

# **EDI CONVERSATIONS:**

**Findings and Recommendations**

**Stakeholder Convenings on Early Development Instrument (EDI) Results**

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**City of Pasadena  
Office of the Young Child**

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# Executive Summary:

## Introduction:

As part of its commitment to the well-being of its youngest residents, the City of Pasadena, along with its partners the Pasadena Unified School District (PUSD), and the UCLA Center for the Study of Healthy Families and Communities, carried out an assessment of the developmental readiness of children entering PUSD Kindergarten using the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in the 2012-13 and 2016-17 school years. The 2013 EDI results were foundational to planning efforts to improve the well-being of Pasadena's 0-5 population over the past five years. In January 2018, after the release of the 2017 EDI results, the City of Pasadena received funding from First 5 LA to hold convenings to present and discuss this last round of EDI results with a wide variety of stakeholder groups including City and school district officials and staff, nonprofit service providers, and parents/caregivers of children aged 0-5 in the neighborhoods with the greatest EDI vulnerability.

The purpose of the convenings was to both raise awareness regarding the need for increased focus on the 0-5 years, and to gather reactions, as well as input regarding possible community-based strategies to improve future EDI results. This report presents findings and recommendations from these meetings, which are one component of a larger planning process underway in the City of Pasadena to refine its goals and strategies, as well as guide implementation of initiatives to improve the well-being of its youngest residents.

This report focuses on fourteen of the convenings, six of which took place with parents/caregivers, three with school district staff, and five with direct service providers both within the City and with local nonprofits. A total of 81 parents/caregivers, 63 school district staff, and 57 direct service providers participated.



## Summary of Findings:

Reactions to the EDI results varied by stakeholder group:



Parents/caregivers were unaware that almost half of PUSD entering Kindergarteners are not fully ready for Kindergarten, and that the North Central Pasadena neighborhood, where an estimated 56% of participating parents/caregivers reside, has the highest levels of EDI vulnerability. The data presented were eye-opening to parents/caregivers and motivated them to do more for their children to ensure their readiness for school.



Educators were generally not surprised by the city-wide results, especially as they related to social and emotional readiness. However, they did have questions regarding their own school or neighborhoods' data, as well as broader questions regarding objectivity, the assessment process, and the impact of the language used in the home or the classroom on results. Educators also desired more context data regarding students and their families to clarify possible contributing factors and interventions.



Direct service providers felt the results concurred with the conditions that they observe on a daily basis, and were eager to see the implementation of interventions.

Parents/caregivers, educators, and direct service providers had similar thoughts regarding the factors which contribute to the EDI results:



Lack of quality time spent together by parents and children due to long work hours, stress/fatigue, electronic device use, multiple responsibilities, and limited communication/parenting skills



Limited financial resources



Lack of safety



Racial discrimination and immigration status



Lack of knowledge of child development among parents/caregivers



Need for personal development among parents (self-confidence, literacy, etc.)



Difficulty finding and accessing programs



Lack of needed programs.

In addition to the factors identified by all groups, educators and direct service providers added that emotional, mental, and physical health issues in families contribute to the EDI results in children. They also pointed to social conditions such as the prevalence of single parent households, lack of affordable housing and child care, as well as gentrification. Overall, the most salient contributing factor according to parents/caregivers and educators was the need for more quality time together between parents and children, while direct

service providers focused more on the need to increase access to services.

When discussing approaches to improve EDI results, Pasadena's many resources emerged as a community strength. In particular, all groups pointed to public institutions as their best resource, particularly those provided by the City as well as the school district. Numerous nonprofits, churches, social networks, and the internet made the list of important assets.

Specific strategies suggested by participants to improve EDI results fell into the following four categories:



**Programs and activities for children aged 0-5** such as expanding and enhancing early childhood care and education programs, offering enrichment activities in the five EDI domains, providing safe play spaces, addressing EDI vulnerabilities through school curriculum, and providing interventions for specific populations including English Language Learners and children with special needs.



**Referrals and Information** on resources for low and middle income families.



**Therapy/Counseling services** to address developmental, behavioral, and emotional issues in children, as well as other members of the family.



**Parent Education** in child development, parenting, and other topics, as well as parent empowerment to advocate on behalf of their children



**Material support** in the form of food, clothing, and literacy materials, as well as connecting to programs offering financial supports.



**Systems-level work** such as collaboration and alignment among direct service providers, and educators across age/grade levels; developing new approaches particularly to engaging with parents; and for the larger societal issues, developing and promoting public policy solutions.

### Recommendations:

The findings of the EDI convenings offer valuable insights from stakeholders groups key to any future initiatives. The following recommendations, presented in four categories, follow from an analysis of the findings.



#### The EDI assessment:

- Address the key concerns and questions regarding the EDI.



#### Parents/caregivers:

- Use EDI results to raise awareness and motivate parents/caregivers.
- Educate parents/caregivers on the importance of their role in the intentional development of Kindergarten readiness and the impact of electronic device use through public information campaigns.
- Take a strengths-based, empowering approach with parents/caregivers.
- Work with organizations with close ties to parents/caregivers and develop new approaches to recruitment and engagement.
- At the Hubs, offer services and programming for children in order to engage parents/caregivers.



#### Direct service providers:

- Address access barriers so that programs can effectively reach and serve families (language, financial, computer-literacy, location/transportation, schedules, cultural sensitivity). Provide “warm hand-offs.”
- Develop a cross-departmental team within the City of Pasadena for the purpose of collaboration on behalf of the 0-5 population.

- Reach out to non-traditional partners such as churches and businesses, and utilize the internet.
- Draw from the expertise of direct service providers (and educators), and involve them in future efforts.



#### Educators:

- Address EDI vulnerabilities through early learning and elementary school programs with curriculum and collaboration across levels.
- Obtain financial resources to enhance ECE programs, allowing them to open additional slots, offer more hours of service throughout the year, and increase family engagement.



#### Community-level:

- Address safety concerns in North Central Pasadena’s public spaces.
- Develop safe play spaces for children aged 0-5.
- Develop public policy solutions to address persistent, complex community problems such lack of affordable housing.

### Conclusion:

The EDI convenings engaged a wide audience of Pasadena stakeholders, and were particularly successful in capturing the reflections and input of parents/caregivers, educators, and direct service providers. The findings from the conversations and recommendations that followed, should serve as a additional resource to guide and refine planning efforts in the next several years. In some cases, they also raise additional, important questions for exploration. In sum, the EDI convenings report serves as one more source of information to illuminate the path for those seeking to most impact the lives of the city’s youngest residents.



# EDI CONVERSATIONS

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