



# The Preschool Experiences We Deserve

A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Produced by



In Partnership with  
The Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Coalition

With Support From  
The California Community Foundation

*The Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Coalition* strives to increase access to quality early care and preschool education programs in underserved communities. Member organizations of the coalition support efforts to address the child care and developmental needs of children from birth to five years of age.

# What Families Can Do

1

Seek quality early care and preschool education experiences for your own children.

2

Learn how to identify quality programs so you can determine if your child is receiving this type of educational experience.

3

Engage in conversations with other parents of young children about the urgency of quality early care and preschool programs for their children.

4

Join a local coalition, parent association or organize one through your network of friends to advocate for a quality preschool experience for all children.

5

Contact decision-makers through letters or by visiting their offices to let them know Los Angeles needs more facilities and quality programs for its young children. Elected officials use information they hear from people like you to decide how to vote on issues.

**Schedule an appointment by calling your official's district office, write a letter to share your concerns, share the Preschool Experiences We Deserve brochure with the official or his/her staff.**

*The following elected officials and decision-makers have influence over policies related to the availability of quality early care and preschool programs for children in Los Angeles County.*

## **FEDERAL LEVEL:**

U.S. Senators and Representatives

## **STATE LEVEL:** State

Superintendent of Public Instruction, Governor, Secretary of State, Senators and Assembly Members

**LOCAL LEVEL:** District and County Boards of Education, City Council Members, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Mayors



**Parents and families get involved!**

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR DECISION-MAKER**

Visit [www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/yourleg.html) and enter your zip code to identify your State Senator or Assembly Member.

Visit [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org) and enter your zip code to identify your U.S. Senator or Representative.

Contact your local librarian or the L.A. County Registrar's Office (1-800-481-8683) for assistance.

Look in the Government Pages of the telephone book for a listing of elected officials and government offices.

## **Tips for Meeting with Your Decision-Maker**

- Share a personal story.
- Send a thank you note.
- Provide your contact information.
- Keep in touch. Develop a relationship with him/her.

# Children Who Start School Ahead, Stay Ahead

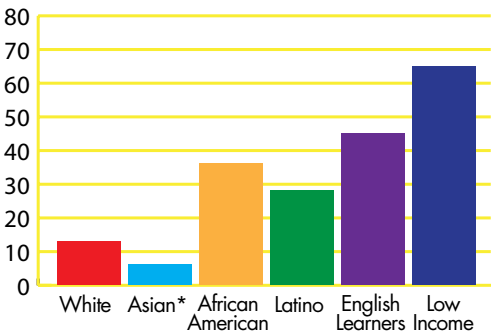
Children who attend quality early care and preschool programs are exposed to language-rich environments, are more likely to do better in reading and math, to graduate from high school and to be employed – earning higher wages as adults.

Evidence from two long-term rigorous evaluations of the effects of preschool also shows that high-quality preschool increases high school graduation rates by as much as 44 percent.

[www.fightcrime.org/ca/dropout/CA\\_Dropout\\_Report.pdf](http://www.fightcrime.org/ca/dropout/CA_Dropout_Report.pdf)

## L.A. County Drop-Out Rates by Ethnicity

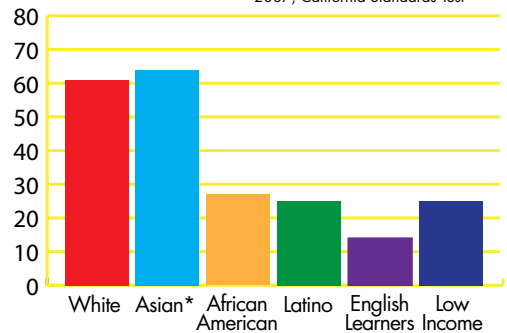
Source: California Dept. of Education, 2006-07 adjusted 4-yr derived rate



\*Data is aggregated by race/ethnicity.

## L.A. County 3rd grade English Language Arts Percent Proficient by Ethnicity

Source: California Dept. of Education, 2007, California Standards Test



## ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EARLY CARE AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

Los Angeles community can reap tremendous benefits by investing in quality early care and preschool programs for all its children. Among other things:

- The preschool industry generates \$1.9 billion annually to the economy
- Provides more than 60,000 full-time equivalent jobs

Learning Begins at Birth!

Close to 33,000 students dropped-out of high school in Los Angeles County in 2006-2007.

Only 34% of 3rd graders in L.A. County are proficient in English.



# LEARNING BEGINS AT BIRTH

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Children read better and are more likely to graduate from high school when their parents are involved in their early learning and education.

Getting your child on the path to a successful life starts at birth, when your child's brain has an incredible ability to learn, more so than at any other time in life. From birth to age 5, your child's brain is absorbing information, learning from everyone he/she encounters and from the environment, and recording these experiences for future reference.

**You are your child's first and lifelong teacher.** Through everyday activities such as playing hide and seek or reading a story at bedtime, you are stimulating and developing your child's brain, establishing a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

As a parent, you want to make available quality time for your child, though it may not always be possible to provide for this yourself, due to the demands of a job or other pressing obligations.

