



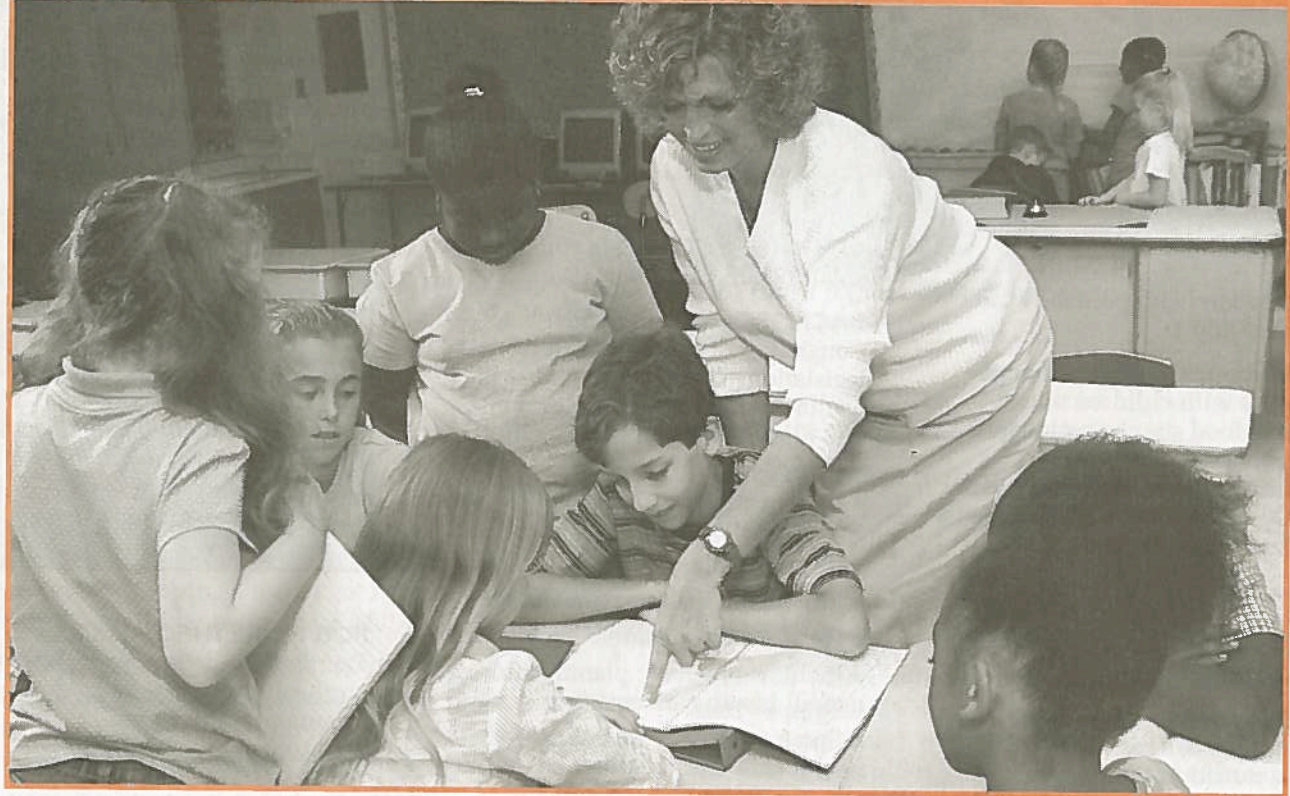
Children's ADVOCATE



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PUBLISHED BY ACTION ALLIANCE FOR CHILDREN



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Call for parent input

ACTION: Parents are invited to give input on a new early care and education quality rating system.

BACKGROUND: The Early Learning Quality Improvement System Advisory Committee wants your ideas on how to provide the information you need to make informed decisions about providers and programs. The committee is asking that you attend public meetings in various locations around the state.

The next meetings will be held on October 29 & December 2, 2009. In 2010, meetings are scheduled in March, May, August, & November. For more info, contact Margot Hunkins (mhunkins@cde.ca.gov) or Carolyn Loveridge (cloveridge@cde.ca.gov), 916-322-4269 or visit www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/engagementsubc.asp

Food stamps and nutrition: NEW LAWS

New state laws and policies went into effect July 1:

- **Food stamps eligibility change**—families with children that receive food stamps no longer have to meet the “asset test” (which limits most households to \$2000 in savings and other assets) to qualify for benefits
- **School trans-fat ban**—schools can no longer sell foods outside the federal school meal program with trans fat to students
- **Menu labeling**—large chain restaurants are required to disclose nutrition information to consumers and post this information by Jan 2011.

Health care reform

ACTION: Tell Congress your views about health care reform.

