



Ready Kids East County

Womb to Classroom

Table Discussion Notes

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For more information about Ready Kids East County, contact Jessica Keener, First 5 Contra Costa Program Coordinator at jkeener@first5coco.org

Based on the initial Womb to Classroom plans that were shared, what are you most excited about?

- Black Infant Health being supported in expanding in Pittsburg and Antioch
- Awareness building of other programs in the county
- Building partnerships at high-level tables (i.e., among those who run departments and agencies)
- System-level approach
- Excited about centering prevention rather than downstream treatment of issues
- Wellness Hub coming into existence – meeting folks where they are
- Trusting relationships among those at the table
- Connection of birth justice movements with early learning movements
- Generally excited about being listened to
- “No wrong door” approach
- Prenatal work with Black birthing people; helping Black birthing people create villages early on, during pregnancy
- Three long-term goals: Ready Families, Ready Schools, and Ready Communities
- Focusing on schools vs. kids getting ready
- Opportunity to collaborate and elevate the needs of specific populations
- Find and support new/first time parents
- Prenatal supports; moving further upstream
- May provide proactive approach or strong desire to engage in services
- Attention to prenatal needs
- Convening, evaluation, spreading the word, outreach
- Action movement, data to support the movement
- Bridging TK, preschool, seamless transition

What else do you think would be needed to best support young African American children in East County?

- Data collection and data use to inform strategies moving forward
- To feel less vulnerable / have more psychological safety in spaces that don't center BAA experiences / voices
- Co-parenting support
- Placing an emphasis on fathers/male caregivers; disrupt stereotypes about gender roles (nurturing parent vs. provider or disciplinarian)
- Mental health needs; dads can experience postpartum too



- Cultivating Black providers; children are socialized at an early age so early exposure to providers that look like them could reduce cognitive dissonance later in life
- Making East County feel more like home; many Black families still utilize services (health and ECE) in Alameda County
- Supporting families with self-advocacy; specifically within special education
- Early outreach; families may not want what they need
- This is a community that commutes, so the system can't take time away from families but support their presence in their kids' lives. It is important not to assume that families are not interested in services when the reality may be that they don't have time
- Lactation, infant development support and supporting families throughout the process
- Focus on math and literacy more in Antioch, Pittsburg
- IEP and how we can better support families waiting
- Paid family leave, meal delivery, mental health support.
- Early intervention action early to prevent issues up the age spectrum
- Offer education to other ethnic groups on what is happening to African American families and the impact it has on everyone
- Offer support, risk mitigation and opportunities
- Identify roles of partners
- Be inclusive of fathers
- Reduce the risk for families
- Opportunity is WOMB to Community vs. just the classroom. Classroom seems narrow.
- Focus groups to elicit feedback
- Home-based programs to meet Black families where they are
- Sustaining workforce; not compensation related
- Fathers to connect and celebrate
- Showing vulnerability; cultural humility

You heard about the African American Wellness Hub and the County Prevention Plan. What other change efforts should we explore connecting to?

- Antioch USD - programming for foster children
- Tabling at community events and resource fairs
- Homelessness prevention movements
- Outreach efforts in general for those who use the services
- Afro-centricism is missing (more culture, books, music of the African diaspora)
- Economic change efforts - lack of affordable wages in East County force families to commute. This leads to:
 - Less time with kids
 - Increased child care expenses
- Mentorship programming
 - John Muir has a mentorship program with Junior Achievement of Northern California for high school students from marginalized communities
- Guaranteed income efforts
 - Introduce to the Hub
- How to connect wellness, guaranteed income, finances, social connections and not view them as separate silos; encourage collaboration



