

Los Angeles County Early Care and
Education COVID-19 Response Team:

Learning, Reflection, and Moving Forward

Presented by:

Becca Patton, Director of
Early Care and Education
Jaime Kalenik, Senior
Program Officer

**Policy Roundtable for
Child Care and
Development:**

November 9, 2022

Research by:

Pauline E. Brooks, PhD
Patricia Karimi-Taleghani, C. Phil.
Diane Griggs-Ross, LCSW
Hamid Karimi-Taleghani, Technical
Assistant

Pauline E. Brooks Consulting, LLC



1ST 5 LA
first 5 la
Giving kids the best start

Presentation Objectives

- Share highlights from LA County ECE COVID-19 Response Team Reflection and Learning Report
- Discuss ideas to improve emergency response in the future



Purpose of the Response Team

Goals:

- Support access to childcare for Essential Workers
- Provide guidance and support to help providers operate safely
- Preserve LA County early care and education infrastructure

Methods:

- Weekly meetings
- Collaboration across institutions
- Advising and advocating with city, county, and state agencies
- Communications to providers and parents
- Securing and distributing supplies



Who is the Response Team

19 individuals from 10 different institutions:

1. Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles
2. Child Care Resource Center
3. Child 360
4. First 5 LA
5. LA County Office of Education
6. LA Mayors Office
7. LA Unified School District
8. Office for the Advancement of Early Care and Education (DPH)
9. Pomona Unified School District
10. SEIU

Key Activities

Access:

- Enhanced referral system and +888 number
- Direct partnership with hospital HR departments
- Advocacy for providers as “essential workers”

Information:

- Hosted 22 Community Calls for average of 500 participants
- Set up centralized website for resources and information: childcareheroes.org

Vaccinations:

- Organized clinics for providers with Children’s Hospital LA
- Phone outreach in partnership with LA College Promise Works
- Created and curated vaccine safety media

Supplies:

- Coordinated acquisition of supplies from First 5 CA, Office of Emergency Management, and others (over 16M items)
- Organized centralized warehouse to store goods
- Distribution through Resource & Referral Agencies





**Learning &
Reflection**

Purpose of Learning and Reflection Report

- Capture best practices for future emergencies
- Identify areas for improvement, specifically around equity
- Illuminate system strengths and challenges
- Hear from providers and parents how the work did or did not reach them
- Help set priorities for moving forward and addressing the impact (ongoing) of the pandemic
- Tell the story

What We Heard from Providers

- Economic strain
 - Low enrollment, often went unpaid and forced to take out loans or spend down savings
 - Applying for funding was too complicated, confusing, “hit and miss,” overwhelming
- Information was key
 - Guidelines helped providers: feel “secure;” maximize “safety” of children; and relay to parents “reliable” and “scientific” information
 - Most helpful topics: available resources, financial help, COVID-19 safe practices
- Health and safety challenges
 - Health insurance was considered a necessity for economic, mental health (lowering stress/anxiety), as well as physical health
 - Providers got infected from children and had to close, did not always know if parents/family members tested positive
- Support for families
 - Talked to parents about assistance programs
 - Taught children calming (e.g. breathing) techniques
 - Gave their own time, money, resources when families were in crisis (e.g. illness, death, job loss, no support system, etc.)

Best Practices for the Future

- Maintain Response Team's work-spirit and commitment
 - Shared goals, collaborative problem-solving
 - Flexibility and nimbleness
 - Trust and community
 - Equal participation and openness
 - No: egos, hidden agendas, silos
- Alignment across city and county
- Helpful infrastructure
 - Resource and Referral Agencies
 - Centralized website
 - OAECE positioned within DPH
 - Strong existing relationships between participating agencies



Areas to Address Moving Forward

- ECE providers in the situations of most-need are often not reached
 - Existing networks are not comprehensive
 - Reliance on technology for communication leaves many out
 - Language accessibility is very important
- Expand the table
 - Include and compensate providers and parents in future efforts
 - Examine what other voices are needed from related fields
- Create a plan for the next crisis
- Work with providers and parents to address COVID-19 fallout and plan for an “equitable recovery”

Discussion

What questions do you have?

Does this information resonate with your experience?

Do you have ideas about the areas to address moving forward?