If this is the case, early care and preschool education programs can assist you in making sure your child's well-being and developmental needs are met. These programs are offered by trained professionals in community agencies, schools or licensed homes and can help your child get the quality care and learning experiences he/she deserves.



**85%**  
of brain growth  
occurs from birth  
to five years.

Children will display better language, cognitive and social skills when they experience quality early care and preschool education programs.

Children who attend preschools show better reading, spelling and math skills.

# QUALITY EARLY CARE AND PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS LEAD TO FUTURE SUCCESS

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Language development is an essential component of all early care and preschool programs. Quality programs help increase your child's vocabulary and pre-reading skills and build on the home language to attain confidence in English.

Before enrolling your child in an early care or preschool program, visit the center or school and try to determine whether:

- *Children develop socially, emotionally and academically*
- *Parents are valued as their children's most important teachers*
- *Teachers pay attention to language and vocabulary development*
- *Teachers receive training and support to engage children in learning*
- *The physical environment is attractive, safe and healthy*

Preschools give children a jump-start to kindergarten by focusing on pre-reading, pre-math and socialization skills, leading to higher rates of high school and college completion. As adults, they contribute more to the economic and civic life of the community. Early care and preschool programs are enjoyable experiences, but they are also the foundation for education and social success in later years.

Children  
and quality  
do better in  
learning and  
school.

By three years of age,  
children who experience  
language-rich environments  
have a vocabulary of  
nearly 1,100 words; children  
without these experiences  
possess only about  
500 words.

Find out if you  
are eligible to be  
on the  
Los Angeles  
Eligibility List  
Resource & Referral  
at 1-800-5

# Resources for Families

Visit the center or school and look for the following signs of quality:

- *Trained teachers who motivate your child to learn*
- *Language-rich activities in your language and English*
- *Individual attention and support from adults*
- *Your participation in school activities*
- *Music, drama, art, science, storytelling and interest in reading*
- *Physical activity, rest, nutrition and health education*
- *A smooth transition to kindergarten*



your child is  
placed on the  
Centralized  
by asking the  
Referral Agency  
543-7793.

## FIND OUT WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

- **Resource & Referral Agency:**  
1-800-543-7793  
[www.rrnetwork.org](http://www.rrnetwork.org)
- **First 5 L.A. Parent Helpline:**  
1-888-FIRST5LA  
1-888-347-7855
- **2-1-1 L.A. County**  
(Dial 2-1-1)
- **L.A. Universal Preschool**  
1-866-581-LAUP (5287)  
[www.laup.net](http://www.laup.net)
- **L.A. County Office of Child Care:**  
[www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov)
- **LACOE Head Start-State Preschool**  
Pre-K Kid Line: 1-877-PRE-K-KID  
(1-877-773-5543)

## CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY MEMBERS:

Center for Community & Family Services: (310) 217-2935

Child Care Information Center: (626) 449-8221

Child Care Resource Center Inc.: (800) 464-9970

Children's Home Society (Los Angeles): (562) 256-7490

Connections for Children: (888) 922-4453

Crystal Stairs, Inc.: (888) KIDS-247

Mexican American Opportunity Foundation: (323) 890-1555

Options – A Child Care & Human Services Agency:  
(626) 856-5900 or (562) 945-2635

Pathways: (213) 427-2700



**“To build a vibrant and healthy Los Angeles, parents, families, policymakers and concerned citizens must work together to shape our children’s future.”**

– Antonia Hernández, CEO  
California Community Foundation

## **POLICYMAKERS AND CIVIC LEADERS NEED TO BE AWARE THAT EARLY CARE AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS MAKE A DIFFERENCE.**

### **POLICYMAKERS CAN DO THE FOLLOWING:**

1. Make early care and preschool education an important priority on legislative platforms.
2. Increase resources and invest financially in early care and preschool education.
3. Share ***The Preschool Experiences We Deserve: A Guide for Families*** pamphlet with your staff and constituencies to spread the word about how these programs make a difference.

### **THE LOS ANGELES PRESCHOOL ADVOCACY COALITION**

The Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Coalition, comprised of early care and education organizations throughout Southern California, promotes the following principles:

- Build on the existing infrastructure for early care and education (ECE)
- Promote access to high quality ECE-preschool programs for children
- Encourage family engagement
- Support language development through research-based best practices

**For a full list of LAPAI Principles visit: [www.calfund.org/pub\\_documents/LosAngelesPreschoolAdvocacyCoalitionPolicyPrinciples.pdf](http://www.calfund.org/pub_documents/LosAngelesPreschoolAdvocacyCoalitionPolicyPrinciples.pdf)**

To learn more about this issue, contact the California Community Foundation at:  
**(213) 413-4130, Extension 402, [www.calfund.org/learn/lapai.php](http://www.calfund.org/learn/lapai.php)**

- Advancement Project: [www.advanceproj.org](http://www.advanceproj.org)
- First 5 L.A.: [www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org)
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP): [www.laup.net](http://www.laup.net)
- Preschool California: [www.preschoolcalifornia.org](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org)

**More than  
40,000 children  
in L.A. County are  
waiting for placement  
in early care programs.**

## The Preschool Experiences We Deserve: A Guide for Families

highlights critical information about early care and preschool education experiences our young children deserve and urges parents and decision makers to ensure quality learning experiences for young children in the Los Angeles area.

