



*Santa Barbara County
Strategic Plan for Early Care
and Education, 2000-2005*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



**Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council
September 2005**

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CHILD CARE PLANNING COUNCIL

Mission

We lead and collaborate in planning, coordinating and advocating for high quality, affordable and accessible early care and education for all children and families in Santa Barbara County.

Vision

We envision a community that values all children and families.



Operating under the authority of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors and Santa Barbara County Education Office.

Funded by the California Department of Education, Child Development Division.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2000, the Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council (the Council) published the *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005* (the Plan). The purpose of the document was to guide Santa Barbara County towards the goal of ensuring that high quality, affordable early care and education is available for all families who need or want such services.

In the Plan, the Council identified ten key areas of early care and education services on which to focus community attention and action. The vision behind the ten “Desired Results” was to set forth goals that all segments of the community could understand and support, and work together to achieve.

In September 2004, the Strategic Plan Committee of the Council began a year-long assessment of progress on achieving the goals of the Plan. Many specific accomplishments have been identified in the body of the Committee’s full report, *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005: Accomplishments*, and all have contributed toward the goal of ensuring that high quality, affordable early care and education is available for all families countywide. Among the many accomplishments made in the last five years, there are some particularly notable highlights. These include:

- ✓ Establishment of the Office of Early Care and Education
- ✓ Increased resources for early care and education support activities, including stipends for the training and retention of the early care and education workforce and increased government support
- ✓ Improved early care and education services and support systems resulting from the resources and efforts of the county and state First 5 Children and Families Commission
- ✓ Increased awareness of the importance of high quality early care and education, with growing numbers of programs achieving measurable standards of quality and many more teachers and providers pursuing further education and training
- ✓ Increased focus on the needs of the whole child and increased collaboration among support agencies and early care and education programs
- ✓ Increased information dissemination efforts and increased awareness of the importance of high quality early care and education
- ✓ Greater emphasis on the inclusion of children with special needs in a variety of early care and education settings.

High quality, accessible, affordable early care and education is an essential ingredient of a healthy community, school readiness, life-long learning as well as individual and family success. The collaborative efforts of all sectors of the community over the past five years have contributed to progress toward the goal of high quality early care and education countywide but much work remains. The Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council will continue to lead and collaborate in efforts to accomplish this goal as they develop and implement the next five-year comprehensive, countywide plan for early care and education.



INTRODUCTION

In 2000, the Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council (the Council) published the *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005*. The purpose of the document was to guide Santa Barbara County toward the goal of ensuring that high quality, affordable early care and education is available for all families who need or want such services. The plan was based on the findings of the countywide *Child Care Needs Assessment* conducted by the Council in 1999. Preparation of the plan involved members of the Council, who represent all sectors of the community and all regions of the county; agencies and programs providing early care and education and related services; and members of the community at large. Development of the plan was supported by funds from Santa Barbara County and the California Department of Education, Child Development Division, and was approved by the County Board of Supervisors and the County Superintendent of Schools in August 2000.

In the *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005*, the Council identified ten key areas of early care and education services on which to focus community attention and action. The vision behind the ten “Desired Results” was to set forth goals that all segments of the community could understand and support, and work together to achieve.

Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005 Desired Results

1. Santa Barbara County has an integrated **countywide structure** that supports the early care and education of children.
2. **Quality**, developmentally appropriate, linguistically and culturally sensitive early care and education services are available to all families.
3. **Children**, including those with special needs, **benefit** from participation in appropriate quality early care and education services.
4. The **community acknowledges** early care and education providers as professionals who support families and provide for the educational and developmental needs of children.
5. The community actively supports the availability of quality, **affordable** early care and education services for families.
6. The **community views** the early care and education of children as vital to its economic and social health.
7. Families have **access** to early care and education services that meet their needs and choices for care.

8. **Families benefit** from participation in appropriate quality early care and education services with linkages to health and mental health care, parent education and family support services.
9. The early care and education community works together to promote **community** education and **involvement** in early care and education.
10. Collaborative countywide **data collection** identifies unmet needs of children's care, development and education, priorities for funding, use of early care and education services, cost of care, and other relevant data.

