



Write Start

A NEWSLETTER FOR THE LACOE HEAD START AND EARLY LEARNING COMMUNITY

Executive Director's Message: Empathy, Gratitude, and Humility

Several weeks ago, one of our home visitors at Plaza had just said goodbye to a mother and her three-year-old son when she witnessed an unthinkable tragedy: a car ran over the child. Thankfully, he is recovering. Not long after, we learned of another mother in St. Anne's Early Head Start program, who lost her newborn child just days after birth.



Keesha Woods

My thoughts are with both families, the home visitor, and our staff members who interacted with these families and are impacted by these tragedies that no parent should have to face. My heart is with all of you who provide the direct services to families and become a part of their life; I feel your pain.

As a Head Start family, LACOE and our delegate agencies together serve more than 11,000 children and their families, and employ nearly 2,500 staff. Each of these individuals has their own story, their own challenges, and their own pain. Whether we're in the classroom, out in the community, or sitting in an office or cubicle, it is important to remember that we don't always know what those around us are facing.

As I reflect on these two recent tragedies, I am reminded to always remain empathetic, because I don't know what struggles others are experiencing or what traumas they may have endured; humble, not knowing when I may encounter the same; and grateful, for all the blessings in my life, including all the family, friends, and colleagues I can turn to for support in difficult times.

In this season of thanksgiving and togetherness, I encourage you too to reflect. I encourage you also to make time to tend to your own well-being. As a Head Start community, we face many challenges and stress every day. If we do not first care for ourselves, we will not be able to give our full attention to our work, nor provide the quality of care and services our children, families, and communities deserve.

I hope you enjoy a happy and healthy holiday season and return refreshed and renewed in 2020.



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/Immigrant-Relations>

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

Come Explore the Resource Center



You are invited to join us at the Head Start and Early Learning Education Resource Center to explore our interactive literacy play area, where you will find a variety of early childhood books. The "Forest" space features opportunities for you to discover and learn with your child. From color mixing and texture panels to imaginary stories and true-life tales, there is something for everyone!

We welcome you to visit us and explore some new resources available throughout the library. Focused on the fundamentals of early literacy—talk, sing, read, write, and play—the learning experiences at the Resource Center are endless!

Resource Center Hours*

Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays:
8:00 AM–4:00 PM
Tuesdays & Thursdays:
8:00 AM–12:00 PM; 1:00 PM–4:00 PM

Location

10100 Pioneer Blvd., Suite #100
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

**Weekly hours are subject to change. Please call (562) 401-5332 or (562) 940-1770 to verify daily schedule with our staff. Open on selected Saturdays.*



Eat Healthy, Be Healthy

On October 23, Plaza de la Raza (PDLR) collaborated with Food Forward, a fruit and vegetable food recovery service, to distribute fresh fruit and vegetables to Columbia site families. "This collaboration was part of our 2019-2020 goals and activities to collaborate with community organizations and bring resources to families," said PDLR's Maggie Salas.

The October event brought out parents, grandparents and more—of the 130 families enrolled at the Columbia site, more than 70 families attended the food drive. This sharing of fresh fruit and vegetables was the first of its kind for PDLR, and because it was so successful, the agency is planning on more distributions at other sites in the future.

For more information on Food Forward, visit: <https://foodforward.org/>.

Policy Council Highlights

In September 2019, a group of Policy Council parents attended the annual NHSA Fall Leadership Institute in Washington, D.C. This opportunity allowed our parents the chance to talk to their elected representatives about the importance of early childhood education and how Head Start has positively impacted their lives.



Recent Policy Council Member Achievements

Congratulations to our Policy Council parents!

- Anna Zimmerman accepted a position at a nonprofit agency that helps survivors of domestic violence gain financial stability.
- Esmeralda Hernandez was hired by MAOF as a health clerk. Esmeralda shared that Policy Council and Health Champions were huge supports.
- Judy Soltan Rodriguez is now a teacher assistant at Foundation.
- Socorro "Suki" Martinez will be receiving her Bachelor of Social Work in December and will be pursuing her Master of Social Work early next year.
- Jeanie Drummer is a California State PTA Parent Engagement Advisory Council member.
- Alice Lee is now an assistant EHS teacher at St. Anne's.
- Karla Morales is now employed at MAOF as Parent Involvement Service Aide.
- Lisa Sagario is a teacher assistant for children with disabilities for Arcadia Unified School District.