BACKGROUND: In September, Congress will debate health reform legislation. There are a number of health care proposals in the House and Senate. Advocates are calling for reform that would:

- Cover everyone, regardless of “pre-existing conditions”
- Be affordable
- Provide all necessary health care
- Have strong consumer protections
- Include a realistic plan for limiting overall health care costs
- Some advocates are calling for health care that wouldn't be tied to a job, others want to expand and improve job-related coverage.

Childhood Matters returns to KISS 98.1FM

Childhood Matters, a weekly call-in radio show for families on raising children, returns Sunday mornings to KISS FM. Recent shows have discussed work and family, asthma, and resources for tough times.

- **Childhood Matters** now airs 7am Sundays on KISS 98.1FM, KBBF 89.1FM, and KOCN 105.1FM—and 10am on KGOE 1480AM. Download shows at www.childhoodmatters.org
- **Nuestros Niños**, a sister parenting radio show in Spanish, airs 8am Sundays on La Kalle 100.7/105.7FM, KBBF 89.1FM, KLOK 99.5FM, KSES 107.1FM, KMBX 700AM—and 11am on KWMR 90.5FM and 89.7FM. Download shows at www.nuestrosninos.com

FOR MORE INFO, visit Kaiser Family Foundation, www.kff.org/healthreform/sidebyside.cfm or Commonwealth Fund, www.commonwealthfund.org

See p. 12 for more

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Executive Director Lisa Ruth Shulman, JD

Accountant Pam Elliott

Administrative Coordinator Eric Foss

Outreach Associate Blanca Rivera

Volunteer Patty Overland

Legal Counsel Nonprofit Legal Services Network

Board of Directors Rosemary Obeid, President; Marion Cowee, Vice President; Lea Austin, Secretary; Catalina Alvarado; Charles Drucker; Randy Reiter; Maria Luz Torre

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Editor in Chief Lisa Ruth Shulman, JD

Editor Jessine Foss

Translators (Chinese) Evelyn Chen, Carol Jin, Iris Lin

Translator (Spanish) Lucrecia Miranda

Intern Ellen Noyes

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Action Alliance for Children
1201 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Oakland, CA 94612-1217

Tel: 510-444-7136

Fax: 510-444-7138

www.4children.org ■ e-mail: aac@4children.org

Oakland parents successfully push for school repairs

By Amanda Montague

Mold, garbage, lack of soap,” Oakland parent Julie Harris says these were reasons “many parents reported that their children—mine included!—wouldn’t use bathrooms,” at Oakland’s Claremont School. “Parents were concerned primarily about filth, deferred maintenance. But there were also horror stories—a parent cleaning up an unused classroom found urine on a desk,” adds Harris, who was 2008 PTA President.

“A lot of things at the school didn’t work properly,” says Ron Kriss, whose son attends Claremont. “A floor hadn’t been mopped for eight months. It was affecting how children felt about going there.”

With support from the Education Equity Project (EEP), parents put pressure on the school district to get needed repairs at the school. Parents came together to:

HELP OUT: When Kriss volunteered at the school, he says, “I’d spend 10 hours taking care of problems, tightening a screw, stopping a leak. I got tired of fixing things the district should be taking care of.”

COMPLAIN TO THE DISTRICT: “The parent community complained to the district numerous times through phone calls and emails, about bathroom conditions and our shortage of custodians,” says Harris.

DRAW ON OUTSIDE SUPPORT: In April 2008, EEP’s Marc TafollaYoung contacted Harris as part of the organization’s outreach about the Williams complaint process. This process provides a way for parents and teachers to make sure districts enforce minimum standards for school facilities, teachers, and instructional materials. “I asked [TafollaYoung] to speak at a PTA meeting,” says Harris. “A 15-minute presentation turned in to an hour-long one because parents wanted to know all about it.”

DOCUMENT PROBLEMS: Parents did a walk-through of the school and took pictures of problems, along with TafollaYoung and Lynn Combs, a pro-bono attorney. Harris emailed teachers to find out about problems in



Julie Harris (center) doing a walk-through with Marc TafollaYoung and Lynn Combs

MIN LEE, NEW AMERICAN MEDIA

their classrooms and “followed up in person after school if I didn’t hear back,” she adds.

FOLLOW UP: Parents filed Williams complaints with the district—and kept up the pressure. They met with district officials and school board members. “The district was interested in doing [the repairs] right,” says Kriss. “It didn’t end up being adversarial.”

But, Harris adds, “the school district said the work was finished when only about 60% was completed so we had to appeal.” Combs filed an appeal with the state, which requested evidence from the school that the work was complete. District officials did not respond to requests for comment.

“The parents really pushed it, they did all the work,” adds Oakland School Board Member Jody London.

Success!

The district has “done a good job repairing things,” says Kriss. “[Now] we’re not wasting volunteer resources. Instead of hanging a pencil sharpener, I can help a student learn math.”

