



California Essentials for Childhood Initiative

Project Overview

Background: The California Department of Public Health was awarded a competitive five-year grant, *Essentials for Childhood: Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments*, from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), beginning in September 2013. The grant funds the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Safe and Active Communities Branch, in collaboration with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Office of Child Abuse Prevention, to support a *collective impact* approach building upon and collaborating with existing efforts to promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments for children and families, prevent child maltreatment, and assure that children reach their full potential. The initiative addresses child maltreatment as a public health issue and aims to raise awareness and commitment to promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments; create the context for healthy children and families through social norms change, programs and policies; and use data to inform actions.

Vision: All California children, youth, and their families thrive in safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments

Mission: To develop a common agenda across multiple agencies and stakeholders to align activities, programs, policies, and funding so that all California children, youth, and their families have safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments

Governance Structure:



Strategic Direction: Strengthen families’ and communities’ capacities to create safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for children

Goals: Identify, align and enhance the California Essentials for Childhood Initiative partners’ and their stakeholders’ efforts to:

1. Build upon families’ assets to strengthen their knowledge and skills to provide safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for their children.
2. Achieve the highest level of well-being for families and children, with special attention to those who have experienced socioeconomic disadvantage and historical injustice, including vulnerable communities and culturally, linguistically, and geographically isolated communities.
3. Prevent child maltreatment and other childhood traumas and implement trauma informed policies and practices throughout public and private organizations and systems.
4. Improve the quality of and expand the accessibility to programs and services supporting families and children.
5. Enhance the integration of systems and networks that support families and children to improve communication, services, accountability and outcomes.
6. Engage communities and strengthen their capacity to act and take leadership roles in creating safe and stable environments that support families and children.
7. Build public support and commitment (or ...“public commitment and political will...”) for policies and programs that promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments for families and children.
8. Embed and incorporate families and children as priorities in public policies.
9. Increase the number and scope of private sector policies and practices that support families and children.
10. Improve and enhance data systems that use common measurements to increase accountability for shared indicators and outcomes for families and children.

