Goal: Healthy Children, Ready to Learn

Since 2000, the Children and Families Commission of Orange County has partnered with schools, nonprofit community organizations, health institutions and educational agencies to achieve the vision that all children are healthy and ready to learn when they enter school. In 2014/15, the Commission invested over $34 million to support this critically important goal.

How Ready are They?

To learn the answer and help guide future efforts, the Commission joined with school districts throughout Orange County to understand kindergarten readiness by using a measurement tool pioneered in Australia and Canada called the Early Development Index (EDI). The EDI tracks five important areas of development: Physical Health & Well-being, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, General Knowledge & Communication, and Social Competence.

For the first time in 2015, the Commission has comprehensive data for every Orange County public school that serves kindergarteners. The answer that emerged from the data simultaneously offers encouragement and issues challenges to those of us determined to help children succeed.

Nearly Half are On-Track, but Half are Behind

The EDI data found that almost half – about 48 percent – of Orange County’s children are developmentally on track in all five areas, positioning them for a positive entry into school.

48% on track
52% not on track

The biggest challenges are:

- Language & Cognitive Development: 33% not on track
- General Knowledge & Communication: 29% not on track
- Social Competence: 23% not on track

The EDI data confirm that helping Orange County children prepare for success from the day they are born is something the community must make the highest and most important priority.
Improving Outcomes While Funding Declines

For more than 16 years, the Commission has focused its resources on bolstering Orange County’s systems that provide services to children ages 0 to 5, improving children’s outcomes in the region. But Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenue is a declining resource, and there is still much work to be done to achieve the vision.

Making Young Children a Priority

To keep young children a critical priority in Orange County beyond the decline in revenue, the Commission is working to:

- Develop partnerships with leaders and organizations throughout the county
- Create shared measurement systems to demonstrate what works
- Identify a shared regional agenda around children’s priority issues
- Continue investing in evidenced-based programs with the greatest impact on young children
- Engage more grant makers and funding agencies to support Orange County’s youngest children

With partnerships and ongoing commitment to improve conditions for young children, the Commission will achieve its vision to ensure all children are healthy and ready to learn.
Healthy Children

The Commission advances prenatal care; expands education and resources for parents; and promotes health and developmental screenings, referrals and services for children through Healthy Children programs.

Program Highlight: Bridges Maternal Child Health Network
The Bridges Maternal Child Health Network, the Commission’s largest program investment, begins outreach at the earliest possible time in a child’s development, including work with pregnant mothers, to identify and address children’s health needs and developmental concerns earlier.

Through Healthy Children Programs in 2014/15:

- 65,424 children received a screening for health, behavior and/or developmental milestones
- 18,578 parents received education, resources and training
- 16,925 children received a dental screening and 11,923 children received dental services, including preventative, restorative and emergency treatment
- 15,541 Kits for New Parents were distributed
- 14,933 mothers received breastfeeding education, intervention and support
- 13,902 parents had 16,712 office visits to improve parent knowledge of healthy child development
- 13,570 children were screened for up-to-date immunizations

92% of Bridges Network mothers received early prenatal care in the first trimester versus the countywide average of 88.6%

54.7% of mothers breastfed their baby until six months old compared with the national average of 47.2%

73.6% of Bridges Network children received all age-appropriate immunizations compared with the countywide average of 73.6%

94% of Bridges Network children breastfed their baby until six months old compared with the national average of 47.2%
Investing in early learning programs that support parents and caregivers as a child’s first teacher has been a Commission priority since 2000. The Commission’s partnership to fund Early Learning Specialists at the 24 school districts that provide kindergarten, early literacy, and math programs is strengthening the foundation for children to be effective learners.

Program Highlight: Learning Link
Learning Link is an interactive place for parents to bond with their children and to support their growth in early education, language development, health and wellness, and family support. Over the past 15 years, the number of learning links have increased, providing accessible and creative learning environments for children and guiding parents in their role as their children’s first teachers.

