



El Centrito Family Learning Centers

2010-2013 Strategic Plan

Approved by the Board of Directors on April 27, 2010

Where We Are

- Organizational Description
- Environmental Trends
- SWOT Analysis

Where We Want To Be

- Mission
- Vision
- Funding Projections

Appendix

- A: 2010 Organizational Chart

Organizational Description¹

BACKGROUND

El Centrito Family Learning Centers is a community center located in Oxnard, California, and has been providing families with preventive, supportive and educationally enhancing services since its inception. El Centrito was founded in 1992, under the sponsorship of Sisters of St. Joseph Ministerial Services, and in 1999, El Centrito began operating as its own non-profit entity. Last year, the agency served 1,994 participants, 1,179 children, and 815 adults. Its mission is to prepare youth and families of Ventura County to meet the future and become productive members of the community by providing bilingual, bicultural family and youth educational programs in partnership with parents, schools, and neighborhoods.

El Centrito Family Learning Centers promotes the educational success of motivated, English language learning families, by providing early education, after school and parent leadership services. The agency addresses participants' educational needs in a bilingual community setting, and provides an environment that nurtures relationships and trust. For families with young children, the agency serves as an educational entrance point. El Centrito also serves as a "cool" place to learn, and provides participants with an opportunity to establish relationships with other youth and adults outside of school and home. El Centrito is a unique social service agency that delivers comprehensive, integrated educational support programs, and incorporates the core value of families "learning together" in all of its services.

CORE VALUES

El Centrito's core values are defined as the following:

- Respect the dignity of each person served
- Respect the bilingual and bicultural identity of people served
- Empower people to give back to their community
- Value input, resources and strengths within the community
- Maintain a neighborhood focus as a basis for program design

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

El Centrito's four interlinked programs are designed to serve the entire family, and provide children and parents with tools to build their educational skills.

- The *Family Literacy Program* is designed to enhance the literacy skills of the adults, while supporting the emerging literacy of their children.
- The *School Readiness Program* and *Ramona Preschool* prepare children for kindergarten and focus on pre-reading preparation.
- The *After School Community Technology Center* and *Adelante Homework Club* focuses on educational enrichment and skill building through technology, homework assistance, and group tutoring sessions.

¹ Includes description of the organization, programs, clients served, funding model, organizational structure, senior leadership, board membership and board committee structures.

- The *Mis Padres y Yo, & Padres Promotores Education Project* offers parent education classes that focus on the importance of parent involvement in the education of their children, interactive parent-child classes for parents and their children from infancy to 2 years, and parent education peer training that teaches parents what steps are needed for students to achieve higher education.

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAM: The Family Literacy program integrates the education of children and their parents. The program provides intensive and comprehensive family literacy services and family support services to children ages 2-5 years and their parents. This program provides parents with English as a Second Language classes to promote their own literacy and educational growth, as well as early childhood education classes to support their children's educational growth. The components are: Adult Education; Early Childhood Education, including Toddler and Pre-School Program; Parent and Child Time Together; and Parent Education.

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM & RAMONA PRESCHOOL: El Centrito operates two preschool programs, a School Readiness Program at the downtown campus and Ramona Preschool, located at Ramona Elementary School in La Colonia. The Programs include two daily three-hour sessions that help prepare children for school with pre-literacy skills. Each session prepares 24 preschoolers, ages 3.5 – 5 years for nine months. The sessions include 15 minutes on a computer terminal, operating the *Waterford Early Reading* software program specifically designed to help prepare young children with pre-reading skills. The sessions are complemented by bilingual reading readiness activities, such as letter and number formation, singing, creative free play, and story-time.

AFTER SCHOOL COMMUNITY TECHNOLOGY CENTER & ADELANTE HOMEWORK CLUB: El Centrito operates a community technology center, which focuses on providing the low-income community with free access to computer technology, the internet, and an opportunity to build computer and academic skills outside of school and work. The Center is free, open daily, and is located at El Centrito's headquarters. The Adelante Club is a homework assistance program offering daily school based after school tutoring sessions, and quarterly parent education classes at two local elementary schools located near El Centrito services sites.