FOR MORE INFO: Education Equity Project, a joint project between the Lawyers’ Committee on Civil Rights and the ACLU of Southern California, 415-543-9444, www.lccr.com/eep.shtml



Parents design L.A. parent involvement model

By Ellen Noyes

Los Angeles parents have a new tool this fall to help them be more active and engaged in their children's schools. The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) will be implementing a new model for involving parents in schools that specifically addresses the needs of "parents of color with kids who struggle in urban schools," says Mary Johnson, mother of two and executive director of Parent-U-Turn.

The new parent involvement model—developed by Parent-U-Turn, an organization focused on improving parent involvement in schools—aims to "help urban parents advocate for their children, navigate the K-12 system, ask [schools] the right questions, and know about policy," says Johnson. The LAUSD is implementing the new model this fall—and now schools across California can also adopt it.

Valuing parents' voices

"Parents are the best experts. It's time to make the voices of urban parents equal to the voices of others," says Johnson. Parent-U-Turn's parent involvement model (see box, p.5) will help parents better advocate for children in schools, with the aim of "decreasing the student achievement gap [and] drop-out rates, increasing graduation [rates] in urban schools of color," she adds.

Parent leaders will learn more about their rights as parents, how to collect and understand data about how children are doing in schools, and how to make sure their children get the resources they need to succeed. Parent leaders will then hold ongoing trainings at their children's schools to get more parents involved. "Parents listen to parents more," notes Johnson.

Parent-U-Turn's model differs from other parent involvement models because it includes "components such as empowering parents to become leaders [and] data collection and analysis," adds Anna Carrasco, par-



Mary Johnson speaking at an event on social change for families in urban communities

ent ombudsperson for local district 6 of the LAUSD. "[Parents need] to learn the key factors that make a difference in supporting their child's education and communicating with the school. The more parents know, the more they can help support their child, even parents who don't speak English."

"Many parents are already leaders in many programs," Johnson adds. "They just need spaces to engage with others and to show their expertise. In the past the only [tool] parents had was a report card."

Ideas from the community

Parent-U-Turn's parent involvement model is "based on experiences from parents [at low-performing] schools that have successfully navigated their children to universities," says Johnson. In 2006, Parent-U-Turn held focus groups, conducted surveys, and interviewed parents about barriers to getting involved in their children's schools. They listened to parents' needs and concerns and "how they navigate the system," recalls Johnson.

The results "overwhelmingly show parents have very little understanding on how to read or interpret data, the requirements [for students going to college], school

structures and policy, and students' rights," says Johnson. Parents also wanted a more welcoming school environment.

"Parents [need to] feel like they are part of the community and part of the decisions made at their child's school—that they have a voice [and are] well informed of decisions and resources," adds Carrasco.

Parent-U-Turn also talked with school advocates, such as the Institute for Democracy, Education, and Access (IDEA). "Parent-U-Turn has articulated a different form of parent involvement," says John Rogers, Co-director of IDEA. "They have promoted research by parents in various ways [and used] parent-created data (from) conducting surveys, access to instructional materials, and analyzed data to hold schools accountable."

Starting local and going statewide

Johnson presented the model to the Parent Collaborative, which brings together LAUSD parent representatives, and asked them to adopt it. Then she brought it before the LAUSD school board.

Parent-U-Turn and the San Diego County Title 1 Parents Association met individually with school board members and staff to ask for their support. When one of the superintendents feared teachers would not support the model, they met with him and PTA members, says Johnson. This fall, schools are implementing the model.

Parent-U-Turn also successfully campaigned for the California Department of Education (CDE) to adopt the parent involvement model as one of several that schools statewide can use. A new CDE website highlighting best practices will include Parent-U-Turn's model, Johnson adds.

Parents as facilitators

At the end of August, Parent-U-Turn will collaborate with another parent involvement organization, Parent Boot Camp, to hold workshops on the new parent involvement model in Spanish and English. L.A. parent leaders will be trained as facilitators and hold ongoing trainings in area schools to help other parents get involved. Budget cuts threatened to "cut a lot of people who were going to be facilitators," says Johnson, but Parent-U-Turn successfully campaigned to get funding reinstated.

"[I want to] help parents know they can make a difference and hold the school accountable for giving a quality education. [We] teach them to use the power of their voices to be engaged and active," says Diane Haney, leader of Parent Boot Camp and the San Diego County Title 1 Parents Association.

PARENTS AS ADVOCATES

Parent-U-Turn's parent involvement model will train parents about their rights, understanding and collecting data, and how to advocate for their children.