The plan is directed to all members of the community who are concerned about children, families and the future of Santa Barbara County. Its purpose is to inform and educate elected and appointed government officials, business leaders, policy makers, community agencies, education leaders, parents and the early care and education community about the conditions and support systems that will promote the availability of high quality early care and education. Strategic Outcomes and associated Strategies were identified to support the achievement of the ten Desired Results. Each sector of the community: government, business, the media, community-based service providers, elementary and early care and education, and the community at large, as well as the Council and the newly created Office of Early Care and Education, were assigned appropriate strategies to undertake in support of the achievement of the strategic outcomes and thus, the Desired Results. The Council underwent internal reorganization as a means of directing its activities toward the achievement of the Desired Results. It established "Action Teams" to work on specific strategies and with specific sectors of the community and to achieve identified internal annual goals.

In September 2004 the Strategic Plan Committee of the Council began a year long assessment of progress on achieving the goals of the *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005*, in preparation for the development of the next 5-year plan. This report, *Santa Barbara County Strategic Plan for Early Care and Education, 2000-2005: Accomplishments*, is the result of the committee's work and reflects input from the Council Action Teams and Standing Committees, the Office of Early Care and Education, First 5 and programs and agencies countywide. The report demonstrates progress and accomplishments achieved by all sectors of the community towards the goal of ensuring that high quality, affordable early care and education is available for all families who need or want such services.

The report mirrors the organization of the original plan. Accomplishments are listed as points under numbered Strategic Outcomes, which are listed under each of the ten Desired Results.



COUNTYWIDE STRUCTURE FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #1:
Santa Barbara County has an integrated
countywide structure that supports the
early care and education of children.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Through a collaborative partnership, Santa Barbara County establishes and maintains an Office of Early Care and Education (Office of EC&E) and hires an Early Care and Education Coordinator (EC&E Coordinator) to implement this countywide strategic plan.
 - *In 2000, the Office of EC&E was established through a grant from First 5 Santa Barbara County to the Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council (hereafter referred to as the Council). Coordinators and staff members were hired to implement elements of the countywide strategic plan. In July 2004, the Office of EC&E became a program of First 5 Santa Barbara County to ensure sustainability.*
2. Increased financial support is available for early care and education services in Santa Barbara County.
 - *Increased financial support has been available to support child care (e.g., First 5 Santa Barbara County funding for Lompoc and Carpinteria programs, increased state funding for child development programs, and increased federal funds for Head Start).*
 - *In 2004, a Preschool for All Planning Committee was established with funding from First 5 California. As a result, a Preschool for All pilot project is being planned.*
3. Increased financial support is available for provider networks and support activities.
 - *The Council allocated funds for website development, training of staff, and activities of the Council's Action Teams and Committees.*
 - *In 2002, a family child care network was developed within the Head Start program.*

- *In 2004, the Office of EC&E website was established to provide information on training and support activities.*
 - *In 2005, the Council's website was launched. The site informs viewers about the Council and its activities.*
 - *The Inclusive Child Care Action Team developed a page on the Council's website to inform the community about inclusive child care for children with special needs.*
4. The public is knowledgeable about and supports the early care and education of children.
- *In 2001, the Council developed and distributed the Strategic Plan brochure, entitled "A Call to Action", to disseminate information about the Plan and to engage the community in early care and education activities.*
 - *The Council increased public knowledge through various speaking engagements by Council representatives and the Office of EC&E staff (e.g., Legislative Forum, Preschool for All panel discussion, television and radio reports, public events, and press conferences).*
 - *The Steering Committee developed "Talking Points" to inform the community about the Council and its work.*
 - *The Council's Membership Committee facilitated three informational sessions with a focus on outreach to consumers and business.*
5. The community, county and city governments, businesses, early care and education community and the EC&E Coordinator actively support and work toward realizing the goals of this strategic plan.
- *The Council formed collaborative relationships during the establishment of the Inclusive Child Care Project (funded through SB 1703) and the early care and education workforce stipends for training and retention program.*
 - *The Council collaborated with county and state organizations including the California School-Age Families Education (CalSAFE) Coordination Committee, KIDS Policy Council, Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC), Santa Barbara Association for the Education of Young Children (SBAEYC), California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC), Tri-County Association for the Education of Young Children (TAEYC), California Alternative Payment Program Association (CAPPA), California Child Development Administrators Association (CCDAA), Preschool for ALL, and First 5 Santa Barbara County.*
 - *In 2003, the Council convened meetings of subsidized programs to discuss enrollment/eligibility and coordination that resulted in better coordination between Head Start and state subsidized programs.*
 - *In 2000, TAEYC and Council members created the countywide Professional Growth Advisor Project and organized trainings/networks in collaboration with*

the Child Development Consortium. As a result, the Child Development Consortium has assumed responsibility for the project.