PARENT EDUCATION: *Mis Padres y Yo, & Padres Promotores Education Project:* The *Mis Padres* parenting program is an interactive workshop that focuses on child development and parent's role as their child's first teacher. The *Promotores* training teaches parents what steps are needed for students to achieve higher education.

El Centrito recognizes the strength of its programs depends on the commitment and knowledge of the parents we serve. The *Padres Promotores Education Project* will provide parents with higher education information, and train parents on how to address the educational systems that fail students. The goal of this program is to provide Oxnard Latino parents with the knowledge and tools to increase *the college-going rate of Oxnard Latino students* and build the strength of parents to challenge the educational systems that are failing students. El Centrito is the first organization outside of the Orange County region to be replicating the *Padres Promotores Education Program*, and to receive training and coaching by the Santa Ana College *Promotores*.

MEASUREMENT OF EFFECTIVENESS

El Centrito assesses program effectiveness based on evaluation data, state and local rankings, as well as teacher and parent feedback. Parents consistently report over time that their children are performing successfully in elementary school and kindergarten teachers state they are pleased with El Centrito children because they are very well prepared.

The School Readiness Program started fourteen years ago when El Centrito piloted its first School Readiness Program with Waterford Institute, and the James Irvine Foundation. The Program continues strongly today, and serves as a model School Readiness Program for the School District's Early Reading First Grant. In addition, El Centrito's Family Literacy Program has operated for nine years, and continues as one of only 55 Even Start programs in California, and is ranked by the California Even Start Department as one of the top 10% programs in the state.

El Centrito's top ranking is measured by a mandated independent evaluation conducted yearly that utilizes scientifically based assessment tools to measure outcomes in the Family Literacy and School Readiness programs. El Centrito preschoolers consistently outperform all Even Start children throughout the state. The *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)* measures upper case letter recognition. In 2009, the state established a target level for the recognition of 15 letters; El Centrito's children recognized 24.5 letters. The *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT)* measures increase in vocabulary words, the state established a target level of 60% achievement, and El Centrito ranked 81.3%.

The Adelante Homework Club uses parent and teacher feedback forms to determine program effectiveness. In 2009, 75% of parents stated that their child demonstrated progress in school, 84% of teachers surveyed stated students improved in completing homework, and 87% of teachers stated that students demonstrated improvement in Math and Reading.

El Centrito holds all programs accountable, and ensures that outcomes are met. El Centrito has a proven track record, addresses the needs and challenges of the participants served and delivers quality services that support children's success in school.

ORGANIZATIONAL & BOARD LEADERSHIP

El Centrito has an established reputation within Ventura County for its high-quality, unique, culturally competent programs, and excellent financial management. Its successful track record is attributed to a committed Board, strong Executive Director, and an excellent team made up of managers and staff who are dedicated, compassionate, well trained, and trusted by the community.² The agency is mission driven, outcome focused and the leadership team regularly assesses “what can we do better, and what more can we do for our community.”

Volunteer membership is made up of primarily parents. The leadership team ensures that parent volunteers are active in the development and operations of programs. El Centrito integrates parent’s strengths and resources into daily activities. The strong partnership of management, staff and parent volunteers contribute to the organization’s success.

El Centrito is governed by a dynamic and dedicated Board of Directors. The members are listed below for reference. Luann Rocha, Executive Director, attends all Board Meetings as a non-voting participant. The by-laws authorizes up to fifteen Board members. The Board is currently recruiting for open positions.

- *Paul Russell, MD, FAAP – President*
Medical Director, Children’s Medical Services, Department of Public Health
- *Pedro Lozano, Vice President*
Employee Relations Coordinator, Raypak
- *Clare Brown, CPA – Treasurer/Secretary*
Vice President/Controller, Ventura County Community Foundation
- *Elias Banales – Member at Large*
Relief Agent, Amtrak
- *Micheline Miglis – Member at Large*
Administrator, Education Services, Oxnard School District
- *Elizabeth Padilla – Member at Large*
Account Manager, NBC Telemundo, KWHY – Channel 22
- *Juanita Scott, CPA – Member at Large*
Executive Director, Radiation Oncology Centers of Ventura County

² A current organizational chart is provided in Appendix A for reference.

