As we embark upon another new year, it is impossible not to reflect back upon Child Action, Inc.’s (CAI) 2018-2019 activities and marvel at our team’s commitment to working together. Our activities included:

- **$59** million in child care subsidies paid for **9,861** children
- **$32,281** in health and safety scholarships to **439** child care providers
- **2,737** parents and child care providers participated in 195 workshops in five languages
- **16,950** individuals reached through publications, community fairs, and public hearings
- **4,689** families received free child care referrals for **5,776** children
- **988** license-exempt providers assisted with TrustLine background checks
- **633** new child care spaces created
- **6** new child care centers and **58** family child care providers opened businesses

Wow! What an inspiration it is to collaborate with diverse and compassionate partners, including CAI staff and all our community supporters.

We know how fun it is to spend time with our littlest friends – our children – and we are always on the lookout for tips to share. In this edition of Our Children, Our Community we share information to keep that “picky” eater’s tummy full.

We also know it can be scary for some to entrust our children in the care of others. For information about choosing quality child care, turn to page 6.

Adverse childhood experiences cause trauma and Trauma Informed Care (TIC) principles shape the way we experience trauma within others and ourselves. CAI offers TIC training to child care providers as they support our region’s children.

Finally, 2020 marks the year of the Census. Inside these pages, you will learn how crucial it is that every child is counted in the Census.

– Tracey Strack, Executive Director
Child Action, Inc.
A parent, provider, aunt, uncle, or teacher, the health of our children comes first. When it comes to winter, we want to keep them bundled up inside where it's cozy, warm, and dry. We try to keep them from getting sick.

Looking back at our own childhood, our best memories are of jumping in puddles, making mud cakes and feeling the rain on our face. When did the rain or playing outdoors in the cold of winter become such a negative thing?

Each season has its own beauty. Winter is just another season of the year that also provides enjoyment as if it was summer or any other season. Going outdoors in the winter just means making some adjustments so we can enjoy it to the max.

One of the greatest activities for children is taking time to recognize our changing seasons; outside activities will help him/her understand the differences and the beauty each season has. It could be the first time your child is experiencing this change; this is the perfect opportunity for you and your child to share meaningful experiences.

As adults we might not enjoy outdoor activities during winter but as a child these activities are memorable. Just try to remember when you were a child…

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A Child Action, Inc. Staff Story

What is your name and who are these precious children in the picture?

My name is Shahla and these are my two grandchildren Darya (5) and Aaban (2). In these pictures, my two grandchildren are enjoying the cold winter day. Outdoors are perfect for them because they are constantly bored indoors during winter.

How do you protect them?

I always make sure they are wearing proper gear for the season: rain boots, rain jacket, and layers. I always ask for extra clothes when I have my grandchildren with me.

Do you remember what activities you did or they enjoyed that day?

I do. I always keep little notes of what we did and pictures for them to remember when they were kids so when they grow up they can do the same activities with their children. This day the children were so excited they were looking for worms and snails. I told them that they could bring one item inside - but not a worm or snail! Darya brought a rock and Aaban brought a stick. With those items they made an art collage for their parents.

Ideas for no cost outdoors winter activities: Observing and collecting rocks, acorns, leaves, sticks; making patterns and shapes with items found in nature; engaging all the senses by feeling, smelling and listening to the sounds of nature, such as wind and rain.

GO OUTSIDE!

Photo courtesy of Shahla Akhzari & Child Action, Inc.
Choosing high quality child care is not an easy task. Parents looking for the “just right” child care setting for their child should not hesitate to seek support from their local Resource and Referral (R&R). Child Action, Inc. is Sacramento County’s R&R agency. You can call us at (916) 369–0191 and our child care specialists are ready to support you. If you receive a child care referral list with providers to call, it is important to talk with them about your child’s and your needs. Ask as many questions as you want! If you decide to visit a provider, use the helpful hints below to learn more about what your child might experience if they are cared for in this setting.

1. **Look around:** Observe the interactions between the caregivers and the children. What does the relationship look like? Is the staff playing with the children? Is the staff meeting the child at their level when they are having interactions? Is there enough staff to adequately supervise the children?