Parent Spotlight:

Socorro "Suki" Martinez,
ABC Unified School District
Parent and Policy Council Member

As an alumna of the ABC USD Head Start program, Socorro "Suki" Martinez never thought that years later the program was still active. However, when her youngest daughter, Grace, was four years old, Suki wanted to put her in preschool and was surprised to find the program still running at her school district.



Socorro Martinez

Suki initially chose Head Start because it was the best preschool option her family could afford, but as early as her daughter's first day of class, she realized that the program offered more than she expected. On Grace's first day, "I was going to leave immediately, but it was an election for class president and I thought that although I was new...it would be a good chance to network and maybe get some recommendations in the future," Suki said.

That decision to run for president started Suki on an enlightening path to find her "passion and purpose in life." Prior to her daughter's birth, Suki had a good job in sales, but she felt unfulfilled, and after talking it over with her husband, they made the decision that she would leave work and be a stay-at-home mother. This decision allowed her to spend more time with her family and be more hands-on with Grace; however, "I had insecurities and felt broken."

Actively participating in her Head Start parent committee and the policy council helped Suki find her voice again. "I felt empowered again, and I got my identity back," she said. She credits this experience for helping her regain her self-esteem, as it allowed her to interact with like-minded parents working toward bettering themselves and the lives of their children.

Suki is currently a student at Arizona State University working toward her Bachelor of Social Work. She will graduate in December 2019. After networking with her fellow classmates in the Family Development Credential class, she realized that she wants to continue to pursue her education and get her Master of Social Work so that she can become a licensed clinical social worker.



EMPLOYEES of the MONTH

September 2019



Demetra Moore
Head Start Fiscal Liaison
Fiscal Controls and Accountability

"Demetra is an innovative and effective leader for our new Community of Practice. She is a wonderful collaborator. She listens to her teammates, takes feedback, implements, and brings the vision to life."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination



Victoria Fabian
Senior Data Processing Specialist
Planning and Resources Development

"Victoria does not knock down an idea. She is open to new ideas and finds a way to make them happen even when the current process does not lend itself to the new structure."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination

October 2019



Hazel Naal
Head Start Delegate Liaison
Team Leader
Program Design & Effectiveness

"Not only is Hazel an asset to the DLT team, she is also a team player across other teams and units. Her work is clearly collaborative and solution-focused for all units."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination



Osvaldo Colin
Head Start Program
Development Specialist
Planning and Resources Development

"Ozzie always takes the initiative to create something "new" to improve operations and thinks of ways to use technology to make monitoring more efficient."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination

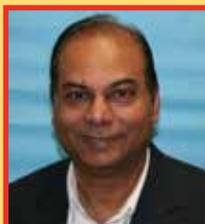
November 2019



Rocio Berru
Senior Typist Clerk-Bilingual
Planning and Resources Development

"She is compassionate, caring and always willing to go the extra mile. She is always looking for opportunities to learn from others, not just about her daily tasks, but from others within our division so that she can better understand the functions of our program."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination

December 2019



Abrar Alam
Head Start Fiscal Liaison
Fiscal Controls and Accountability

"Even though he is not the fiscal liaison on my IAP team, he's always willing to spend a few minutes hearing what I need and providing information. He recognizes that it's about supporting the agencies."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination



Anush Arakelyan
Head Start Child Development
and Education Specialist
Planning and Resources Development

"Anush's popular phrase is 'let me see if I can help.' She encourages team members to lead tasks, lends a hand, and provides support if needed. She then cheers for you when the task is complete."
-Excerpt from 2019 Nomination

Give the Gift of Preparedness



This season, find a gift that truly shows those you love how much you care—the gift of preparedness.

While an emergency kit may not be on any of the top-ten big name gift lists this season, a starter kit could end up being the most important gift you

give your friends and family this year. Most of us would love to be a little more prepared, but have not made the time or don't know where to start. Often, just taking the first step towards getting prepared is the hardest part. Give your friends and family the gift of being prepared for the unexpected.