Environmental Trends³

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

El Centrito targets the low-income hardworking and highly motivated monolingual Spanish speaking families who desire for their children to succeed in school, however lack the language and skills. Oxnard is primarily a Latino community, made up of families with high poverty rates, limited English language skills and low education. 86.2% (13,282) are Latino, 50% (7,707) are English Learners, and 78.7% (12,133) receive free & reduced meals (2008-09 Education Profiles for Oxnard School District). 41% of Oxnard's adults do not have a high school diploma (US census, 2000). Ventura County Department of Human Services reported in March of 2009 that 48.9 % of Ventura County clients who receive food stamps or public assistance benefits live in Oxnard. Current economic trends indicate that unemployment in Oxnard has reached 15%, and almost half the households in Oxnard are below the self-sufficiency standard, compared to 28% in the County (Ventura County Star 9-29-09 & 12-9-09).

EARLY EDUCATION

Demand for quality affordable and accessible preschool services is very high, especially for low income and Spanish speaking children. In Ventura County 68% of Latino children do **not** attend preschool, and only 18% of children below poverty level in Ventura County attend center preschool programs. (2008, P-16 Regional Council, & 2007, Ventura County Child Care Portfolio). In the City of Oxnard, 8.7% of children are under 5 years (2000 Census). Attendance in preschool is linked to academic success, and there is an extraordinary need to provide School Readiness programs to prepare children readying for entry into a formal school system. However, the state of California ranks 26th in 4 year olds' access to publicly funded preschools (2008 NIEER State of Preschool Report).

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Ventura County Latino children are not making sufficient progress in student achievement. In Ventura County, 40% White and 60% Asian high school students have taken the A-G required classes for entry into a UC/CSU, yet only 17% of Latinos have taken these classes. 80% of the student population at Hueneme, Channel Islands and Pacifica High School is Latino, yet only 15% of Latino students took the SAT, College entrance exam (Ventura County P-16, 2007). The educational disparity is significantly noticed in the Standardized Testing and Reporting Results (STAR). In 08-09, only 36% of Oxnard Elementary students achieved proficiency in English Language Arts, and 43% met Math proficiency. (www.oxnardsd.org, 08-09 Accountability Card).

TECHNOLOGY – THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

There are significant links between poverty, ethnicity and access to technology. According to the "Latinos Online" report from Pew Internet & American Life Project, 56% of Latinos use the Internet compared to 71% of whites. El Centrito's own study conducted April 2009 indicates 57% of participants do not have a computer at home and 65% of participants do not have internet access at home. Online technology use is affected by three factors:

³ Includes descriptions of the social conditions, fiscal climate, political and industry trends.

educational levels, generational levels, and English proficiency rates. Because of their new immigrant status, Latinos tend to have lower levels of English Language skills. This deters many Latinos from accessing the Internet because it is largely English-based. Due to economic constraints, many Latino households are cell phone-only households. Without a landline, they are less likely to have Internet access. The disparity in technology use between parents and their children interferes with family cohesion, and deepens the generational gap and digital divide. Parent's lack of internet use leads to limited parental oversight of their children's online activity and lends to increased safety risks for youth.

FAMILY LITERACY

Parent involvement in the education of their children is an important factor in determining academic success. 24% of child academic performance is based on parent commitment (Darling-Hammond & Ball, 1997). El Centrito's William Goodling Even Start Family Literacy is dedicated to the education of the parent and child together. In the peak of Even Start funding, California funded 154 Family Literacy programs totaling \$31.5 million. For the 2009-10 year, the state awarded only 55 programs, totaling \$6.7 million. The last grant award year for the William F. Goodling Even Start Family Literacy Program is 2010-2011. The state of California is developing a plan to replace the Even Start Family Literacy Program with new early education funding that will incorporate the family literacy model into the child development division. The child development division will welcome community based organizations to apply when new funding is available.

EL CENTRITO FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

El Centrito has experienced approximately a 32% reduction in grant and donor revenue this current year. Many of its grantors and donors have had to scale down their donation or stopped all together due to loss of business or inability to contribute at this time. To maintain core services and minimize the impact on participants, El Centrito is absorbing many of this fiscal year's cuts through reduction in staff, not awarding staff cost of living adjustments (COLA), trimming costs, and decreasing after school services.