2. **Do a policy check:** What is their discipline, TV, feeding, sleeping, sick and communication policies?

3. **Drop by:** When visiting a child care setting, look at the environment. Is there adequate child proofing, materials, supplies, toys and books? Is the area clean, organized and well-stocked?

4. **Keep Talking:** What does the interaction/communication between the caregiver and parent look like? Is there a check-in in the morning, throughout the day and at pick-up time?

5. **Problem-Solving between provider and parents:** Do the parents and caregiver work together in the best interest of the child? For example, Mom wants child to wear her jacket when it’s cold outside. When the child gets outside, the first thing she does is takes off her jacket. The caregiver feels that it’s warm enough that the child doesn’t need to wear the jacket. If parent and provider have a difference of opinion, what are the ways that they come to a compromise so that it satisfies all needs?

6. **Trust Your Gut:** Every parent knows when something doesn’t feel quite right.

7. **Be Open to Change:** You are not married to a particular person or situation, and if things don’t work out, you can always make a switch.

These tips, and more, can be found on the Parents tab of our website (www.childaction.org) under Publications for Parents.

**Look for These Signs of Quality:**

- **Staff members who truly enjoy caring for children**
- **A warm and inviting environment for you and your children**
- **General cleanliness, supervision and good hygiene**
- **Opportunities for parent involvement**
“When is lunch?” “I’m hungry!” We’ve all heard these words from the little ones we care for, sometimes as the meal is being made, but when you put their plate in front of them you hear, “I don’t want it.” “Can you make me something else?” “I don’t like that.” You may be wondering, “Well, what do you like?” This is a great opportunity to engage with children to explore foods and create routines that make meal and snack times more enjoyable.

Young children are constantly learning and their food preferences are forming rapidly; one day they may like bananas and the next, only banana chips. Fresh, dried, frozen, canned, whole, chopped…use the endless options to your advantage! Overcoming “pickiness” can be as simple as putting the child in control of their choices.

Family style meals are one way to incorporate choices. In a family style meal, the adult is responsible for what is served, where and when; allowing the child to be responsible for how much or at all. During family style meals, children choose from the options you provide in serving bowls while sitting at the table with their peers. Children are allowed to choose or not choose a food independently. The children practice their social skills by asking for what they need and their motor skills by passing food to one another.

When children choose how they will eat, they are learning valuable lessons about their own body. If a child has stopped eating or left food on their plate, try asking “Is your stomach telling you that you’re full?” and see where the answer leads you. By placing the emphasis on the child’s feelings instead of on a clean plate, we help them build self-reliance and autonomy. Check out more on “Phrases that help vs. hinder” on our Facebook!

While you’re there, let us know your thoughts on family style meals! What has worked or not worked for you? Feel free to share your "nailed it" or "failed it" moments; because there’s nothing better than knowing you’re not alone.

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<tr>
<th>The parent/caregiver is responsible for:</th>
<th>The child is responsible for:</th>
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<tr>
<td>◮ What food is offered</td>
<td>◮ How much to eat</td>
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Three Strategies to Help Children Feel Safe:

1. **Schedules/Routines** — A visible schedule provides visual examples for children at eye level of what they can expect next. There can be toddler and preschool versions but when you include pictures, children are more likely to engage.

2. **Naming feelings** — When children learn what an emotional word means, it is easier for them to identify how, why, and when they feel those throughout the day. It also helps them to express how they are feeling to others.

3. **Cozy corner** — Create a safe space, cozy area or even a bin of objects that will help a child feel safe. It could be objects from home, such as Snuggies, stuffed animals, or blankets. Music, sensory objects, bubbles, or pinwheels to blow also provide comfort and help to relax children.

Positive connections enhance a child’s sense of safety and builds resilience. Relationships between an adult and child are critical in forming positive, long-term attachments and providing stability. Early child care providers can promote positive relationships and help children maintain connections.

To learn more about Trauma Informed Care call Child Action, Inc. at (916) 369–0191, and ask to be transferred to the Resource and Referral Department.

