



City of Long Beach, California Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan

2018-2023

Executive Summary



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A strong collaboration of inter-disciplinary professionals across multiple organizations, parents, and young children in Long Beach have made the development of this actionable City of Long Beach Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan possible. The City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) would like to thank the hundreds of parents, young children, community members, and stakeholders from community organizations, educators, and elected officials, who contributed their ideas to this plan. This work would not have been possible without the dedication of DHHS staff: Alejandra Albarran Moses, Christina Boatwright, Tiffany Cantrell-Warren, and Nancy Riano. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee's subject matter expertise, review, and reflection, ensured the buy-in of many stakeholders to the actions proposed in this plan. We would like to thank the Strategic Plan Steering Committee members: Cynthia Young and Miriam Garcia from Long Beach Unified School District, and Co-Chairs of the Long Beach Early Childhood Education Committee Whitney Leathers (Long Beach Day Nursery) and Julie Turvey (ChildNet), and the aforementioned staff.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Long Beach Early Childhood Education Strategic Plan is a collaborative and comprehensive plan developed with multiple stakeholders throughout the City. This Plan was created to ensure all families and young children across the City have equitable access to the programs and supports they seek, as well as to provide a road map for the City's early childhood system to continue to advance and promote access to high quality services and supports for all families.

The purpose of the this Plan is to provide direction for early childhood investments and advocacy as well as to outline collaborative opportunities that can strengthen the City's offerings for young children and their families. This Executive Summary highlights the goals and objectives that were developed through community focus groups and key informant interviews. To view the full plan please visit: www.longbeach.gov/ECEP

WHY EARLY EDUCATION?

The scientific evidence is clear – investing in the wellbeing of young children lays the foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society. High quality early childhood experiences matter for all children. During the first few years of life, 700 new neural connections are formed every second - laying the foundation for all future learning, behavior and development.¹

Experiences in the early years are critical in predicting life-long success, where children who have secure attachments, language-rich exposure, and safe, healthy homes are more likely to have long term success.

“One of the **BEST** investments we can make in a child's life is **HIGH QUALITY** early education”

– Barack Obama, 44th President of the United State of America

Investments in early childhood education (ECE) help reduce the achievement gap, reduce the need for special education, increase the likelihood of healthier lifestyles, lower the crime rate, and reduce overall costs to society.² In fact, every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education produces a 7-10 percent return on the investment.³

¹ Center on the Developing Child (2009). *Five Numbers to Remember About Early Childhood Development* (Brief). Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu

² Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A. & Yavitz, A. (2010). The rate of return to the HighScope Perry Preschool program. *Journal of Public Economics, Elsevier*, 94 (1-2), 114-128. doi: 10.1016/j.jpubeco.2019.11.001

³ Heckman, J. J., Moon, S. H., Pinto, R., Savelyev, P. A. & Yavitz, A. (2010). The rate of return to the HighScope Perry Preschool program. *Journal of Public Economics, Elsevier*, 94 (1-2), 114-128. doi: 10.1016/j.jpubeco.2019.11.001

What's early childhood like in the city of

Long Beach?

Poverty rate for children 18 and younger.



zip code 90808



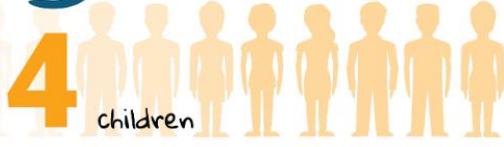
zip code 90803

A few miles away in zip code 90813, the percent of children under 18 living in poverty increases to:



In Long Beach, there are

32,474 children



90%

of a child's brain has formed by age 5

Average annual child care costs:

\$8,000 for family child care

>\$13,000 for center child care

35.7%

of children live in households with Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash public assistance income, or Food Stamps/ SNAP benefits

23%

of children eligible for publicly funded EC services*

leaving **16,164** eligible children unserved



*Eligibility refers to children who meet state and federal enrollment requirements for childcare subsidies



THE PLAN

This Plan is organized around a set of guiding principles, which focus on strengths, seek to remove barriers, consider the “whole child” and ensure that all children and their families receive the respect and opportunities they need to succeed.

