



February 2019 Featured Agency of the Month

Imperial County Office of Education–Early Care & Education Programs



The Imperial County Office of Education (ICOE), Early Care & Education Programs (ECEP) was first conceived under the name of Child Development Services (CDS) back in 1979 with the Child Care Resource & Referral Program, a single \$50,000 contract, which consisted of one and a half staff and a small office within the ICOE. Thirty-nine years later, with a name change back in 2009, ECEP has grown into an \$18 million program holding eighteen contracts, growing steadily every year, with over 120 staff, (8) Head Start, (4) Early Head Start serving 368 children, and (12) State preschool sites serving 479 children, including (1) blended program. Our centers are part of the First 5-Quality Start program. In addition, we have an Early Head Start Home-Base program which serves 60 children and the Early Head Start Family Child Care Partnership program serving 20 children. It is our goal to make sure that children enrolled in our programs leave our centers with a positive self-image and a beneficial school experience. Children with working parents spend over 12,000 hours in center-based care. For this reason, developing the early years are so important which have a long-term effect on the future success of children. Learning does not begin in Kindergarten; it starts the moment the child comes into the world. How we respond during the first five years will determine how the child matures later in life. ECEP provides unique services countywide to families and children and is widely known as a one-stop-shop for our families, children and the ECE community.

Resource & Referral (R&R):

The R&R trains child care providers and license-exempt providers in the California Childcare Initiative Project (CCIP), The Heart of Infant & Toddler Care (HIT), Health & Safety, Trustline and gives licensing support. We provide an R&R online referral system (NoHo) for parents seeking licensed child care in Imperial County. Most recently, we partnered with Department of Social Services (DSS) in providing services to Resource parents through Foster Care Bridge Program: Navigator and Trauma-Informed Care Coach. ECEP collaborates with other programs, providing our ECE educators trainings and professional development. R&R partners are UC Davis: Center for Excellence in Child Development, Medic First, YMCA Resource & Referral (San Diego) and the Imperial County Health Department, to name a few.

Alternative Payment Program:

ECEP serves 1,283 children through the CAPP, Cal-Works Stages 2 & 3 programs which work closely with Department of Social Services. An array of child care services is provided to parents such as license-exempt care, family child care, private centers, and center-based. Programs offered by ECEP include Families must be income eligible, employed, seeking employment, or participating in a job training or education program. Incapacitated parents and homeless families may also be eligible. Parental choice is presented at all times.

Early Care & Education Planning Council (Local Planning Council):

Support the overall coordination of child care services in Imperial County. Conducts Needs Assessment and Strategic Planning that addresses the needs of Imperial County including the Zip Code priorities. The LPC Coordinator oversees the CTKS and AB 212 Early Childhood Educators Retention & Quality Training Project.

****A BIG thank you to Emma Sanchez, Assistant Director, for this submission!**