Through Early Learning Programs in 2014/15:

- **133,543** new and used books were distributed to children by health care providers and through early education programs
- **30,783** children participated in a program early literacy programs to increase the frequency of reading at home.
- **11,563** children were read to at physicians’ offices or clinics
- **9,226** children participated in early math programs
- **3,442** parents and **3,406** children participated in a family-focused, drop-in early learning program (Learning Link)
- **1,571** volunteers were recruited to support early literacy programs
- **667** children and **764** parents received access to high quality preschool that provided enhanced quality of care and education services.
National data confirms that the typical homeless family is a young single mother in her late twenties and two children, one or both usually younger than age six. Knowing that children need a safe and stable home environment, the Commission funds homeless shelter providers and HomeAid Orange County to increase the capacity and infrastructure of the shelter system, both emergency and transitional shelters, as well as the provision of direct services with an emphasis on basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing.

**Program Highlight: Homeless Prevention**

Since 2000, nearly 500 emergency and transitional shelter beds have been added to the county’s shelter system for homeless pregnant women and families with young children.

**Through Strong Families Programs in 2014/15:**

- **1,310** individuals were stably housed
- **1,152** children received screenings for vision, hearing, height, weight, health and developmental milestones
- **890** children with special needs received services
- **233** children accessed family support services and 81 children living in shelters had a regular place for medical and dental care
- **187** parents and caregivers accessed family support services and resources and informational materials about preventable childhood injuries

The number of children that were unstably housed or at risk for homelessness was reduced by 35%

The number of children 3-years or older attending school regularly increased by 20%
Capacity Building

The Commission leverages resources through national service corps and federal reimbursement programs; awards competitive grants and provides technical assistance to enhance the capacity of agencies serving young children and families; and integrates a performance evaluation process for all Commission-funded programs.

Program Highlight: Pay for Success
Given decreasing tobacco tax revenue, new funding strategies are being evaluated to support the Bridges Maternal Child Health Network. An initial evaluation of the Pay for Success funding model was completed this year. Pay for Success may provide a way to diversify the program’s funding base and sustain the services that identify health and development concerns during the critical first years of life. Early detection and intervention can save on costly medical services later.

Through Capacity Building Programs in 2014/15:

- **640** children received direct early learning services from AmeriCorps members
- **350** volunteers were recruited by VISTA members, and another 119 volunteers were recruited by AmeriCorps members to support non-profit organizations
- **126** organizations implementing **248** individual programs serving young children and their families participated in the annual evaluation and performance review

The Commission is diversifying its funding base.

- **$50 million** in federal reimbursements
- **$47 million** has been generated by Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA) and Targeted Case Management (TCM) claims since December 2001.
## Program Funding Expenditures and Numbers Served
### FY 2014/15

### Program Expenditures and Numbers Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>Catalytic Expenditures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Children</td>
<td>$14,725,872</td>
<td>$4,330,629</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bridges Maternal Child Health Network</td>
<td>$5,781,482</td>
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<td>Pediatric Health Services</td>
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<td>School Readiness Nursing</td>
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<td>Community Clinics</td>
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<td>Health Access and Education</td>
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<td>Fitness/Nutrition</td>
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<td>Childrens’ Dental</td>
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<td>Healthy Children Program Management</td>
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<td>Early Learning</td>
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<td>Child Signature Program</td>
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<td>School District Programs/Early Learning Specialists</td>
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<td>Countywide Early Learning Programs</td>
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<td>CARES Plus Early Educator Professional Development</td>
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<td>Early Learning Program Management</td>
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<td>Strong Families</td>
<td>$2,440,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homeless Prevention</td>
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<td>Family Support Services</td>
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<td>Strong Families Program Management</td>
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<td>Americorps/VISTA</td>
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<td>Performance Outcomes Measuring Systems and Evaluation Support</td>
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<td>Capacity Building Program Management, Grants, and Fund Development</td>
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<td>Technical Assistance</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL** $27,831,009 $6,415,132

Note: Catalytic expenditures are one-time funding actions designed to reduce ongoing demand on the Commission’s budget, while making system-wide impacts on services for young children.

### In fiscal year 2014/15, children ages 0-5 received over 1.8 million services, while their family members received over 765,000 services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Healthy Children</th>
<th>Early Learning</th>
<th>Strong Families</th>
<th>Capacity Building</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children served</td>
<td>70,357</td>
<td>57,596</td>
<td>3,130</td>
<td>6,145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
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