To accomplish this, the Plan outlines the following seven goals which include objectives and activities that work to achieve each goal. Activities are organized as on-going, short-term, mid-term, and long-term and are included in the full Plan. To view visit: www.longbeach.gov/ECEP

GOAL 1: Support and build strong and resilient families

Families play a critical role in their children’s life. Familial factors, specifically maternal health and wellness practices during pregnancy, can impact a child before taking their first breath. The median income in Long Beach is \$55,151⁴ and the poverty rate is 22.9%.⁵ In zip codes 90808 and 90803, the poverty rate for children under 18 is 3.6% and 5.7% respectively; however, in zip code 90813, the percent of children under the age of 18

living in poverty is 46.1%.⁶ In 2017, Long Beach recorded 119 families experiencing homelessness, which included 242 children under the age of 18.⁷ One in six Californians (16.7%) has experienced four or more Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs). While ACEs may represent the most significant safety or risk factors, understanding the impact that community safety has on a young child’s developing brain is important.

Objective 1.1: 100% of infants and 100% of pregnant women will have a medical home

Objective 1.2: Increase the use of mental health services for children and parents who have a need or who have identified that they could benefit from accessing mental health support

Objective 1.3: Increase use of multiple developmental screenings before the age of three

Objective 1.4: Increase parents’ and families’ understanding of child development

Objective 1.5: Increase parents’ knowledge of and referrals to appropriate resources

GOAL 2: Increase access and affordability of infant through pre-k early care and education services

In 2016, Long Beach, had 21,172 children under the age of 5, 23% of whom receive services, leaving 16,164 children who are eligible for services such as Head Start, that are not enrolled in those early childhood programs. In addition, only 14% of infants, in need of care, are receiving it. In Long Beach, there is a short fall of child care spaces for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers in both home-based care and center-based programs. Current spaces for children under age three

⁴ United States Census Bureau. (2010). 2010 Census American Fact Finder. Retrieved from <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=bkrmk>

⁵ Live Well Long Beach. (n.d.). Children Living Below Poverty Level. Retrieved on July 2, 2018 from <http://www.livewelllongbeach.org/index.php?module=indicators&controller=index&action=view&indicatorId=189&localeId=6315>

⁶ Roosevelt, M. (2017). New study shows stark difference in child poverty among Long Beach’s regions. *Press-Telegram*. Retrieved from <https://www.presstelegram.com/2017/02/23/new-study-shows-stark-difference-in-child-poverty-among-long-beachs-regions/>

⁷ Long Beach Continuum of Care, Household with Children (Ages 0 - 17) (n.d). Report. Retrieved on December 22, 2017 from Long Beach Homeless Management Information System

only meet 13% of the need, leaving a gap of 77% for children under three.

Objective 2.1: Expand access for infant/toddler and preschool-aged early care and education

Objective 2.2: Expand supplemental early learning opportunities throughout Long Beach



GOAL 3: Support the development of a stronger early childhood workforce

Research demonstrates that teachers who received intensive coaching and/ or consultation in addition to professional development show greater increases in their own quality of interactions with children and classroom environments than teachers who only receive professional development.⁸ As the skill sets, knowledge and experience of the ECE professionals increases, so does the quality of the program where they work.

Objective 3.1: Build awareness of the value of early childhood education workforce

Objective 3.2: Increase the professionalization of the early childhood workforce by providing consistent professional development opportunities to ECE Professionals

GOAL 4: Improve quality of programs and services offered to children from birth through age 8

California has created a system of rating the quality of early childhood care and education programs (Quality Rating and Improvement System, QRIS). The goal is to assess, improve and communicate the quality of early care and education settings. As of June 30, 2018, only 4% (252) of home-based and only 18% (619) of center-based programs in Los Angeles County were rated using QRIS, leaving many programs in Los Angeles County and the City of Long Beach unrated.