Need creative ideas for your gifts of preparedness? We've got you covered with these gift ideas:

The Starter Kit

Help get your friends thinking emergency prep with a few key items to start their emergency kit. Pack the items in a small plastic storage container or waterproof bag that can be stored easily. Include the following items:

- **First aid kit** (You can get a pre-made kit at most local drug stores or pharmacies)
- **Flashlight and extra batteries**
- **Portable phone charger** (also sometimes known as a portable battery. This charger should be rechargeable and have the ability to charge a phone without being plugged into a power source)
- **Manual can openers** (and a reminder that every emergency kit should include a three-day supply of food and water)

Emergency Prep for Kids

Sometimes the best way to get families thinking about emergency preparedness is through teaching kids about the importance of having an emergency kit, an emergency communication plan, and a family emergency response plan for every disaster.

Get kids excited and interested in emergency preparedness with CDC's Ready Wrigley activity books. You can print coloring books for disasters including extreme heat, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, and winter weather. Help kids check off items on Ready Wrigley's emergency kit list with some of the following items:

- **Flashlight and extra batteries**
- **A battery-powered or crank weather radio**

- **Small and portable games or activities** that can entertain kids if they have to shelter in place or evacuate to a shelter (small board games, playing cards, books, or stuffed animals are good items to consider)

Emergency Kits for the Road

For the car-lovers or new drivers on your list, consider putting together a kit of emergency supplies they can keep in their car. Your car kit can include these basic items:

- **Basic tool kit** with pliers, a wrench, and a screwdriver
- **Jumper cables** (you may consider purchasing a "roadside emergency kit" from your local auto shop that also includes reflective triangle markers, gloves, and a flashlight)
- **First aid kit**
- **Cellphone charger** (either a car charger or rechargeable portable charger)

Pets and Pet Lovers

Remember to include pets in your emergency planning. Whether you are thinking of your furry friends or the pet lovers in your life, put together a gift of the following pet emergency kit items:

- **Extra food and water** for your pet, including an extra water and food bowl
- **Sturdy leash, harness, and carrier** to transport pet safely. A carrier should be large enough for the animal to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down. Your pet may have to stay in the carrier for several hours.
- **Pet toy and a pet bed** that can easily be stored and taken if you are forced to evacuate (remember to always check with your local emergency shelters before a disaster to find out which shelters take in pets)

All of these emergency packages are great gifts to help friends, family, or yourself start an emergency kit. Check out CDC's "Emergency Preparedness and You" page for more tips on how to prepare for any emergency.

Source: CDC. Available at: <https://blogs-origin.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2015/11/give-the-gift-of-preparedness/>.

CDC's Emergency Preparedness and You: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/preparedness/index.asp>.

Ready Wrigley activity books: <http://www.cdc.gov/phpr/readywrigley/books.htm>.

Resource Center Activity Time!

Please join us this winter for parent child activities at the Resource Center. All events are from 1:30–3:00 PM:



- December 18 – New Year's Party Hats
- January 10 – Winter Tree Art

- February 12 – Spreading Love & Kindness
- February 21 – STEAM Inventor's Box



Join the All-Stars and Inspire to Reach Higher



The HSEL Community Outreach Team (COT) supports full enrollment of Head Start programs through data-driven, innovative, and engaging means.

One of the COT's innovative approaches is the specialized All-Stars Training for both grantee and delegate agency (DA) staff. This is a best practices training that uses tried and true, engaging methods on how to interact with families during various situations, such as at events or during presentations.

The training also delves into how to address difficult situations like connecting with families experiencing homelessness, families that have foster children, etc. "This was important in learning how to address families appropriately," said Maricela Mendez, HSEL Senior Typist Clerk-Bilingual.

This training is a great opportunity for new and seasoned staff to learn new techniques like writing and presenting a compelling elevator pitch. It also allows the trainees to role-play different scenarios that may be encountered at events. "I found this to be very helpful because I learned how to get people's attention without being too insistent," Mendez stated.

Staff who work on behalf of HSEL at any Community Outreach events must attend the Outreach All-Stars training. The next division Outreach All-Stars training is scheduled for February 6, 2020.

For more information about the Community Outreach Team or to sign up for an All-Stars training, please contact the Program Manager, Community Outreach, Debi Anderson at: anderson_debi@laco.edu.

Natural ways to cleanse your lungs



Breathing in air pollution, cigarette smoke, and other toxins can damage the lungs and even cause health conditions. Maintaining the health of the lungs is essential for keeping the rest of the body healthy.