- *The Inclusive Child Care Action Team of the Council has a broad membership and has collaborated with agencies countywide to promote inclusive child care.*
- *The First 5 School Readiness Initiative and the Council have actively supported partnerships between early care and education programs and primary school teachers.*
- *The County Alternative Payment Programs have collaborated to effectively administer child care delivery for California Work Opportunities and Responsibilities to Kids (CalWORKs) families in Santa Barbara County.*

QUALITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #2:
Quality, developmentally appropriate, linguistically
and culturally sensitive, early care and education
services are available to all families.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Early care and education programs (center-based and family child care) available to Santa Barbara County families are of nationally recognized high quality. Providers are committed to ongoing quality improvement activities.
 - *In 2000, the Program Quality Improvement Project (PQIP) was established.*
 - *The PQIP's Accreditation Project activities have increased the number of accredited programs in the county. There are now twenty centers accredited by National Association for the Education of Young Children and eight family child care providers (one school-age) accredited by the National Association Of Family Child Care in Santa Barbara County.*
 - *The Council's Program Improvement Action Team has provided support to the Accreditation Project and the Stipends for Training and Retention (STAR) project.*
2. Providers are committed to ongoing quality improvement activities.

- *The Program Improvement Action Team developed and coordinated a training calendar on the Office of Early Care and Education web site.*
 - *Since 2000, 1,610 training and retention stipends have been awarded to early care and education providers in recognition of their commitment to ongoing professional development and continued service in an early care and education program. First 5 Santa Barbara County, First 5 California, California Department of Education-Child Development Division, and the City of Santa Barbara have provided funding to support the stipend project.*
 - *Since 2000, the Spruce-Up for Kids program, funded by First 5 Santa Barbara County and the Orfaea Family Foundation, has enabled family child care providers and centers to improve their facilities on a yearly basis, thereby enhancing program quality.*
 - *Since 2001, an annual family child care conference, organized by the Children's Resource and Referral Program of the Santa Barbara Family Care Center (SBFCC), provided opportunities for professional development for family child care providers. In 2005, the conference was expanded to include early care and education center staff and was organized through a collaborative among the Children's Resource and Referral Program, the Office of EC&E, the Council, SBAEYC, and the Adult Education Program of Santa Barbara City College.*
 - *Family child care and center-based providers have participated in many training opportunities (e.g., UC Davis Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers, workshops around quality initiatives offered by the Office of Early Care and Education, Program Quality Improvement Project, "Heads Up Reading" Early Literacy Project, School Readiness training activities co-sponsored by the Council's Program Improvement Action Team, Inclusive Child Care Project training, and the California Instructional Program Improvement Network Language and Literacy Development Project workshops).*
 - *The Santa Maria Family Child Care Association organized tours for family child care providers to learn from their peers by visiting other providers' homes.*
 - *In 2004, the Office of EC&E and the SBFCC began a quality improvement project for exempt providers through the Family, Friend, and Neighbor Initiative.*
3. Parents' choices for early care and education services are based on quality indicators.
- *Numerous organizations have provided education and information for parents regarding quality and care choices (e.g., Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) and the Resource & Referral Program of the SBFCC).*
 - *The Council's Community Action Team selected and distributed informational brochures about early care and education quality indicators.*

4. The early care and education community works together with elementary schools to ensure smooth transitions from preschool to elementary and after-school care.
- *School Readiness programs in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, Lompoc, Guadalupe, and Isla Vista have written articulation plans between early care and education programs and kindergarten classes. Meetings have brought together both groups to develop a common understanding of child development, education, and the transition process. Some program outcomes have included: reformatting registration forms, incorporating state preschool students into the school data base system, sharing screening tools and results, and deciding best methods of teaching when students transition.*

CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #3:
Children, including those with special needs, benefit from participation in appropriate, quality early care and education services.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Parents receiving quality early care and education services report positive outcomes for the development of their child.
 - *In 2000, the state of California implemented the Desired Results surveys that measured parents' satisfaction with early care and education programs.*
2. Children's integrated social, emotional and health needs are supported by their placement in early care and education services, which have links to other agencies.
 - *The Council's Inclusive Child Care Action Team has advocated for providers to be included with parents in the Individualized Education Plan process.*
 - *The SBCEO Child Development Program's Health Linkages Initiative, funded by First 5 Santa Barbara County, has worked to improve health and safety standards in early care and education programs in Santa Barbara County.*
3. Early care and education programs are developmentally, linguistically and culturally appropriate for the children they serve.

- *The Office of EC&E has served as a clearinghouse to disseminate information about developmentally appropriate practices to both early care and education, and school age providers and parents.*
 - *The Inclusive Child Care Project, funded through SB1703 and supported by the Council's Inclusive Child Care Action Team, has provided training for approximately 250 family child care providers and non-subsidized center staff, and technical assistance for programs enrolling children with special needs. Prior to training, providers reported serving 139 children with special needs. Following the training, providers reported their willingness to serve 322 additional children with special needs.*
 - *The Inclusive Child Care Project, with support from the Inclusive Child Care Action Team, facilitated Project EXCEPTIONAL Training of Trainers in which 6 training teams, made up of 21 special education and early care and education professionals and parents, were trained on topics concerning inclusive child care for children with special needs. In turn, the teams will offer the training for other programs serving, or interested in serving, children with special needs.*
 - *Increasing numbers of early care and education programs have become inclusive of children with special needs and have been supported by the SBCEO.*
 - *In cooperation with other agencies, the Office of EC&E encourages bilingual/bicultural individuals to become providers and to enroll in local early care and education training programs.*
4. Early identification and intervention for children with special needs is facilitated by enrollment in quality early care and education programs.
 - *Early screening of children, through programs such as Health Linkages and Head Start, has facilitated early identification of children with special needs and has fostered appropriate interventions.*
 - *The Office of EC&E coordinates provider workshops and training on referral procedures for children with special needs.*
 5. Positive outcomes for children are reflected in positive performance in elementary school and beyond.
 - *Responses to surveys of teachers, administered during the Preschool for All planning process, reported better performance by children who had preschool experience prior to kindergarten entry.*



COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGES EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS

Desired Result #4:

The community acknowledges early care and education providers as professionals who support families and who provide for the educational and developmental needs of children.

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. The entire community acknowledges the benefits of a quality age-appropriate early care and education experience and recognizes early childhood educators for their contribution to the community, families and children.
 - *The Council's Business Action Team facilitated the establishment of the Hedy Damery Service to Children Award in 2003. The annual award has recognized individuals who have made significant contributions to children in Santa Barbara County. Award winners to date include: Flo Furuike, Rita Madden, and Susan Ham.*
 - *The Child Friendly Award has recognized advocates for high quality early care and education. Recipients since 2000 have included: Trudy Adair-Verbais, Jennifer Bergquist, and Ann Wood.*
 - *Participants in the Stipends for Training and Retention (STAR) program have been recognized in public ceremonies.*
 - *In 2005, at the 4th Annual Santa Barbara County Child Development Conference, accredited programs, STAR recipients and CCIP graduates were publicly recognized.*
 - *The SBFCC's Resource and Referral Program has held recognition dinners for family child care providers.*
 - *In 2003, SBAEYC, Stand for Children, and outstanding early care and education professionals were acknowledged by the media during Stand for Children Day 2003.*

2. The public education community values and acknowledges the benefits of quality age-appropriate early care and education for children’s K-12 school experience and outcomes.
 - *There has been broad participation by the K-12 community in various early care and education activities (e.g., School Readiness Initiatives, Legislative Forums, Preschool for All, and the Council’s Hot Topic Sessions).*
 - *In 2005 the Santa Barbara Elementary School District committed \$50,000 toward the development of a Preschool for All demonstration microsystem.*
3. The community acknowledges the need for professionally trained early care and education providers.
 - *The Preschool for All Initiative in Santa Barbara County has developed professional criteria for early care and education providers.*
4. County and city governments and the community at large support appropriate compensation for early care and education providers.
 - *Stand for Children has advocated for funding support for the STAR Project.*
 - *In 2003, the Santa Barbara City Council supported the STAR Project with a \$9,000 grant award.*

AFFORDABILITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #5:
The community actively supports the availability
of quality, affordable early care and education
services for all families.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. All families have the quality early care and education services they want and/or need.
 - *The Council has recognized the continuing need to increase the number of quality early care and education services.*

- *The Council has been involved in promoting the Preschool for All Initiative in an effort to increase access to quality, affordable early care and education services.*
 - *Council members participated in regional planning and development of Preschool for All demonstration projects.*
2. There are sufficient early care and education subsidies to meet the needs of income-eligible families.
 - *Subsidized child care has been available for eligible low income students/parents in Santa Barbara County.*
 - *The Council has pursued all opportunities to advocate for expanded services for income eligible families from state, federal, and private resources and continues to explore additional resources as they become available.*
 - *In April 2004, the Council's Government Action Team participated in the Public Policy Forum in Sacramento and advocated for additional funding support.*
 3. City and/or County governments form public/private partnerships that support the availability of affordable quality early care and education services.
 - *The Lompoc Housing & Community Development Corporation has developed plans to build two child care centers, including an infant center.*
 - *In 2004, the Office of EC&E was awarded the Constructing Connections grant to facilitate the process for developing or expanding child care facilities.*
 4. Employers/businesses support affordable, quality early care and education services for their employees.
 - *In 2003, the Office of EC&E developed the Work-Life Initiative with support from the Council and funding from the Orfalea Family Foundation.*
 - *In 2003, the Work-Life Team developed an informational brochure about work-life policies for distribution to businesses.*
 - *In 2003, the Office of EC&E and the Work-Life Initiative piloted a workforce survey at three organizations to gather information about employees' child care and other work-related needs.*
 5. There are sufficient CalWORKs subsidies to meet the early care and education needs of eligible families.
 - *Subsidies continue to be available for early care and education for children of CalWORKs families but there is potentially a facility shortage if a greater number of the eligible families wish to use the subsidies.*

COMMUNITY VIEW OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #6:
The community views the early care and
education of children as vital to its economic
and social health.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. County and city governments, business leaders and community decision makers use expertise, information and data about children's care, development, and education provided by the Council, the Office of EC&E and this Strategic Plan to determine policy and priorities.
 - *During fiscal year 2003-2004, in a climate of drastic financial cutbacks, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors retained funding to support local child care coordinators in Santa Maria and Lompoc.*
 - *The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors adopted funding priorities for state subsidized child care as identified by the Council.*
 - *In 2003, at the request of Stand for Children, the Santa Barbara City Council established the "Committee on Youth and Children".*
2. County and city governments and economic analysis projects use the state of local early care and education as an indicator of economic and social health.
 - *In 2003, the Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services Workforce Investment Board used child care as an indicator in the "State of the Workforce" document.*
 - *There is still a need to work with county and city governments to increase the use of early care and education as an indicator of economic and social health.*
3. County and city General Plans include early care and education impact reports.
 - *The Office of EC&E is promoting the inclusion of early care and education elements as part of County and city general plans.*
4. County and city planning and zoning ordinances and permit requirements are amended to comply with California statutes and regulations impacting early care and education.

