

Orange County Early Childhood Policy Framework



All children are valued, nurtured, healthy, and thriving.

Vision:



Young children reach their developmental potential and are ready to succeed in school and in life



Adults are knowledgeable, nurturing, responsive, and interact effectively with other adults, children, and the family unit



Environments that impact children are safe, supportive, stable, and healthy






Orange County attains economic and social benefits by prioritizing children and families

Core Principles:

- Children and families thrive regardless of income, language, and culture
- Supports and services are coordinated and integrated across settings and sectors
- Policies and practices are family centered

Orange County

Early Childhood Policy Framework

	 Resilient Families	 Quality Early Learning	 Comprehensive Health & Development
Access: Recognizes the availability and accessibility of services are important	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting programs are sufficiently available, utilized, promote the resilience of caregivers, and enhance the knowledge of parenting and child development • Programs, schools, and communities offer opportunities for family engagement and leadership • Family friendly policies and practices exist in the workplace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences and environments are sufficiently available to meet the needs of all children and families • High quality education, coaching, and training are available for caregivers, teachers, and other professionals • Workforce shortage of early learning educators is addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive health coverage and services are sufficiently available and utilized, including screening, early identification, consultation, and treatment. • Mental health needs are identified and treated • Workforce shortages of pediatric specialists and mental health specialists with lived experience, are addressed • Preventive physical and mental health services are available and accessible
Quality: Recognizes that services must meet a high standard of quality and informed by evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs promote and support family self-efficacy and self-sufficiency • Families are empowered to choose high quality, comprehensive services, supports, and education that meet their family's needs • Services and programs for families promote protective factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal and informal care environments maintain the highest standards of quality • Curriculum and behavior expectations for programs serving birth through 2nd grade are developmentally and culturally informed, and individualized to each child's needs. • All settings provide effective transitions across and within programs, schools, and systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers and practices consistently meet quality indicators for their respective standards of care • Settings and practices promote the power of positive relationships and ensure optimal social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development in relation to the family and community context
Equity: Recognizes that different populations have different needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All families have help to access preventive, timely, and coordinated services and supports according to their needs, including high-need children and culturally and linguistically diverse families • Education, employment, housing, financial, health, and legal supports and policies contribute to family economic stability and long-term security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disparities in school readiness and academic achievement are eliminated for children birth through eight (e.g., based on race or ethnicity) • Early childhood professionals are well-trained and well-compensated across programs and settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health disparities are eliminated through education, employment, housing, financial, and legal policies that support child and family health • All environments are safe, free of toxins, have affordable nutritious foods, and opportunities for physical activity • Children with special health, behavioral, or developmental needs receive individualized services and supports

Developed in 2018 by a collaborative of early childhood stakeholders to work upstream for Orange County, California.

Revised 2024.