According to the World Health Organization, exposure to air pollution results in 4.2 million deaths worldwide each year. Cigarette smoking is the cause of death for one in every five people in the United States.

The following lifestyle changes are natural ways that may improve lung health and decrease the risk of health conditions:

Exercise

Regular exercise can improve physical and mental health, and it decreases the risk of many health conditions, including stroke and heart disease.

Exercise forces the muscles to work harder, which increases the body's breathing rate, resulting in a greater supply of oxygen to the muscles. It also improves circulation, making the body more efficient in removing the excess carbon dioxide that the body produces when exercising.

The body will start to adapt to meet the demands of regular exercise. The muscles will learn to use oxygen more efficiently and produce less carbon dioxide.

Although exercising may be more difficult for people with chronic lung conditions, these individuals can also benefit from regular exercise. People who have COPD, cystic fibrosis, or asthma should consult a healthcare professional before starting a new exercise regimen.

Green tea

Green tea contains many antioxidants that may help reduce inflammation in the lungs. These compounds may even protect lung tissue from the harmful effects of smoke inhalation.

A study of more than 10,000 adults in Korea, published in *The Journal of Nutrition* in 2018, reported that people who drank at least two cups of green tea per day had better lung function than those who drank none.

Anti-inflammatory foods

Inflammation of the airways can make breathing difficult and cause the chest to feel heavy and congested. Eating anti-inflammatory foods can reduce inflammation to relieve these symptoms.

Foods that help fight inflammation include:

- turmeric
- leafy greens
- cherries
- blueberries
- olives
- walnuts
- beans
- lentils

Adapted from "Natural ways to cleanse your lungs" by Jamie Eske. Medically reviewed by Alana Biggers, MD, MPH, on February 18, 2019. **Source:** <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324483.php>.

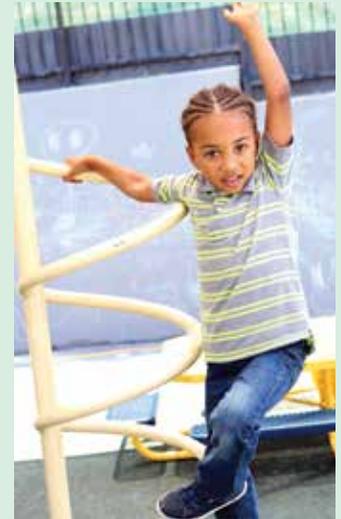
Important Dates to Remember

December 2019 – March 2020

December 24	Christmas Eve—LACOE Offices Closed
December 25	Christmas—LACOE Offices Closed
December 26-30	LACOE Head Start and Early Learning Division Office Closed
December 31	New Year's Eve—LACOE Offices Closed
January	National Mentoring Month
January	Poverty in America Awareness Month
January 1	New Year's Day—LACOE Offices Closed
January 13-15	2020 Head Start CA Annual Conference, Sacramento, CA
January 14	Policy Council Meeting
January 16	Delegate Agency Directors and Managers Meeting
January 20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day—LACOE Offices Closed
January 27-31	2020 NHSA Winter Leadership Institute, Washington, DC
February	National Children's Dental Health Month
February 7	Give Kids a Smile Day
February 11	Policy Council Meeting
February 14	Lincoln Day—LACOE Offices Closed
February 17	Washington Day—LACOE Offices Closed
February 20	Delegate Agency Directors and Managers Meeting
February 28	24 th Annual Parent Involvement Academy, City of Industry, CA
March	National Nutrition Month
March	National Reading Awareness Month
March 2	National Read Across America Day (Dr. Seuss' Birthday)
March 2-6	National School Breakfast Week
March 10	Policy Council Meeting
March 19	Delegate Agency Directors and Managers Meeting
March 21	7 th Annual Univision Health Fair, Los Angeles, CA
March 22	2020 March to End Epilepsy, Pasadena, CA
March 29-April 2	2020 NHSA National Conference, Phoenix, CA

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 25, 2020**. You may also fax your submission to (562) 940-1740, Attn: Stephaney Roy.



Los Angeles County Office of Education
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:** James Cross, President; Monte E. Perez, Vice President; Douglas R. Boyd, Sr.; Betty Forrester; Alex Johnson; Ellen Rosenberg; and Thomas A. Saenz. **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, Gabriela Trejo, and Keesha Woods. **Editor:** Colin Legerton. **Graphics/layout:** John Paster.