El Centrito's family literacy and early education programs were deeply impacted by funding reductions. First 5 cut 5% from the School Readiness and Ramona Preschool Programs, totaling a \$18,576 reduction. The State of California Even Start Family Literacy Program imposed a 26% or \$43,000 reduction in funding. Next year's funding of the federal Even Start Family program was maintained, however at the same reduced level. To minimize the impact of the donor cuts, El Centrito eliminated this fiscal year one full time teaching position in the School Readiness and Ramona Preschool Program and replaced with one half-time teacher who splits her time between the two sites.

The After School Technology Center and Adelante After School Tutoring Programs are the core programs most significantly impacted by the cuts. These two programs are primarily supported by private and corporate foundation grants, and experienced a 37% or \$25,980 reduction in grant support this current fiscal year. Due to funding reductions, El Centrito is offering the Adelante program for only one semester. Additionally, the Adelante Program will be offered at El Centrito's headquarters, instead of two local schools. Offering Adelante Program on-site enables El Centrito to trim costs by eliminating two part-time mentors. Offering the program on-site provides a programmatic benefit as well; children receive assistance with homework, and then have the opportunity to attend the computer lab.

SWOT Analysis⁴

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy & results of programs • Quality of programs & services • Community outreach • Involvement & support of parents • Good management/internal controls • Very good teachers & staff • Family centered • Service rendered are top-tier and unique • Strong ED • Flexibility of programs & services • Computer training • Different programs for different ages • Dedication • Grass roots • Homework program • Connection to the community • Waterford Early Reading Program • Philosophy - Family Learns Together • Comprehensive learning opportunities for families • Trusted and experienced partner in community • The academic preparation participants acquire • Communication with parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity & amount of funding • Uncertainty & quality of facility • Visibility/PR • Board of Directors • Relationships with school district, local agencies & politicians • Not enough programs & services • Ability to expand to other communities • Internal communication • Ability to quantify outcomes of programs • Requiring parents take more accountability • Lack of participant commitment • Difficulty finding & retaining qualified staff • No Succession planning for ED • Infrastructure • Viewed as agency that only serves poor Latino community • Parent Education Component not marketable • Lack of community involvement/participation
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership/Networking opportunities • PR/Marketing opportunities • Great need in the community • Corporate/Private funding • Participation in city/community events • New board members • New staff or expanded capacity of existing staff • Facility upgrade • Opportunities outside of Oxnard • Federal/government support • New grants • Outcome research to testify success of programs • Help from parents • First 5's strategic planning process • Charitable community links • Licensing of sites • Resources of the City of Oxnard • Recurring revenue streams • Attracting the attention of adolescents • Implementation of more ideas in a work setting • Diversity education programs • New models for fundraising, publicity, board recruitment and service management • Reputation in community • Problems in regular school system - provides opportunity to showcase El Centrito 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding/budget cuts • Competition from other organizations • Poor economy • Loss of facility/lease • Dependency/lack of support from Oxnard School District • Poor political connections • Lack of public awareness • Dependency on First 5 • Declining First 5 revenues • Scarcity of strong board members • Lack of interest/participation from parents & participants • School system bureaucracy • People with negative attitudes interested in agency • Lack of multipliable level of management support • The community's geographical diversity • Changing grantor priorities • Planning for the future • Lack of fund development program • Loss of passion & patience from teachers/colleagues • Licensing requirements • Larger organizations dominate the market • Decline in foundation funding • Find new funding sources

⁴ Source: 2010 El Centrito Stakeholder Analysis.

Mission

The mission of El Centrito Family Learning Centers is to prepare youth and families of Ventura County to meet the future and become productive members of the community by providing bilingual, bicultural family and youth educational programs in partnership with parents, schools, and neighborhoods.

2013 Vision

To fulfill its mission and remain sustainable for the future, El Centrito’s vision over the next three years is to build the leadership capacity of the staff and the Board of Directors; diversify funding streams; secure long-term facilities that allow for the licensure of our early education programs; and develop productive, mutually beneficial partnerships that reflect El Centrito’s core values. The following metrics will be used to chart our success in each of these areas.