We need to support families in Los Angeles and help them meet the challenges they face by ensuring their young children have access to quality early care and education programs.

## COALITION MEMBERS

### Advancement Project

[www.advanceproj.org](http://www.advanceproj.org)

### Alliance for a Better Community

[www.afabc.org](http://www.afabc.org)

### Asian and Pacific Islanders California Action Network (APIsCAN)

[www.apiscan.org](http://www.apiscan.org)

### California Community Foundation

[www.calfund.org](http://www.calfund.org)

### California Federation of Teachers

[www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)

### Californians Together

[www.californiantogether.org](http://www.californiantogether.org)

### California Strategies

[www.calstrat.com](http://www.calstrat.com)

### Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles

[www.ccala.net](http://www.ccala.net)

### Children Now

[www.childrennow.org](http://www.childrennow.org)

### Child Development Consortium of L.A.

[www.cdcla.org](http://www.cdcla.org)

### Crystal Stairs, Inc.

[www.crystalstairs.org](http://www.crystalstairs.org)

### East Los Angeles College

[www.elac.cc.ca.us](http://www.elac.cc.ca.us)

### Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California

[www.fightcrime.org/ca](http://www.fightcrime.org/ca)

### First 5 L.A.

[www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org)

### Holy Trinity Child Care Center

### Hope Street Family Center

[www.healthychild.ucla.edu](http://www.healthychild.ucla.edu)

### Long Beach Day Nursery

[www.lbdn.org](http://www.lbdn.org)

### Long Beach Early Childhood Education Committee

<http://www.longbeach.gov/health/fss/childcare/default.asp>

### Los Angeles County Office of Child Care

[www.childcare.lacounty.gov](http://www.childcare.lacounty.gov)

### L.A. County Children's Planning Council

[www.childrensplanningcouncil.org](http://www.childrensplanningcouncil.org)

### Los Angeles County Office of Education

[www.lacoe.edu](http://www.lacoe.edu)

### Los Angeles Unified School District Early Childhood Education

[www.lausd.net](http://www.lausd.net)

### Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

[www.laup.net](http://www.laup.net)

### Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)

[www.maldef.org](http://www.maldef.org)

### Mockingbird Communications

[www.mockingbirdcommunications.com](http://www.mockingbirdcommunications.com)

### National Council for La Raza (NCLR)

[www.nclr.org](http://www.nclr.org)

### Preschool California

[www.preschoolcalifornia.org](http://www.preschoolcalifornia.org)

### Proyecto Pastoral at Dolores Mission

[www.proyectopastoral.org](http://www.proyectopastoral.org)

### Progressive Strategy Partners

[www.progressivestrategypartners.com](http://www.progressivestrategypartners.com)

### Public Counsel Law Center

[www.publiccounsel.org](http://www.publiccounsel.org)

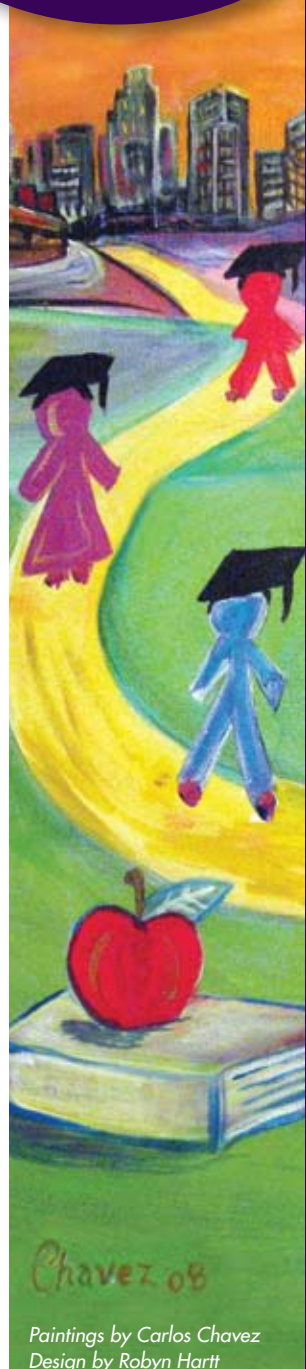
### Urban Education Partnership

[www.urbanedpartnership.org](http://www.urbanedpartnership.org)

### ZERO TO THREE

[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)

**FIS** Families In Schools  
Building Partnerships for Student Success



Paintings by Carlos Chavez  
Design by Robyn Hartt