Parents will learn:

- ❖ **the rights** of children as students and their own rights as parents—to visit the classroom, to take off work to attend school activities.
- ❖ **about course requirements** and the curriculum used in the classroom.
- ❖ **ways to support their children**—"It's important that parents discuss with teachers how to engage their child and use the child's strengths to build strength in the child's weakest academic area," says Valerie Muñoz, co-founder of Parent-U-Turn.
- ❖ **how to read data** from STAR testing and other school assessments—"Parents need to know [this] in order to improve their children's education," says Johnson. "Plus [these are] skills parents need to be an equal partner on decision-making councils."
- ❖ **how to collect data** through surveys, focus groups, and assessments.
- ❖ **how to write complaints** and hold people accountable.
- ❖ **ways to successfully advocate** for their children, particularly those in special education.

Parent-U-Turn is creating a parent facilitator guide in English and Spanish and developing an online Parent Involvement 101 course for parents, teachers, and principals.

For more information or to get involved, contact: Parent-U-Turn, 323-809-9160, www.californiaparents.net

Valerie Muñoz plans to be a trainer at the August workshops because "I want to make a difference in children's lives, [so] they have opportunities to be successful in life. Parent-U-Turn is making many changes in our community, by empowering parents as advocates for their children," she adds. Muñoz is co-founder of Parent-U-Turn and mother of six children.



Classroom projects offer rich learning opportunities

By Jean Tepperman

Last summer, Tami Sanders planted a sunflower garden with her preschool class in the Yuba City Unified School District—and the garden turned into a summer-long project.

“The garden is in our play area,” says Sanders. “When [children] were riding their bikes, they noticed, ‘Hey, the seeds are sprouting!’ So they all went to see.” Sanders encouraged more observations: “How many days did they take to sprout?”

“The learning that comes from [following kids’] genuine interests is amazing! Much more meaningful learning comes from them,” says Sanders, who has been doing project-based learning for the past 15 years.

DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S INTERESTS: Yuba City Unified Early Childhood Program

Math and literacy

Sanders and other teachers “brainstorm together” about how to “intertwine” projects with district math and literacy goals.

“With the sunflower project it was easy,” Sanders says. Children were fascinated with the sunflowers’ growth. “‘Last week it was only up to my knee!’ ‘It’s taller than you but shorter than the teacher.’ So I put out a yardstick and measuring tape and they started discovering inches and feet,” she adds.

Sanders would ask “‘What did you discover?’ Someone found a worm, so I wrote ‘worm’ on the board. ‘Where did you find the worm?’ ‘In the dirt.’ I wrote ‘dirt’ and drew a line to ‘worm.’ I wrote words with pictures—‘grasshopper,’ ‘ladybug’—and put them in writing and art areas. Children wrote and drew about the garden.”

Science and art

“[The children] wanted to pull weeds,” Sanders recalls, “so we talked about how to tell what was weeds. They discovered bugs, toads, spiders. We gave them clipboards so they could draw or write what they were see-

ing. We let children observe [the bugs] with magnifying glasses.” They counted legs—insects had six, spiders had eight. “We also talked about how we have to set them free.”

“We brought worms in [and] fed them lettuce and potatoes,” she adds. “One child asked, ‘Will they eat newspaper?’” It turned out they did.

When bees swarmed around the sunflowers, “children started trying to make bees,” she says. “I brought in pictures of bees, coffee filters, egg cartons, black and yellow paper. But I didn’t tell them how to make bees—I wanted them to be *their* bees.”

Parents contribute

One parent, a beekeeper, came to talk with the children. Others contributed materials. “I do a project board so they know what we’re working on,” says Sanders. Local stores donated supplies.

They are learning

Sanders can see benefits of the project approach in “the language that comes from [children] discovering their own stuff. They have a huge vocabulary. Their phonemic awareness is unbelievable because of [all] the communication.”

Children also learn social skills. “Older kids teamed up with younger kids. Bilingual kids teamed up with Spanish-speaking students, and translated for them,” she adds.

HIGHER-LEVEL SKILLS: Salida Child Development Program

After the Salida Unified School District adopted a project-based curriculum, “we noticed [children’s] language skills improved,” says Jacki Gray-Hill, Literacy Coordinator of the Child Development Program.

Projects “are based on children’s questions, [so] children develop higher-level thinking skills,” adds Education Coordinator Tanya Vander Weide.

Some teachers, says Vander Weide, found it hard to “let go of control [and let] children’s questions guide the study. [Others] thought it would be more work. But



SALIDA CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Children visit an auto parts store as part of a project on cars.

they found being child-focused was less work. Children’s curiosity lead them to activities. When studying rocks, [children] discovered they could write with stones and sort their collection.”

Methods of investigation

“Math skills are strengthened,” says Vander Weide. “[Children] do surveys: number of windows in your house, what kind of food you like. Or in a project on cars, they might list four colors, then tally [cars of each color].”

