



**Los Angeles County
Office of Education**
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The Write Start

Summer 2011

Volume 5, No.2



A Newsletter for the LACOE Head Start and State Preschool Community

The Director's Message

This is a difficult message for me to write. I have announced my retirement from LACOE and although I look forward to the next phase of my life, I am sad to leave a phase of life that gave me gargantuan challenges, and at the same time, great joy.



During my almost five year tenure, I have seen the program grow in so many ways, having gone through three reorganizations – from 225 staff down to 110. The growth came as we worked together to create systems, built upon staff's early childhood experiences, expanded expertise, working as a team and in partnership with agencies and stakeholders -- always striving for excellence, raising the bar for ourselves and our partners.

However, we knew the benefit of having fun. We had parties, went to Dodger Stadium, ate many goodies together, played ball and some people even went kayaking. We grew in size, in that several of our staff became parents for a first or second time, and some had their grandparent experiences and joys expand as well.

This is not to say that we haven't had our share of challenges and bumps in the road. But those were overshadowed by our accomplishments. Our first, followed by a second, annual Learning and Resource Fair was an event to be applauded. Nothing can rival the amount of fun, interesting and entertaining experiences that were offered to families. Then let's not forget our visits from the DC Head Start Director on two different occasions and how we took advantage of the opportunities to boast about the good work that was happening in our communities.

How about seeing if we can win a prize for the number of reviews or audits that have been conducted in a five year span? We have had reviews, and follow-ups to the reviews – some program, some fiscal. We have even been unknowing victims of a federal sting operation conducted nationally at 15 different grantees, reviewing enrollment procedures, and several of our agencies were involved.

We accepted the challenge of ARRA dollars and expanded by 800 Early Head Start and Head Start families. That was a trick to do, knowing that expansion needs a six month start up time. Yet our agencies accepted the monies hitting the ground running – programs were expected to start providing services as quickly as monies were received.

We have had interesting delegate agency directors' meetings – working to have a balance of information sharing and at the same time build upon our strong foundation of knowledge making program improvements. The Policy Council has made us so proud each year, with their level of involvement, commitment to program improvement, desire to be well informed, more importantly, their commitment to their children's growth and development.

The special projects are numerous. However, I would like to refer to just a few that we have had such great success with: Education Pioneers, with post-graduate students helping the grantee with its own special projects; Teach for America, with young graduates working in classrooms; the Family Development Credential Program with an average of 100 family service workers receiving credentials each year; the Early Learning Teacher-Mentor Coaching Project, our most recent project that puts coaches directly into the classrooms to work with the teachers in a mentoring capacity.

It has all been a wonderful experience for me and one that I will always cherish. I have enjoyed working with you all, and I wish you the best as you continue with your commitment to excellent services for families and their preschool children.

— Sarah Younglove, *Division Director*

Early Learning Mentor Coach Grant

LACOE has been awarded the Early Learning Mentor Coaches grant for \$225,000 from the Administration of Children and Families, Office of Head Start. The grant will allow the Division and selected agencies to (1) improve the quality of teaching; (2) assist programs to promote positive, significant, and sustained outcomes for children; and (3) promote career development for teaching staff working in Head Start programs.

A mentor-coach is a qualified early education specialist who has in-depth knowledge and experience in implementing and training on various ECE curricula. A mentor-coach provides individual support to classroom teachers and models appropriate service delivery practices to assist teachers in grasping appropriate strategies and principles.

Aligning outcome strategies to those outlined in the OHS Roadmap to Excellence, LACOE will partner with Rio Hondo College in Whittier to provide for Head Start children.

Coming Events June–August 2011

June 28	2011 Countywide Youth Resource Fair, The California Endowment, Los Angeles
July 12	Policy Council Meeting
July 16	Best Practices
July 21	Delegate Agency Directors' Meeting
August 9	Policy Council Meeting
August 18	Delegate Agency Directors' Meeting
August 26-28	Fiesta La Ballona, Culver City



Bon Voyage – Head Start Assistant Director, Keesha Woods (left) presents outgoing Head Start Director Sarah Younglove with awards from the Head Start staff and the California Head Start Association Board of Directors during the May all staff meeting. Younglove served as LACOE Head Start director since 2006. She also served as ACF program specialist, HS Bureau leader, and LA Universal Preschool COO.

Highlights from the Policy Council

Spring has been a time of tremendous growth and development for the Policy Council. Several members have attended one or another of the leadership conferences that have been held, including the Annual California Head Start Association Annual Conference, the Annual Fathers and Families Conference, the Annual Parents Academy, and most recently, the California State PTA 112th Annual Convention in Long Beach in April.