Key Result Areas	2009-2010 (base)	2012/2013
Leadership Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No current succession plans in place • Biweekly management meetings • 30 minute weekly team meetings • Quarterly all staff meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established succession plan for key positions at El Centrito • Professionally managed organization with well-trained and supported managers
Board Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 board members including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Medical Director ○ Human Resource Manager ○ Controller ○ Education Administrator ○ Radio Account Manager ○ Business Director ○ Community Representative • 71% attendance rate • Board commitment policy based on individual’s ability to donate • 43% of board members donating funds in 2009/10 year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 active board members that meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Latino ○ Political representative ○ 2 Parents ○ Local advertising/PR ○ Top executive/GM of top Ventura County company ○ Well networked professional service provider (attorney, accountant, etc.) • 75% annual attendance rate of board members (9 out of 12 board members at each meeting) • Established contribution policy with 100% board participation
Fund Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private and corporate fund development (including proceeds from fundraising events) that yields \$54,500/year • As of 2-28-10 yield is \$33,710 or 61% of total projection • No coordinated marketing plan to promote El Centrito 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private and corporate fund development (including net proceeds from fundraising events) that yields \$80,000/year • Dedicated marketing/PR effort resulting in greater awareness of El Centrito

Key Result Areas	2009-2010 (base)	2012/2013
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • El Centrito operates 7 classrooms at the old Oxnard High School. Three classrooms used for early education are not licensed due to inadequate plumbing. • El Centrito operates on a month to month lease and all rent is forgiven • To date, the City of Oxnard has not identified future master plan for the building, although it has talked about it since El Centrito moved to site in 1999 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities for early childhood education classrooms that meet the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Enables licensure for early childhood education programs – Safe, attractive learning environment – Highly visible signage – Secure permanent contracts – Affordable to license and to pay rent
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal contractual partnerships with Oxnard School District First 5 Program • Programs and Operations Director serves on Ventura County First 5 Early Education Committee • Executive Director serves on Ventura County First 5 Family Strengthening Committee (position transfer to Family Literacy Manager) • Program and Operations Director serves on First 5 Education Committee • Program and Operations Director or Family Literacy Manager attends monthly Oxnard First 5 Steering Committee meetings • 2 El Centrito parent participants serving on Oxnard First 5 steering committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved relationship with local and County First 5 resulting in increased amount of funds received from agency • Formal partnerships with 3 new entities: e.g. CSUCI, school/ NFL, community agency, political or governmental entity

Revenue Projections

Revenue Projections/ Funding Source	2009-2010 (base)	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
Used Cash Reserves	\$8,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Grants/Foundations	\$179,074	\$182,971	\$189,980	\$195,679
Government Contracts	\$541,694	\$541,694	\$557,945	\$574,683
Program Fees	\$1,250	\$1,288	\$1,326	\$1,366
Corporate Donations	\$30,000	\$31,500	\$36,225	\$41,499
Private Donations	\$14,000	\$14,700	\$16,905	\$21,286
Fundraising activities	\$10,500	\$12,500	\$12,679	\$17,215
Interest	\$950	\$979	\$1,008	\$1,038
Other (in-kind-rent, contribution)	\$75,000	\$77,250	\$79,568	\$81,955
Total	\$860,468	\$862,882	\$895,635	\$934,721
Cash Reserves	\$82,595	\$83,007	\$83,423	\$83,840

Assumptions about projections:

- **Grants/Foundations & Government Contracts:** 3% annual growth over next 3 years; slow growth due to economy.
- **Program Fees:** Minimal growth, due to participant's inability to pay.
- **Corporate/Private Donations & Fundraising Activities:** Anticipate 47% growth (\$80,000) by 2013. Goal and focus of agency is to increase donations from donors, businesses, and fundraising activities.
- **In-kind contribution:** Anticipate rent forgiven at facilities where programs are located.
- **Total Revenue:** Anticipate 9% overall growth by 2013. Benchmark based on conservative growth rate due to current economic situation.
- **Cash Reserves:** Due to economy, El Centrito does not anticipate reserves growing.