“Visiting experts”

“One class did a house project,” says Vander Weide. “One of the fathers did framing work, so he brought in wood and [helped] each child make a little house.” Parents have been visiting experts on cooking, pets, gardening.

In a car project, “the [school] janitor showed children how he washes a car,” Gray-Hill adds. Children visited a mechanic’s shop and a car wash.

Teamwork

“One class built a car together,” says Vander Weide. “Kids were in charge of making different parts. They shared with the teacher what materials they thought they would need. Some didn’t work—maybe they weren’t strong enough. They were testing hypotheses to see if they were correct.”

CLASS ART GALLERY: Westside Children’s Center

Two-and-a-half-year-olds spent two months creating an art gallery in Yanira Vasquez’s class at Culver City’s Westside Children’s Center. Children presented it to parents at an evening event—and developed important skills and confidence.

Teachers brought in “yarn, pasta, playdough, finger-paint, watercolor,” says Vasquez, “so [children could] experiment with different textures and materials. We made one room an art gallery.”

Verbal skills

Before the event, each child chose something to display. When the parents arrived, children went up to say what they did and why they picked each piece—“because she used purple and I like purple,” “I made this for my mommy and daddy,” “I made a lion.” Vasquez says, “They were able to verbalize what they were feeling. They were proud of what they had done!”

Social awareness

Working on a group project helped children develop greater social awareness and skills. Children would say to each other, “You did a good job. I like your painting.”

Sometimes a child worried he’d done something wrong because his project was different. “That gave us a chance to explain that everyone does it differently,” says Vasquez. “You did it the way you liked it,” and that was just fine.

RESOURCES

- ❖ **Project Approach:** information on projects with children. English and Chinese. www.projectapproach.org
- ❖ **Early Childhood Research and Practice:** descriptions of projects done by teachers. English and Spanish. <http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/byproject.html>
- ❖ **Tami Sander’s sunflower garden project,** <http://kidsworldexploration.com/id80.html>
- ❖ **Teacher guides** (both by Sylvia Chard, Scholastic):
 - *Project Approach: Making Curriculum Come Alive*
 - *Project Approach: Managing Successful Projects*
- ❖ **Engaging Children:**
 - *Project Approach, Second Edition* by Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard, Ablex Publishing
 - *Handbook for Planning Child-Centered Curriculum,* by Deb Curtis and Margie Carter, Redleaf Press
- ❖ **Video:** *Thinking Big: Extending Emergent Curriculum Projects,* Margie Carter, Sarah Felstiner, Ann Pelo, Redleaf Press

For more resources, see
www.4children.org/issues/2009/september_october

Raising Kids Families and parent educators share tips for stopping bullying

By Jean Parietti

Berkeley mom Claudette Johnson was concerned when her fourth-grade daughter, Louise, started dragging her feet on school mornings, withdrawing from activities, and gaining weight. Then Johnson learned from another parent that one of Louise's friends was bullying her.

Bullying—which can include hitting, tripping, name-calling, threatening, or shunning a classmate—is more common than parents may think. By some estimates, more than 160,000 kids miss school every day because of bullying.

“Bullies often go after kids who are vulnerable or who are perceived as different,” says Lynne Wasley, senior parent advisor at Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center in Novato. Parents and educators discuss how families can intervene to stop bullying.

Be alert for warning signs

Children who are being bullied may cry or make themselves sick to avoid going to school, but other signs can be more subtle. “Any change in daily activity, how they eat, how they're sleeping” can be a warning sign, says Wasley.

When parents are involved at school, they can see how students interact with each other. “Come early and observe what's going on in the schoolyard, or drop in on the class,” says Irene van der Zande, executive director of Kidpower, a Santa Cruz-based nonprofit that offers skill-building on personal safety and anti-bullying education.

Talk with your child

Johnson used a gentle approach to talk with her daughter about the bullying. She asked Louise how things

were going at school. Later she mentioned that, when she was young, she was the target of a “mean girl.” Within a few days, Louise opened up, telling her mother that her friend was calling her names and demeaning her.

Johnson helped her daughter think of different ways to respond to situations that might come up at school. “I [tried] to get her to be more assertive about things,” says Johnson. If the other girl ordered Louise to get some crayons, Johnson suggested saying, “I'll get them this time if you get them next time.”