- *The Council's Government Action Team worked with the Office of EC&E to develop a zoning matrix. Representatives met with local planning departments to discuss the zoning matrix.*
 - *In June 2002, a planning guide, entitled "Planning for Child Care in Santa Barbara County: A Guide for Planners", was written and distributed to local planning offices. It is also located on the Office of EC&E website.*
 - *Local zoning regulations for child care facilities have been brought into alignment with state regulations in all but three local planning departments.*
 - *In 2004, a Constructing Connections grant was awarded to the Office of EC&E to bring together key decision makers for the purpose of streamlining the development of child care facilities.*
5. Policy makers and community members acknowledge the financial contribution of early care and education to the economic vitality of the County.
 - *Council recognizes the need to advocate for the inclusion of early care and education data in UCSB's "Economic Impact Report".*
 6. Employers recognize the correlation between quality early care and education services, worker productivity and business success.
 - *In 2002, the Office of EC&E held a Roundtable to engage business leaders in addressing child care issues in Santa Barbara County.*
 - *The Council's Business Action Team supported the development of the Office of EC&E's Work-Life Initiative as a means of engaging businesses.*
 - *In 2002, the Council provided tuition support for designated Council members to complete the Boston College Work-Life Certificate Training Program. Additional local expertise was developed with financial support from a private foundation.*
 7. Community at large views quality early care and education services as vital to its social health.
 - *Since 2000, community members repeatedly expressed the opinion that quality early care and education services are vital to the community's social health in public forums, focus groups, and community conversations. This view was further exemplified in the article, "Public Safety Can't Wait! California's Preschool Shortage—A Missed Opportunity for Crime Prevention", written by law enforcement representatives.*

ACCESSIBILITY OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #7:
Families have access to quality early care
and education services that meet their needs
and choice for care.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. There are a sufficient number of all types of quality early care and education service settings to meet the needs of Santa Barbara County families.
 - *During 2000-2005, all opportunities for expansion in Head Start and Child Development were pursued.*
 - *With funding support from First 5 Santa Barbara County, the SBFCC's Child Care Initiative Project recruited and trained 150 new and existing child care providers with an emphasis on providing infant/toddler and non-traditional hours of care.*
 - *The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), offered in Guadalupe and Santa Barbara, was developed to serve children not attending preschool and to provide in-home training for parents so that they might support their child's development.*
 - *Council Members and the Office of EC&E staff participated in high school career days to inform high school students about careers in early care and education.*
 - *The Office of EC&E works with local parks and recreation departments and others to create recreational/care options for teens, including those with special needs.*
2. Center-based and family child care homes expand their capacity to meet their community's need for early care and education services.
 - *Between 1999 and 2004 licensed child care capacity increased by 7% (927 spaces) in Santa Barbara County.*
3. Staff in center-based and family child care homes are trained to provide specialized services to children with special needs.

- *Since 2003, the Inclusive Child Care Project Coordinator provided training for approximately 250 family child care providers and non-subsidized center staff, and technical assistance for programs enrolling children with special needs.*
 - *The Council's Inclusive Child Care Action Team advocated for more high quality child care opportunities for children with special needs and supported the work of the Inclusive Child Care Project Coordinator.*
 - *The Inclusive Child Care Project and the Inclusive Child Care Action Team distributed resource packets to over 700 licensed family child care providers and centers.*
4. Public transportation is available to reach early care and education services.
 - *Public transportation has continued to be a need within Santa Barbara County.*
 5. The early care and education community retains quality-trained providers and staff.
 - *Since 2000, 1,610 training and retention stipends have been awarded to early care and education providers in recognition of their commitment to ongoing professional development and continued service in an early care and education program. First 5 Santa Barbara County, First 5 California, California Department of Education-Child Development Division and the City of Santa Barbara have provided funding to support the stipend project.*



FAMILIES BENEFIT FROM EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #8:
Families benefit from participation in appropriate quality early care and education services with linkages to health and mental health care, parent education and family support services.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Parents' involvement in all types of quality early care and education settings is supported.
 - *In 2003, the Council's Community Action Team updated the subsidized child care brochure to inform parents about subsidized child care programs available in the communities of Santa Barbara County.*
 - *In 2003-2004, with funding from First 5 Santa Barbara County, the Children's Resource and Referral Program provided health and safety training for license-exempt child care providers countywide.*
2. Parents using quality early care and education services report positive outcomes.
 - *Since 2000, the State of California has implemented a yearly survey measuring parent satisfaction in state funded programs. For instance, Head Start parents reported overwhelmingly that they are satisfied with early care and education services provided to their children.*
3. Parents report that their child's early care and education arrangement supports their goals for employment, training and self-sufficiency, including financial stability.
 - *Since 2000, the State of California has implemented a yearly survey measuring parent satisfaction in state funded programs. For instance, Head Start parents reported that their child's early care and education arrangement supports their goals for employment, training, and self-sufficiency, including financial stability.*