The PTA Conference was particularly noteworthy since LACOE Head Start had a booth and shared information and news regarding the Head Start program. Of the many presentations, perhaps the most noteworthy was that which focused on the development of innovative strategies for the 21st Century.

The Policy Council held its own Leadership and Communication Training Workshop for a full day on April 6. Council members were invited as well as Executive Committee members and Parent Involvement Coordinators from the delegate agencies. The attendees received a full day of training: Roles and Responsibilities facilitated by Sandra Ybanez; Leadership 101 facilitated by Bill Daniel and Lee Ho (with others); and in the afternoon an exciting presentation by Ignacio Rojas on The Importance of Leadership for Parents.

All of this was punctuated June 1 by a parent education conference led by Dr. Nereido J. Rodriguez, pediatrician and program director of Nu Parent. Dr. Rodriguez spoke of the essential role that parents play as the first and most important teachers in every child's life.

Wellness Corner

From "Women's Health" Magazine, March 2011

Learn how to preserve your eyesight in an increasingly digital world

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) can affect up to 90 percent of people who spend two or more continuous hours a day with their eyes glued to a screen, whether it's that of a computer, an e-reader, or a smartphone. The symptoms, which can include blurry vision, headaches, dry eyes, or even long-term nearsightedness, may accrue over a period of days or months—but don't wait until you sense something is wrong. Start preventing the problem today.

What's more, the eye's natural focal point lies about 20 feet in front of the face. Most people, however, sit less than two feet from their computer screen, forcing a ring of eye muscles to continuously contract in order to redirect focus. If you stare at any sort of digital monitor for hours, those eye muscles can become so overworked that they can't relax, even after you look away.

Most CVS symptoms can be controlled. The first step: Start living by a simple 20-20-20 rule. Look away from your screen every 20 minutes for 20 seconds and focus on a fixed point 20 feet away. Set an alarm via onlineclock.net to remind yourself to get into the habit.

Make sure your workstation is set up so that your eyes are level with the very top of your monitor eyes focus best when they're looking downward partially closed lids can combat dry eyes by preventing tears from evaporating. If you're holding a Smartphone or e-reader and have to cup one hand over the screen to read the words on it, you could be straining your eyes and risking CV. Close the blinds, adjust your device's contrast or brightness levels, or buy an inexpensive antiglare cover.

Consider getting fitted for computer glasses. Your doctor can even prescribe an all-in-one pair of lenses that will correct CVS and any other sight issue.

When in doubt, blink it out. Whenever you sit in front of a screen for hours at a time, combat overly dry eyes by blinking very slowly—as if you're fading off to sleep—every so often. Small breaks and a healthy perspective are the keys to beating CVS.

Parent Spotlight



Arturo Cornejo, an Inglewood USD parent, is the chairperson to the Policy Council for the 2010-2011 program year. Here are some of his views about Head Start:

Q. Why is Head Start important?

A. Head Start sets the foundation for kids and gives them an advantage. They are ready for school, ready to follow directions. They have a big advantage over the kids who didn't get the chance to attend Head Start.

Q. Why enroll your children in Head Start?

A. I wasn't aware of Head Start with my first and second kid. My third kid has a disability attended Head Start and was able to adapt to Head Start. My fourth child has a disability, and attending Head Start made a big difference.



Arturo Cornejo

Q. How do you feel your child is benefiting from the program?

A. They are better at following directions. My four-year-old is ready for kindergarten now, and he is one year ahead of the other kids his age.

Q. How are you and your family benefiting from Head Start?

A. I got involved with Head Start by "mistake." My wife couldn't attend one of the meetings, and I was asked to stay. I started getting involved with my child's education. I joined the parent committee, policy committee and other groups. I was able to apply these new skills to other groups.

Q. What have been your goals as PC Chairperson?

A. My goal is to make a difference, by being active in PC and by helping other children in the future. I'd like to bring back "experienced" parents who have passed their three-year limit and continue to help the newer parents.

Q. What would you like to see accomplished?

A. Getting parents to be more experienced, getting them informed.

Q. Is there any one message or point that you would like to get to the broader Head Start community?

A. Get involved. Volunteer. Do whatever it takes to move the program forward.



PACE Visit – David Hansell, acting assistant secretary for the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visited Magnolia site in March as part of its Community Initiative tour.

The Write Start

The Write Start welcomes your articles pertaining to Head Start activities and events. Please submit them to: thewritestart@lacoedu.edu. The deadline for the next edition is **Friday, June 24, 2011**. You may also fax your submission to 562/940-1740, Attn: Sherri Ford-Mackey.



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