DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Child Action, Inc. (CAI) has been serving the Sacramento child care community since 1976. In our over 40-year history, we have adapted to meet our community's needs. 2017–2018 was no different and was a busy year for us. Our commitment to the community can be seen in these numbers:

• We assisted families with more than 4,100 child care referrals
• We provided over 150 workshops to more than 1,600 providers and parents
• We enrolled over 2,000 new child care providers
• Our subsidy program served over 5,000 families and nearly 8,700 children
• We calculated over 86,000 provider payments
• We paid out $9 million more in child care payments than the previous year

In this issue of Our Children, Our Community, you will learn more about CAI and where we are headed in the New Year. The Foster Care Bridge Program (FCBP) is a new program meant to support the foster care system by helping foster families access and pay for child care. FCBP also increases the capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in their care by offering child care providers Trauma Informed Care training and coaching.

CAI's Meaningful Play Day events provide education and information about engaging and teaching children through play. Art and sensory activities, outside play, and movement and music make our play days fun for providers and children alike! Impact is possible through a partnership with Sacramento County Office of Education.

Keeping children safe is our number one priority. Because of that, we advocate for children through our legislative efforts, providing health and safety education to child care providers, and through our quality improvement efforts. Our programs are offered to support child care providers through training and workshops, on-site consultations, and program assessments and improvement plans. Customized program plans help both providers and the families they care for by leading to better communication, improved classroom environments, and increased support for children. Our client stories, an example of which is shared in this issue, are a testament to the hard work and dedication of our team.

Stay tuned – follow us on twitter, Facebook and visit our website often – to stay up-to-date. There is much more work to be done.

– Tracey Strack, Executive Director
Child Action, Inc.

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Public Policy and Community Engagement Matters

Decisions that affect the availability, quality, and affordability of child care

Making high quality child care available and accessible to all families creates opportunities for children’s success and there is something you can do. Help give your elected representatives a full picture of the challenges families face seeking child care.

Lawmakers make policy decisions that affect the early care and education system. These decisions determine child care funding levels, and impact regulation and oversight. You can have a say in child care policy by letting these decision makers hear from you.

Engage your representatives to get involved in creating policies that affect what the child care workforce earns, child care and early education standards, and the funding levels for subsidized child care.

Without child care, parents cannot go to work, school, or training.

A parent’s story about child care is personal and paints an important picture.

You can:
- Be part of an advocacy group
- Make phone calls and write letters
- Take part in a social media campaign
- Contact Child Action, Inc. to see how we can help

Meaningful Play:
Maria’s Story

3-year-old Maria attended a CAI Meaningful Play session with her grandma. They arrived to the happy sounds of laughter and saw other children and caregivers rolling, cutting and shaping scented play dough.

“Would you like to play with some playdough?” CAI’s child development specialist asked Maria. Maria’s grandma replied that Maria didn’t like to get her hands dirty.

“That’s okay. Many children are afraid of new experiences and may not like touching new things. Would you like to play with the dough? Maria could watch.”

Grandma began rolling the play dough with her hands. Maria watched her every move. After a few minutes grandma offered Maria a piece of play dough.

“I’m afraid. I don’t want to touch it,” Maria said. Grandma told Maria it was ok, but she continued to play with the dough, making pretend cookies. Maria watched the other children roll and squeeze their dough. Soon, she suggested a decoration for her grandma’s cookies and began pressing her fingers into the dough to make a pattern. They continued to make imaginary cookies together and pretended to eat them.

When Maria and her grandma were ready to leave, the specialist handed Maria a baggie full of blue playdough and gave Maria’s grandma the playdough recipe.

“Thank you!” Maria smiled.

Simple but powerful interactions like these prepare children for kindergarten by encouraging learning through play. Maria and her grandma teamed up to overcome Maria’s fear and explore her natural curiosity.

CAI invites family, friends and neighbor caregivers to Meaningful Play events throughout the year to play, wonder, and learn together in a safe, nurturing, environment. Child development specialists share information, new ideas, and take-home activities that support children as they develop.

To learn more, please visit the Calendar of Events located on our website: www.childaction.org or contact us at (916) 369–0191.

2017–2018: By the Numbers

- $51 Million in child care subsidies paid in Sacramento County for 8,682 children.
- $23,840 in health and safety scholarships to 334 child care providers.
- 27,700 instances of community education were provided for parents, providers, educators, and community members.
- 1,564 Parents and child care providers participated in 151 early learning development trainings.
- 4,107 families received free child care referrals for 5,076 children.
- 746 licensed exempt providers assisted with TrustLine background checks.
- 662 New child care spaces were created. 8 new child care centers and 42 family child care providers opened businesses.
Are you or someone you know a foster parent in need of assistance with paying for child care? Foster families may be eligible to receive services under the Emergency Foster Care Bridge Program.

The Bridge Program was created to support the placement of foster children in child care settings, increase capacity of child care programs to meet the needs of foster children in our community, and to support the child care needs of eligible families.

The Bridge Program offers:

- **A Child Care Navigator** who partners with families to determine their child care needs and assist them with finding a child care provider.

- **Emergency Child Care Vouchers** to help foster families pay for child care costs.

- **Resources and training** for child care providers as they care for foster children.

If you have questions, call Child Action, Inc. at (916) 369–0191.