4. Programs are linguistically and culturally sensitive to the families they serve.
 - *Some programs are increasing their efforts to ensure that materials are translated into the primary language of families, translation is provided during meetings, staff is hired that is linguistically and culturally diverse, staff is trained to support linguistic and cultural sensitivity, and that there is recruitment of board members who represent the cultural and linguistic composition of the community.*
5. Parents receive support services on site at early care and education settings when needed or are appropriately referred to linked community services.
 - *In 2000, Health Linkages was established by SBCEO with funds from First 5 Santa Barbara County. Health Advocates from the Health Linkages program work in State Preschool Programs to connect children and families to health and social support services they need.*
 - *Since 2000, health & safety support services have been provided to 35 State Preschool classrooms and to two Cal-SAFE child care programs. Services include vision, hearing and dental screening, doctor referrals, and parent, student and provider education. Health Linkages screened 980 children in State Preschool programs for vision, hearing and oral health needs and 180 children were referred for further evaluation and treatment.*
 - *Health Linkages has participated in community collaborative and multi-disciplinary teams to expand/create services to meet the unmet health needs of children in both family child care homes and center-based programs. They have focused on access to health care and have promoted community capacity building.*
 - *In 2004, the Council's Inclusive Child Care Action Team developed and distributed a brochure, entitled "Resources for Children Whose Needs May Be Special", for parents and providers. It provided information about how to access resources and services for children with special needs.*
 - *Early care and education has been linked to the Child Assistance Team Creating Hope (CATCH) program that provides support for children with behavioral challenges and their families.*
 - *Santa Barbara County Education Office has provided an annual "Parents Are Teachers Too Conference".*
 - *Subsidized programs provide parent trainings on an ongoing basis.*
 - *The California School-Age Families Education (CalSAFE) program in Santa Barbara, Lompoc, Santa Ynez and Santa Maria high schools has provided support services for pregnant and parenting teen mothers and fathers. Child care for children of teen parents has also been provided through CalSAFE in Santa Maria, Lompoc and Santa Barbara.*

6. Parents report that their early care and education program provides a sense of community for themselves and their children.
- *Based on the Desired Results Survey administered in subsidized programs and anecdotal information, parents have reported that their early care and education program provides a sense of community for themselves and their children.*

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #9:
The early care and education community works to promote community education and involvement in early care and education services.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Annual efforts are in place to solicit public input with regard to the early care and education needs of children and families in Santa Barbara County.
 - *In 2003, the Council's Business Action Team piloted The Working Family Friendly Child Care Survey in three communities.*
 - *A protocol for the introduction of new initiatives was developed by the Council's Steering Committee.*
2. Community at large and policy makers are informed about the needs of families and their children for early care and education services, the cost of care and the impact on the economic and social health that care or lack of care has on the community.
 - *In 2003, the Council held an Elected Officials Forum in Santa Maria and Santa Barbara to discuss early care and education issues.*
 - *In 2004, the Council's Government Action Team and local CAEYC representatives attended the CAEYC Public Policy Symposium in Sacramento where they met with legislators to advocate for early care and education.*
 - *The Public Awareness/Advocacy Action Team provided input in the development of the KIDs Network legislative platform.*

3. Community at large and policy makers are informed about the indicators of quality early care and education services.
 - *The Council's Community Action Team distributed quality child care brochures countywide to help inform the community about the characteristics of high quality programs.*
 - *The Office of EC&E's and the Council's web sites have provided information about indicators of quality care.*
 - *The Inclusive Child Care page on the Council's web site publicizes the Council's position on Inclusive Child Care and provides information about inclusive child care.*
 - *The Council's Inclusive Child Care Action Team has developed and distributed a resource packet about issues related child care for children with disabilities and other special needs.*
4. Community is involved in early care and education organizations, initiatives and advocacy.
 - *In 2003 a local chapter of Stand for Children was formed. Events from this organization have brought together community advocates for children.*
 - *The Council's Program Improvement Action Team supported the development of the STAR Project and has provided ongoing advice.*
 - *Spruce-Up For Kids has promoted early care and education quality with community involvement and volunteers.*
 - *The Child Care Initiative Program, funded through public-private partnerships, has increased the capacity and quality of family child care homes.*
5. Community and employers are informed about family friendly business policies, alternative employment strategies and employer supported early care and education programs.
 - *The Office of EC&E Website has provided information for employers and the community.*
6. Council and the Office of EC&E provide regular community information updates about the status of early care and education services in Santa Barbara County.
 - *The Council's membership has included representation from community organizations, educational institutions, and other sectors of the community thereby providing opportunities for information sharing and feedback about the status of early care and education in Santa Barbara County.*
 - *The Spruce-Up for Kids Day has involved community participants and has provided publicity for early care and education through television and newspaper reports.*