RESOURCES

- ❖ **Kidpower** offers workshops and trainings on self-protection, confidence-building, and anti-bullying. Site includes resources on safety and bullying prevention. Some resources are in Spanish (scroll down). www.kidpower.org/ARTICLES/index.html
- ❖ **Bullying Prevention Project**, from PACER Center (which focuses on disability issues affecting children), offers resources on bullying, including a website for kids and prevention resources in English, Spanish, and Somali. www.pacer.org/publications/bullying.asp
- ❖ **Matrix Parent Network and Resource Center** is a resource center for families of children with special needs. Offers a toolkit on bullying and children with special needs, including tips for talking with your child as well as advocating for changes in your child's school. www.matrixparents.org/pub/pdf/BullyingArticle.pdf
- ❖ **The California Department of Education** offers a list of publications and resources on bullying, www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp

For more resources, see

www.4children.org/issues/2009/september_october



KIDPOWER

Children practice the “stop sign,” a technique for handling bullies, at a KidPower training.

“Don’t lecture” when a child talks to you about being bullied, adds van der Zande. “Just say, ‘Tell me more, and we will figure out what to do.’” Parents can coach children on what to say to the other child and role play situations and saying the words.

Provide tools to help children handle the situation

After 6-year-old Lily took an anti-bullying class from Kidpower, she used her new skills to respond to a first-grade boy bullying her and two of her kindergarten classmates. Lily “told her friends that just being mean back wasn’t going to get them anywhere,” says her mom, Lisa, a Hillsborough resident. The girls walked away from the boy, tossing his mean words into an imaginary trash can. When the boy kept bothering them, Lily told him to stop or she would tell. When that didn’t work, she reported him to a playground monitor and the boy’s bullying stopped.

“If a problem is small, the child should try to handle it first,” says Caroline Cabrera, an outreach specialist for Lutheran Social Services of Southern California who teaches the K-4 “Steps to Respect” program in Barstow.

Van der Zande adds that if the bullying doesn’t stop, children should get help from an adult—“schools often punish a child who fights back.”

Get involved when needed

Leslie Chen, a Sacramento mom of Chinese descent, found out one of her 12-year-old son’s friends had been taunting him for weeks, referring to him as a type of Asian food. At first, she says she didn’t take it too seriously—her son, Matthew, played sports with the other boy and the families had a common circle of friends.

“I never thought of this whole situation as bullying,” says Chen. “[My reaction was] turn your cheek, he’s just kidding, don’t let him get the better of you. I just wanted the kids to settle it themselves.”

“[Matthew] just tried to ignore [the boy] and told him to quit it,” Chen says. But one day, when Matthew responded with a clever remark, the other boy punched him. The boy was suspended; after his parents made him apologize, he started threatening to beat up Matthew.

Chen’s husband wrote a letter to the school and Chen also met with the principal. The boys had two classes together, so Chen emailed those teachers and asked them to keep an eye on the situation. “Even if your kid doesn’t want you involved, as parents we need to be an advocate to make sure they’re safe,” says Chen. “Both teachers talked to my son to make sure he was OK.”

Chen talked to the boy’s mother, who insisted her son’s threats were idle. But the bullying ended after school officials and the boy’s parents told him to stay away from Matthew.

“Even if your kid doesn’t want you involved, as parents we need to be an advocate to make sure they’re safe.”

Leslie Chen, Sacramento mom

Johnson also talked with administrators at Louise’s school. She asked a teacher her daughter trusted to tell Louise “you’re aware that she’s having a tough time and you’re here should she need anything,” she says. She also asked the recess attendant to step in if it seemed the other girl was hovering over Louise.

Johnson says the bullying seems to have ended. Louise is attending a new school this fall (unrelated to the bullying) and the two girls still email each other, though Johnson monitors the conversations.

Advocate for anti-bullying programs

Parents can push for changes in school policy to limit bullying. “[Schools] might need more supervision of children at lunch and recess. They might need a policy. They might need [an anti-bullying] training program,” says van der Zande.

Wasley says it’s important “to address the whole school culture,” so that bullying behavior is seen as uncool, bystanders are willing to say so, and incidents are reported to adults. “Everybody has the right to be respected and feel safe for who they are,” she adds.

Some names have been changed.

THE California Child Development CORPS

Early childhood teachers and providers organizing and advocating for better pay, benefits, job conditions, and professional respect.

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

Riverside Corps participants build leadership

We want a community of leaders, to build unity and strength within the early childhood community," says Tamara Dobson, California Child Development Corps participant, Riverside Family Child Care Association President, and owner of Dobson Christian Preschool and Child Care. "Involvement in the Corps has made us really aware of the statewide funding loss. This is a time to unite and bring in new funds. We see ourselves as leaders and have to do our part. We all need each other."

Riverside Corps participants—as leaders of the Riverside Family Child Care Association—are bringing together family child care providers throughout the county to work on shared goals. Despite the tough economic climate, the group received funding for an upcoming leadership summit and is seeking funds to help providers offer Early Head Start programs.

