



Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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To Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
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From: Duane Dennis, Chair 
Policy Roundtable for Child Care

STEPS TO EXCELLENCE PROJECT QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

The Steps to Excellence Project (STEP) is a child care quality rating and support system developed by the Policy Roundtable for Child Care (Roundtable) and endorsed by your Board in December 2006. STEP officially began implementation activities in July 2007. This quarterly progress report summarizes key accomplishments achieved between July and September 2007. The next quarterly report will be submitted by January 12, 2008.

Result Area 1: Developing a STEP Infrastructure

- Hired Helen Chavez in August 2007 to lead STEP implementation. Ms. Chavez is a Program Specialist III, working in the Office of Child Care (OCC), Service Integration Branch within Chief Executive Office.
- Database is being developed to track prospective and actual STEP participants.
- Developed a draft appeal process map and continue working with County Counsel to refine.
- Developed a STEP evaluation process map and drafted a preliminary set of evaluation questions.

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Result Area 2: Recruiting Child Care Providers to Join STEP

- Mailed outreach letters directly to over 400 providers.
- Distributed over 60 STEP applications to providers via U.S. mail. Other providers are downloading information from the OCC webpage at www.childcare.lacounty.gov.
- Scheduled 21 STEP provider and stakeholder outreach sessions. Implemented approximately 60 percent of these meetings in less than five weeks.
 - Over 170 providers have attended STEP information sessions this quarter.
 - Preliminary evaluation results indicate that over 67 percent of providers in attendance intend to submit STEP applications.
- Designed new STEP outreach materials, including posters, brochures, flyers, and translated materials into Spanish.
- Created a media plan to identify communication materials and plan partnerships with key distributors.

Result Area 3: Implementing Support and Training Activities

- Coordinated a workshop on the Adult Involvement Scale, one of the observational tools used in STEP. Dr. Carollee Howes, with the UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality, led the session and noted that young children need to establish a positive relationship with their teachers in order to learn. Dr. Howes described how the tool would be administered in STEP. Participants included representatives from all 10 child care resource and referral (R&R) agencies in Los Angeles County, family child care and center providers.
- Implemented the first of a series of trainings for providers on the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. This tool, which will also be used in STEP, is frequently used by researchers to assess program quality and by practitioners for program improvement.
- Over 75 individuals have participated in STEP training activities this quarter.

Result Area 4: Leveraging Community Resources and Partnerships

- Collaborated with R&R agencies to coordinate and implement seven outreach sessions for providers.
- Leveraged R&R outreach resources to mail STEP marketing materials.
- Hosted a planning meeting with representatives from Community Care Licensing Division to establish collaboration parameters.
- Formed agreement with the Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent of Early Childhood Education to have centers located in pilot communities Pacoima, Wilmington, and Florence/Firestone participate in STEP.
- Initiated collaboration with the County of Los Angeles Public Library to enhance STEP outreach and training activities.

Result Area 5: Increasing Public Awareness about STEP

- STEP was featured in the following newspapers upon launch:
 - The Wall Street Journal (July 22, 2007): *Rating day care; Parents counting on quality; and*
 - Santa Monica Daily Press (July 10, 2007): *Grading professional baby-sitting; County to begin rating child care facilities.*
- Developed and distributed electronic STEP newsletter to stakeholders.

Conclusion

The Roundtable, OCC, community partners, and child care providers are making STEP a reality. The Roundtable looks forward to reporting further progress in its next quarterly report. If you have any questions or require any additional information, I can be reached at (213) 427-2700 or your staff may contact Helen Chavez, at (213) 893-0505 or via e-mail at hchavez@ceo.lacounty.gov.

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c: Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
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