

Monthly Meeting Highlights



Children & Families
Commission of Orange County

FEBRUARY 2007

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM EXTENDED TO 2009

Over \$5 million was approved to fund the two-year continuation of the successful School Readiness Program at 25 Orange County school districts that serve kindergartners. The School Readiness program was initially funded in 2000 and was built on the concept that children will be ready for school and schools will be ready for children. The program is the foundation for the Commission's school readiness framework that includes school nurses, school readiness centers, and early literacy programs.

The program funds 31 School Readiness Coordinator positions to implement the program that adapts to the strengths and needs of each district and the children they serve. Specifically the Coordinators engage in activities within and beyond the school district sites boundaries including outreach, referrals and linkages among the school district, early childhood education providers and other community agencies; and identify strategies to assess the progress of children transitioning into and through the school district.

FUNDING APPROVED FOR DENTAL POST-RESIDENCY PROGRAM

An annual allocation of \$100,000 for a children's dental post-residency program was approved with direction to develop the residency retention program for final Commission action in March. In recognition of the significant shortage of children's dentists both nationally and in Orange County, the Commission directed Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County to administer the children's dental residency program. The retention program will be based on successful state and federal programs that allow for student loan repayment and other incentives in exchange for a commitment to provide services to young children in underserved areas of the county.

COMMISSION REVIEWS FUTURE DIRECTION

A special meeting of Children & Families Commission replaced the regular monthly meeting in February. The special meeting included a workshop to discuss the impact of Commission funded programs in the community. The Commissioners also discussed the stages of the Commission's growth over the past seven years and defining a future strategic direction as a mature organization. The Commissioners agreed to an external assessment that could guide funding decisions on the future direction for the Commission. A follow-up to this item will be presented for Commission action at the March meeting.

NEW COMMISSIONER APPOINTED

Supervisor Bill Campbell was appointed by the Orange County Board of Supervisors as their representative on the Children & Families Commission. Supervisor Campbell replaces former Supervisor, now Senator Lou Correa who was elected to the 34th California Senate district in November 2006.

For more information, please visit the Commission website at www.occhildrenandfamilies.com