,
ABC Unified School District
Parent and LACOE Head Start Policy Council
Community Representative

When TaJauta "Taj" Gilbert-McLaine's eldest son was born, she was working in a high-stress, well-paid position in the medical field. When she was ready to place him in preschool, a friend told her about Head Start, but her family did not qualify. When Taj was laid off from her job during her next pregnancy, she and her family faced a sudden financial hardship. But, on the bright side, she was able to enroll her baby daughter in Head Start, starting a connection that has enriched their lives ever since.



TaJauta "Taj"
Gilbert-McLaine

Taj always felt guilt from missing quality time with her son due to her hectic work schedule, so when afforded the opportunity to be more actively involved with her daughter, she took full advantage. And when she started looking for employment again, she enrolled her daughter at Kennedy High School Head Start (ABC USD) in 2016.

Taj happily notes that while her daughter was always very smart, "Head Start gave her confidence in her ability and sparked a love of learning." Even though Taj's daughter is no longer in Head Start, she still benefits from the structure that she learned, and she remains confident in herself, because her "teachers were always kind and encouraged her to be whatever she wanted."

When her daughter was in Head Start, Taj found multiple opportunities to volunteer and help her school site. She also increased her community and civic engagement as she learned that Head Start is not only about the child's education, but also about empowering parents. She started to "pay more attention to the measures on the ballots and became more aware of what was being taught in both her children's schools."

Taj found that by taking on leadership positions at ABC USD and on the Policy Council, she became more confident and "more of a leader." She has become an ambassador for the Head Start program, with the opportunity to meet with U.S. Senator Kamala Harris's L.A. office and represent LACOE as a featured speaker in the Parents as Leaders delegation that met with elected officials on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC.

Since Taj became involved with Head Start, she has discovered a passion for education. This experience has inspired her to take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the Family Development Credential and Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) courses. Taj's goals after Policy Council include continuing her education and finding full-time employment.

EMPLOYEES of the MONTH

September 2018



Lee Ho
HS Training & Technical Assistance Specialist
Program Design & Effectiveness

"There is never a time when one is concerned if things will be done, on time, and to the standard expected when Lee is at the helm. All go to him for inspiration and strategies to connect with our workforce, and really enjoy the process toward successful outcomes."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination



Robert Graham
Budget Analyst
Fiscal Controls & Accountability

"Robert has a solution-driven approach to work. When I come with a challenge, he meets me with answers, not more roadblocks. His attention to detail reveals questions I hadn't considered and sometimes even new approaches to routine tasks."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination

October 2018



Sardis Rodriguez
HS Program Development Assistant
Program Design & Effectiveness

"Sardis is a natural leader and team player. Her demeanor is always peaceful and she will always respond with encouragement, objectivity, and has great follow-through."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination



Rodner Gutierrez
HS Applications Architect
Planning & Resources Development

"He always has a smile on his face. He inspires me to portray myself more positively through adversity."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination

November 2018



Guadalupe Villanueva
HS Family & Community Engagement Consultant
Program Design & Effectiveness

"Guadalupe is definitely a team player and assists any new staff in any way he can. Whenever there is something we should know, a meeting to go or a task to perform, he makes sure that we are aware and guides us through all the new tasks."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination



Frank Huynh
Micro Computer Support Technician II
Planning & Resources Development

"Frank doesn't just fix our computers when we have an issue. He takes the time to solve it, then will even notice something that will make the computer run faster and makes that extra effort."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination

December 2018



Navi Gamboa
Bilingual Senior Typist Clerk
Public Policy & Special Projects

"Navi has always displayed a "can do" attitude and a willingness to learn. She never shies away from work, even if she does not yet know how to do it."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination



Rei Johnson
HS Health Consultant
Program Design & Effectiveness

"The Promotora project is a wonderful example of Rei's "spirit of service." She is committed not only to the health and safety of enrolled children, but she has also embraced the provision of services to uplift, inspire, educate and empower the parents of those children."

—Excerpt from 2018 Nomination

Making a Family Emergency Plan



One of the most important tools every individual and family can have to protect themselves in possible emergencies is a family emergency preparedness plan, complete with a list of emergency contacts. Planning should include what to do during an emergency and take into account any members of your family with special needs, specific preparations for children, and what you will do with your pets.