"Improving care for children"

At the Leadership Alliance Summit (Sept. 19), "we will go over different types of leadership [as well as] business practices, stress relief, nutrition, how to communicate with parents," says Dobson. "We will be educating family child care providers about health and safety to reduce the number of licensing [problems]. This will definitely help new providers improve care for children." Dobson has been a family child care provider for eight years, and Corps participant and Association President for more than two years.

"Promoting school readiness"

"We're trying to include family child care providers in Early Head Start, because we serve a lot of infants and toddlers," says Dobson. "Providing [these] services will help providers promote school readiness and build stronger relationships with parents. It [would] definitely assist parents with their child care needs." Early Head Start provides a range of services for families of children under three, including early care and education for children and home visits.

Dobson, in her role as President of the Riverside Family Child Care Association, has written a proposal for federal funds to help providers meet Early Head Start standards. The proposal focused on the need for additional early childhood spaces for low-income families. Family child care providers plan to collaborate with community agencies, who would do parent outreach.

—Amanda Montague



TAMARA DOBSON

Tamara Dobson with Keagan, a child in her program

Announcements

- ❖ **Saturday, Oct 17: Don't miss the California Child Development Corps' annual meeting and training!** Build leadership in your county. Make sure your county leaders are connected to statewide policy and advocacy. Reserve space now for up to five teacher and provider representatives from your county.
- ❖ **Corps participants around the state** are experiencing impacts from the budget cuts and changes in First 5 funding. Let us know how you and your programs are impacted. Call us today.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

- ❖ **Alameda:** Marva Lyons, 510-521-3997 and Margaret Costello-Chevis, 510-226-9414
 - ❖ **Butte:** Jennifer Ferrini, 530-893-2443
 - ❖ **Contra Costa:** Donna Daly, 925-833-0834
 - ❖ **Humboldt:** Danielle Koren, 707-443-2497
 - ❖ **Los Angeles:** Catherine Scott, 562-572-9939
 - ❖ **Riverside:** Tamara Dobson, 951-340-3186
 - ❖ **San Diego:** Katy Kenshur, 760-436-3725
 - ❖ **San Francisco:** Valentina Feldman, 415-861-5361
 - ❖ **San Joaquin:** Bettina Engleman, 209-601-9467
 - ❖ **San Mateo:** Silvia Espinoza, 650-359-4675
 - ❖ **Santa Barbara:** Christine Fleenor, 805-937-0675
 - ❖ **Shasta:** Carol VonBrandt, 530-365-1931
 - ❖ **Solano:** June Regis, 707-439-0876
- If your county is not listed above, contact Sara Hicks-Kilday at cares@caccwrc.org, 415-808-7327. For Spanish, contact Teresa Calle-Streicker, 415-821-7871.



A parent-run, parent-led grassroots organization fighting for affordable quality child care for all

Parent Voices chapters are hosted by child care resource and referral agencies throughout California.

Parents and providers call on legislators to protect child care

“[Last year] I was working for a resource and referral agency, but I wasn’t able to afford child care,” says Venice mom Brianne Harvey, a lead organizer for Community Voices (the L.A. chapter of Parent Voices). “I was on the waiting list for over two years and going into credit card debt trying to take care of my daughter.”

Harvey became a family child care provider to care for her three-year-old daughter, Akina. As a parent and now a provider, she is keenly aware of the importance of state-funded child care subsidies.

So Harvey helped Community Voices coordinate events where both parents and providers spoke with legislators about the need for continued funding for quality, affordable child care. Child care funding emerged relatively intact in the state budget agreement—though other programs suffered big cuts (see p. 12)

Parents and providers worried

“I know a lot of [parents were] concerned their child care [subsidy would be cut]. They wouldn’t be able to work,” she says. “Providers [were] also really anxious because their livelihood depends on subsidized children in their care. With IOUs, they could be waiting months to get paid.” (When the state ran out of money this summer, California issued IOUs to providers instead of paying them.)

“We are the link to real struggles”

Community Voices organized a town hall meeting between parents and legislators in Sacramento. The chapter also coordinated visits by providers and parents to legislators’ local offices—and delivered posters signed by 3000 providers and parents that read “IOUs won’t do.” Providers signed the posters at L.A. child care resource and referral agencies when they came to turn in their paperwork.



Brianne Harvey with her daughter, Akina

“The goal was to speak to legislators about where we’ll be left without child care,” Harvey says. “We let them know how important child care is to California’s economy, because it allows people to work. This year, people talked about losing their homes and cars, the losses were a lot more profound.”

“[These events] always leave me feeling very inspired,” Harvey adds, “and make me want to continue to speak with legislators about the importance of child care. They have to know what’s going on in the community. We are their link to the real struggles.”