Objective 4.1: Increase the number of early childhood education programs participating in a quality rating improvement system

GOAL 5: Children in Long Beach live, learn, and play in safe, healthy, and accessible environments

There are many great qualities and benefits associated with living in Long Beach, yet disparities in access to healthy food, air quality, criminal activity, health, and life expectancy exist between communities living within Long Beach. Long Beach is known for great parks but park space varies significantly by zip code. The 90810-zip code (West Long Beach) has the lowest number of acres per 1,000 residents, while 90808 (East Long Beach) has the highest number of acres per 1,000 residents⁹. A lack of green space limits a person's opportunity to be physically active, increasing their risk of chronic diseases, and impacting air quality. Neighborhoods facing less access to healthy and fresh foods, greater health concerns, limited safe park access, and high levels of poverty are those neighborhoods associated with the lowest life expectancy, whereas residents who reside in communities without these challenges are living much longer. The average life expectancy of residents in Central Long Beach is 75.2 years

⁸ Howes, C., Hamre, B.K., & Pinata, R. C. (2012). Effective Early Childhood Professional Development. Brookes Publishing: Baltimore, MD.

⁹ Long Beach Parks, Recreation and Marine (2016, September 16). City of Long Beach Parks and Park Acreage.

of age, whereas the life expectancy of residents in East Long Beach is, on average, 82.6 years of age. It should be noted that there is only a five-mile distance between these two areas of Long Beach.¹⁰

Objective 5.1: Facilitate opportunities for young children and their families to engage with trauma-informed service professionals in their communities

Objective 5.2: Increase inclusive, safe and accessible infrastructures within parks in communities with low park acreage

GOAL 6: Promote *partnerships* to address access to quality basic needs and services

True collaboration takes place when service providers, at all levels of one's ecosystem, are (1) aware of the other services available to families and, (2) in constant communication about their services. Because no one service provider can do everything needed to successfully support parents and their children, providers must work to link services in a way that yields the best outcomes for children and their families. To achieve results that impact children and families in Long Beach, it is necessary to reach integration of cross-sector services and supports, ensuring that families have timely access to services that meet their needs. This moves away from a system-centered approach and moves towards a client-centered approach to delivering services.

Objective 6.1: Increase collaborations between ECE programs and community partners working with young children and families

Objective 6.2: Create more opportunities for parents to participate as partners in settings where decisions about young children and families are made

Objective 6.3: Achieve seamless access and transition from programs and services to kindergarten



GOAL 7: Strengthen alignment of existing birth through age 8 governance structures and early childhood support systems

When partners collaborate around the individual, family, or client who they are all trying to serve, a collective impact design of the system naturally follows. Funding silos and organizational silos do not matter to the individual client being served, and silos create barriers to improvement in the client's situation or outcomes. To elicit change in policies or complex social issues, it is important to address the systems from which the issues originate. In many instances, shifts in policies and social issues come out of collective impact approaches.

Objective 7.1: Regularly monitor Plan Objectives to ensure accountability

Objective 7.2: Generate awareness among the community, decision-makers, funders, and elected officials, of the importance of ECE

Objective 7.3: Establish a system of data sharing and collection across programs to improve informed service delivery

Objective 7.4: Build a strong, cohesive sustainable support infrastructure for early childhood

¹⁰ Equity Analysis of the Land Use Element of the General Plan (2017, November 28). Retrieved from <http://www.longbeachize.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Exhibit-D-health-memo.pdf>

CALL TO ACTION

Children come into the world ready and eager to learn. From birth, children seek active engagement with family members and caregivers. The frequency and quality of these interactions shape their brain's growth. We know that children learn, grow, and develop within the context of their home, family, and community life. Learning can happen everywhere, including in the home, in child care and learning settings, in libraries, in faith-based organizations, at parks, and even in grocery stores.

To best support all children of Long Beach, (regardless of ability, ethnicity, geography,

identify, income, language, or race,) and to strengthen and expand early learning opportunities throughout the City, it is essential that all members of our community become champions for our children and agree to prioritize investments that support early learning throughout Long Beach.

It is the responsibility of all residents within Long Beach to ensure that these early and important learning experiences are positive and healthy, promoting growth and ensuring that learning experiences are provided for all children across the City.

The hopes and dreams of the children of Long Beach depend on the actions taken today to ensure their bright and limitless future!



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Photography by (not in order of appearance) Amanda Proudfit, Brenda Muñoz, Catherine Desmond Photography, City of Long Beach Staff. All children featured in this Plan are children who live, learn, or play in Long Beach. Cover: Anthony Lozano, a student at a local ECE Center in Long Beach



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