As part of your planning, you should make copies of and safeguard personal and financial records. Also, take any actions necessary to prepare your property. Everyone in the family should understand what to do, where to go, and what to take in the event of an emergency.

Make a Communication Plan

- As a family, create a comprehensive plan for communicating if separated during an emergency.
- Create a sheet or card with all the phone numbers and information every individual in the family may need, and make sure every member of the family has a copy of the communications plan.
- Be aware that in the event of an emergency, phone lines and cell phone towers may be overloaded or not working. You can try text messaging if normal communication options are not available. It helps to have a contingency plan for reaching each other.
- Ensure every member of your family has a cell phone, coins, or a prepaid phone card in order to connect with your emergency contact during emergencies.
- Establish an out-of-state, in-case-of-emergency (ICE) name and number for everyone in your family. Save the ICE information in everyone's cellular phone.

Make an Evacuation Plan

- As a family, discuss where you will go in the event of an emergency.

- Discuss where your children will go if they are in school or daycare at the time of the emergency, and make sure they understand where you intend to be.
- Your plan should also address the needs and care of pets, family members with special needs, and safely shutting off utilities.

Practice Your Plan

- Set up practice evacuations or shelter-in-place drills at least twice a year for your family to ensure everyone knows what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency.
- Update your plan according to any issues that arise.
- Keep your emergency kit up to date, replacing water and perishables periodically. Make sure everyone knows where it is and to take it when sheltering or evacuating.
- Check your smoke alarms regularly.

Other Considerations

- Create one or more emergency kits that include enough supplies for at least three days to make sure that your family is fully prepared.
- It is advisable to keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks at home in your kit or in a safe place where you can quickly access them in case of evacuation because ATMs and credit cards may not work during a disaster.
- Consider saving money in an emergency savings account for crises.

Adapted from United States Marine Corps article, "Emergency Preparedness Program" <https://www.ready.marines.mil/Make-a-Plan/Making-a-Family-Emergency-Plan/>.

Read Across America Day – March 1, 2019



The National Education Association (NEA) is building a nation of readers through its signature program, NEA's Read Across America. Now in its 21st year, this year-round program focuses on motivating children to read through events, partnerships, and reading resources.

In honor of Dr. Seuss' birthday, NEA adopted Read Across America Day to celebrate the importance of reading. Seuss-themed reading parties are the celebration of choice for many of the millions of participants each year. Here are a few tried and true ideas for celebrating on March 1, 2019.

Spirit Day for Reading

Mark Read Across America Day with Seuss spirit. Have a school-wide Crazy Hat Day, Wear Red and White Day, Foxiest Socks Day, Pajama Day, Wear Your Clothes Inside Out Day, or Come as Your Favorite Seuss Character Day. Be sure to tie books into your festive-wear theme with read-alouds of related titles.

Door Décor

A school-wide door-decorating activity gives everyone a chance to show enthusiasm for reading. Get students involved by using photographs or student-drawn self-portraits embellished with Cat in the Hat hats, Thing 1 and Thing 2 blue hair, or notable features from other favorite Seuss characters. Do not forget to include a reversible door hanger—Do Not Disturb, We're Reading! / Come In and READ with Us!

Cook Up Some Reading Fun

Serve up some green eggs and ham on Read Across America Day or make Cat in the Hat pattern snacks! Provide kids with short straws and red and white foods: banana and strawberry slices, raspberries and mini marshmallows, red pepper and white cheese, etc. Have kids alternate red and white as they put them on the straws, then let them enjoy the snack as you read aloud.

Literary Field Trip

Plan a field trip to your local library or bookstore. Work with the librarian or bookseller to develop a guided experience that includes time for both exploring and hearing books read aloud. Local libraries and museums also often host exhibitions that focus on children's book authors, and bookstores have authors for public readings and events. Take advantage of their efforts and offerings.

"You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read with a child." Dr. Seuss

For information and tips about NEA's Read Across America, visit <http://www.nea.org/grants/886.htm>.

