

Fact Sheet
Local Planning Council
A Community Connector and Capacity Builder for Child Development Services

Local Planning Councils (LPC) were developed in each county in 1996-97 as a component of the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant, which was created by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. In requiring the LPCs, the federal government recognized the importance of establishing independent, diversified groups who could quantify the need for child development services and determine which areas within each county have the greatest need for subsidized care. Only LPCs have been charged with collaborating with subsidized and non-subsidized child development providers, county welfare departments and human service agencies, regional centers, job training programs, employers, integrated child and family service councils, tribal councils, local and state children and families commissions, parent organizations, Early Start family resource centers, local child care resource and referral programs, and other local stakeholders to build the local child development infrastructure.

Responding to these foundational requirements, each LPC conducts periodic countywide needs assessments that consider the child development needs of all families and identifies gaps for both low income families and families who can and do use market rate child development services. Each LPC has conducted research to identify geographic priorities for the limited funding available for subsidized child development used by the California Department of Education (CDE) and by local agencies and organizations in expanding child development opportunities.

Creating Links and Maximizing Resources

Since inception, LPCs have become robust catalysts for connection, collaboration, and coordination among historically isolated programs, services, and stakeholders. This ability to connect and collaborate is at the heart of the success of LPCs. Funding for LPCs amounts to only \$6.6 million statewide from the Quality Improvement Plan. However, LPCs have leveraged significant resources from other sources to enhance and expand the child development system in each county through quality improvement activities, training, workforce development, and outreach to underserved populations.

The LPCs have developed comprehensive plans that address the specific conditions in their respective counties, as well as more general issues that impact the availability, accessibility, and quality of child development services. Implementation of the plans engages many players and stakeholders in each county thus multiplying the impact of the LPC.

LPCs as Partners with CDE within Our Local Communities

The LPCs are critical partners with the CDE by coordinating statewide efforts at the community level.

- LPCs enable other CDE-contracted programs to stretch their reach and effectiveness by promoting, coordinating, and hosting California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN) trainings, WestEd: Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) trainings, and more.

- When CDE was authorized to pilot a new strategy called the Temporary Voluntary Transfer of Funds designed to reduce the amount of under-earned funds from CDE child development contractors, it turned to the LPCs to coordinate the pilot in each county. During the pilot year, the LPC for Los Angeles County (e.g. Child Care Planning Committee), coordinated the reallocation of \$2 million for child development services that otherwise would have gone unused and returned to the State.
- CDE field staff consult with LPC coordinators when CDE contractors request changes in service priorities so that the Sacramento based staff will have an accurate picture of local conditions and factors.
- LPC Coordinators developed the guidelines for determining geographic funding priorities, which was authorized by the CDE and is now uniformly used in each county. The LPC Coordinators are now developing a uniform needs assessment process so that CDE can aggregate data submitted by each county into a statewide assessment of need and capacity.

Incubators of Change

LPCs are often in a position to test new strategies and initiatives locally that can be implemented statewide. In Los Angeles County,

- The LPC has facilitated linkages between Head Start, the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Probation Department to ensure that more children of probation families and families in the child welfare system are successfully enrolled in and receive the benefit of Head Start services.
- The LPC organized a major forum of family child care providers to hear about and provide input into the development of the Early Learning Quality Improvement System in support of CDE's efforts to ensure broad based input. The forum was conducted in English, Spanish and Chinese and became a model for LPCs across the state.
- The LPC developed a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) long before the State legislation was passed mandating the development of a QRIS. The QRIS has evolved into the Steps to Excellence Project (STEP), a QRIS being piloted in ten communities throughout Los Angeles County.

California is rich in services, programs, initiatives and supports as part of its diversified child development system. However, there has been little attention paid to optimal utilization of all of these resources. Efforts of coordinating and connecting the components of the child development system in a meaningful way and leveraging other stakeholders and support are a direct result of the work of the LPC.

For more information on the Los Angeles County's Local Planning Council,
the Child Care Planning Committee,
please contact the Office of Child Care at 213/974-4103
or visit our Web site at www.childcare.lacounty.gov.