—Amanda Montague

Parent Voices contacts:

Statewide: Mary Ignatius, 415-882-0234, mignatius@rrnetwork.org

Alameda (Hayward): Jennifer Greppi, 510-584-3115, jenniferf@4c-alameda.org

Alameda (Oakland): Janet Zamudio, 510-658-7353, janet@bananasinc.org

Amador: Amy Jones, 209.223.1624 x109, ajones@hrcccr.org

Butte: Jane Haberman, 530-895-1677, jhaberman@valleyoakchildren.org

Calaveras: Cheryl Berg, 209-754-1075, ext. 115, cberg@hrcccr.org

Contra Costa: Candy Duperroir, 925-778-4739, candy@cocokids.org

El Dorado: Heather Della Ripa, 530-541-5848, hscfslt@pacbell.net

Fresno: Lourdes Hernandez, 559-456-1100, louh@cvcsn.org

Los Angeles: Dawn Lovelace, 323.421.2602, DLovelace@crystalstairs.org

Marin: Leah Benz, 415-491-5776, leah@mc3.org

Sacramento: Rachel Minnick, 916-369-3387, Rachel.Minnick@childaction.org

San Francisco: Maria Luz Torre, 415-343-3383, parentvoices@childrenscouncil.org

San Joaquin: Ana Tacan, 209.461.2933, atacan@frrcsj.org

San Mateo: Child Care Coordinating Council, 650.655.5078

Santa Barbara: Children’s Resource and Referral Program, 805.962.8988

Santa Clara: Mario Del Castillo, 408-487-0747, mariod@4c.org

Solano: Kathy Lago, 707-864-4620, klago@solanofs.org

Sonoma: Lorie Siebler, 707-522-1413, lsiebler@sonoma4cs.org

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State budget cuts services for families

Services for children and families took a big hit in California's budget—despite activism by people who care about children. The state's \$23 billion shortfall was mostly closed with \$16 billion in cuts. The governor also used the line-item veto to cut an additional \$500 million (legislators are protesting these cuts). He called on First 5 to fill the gap—and First 5 promised to help with funding. The budget will:

CalWORKs (effective 2011)

- Limit adults to 48 months of cash assistance in any 60-month period
- Require "self-sufficiency reviews" for adults without enough welfare-to-work activity hours. Cash assistance would be cut in half if adults didn't attend without good cause.
- Cut children's grants up to 50% if adults do not meet work requirements
- Count the time during which an adult is sanctioned toward the 60-month lifetime limit.

Additional changes

- End COLAs for CalWORKs grants, starting 2010-11
- Cut \$375 million from county funding
- Exempt primary caregivers of young children from work requirements until July 2011
- Stop the 60-month time clock when an adult has been excused from participation, until July 2011.

Health

- Cut \$323 million from Medi-Cal—plus \$60 million from county funds
- Cut \$174 million from Healthy Families. Healthy Families stopped enrolling children in July.

First 5 promised to contribute \$81 million—but without additional funding. Healthy Families will begin disenrolling children this fall. The California Budget Project estimates that up to 800,000 children could lose coverage.

- Cut \$234 million from Department of Developmental Services programs, including regional centers for people with developmental disabilities (\$100 million was cut in Feb. and \$50 million more was cut from young children's services in line-item vetoes)
- Cut state funds for several community clinic programs and also Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health programs; eliminate state funds for the Immunization Program and the Black Infant Health Program
- Create a plan to centralize (and likely privatize) eligibility and enrollment for Medi-Cal, food stamps, and CalWORKs.

Child care and development

- Eliminate the school-age community child care program (latchkey)
- Increase Community Care Licensing fees by 10%
- Train former CalWORKs recipients as child care teachers (\$4 million)
- Train license-exempt child care providers (\$2.5 million).

Child welfare

- Cut some foster care provider rates by 10%
- Cut \$80 million from child welfare services.

Schools

- Fund K-14 spending at the minimum Prop-98 level (\$1.4 billion

less for 2008-09 and \$4.5 billion less for 2009-10 compared with Feb. budget levels)—but eventually restore 2008-09 reductions

- Count \$402 million from funds for districts with the lowest academic achievement levels toward Prop 98 funding
- Allow districts to reduce the school year by up to five days through 2012-13
- Allow districts to sell surplus property to pay for General Fund purposes through 2011.

Sources: California Budget Project, Child Care Law Center, Child Development Policy Institute, Health Access

Take action this fall

OCT 5-9:

Step up for kids day: advocates will call on elected officials to make children's issues a top priority. Events will take place in state capitols around the country.

For more info, contact Every Child Matters, 202-223-8177, www.everychildmatters.org/National/Campaigns/Step-Up-For-Kids-09.htm

OCT 22:

Lights on afterschool: advocates will celebrate afterschool programs and call for additional support to ensure that programs thrive. Event planning kit is online.

For more info, contact the Afterschool Alliance, (866) KIDS-TODAY, www.afterschoolalliance.org/loa.cfm