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**Book Review**

*Once I Was Very Scared*, written by Chandra Ghosh Ippen focuses on how each of us responds in our own unique ways to the scary things that happen to us. The book shares the story of a little squirrel that was once very scared, but he soon learned he was not alone. Other little animals also had scary experiences but they reacted differently. A porcupine in the book helped the little animals feel safe and taught them how to deal with difficult feelings. This book was written to help children and caring adults understand how scary events affect children and it provides coping strategies.

If you would like to check out a copy of this book, call us at (916) 369–0191 for availability.

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"Every child needs one person who is crazy about him/her."

—Urie Bronfenbrenner
What is the Census?

The census is the method the U.S. government uses to count every person in the United States — adults, children and babies, citizens, immigrants, or visitors. The census plays a very important role in determining how our community receives money for child and family programs. The state and federal government uses census information to fund programs like child care, free and low-cost school lunches, and Medi-cal.

When is the Census carried out?

Census Day will be April 1, 2020. Beginning in March, most households in the U.S. will receive a postcard invitation to participate in the 2020 Census.

Why is it important for me to complete the 2020 Census?

Unfortunately, in 2010, the census missed over two million children age 4 and under — or one out of every 10 young children. In fact, so many young children were missed in the last census that states collectively lost over a half a billion dollars a year every year for the last decade.

The census happens only once every ten years, so if we don’t count a two year-old, our community will have less funding for education, child care, and other services children need for a decade, most of their childhood.

What happens if I don’t complete the Census?

If households choose not to complete the census, they are likely to receive a home visit from a census official after April 1, 2020.

U.S. Census Bureau field staff will always show a valid Census Bureau ID. If you receive a visit from U.S. Census Bureau field staff, you can confirm that they are an official employee by entering their name into the Census Bureau Staff Search or by contacting the California Regional Office.
How do I complete the census form?

You can fill out the Census on your own schedule. The Census only takes about 10 minutes to complete. You can complete the census online, by phone or by mail.

Each household will receive a postcard by U.S. Postal Service that includes a user ID. If you complete the Census online, you will be asked to enter this ID on the web form.

Can I complete the Census in a language other than English?

YES. If you opt to complete the census by mail, then you will only be given the option of English or Spanish versions. To check for all available languages, please visit our website and click the link on our home page to access the official US Census Bureau page. The census can be completed online in a variety of languages.

Will I have to pay for assistance completing the census?

The U.S. Census Bureau will never ask for payment to fill out the questionnaire.

What information do I have to share?

Census questions gather information about how many people live or stay in each household as of April 1, 2020; whether the home is owned or rented; about the demographics of each person in each household (including age, race, whether each person is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin, and the relationship between the residents in all households).

What questions will not be on the census

You will not be asked to disclose your immigration status, Social Security number, or banking details.

I am not in the country legally. Should I take the census?

YES. By law, the census cannot report your answers to any immigration authorities, law enforcement, or people in charge of government benefits. Everyone living in the U.S. at the time of the census should be counted, no matter their citizenship or immigration status.

I have kids living with me who aren’t mine—do I list them?

YES. You should count every child who is living at your address, even if only temporarily, on April 1, 2020.

What if my child is a baby — do I list him or her on the census?

YES. Please list your baby no matter how old — even if you are still in the hospital!

My child doesn’t live with me all the time — do I list him or her?

It depends. Whomever your child lives with most of the time should count your child. If time is split evenly, the adult who has the child on April 1, 2020 should count the child.

I have more people living with me than my landlord knows. I shouldn’t list them, should I?

Everyone must be listed. The census will not report your answers to your landlord or anyone else. Please make sure all people living in your household, or property, on April 1st, 2020 are counted.

Will my information be shared?

Your personal information will not be shared. Federal law protects your responses. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics. By law, your information cannot be shared with immigration enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, nor can it to be used to determine your eligibility for government benefits.
Our Children, Our Community

Is a free publication of Child Action, Inc., serving Sacramento since 1976. Child Action, Inc. is primarily funded by the California Department of Education.

Our Services

Child Action, Inc. provides information and consumer guidelines to assist families in making choices regarding child care. We offer resources and services to assist current and new child care providers in providing quality care for children and we provide subsidies to help low-income families pay for child care services.

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Foster Care Bridge Program (FCBP)

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.

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.