Adapted from "NEA's Read Across America Activity Ideas" <http://www.nea.org/grants/69971.htm> (includes links to additional resources).

Lifestyle Tips to Ease the Winter Blues

With the changing of temperatures, some experience what is commonly known as the “Winter Blues.” When your mood is falling as fast as the thermometer, these small lifestyle changes may help boost your spirits.

Here are some scientifically proven ways to lift your spirits and ease the mid-winter doldrums:

Make your environment brighter

When your body is craving more daylight, opening blinds and curtains, trimming back tree branches, and sitting closer to windows can help provide an extra dose of sunshine.

Limit sugar intake

If you start looking at the ingredients of food labels, you will notice various forms of sugar. They will appear as syrups or words that end in “-ose.”

Sugar may give you a little happy boost at first, but research from UCLA suggests that too much sugar and too few omega-3 fatty acids can functionally change your brain and slow it down. Research on how the brain works is always ongoing. But it's a safe bet to stay away from sugar—especially if you're feeling depressed. The crash after a sugar high can easily make you feel worse than before.

Omega-3 fatty acids

Omega-3 fatty acids have been praised for their health benefits, including possibly influencing your mood. One study from the University of Pittsburgh found that people with higher levels of omega-3 fatty acids were less likely to experience moderate or mild symptoms of depression.

Sources that contain the highest levels of omega-3 fatty acids include flax seeds, walnuts, and salmon.



Exercise

A 2005 study from Harvard University suggests walking fast for about 35 minutes a day five times a week or 60 minutes a day three times a week improved symptoms of mild to moderate depression.

Exercising under bright lights may be even better for seasonal depression: A preliminary study found that exercise under bright light improved general mental health, social functioning, depressive symptoms, and vitality, while exercise in ordinary light improved vitality only.

Turn on the tunes

In a 2013 study, researchers showed that listening to upbeat or cheery music significantly improved participants' mood in both the short and long term.

Help others

Ladling out soup at the local shelter or volunteering your time can improve mental health and life satisfaction.

Get outside

Talking yourself into taking a walk when the temperatures plummet isn't easy, but the benefits are big: Spending time outside (even when it's chilly!) can improve focus, reduce symptoms of seasonal affective disorder, and lower stress levels.

Adapted from the following articles:

“8 Scientifically-Backed Ways to Beat the Winter Blues” by Brigitt Earley, www.realsimple.com

“Winter Blues? Try These 10 Food Tips to Help Ease Symptoms” by Brian Krans and Rena Goldman, www.healthline.com.

Individuals can locate a mental health screening site or take an online screening by visiting www.helpyourselfhelpothers.org.

Important Dates to Remember

January – March 2019

January	National Mentoring Month
January	Poverty in America Awareness Month
Jan 8	Policy Council Meeting
Jan 15	LACOE Board Meeting—2018 Golden Apple Awards Ceremony, Downey, CA
Jan 17	Directors Meeting
Jan 21	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Jan 28-31	2019 Winter Leadership Institute – Washington D.C.
February	National Children's Dental Health Month
Feb 2	Walk to End Epilepsy—Los Angeles, CA
Feb 4	Mexican Consulate Health Fair—Los Angeles, CA
Feb 4-8	CHSA 2019 Annual Conference – Riverside, CA
Feb	7-8 Young Child Expo and Conference—Los Angeles, CA
Feb 10-14	Region IX Western States Early Learning Institutes—Tempe, AZ
Feb 11	Lincoln Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Feb 12	Policy Council Meeting
Feb 18	Washington Day—LACOE Offices Closed
Feb 21	Directors Meeting
Feb 28	2019 African-American Mental Health Conference
March	National Nutrition Month
Mar 1	23rd Annual Parent Involvement Academy, City of Industry, CA
Mar 1	Read Across America Day (Dr. Seuss' Birthday)
Mar 4	Mexican Consulate Health Fair—Los Angeles, CA
Mar 4-8	National School Breakfast Week
Mar 12	Policy Council Meeting
Mar 21	Directors Meeting



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, February 22, 2019**. You may also fax your submission to (562) 940-1740, Attn: Stephaney Roy.

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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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