The Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative 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 and enter your zip code to identify your State Senator or Assembly Member.

Visit 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)

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF EARLY CARE AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

The 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.

L.A. County Drop-Out Rates by Ethnicity

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

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

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

*Data is aggregated by race/ethnicity.
LEARNING BEGINS AT BIRTH

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 who attend quality preschools do better in reading, spelling and math in school.

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

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

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 Los Angeles centralized Eligibility List Resource & Referral at 1-800-543-7793.
PoL ICy s And cIVIc LEAd eRs n e e d tO Be AWA rE tH At eArLy cAr e And PrEH o al Pr o Gr aM s MA ke A d Ifference.

“A parent’s testimonial will go here talking about the difficulties of finding quality child care.”
–Parent Name

CHI LD c AR e r e s o u r c e A n d r e f e r rA L A G e n c y M eM Be r s:
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

FIND OUT WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE IN YOUR COMMUNITY:

Resource & Referral Agency: 1-800-543-7793
www.rrnetwork.org

Los Angeles Universal Preschool
1-866-581-LAUP (5287)
www.laup.net

First 5 LA Parent Helpline:
1-888-FIRST-5-LA
1-888-347-7855

Los Angeles County Office of Child Care:
www.childcare.lacounty.gov

2-1-1 Los Angeles County (Marque 2-1-1)

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CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY MEMBERS:

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find out if your child is eligible to be placed on the Los Angeles centralized eligibility List by asking the resource & referral Agency at 1-800-543-7793.

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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 INITIATIVE COALITION

The Los Angeles Preschool Advocacy Initiative 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

ONLINE RESOURCES

- California Community Foundation: www.calfund.org/learn/lapai.php
- Advancement Project: www.advanceproj.org
- First 5 LA: www.first5la.org
- Preschool California: www.preschoolcalifornia.org
- Los Angeles County Office of Child Care: www.childcare.lacounty.gov

More than 40,000 children in L.A. County are waiting for placement in early care programs.
To order additional copies of the toolkit, please contact Families In Schools.