

# Collaboratively Empowering Parents



**PRESCHOOL WITHOUT WALLS IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, AIMS TO REACH, EDUCATE, AND EMPOWER PARENTS TO SERVE AS THEIR CHILDREN'S FIRST AND LIFELONG EDUCATOR. THEIR STRATEGIES INCLUDE:**

**Teaching in Familiar Places:** Preschool Without Walls identifies familiar community spaces, such as parks and libraries, for learning. Teachers create lessons that incorporate the unique attributes of each setting.

**Families Learning Together:** Bilingual lessons are shared with parents and children to explore both core competencies (colors, days, times) and specific themes (culture, art, and science). Parents develop teaching skills for communicating with children, such as asking open-ended questions and engaging in tactile activities.

## **Child Development and Early Learning**

**Pathway:** Children often arrive at Preschool Without Walls after their mothers participate in the South Bay Center's Doula Program, where doulas guide mothers—primarily young, first-time parents—through pregnancy, perinatal care, delivery, and infancy.

**Kindergarten Transition:** Facilitates a hands-on approach to kindergarten transition through field trips to local schools. By introducing parents and children to public school teachers and buildings, the program helps to familiarize its participants with these institutions and begins to build trust.

A case study from *Collaboration to Build Healthier Communities: A Report for the RWJF Commission to Build a Healthier America* (published June 2013)

## **MAJOR OUTCOMES/ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

**Recruitment of families** that have previously resisted participation in mainstream wellness programs and early childhood learning programs. Many of the parents targeted by Preschool Without Walls are hesitant to enroll children in traditional center-based early childhood programs due to unfamiliarity or negative experiences with public institutions.

**Partnered with** Department of Children and Family Services to support outreach and expand services to a group of their high-risk clients.

**Demonstrated gains** for participants in school readiness indicators, pro-social behaviors, literacy, and attachment and bonding between parent and child.

**When children** reach school age and enter a formal schooling arrangement, parents often volunteer for the role of parent-teachers, expanding program capacity and contributing to the sustainability of the program.

## **INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS**

"Community organizing—having a mechanism to reach parents in a way that's not a caseworker knocking on the door, but rather a contact through peers. Community members say, 'I've been doing this with my kids, and you might want to give it a try'. When you're dealing with a socially isolated 19-year-old mom, sending a social worker around to knock on the door doesn't work. But having the women who she goes to church with, or high school with, that's a different set of interactions. Leveraging those relationships has been the most important piece."

—Taylor Brady, Development Director, South Bay Center for Community Development

## **KEY PARTNERS**

**Community Development:** Wells Fargo, Union Bank, East West Bank

**Health:** South Bay Center for Community Development, Los Angeles County Dept. of Children and Family Services, First Five California

## **POPULATIONS SERVED**

Low-income residents of Los Angeles County, primarily within the City of Los Angeles and South Bay region. The organization serves a large number of African Americans and Latinos, including many first generation immigrants and/or those whose home language is Spanish.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

<http://www.sbaycenter.com/>, website available after August 1, 2013