- *A quarterly “Hot Topic”, presented by the Council, has provided topical information and a forum for relevant early care and education issues such as universal preschool, services to children with disabilities, and standards in education.*

DATA FOR EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

**Desired Result #10:
Collaborative countywide data collection identifies unmet children’s care and education services, cost of care, and other relevant data.**

Strategic Outcomes and Accomplishments

1. Data collection supports the identification and prioritization of unmet needs for early care and education services.
 - *In 2003, the County of Santa Barbara departments, non-profit organizations, and the Council collaborated to share information regarding each organization’s respective needs assessment.*
 - *Community agencies have provided data to the Council for the Child Care Needs Assessment that is completed every five years.*
2. The community supports this Strategic Plan and its data collection efforts.
 - *Community agencies have provided updated data to the Council for the Child Care Needs Assessment that is completed every five years.*
3. Regional needs for early care and education services are assessed annually.
 - *On a yearly basis, the Council has reviewed and updated the priorities for subsidized child development funding in Santa Barbara County.*
 - *Data collection efforts have been collaborative and have been shared with the public at large, agencies, elected officials, schools, and other interested bodies.*
 - *The Council has distributed the needs assessment broadly among public and private entities.*
4. County agencies collaborated to share information needed for their needs assessments.

- *The “Santa Barbara County Children’s Scorecard” has reported data collected from stakeholders for use by other agencies for grant writing, publicity, advocacy and other reports.*
 - *Children’s Resource and Referral Program collected and shared countywide data on the supply and demand for child care.*
 - *Agencies countywide have collaborated with the Council to provide data for the needs assessment.*
5. Data collection efforts are aligned and coordinated with the Council’s initiatives and the initiatives of other agencies.
- *Data for the 2004 Needs Assessment were gathered in collaboration with the Office of EC&E and other county agencies in an effort to collaboratively identify elements to be included and to align information*



CONCLUSION

During the period 2000-2005, the Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning Council dedicated itself to action in implementing the comprehensive, countywide early care and education plan designed to mobilize public and private resources to address identified early care and education needs. With the collaboration and commitment of individuals, agencies and programs from all sectors of the community, progress has been achieved. Many specific accomplishments have been identified in the body of the report and all have contributed towards the goal of ensuring that high quality, affordable early care and education is available for all families who need or want such services. Among the many accomplishments made in the last five years there are some particularly notable highlights. These include:

- ✓ **Establishment of the Office of Early Care and Education**
- ✓ **Increased resources for early care and education support activities, including stipends for the training and retention of the early care and education workforce and increased government support**
- ✓ **Improved early care and education services and support systems resulting from the resources and efforts of the county and state First 5 Children and Families Commission**
- ✓ **Increased awareness of the importance of high quality early care and education, with growing numbers of programs achieving measurable standards of quality and many more teachers and providers pursuing further education and training**
- ✓ **Increased focus on the needs of the whole child and increased collaboration among support agencies and early care and education programs**
- ✓ **Increased information dissemination efforts and increased awareness of the importance of high quality early care and education**
- ✓ **Greater emphasis on the inclusion of children with special needs in a variety of early care and education settings.**

High quality, accessible, affordable early care and education is an essential ingredient of a healthy community, school readiness, life-long learning as well as individual and family success. The collaborative efforts of all sectors of the community over the past five years have contributed to progress toward the goal of high quality early care and education countywide but much work remains. The Santa Barbara County Child Care Planning

Council will continue to lead and collaborate in efforts to accomplish this goal as they develop and implement the next five-year comprehensive, countywide plan for early care and education, which will be based on the findings of this report and the recent needs assessment, *Santa Barbara County: The Status of Early Care and Education*, completed by the Council in July 2005.