- Create a more cohesive system instead of changing the system?
- School districts receive children after they exit First 5 eligibility, so what is the connection to the school districts? Teachers and school staff would benefit from connecting with providers and community partners and learning about incoming families; hearing their stories could create awareness; school services are integrated into school
- How to create more community feel at schools; more school staff live in the community
- Faith system, particularly in East County
- Status of the 501 grant
 - Used to provide transportation support for students of any age
- Life skills workshops
- Creating access to free activities and families opportunity to form community (e.g. recreational, cooking classes, etc.)
- Utilizing empty spaces/vacant lots for gardens or other resources to benefit the community
- Geographically accessible resources to incentivize the community that the resource is for them
 - Mobile libraries
 - Co-locating services and/or activities at gyms, community centers
- Workforce development
- Mental health services
- Technological advances and their impacts on children
- Don't know of any, we need to build connectivity
- Some families don't have access to transportation. CCHP has transportation benefits but it's limited and does not meet the needs of families. It doesn't meet the needs of families to make it . It is not equitable and there is no accountability. It would not cover a mother going to the hospital to see her sick child.
- Love the idea of the hub. It's a good idea, but don't let this be the only solution or "the job is done". What will make it comprehensive and effective is not having to worry about funding from one budget cycle to the next. Ensure it is evaluated to ensure it is doing what it is supposed to be doing. It needs to be less insular and more integrated to larger community efforts.
- Communication is missing. There needs to be a strategic communications plan to ensure families are aware of the resources available to them and what is going on in the community.

Who else should be part of this effort to support and empower Black families in East County?

- Paradigm shift from mandated reporting to community supporting
- Cross sector referral system
- Connection seeking families
- Middle schools and high schools
- Dignified Paths (a local east county effort for older girls)
- School districts and staff
 - Sometimes overlook or decline opportunities for services, collaboration
 - Try engaging specific school sites
- Faith-based organizations and groups
 - Participation in church varies generationally
 - Need multi-layered approach
- Rubicon



- Nonprofits that focus on Black and African American diaspora members
- Family Justice Center
- Peaceful Warrior Healing Circle (Nami)
- Afroplay
- Health and Wellness entities
- SparkPoint
- Reps from all public schools?
- Health systems, health plan
- Child care, family child care providers, it's a bigger conversation
- School districts
- Psychologists
- Police departments
- Public service
- Business owners and employers
- Insurance
- Be clear about roles that each entity plays
- First 5 is a public agency and has limitations on what it can do, Community partners have different access
- Empower families to navigate systems, educate families on their rights, partners supporting each other with referrals...we are a part of the system. Those who do "harm" intentionally and unintentionally should also be invited to the table
- DEI under attack.
- Reentry programs, justice impacted families, reunification there is not a lot of support for families
- Not working in silos. We have to stay focused on the tasks at hand and push through. Stronger Advocacy. Embracing roles we play and honoring who we are.
- Honoring the data. Braid funding to make systems more robust. Quickly reallocate money.

Additional Notes:

- All Pittsburg schools are now community schools, so individual level schools can be brought into this conversation in a stronger way
- "Nothing about us without us"
- Some individual level invites from one group to another were scaffolded in our small group
- Importance of empowering parents towards self-advocacy
- Civic engagement; leverage the CACs
- Consider mobile services
- Create access to a diverse offering of resources; update and adapt resources to fit modern needs
- Prototyping a referral system is paramount
- Focus on parents, families, schools, communities
- Tired approach
- Prenatal: Support services and focus on whole person/women
- Post-Natal
- Mental Health: Focus, intention
- Postpartum support for both mom and women
- Whole families: need for both parents, include and amplify men's voices/needs
- Cultural stereotypes
- Unpack and break



- Down and challenge
- i.e. gendered roles
- Co-parenting: involve the fathers, holistic approach
- More coordinated, integrated systems of care that serve the whole person?
- HUB: need for economic supports and justice
- Financial security is central to family health
- Job training, economic development, financial (educator)
- Hub: Mentorship model, John Muir has internship opportunities
- Hub: How will it be implemented, especially in outer regions of county
- Hub: How do we connect it to the GI work that the community, and new county, will be moving forward?
- Need to integrate families fully into the whole spectrum of services/programs
- More coordination across providers
- Freedom to create and dream new systems informed by or lived exp.
- How can funders encourage and grow coordination and alignment via their reg metrics and outcomes?
- More equity trainings for educators/practitioners
- Focus on 0-5 needs and priorities
- Needs of black families
- System partners, orgs, providers, faith orgs are often siloed and separated
- Schools need to be ready to receive and support youth and families
- Isolated people, lack of sense of “community”
- Hold systems accountable and cultural competency needs to be prioritized