

EARLY CHILDHOOD SUMMARY & IMPACT REPORT

Corning Promise



THE REPORT: EARLY CHILDHOOD FOCUS

The Early Childhood Summary & Impact Report summarizes the early childhood component of the cradle-to-career solutions supported by the Everett Freeman Promise Neighborhood (“Corning Promise”), a community initiative of the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Tribe. The solutions were implemented in partnership with 11 early childhood organizations between 2017 and 2022. Some activities supported in 2023 are included in this summary report.

PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING FOR LIFELONG SUCCESS

Improve language and literacy
Invest in relationship-building
Expand opportunities & access

Partner to build high-quality early learning programs
Strengthen collaborative practices & structures



Acknowledgement

The Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indian Tribe and the Tehama County partners are immensely grateful to the United States Department of Education – Promise Neighborhood for giving us the gift of stewarding a grant that transformed the community with its system-level ambitions and cradle-to-career approach.

Formal Partnerships

City of Corning * Northern California Child Development, Inc. (NCCDI) * River Cities Counseling (RCC) * Tehama County Department of Education (TCDE), partnered with seven center-based private, state, and Early/Head start programs in Corning * Tehama County Health Services Agency (TCHSA) * Center for Optimal Brain Integration * Tehama County Library

EARLY LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Corning Promise collaborated with TCDE on the early language and literacy development program design and delivery. TCDE worked with seven center-based pre-K programs to transform them into “Centers of Excellence,” marked by literacy-rich learning environments, quality programs, and instructional practices. The evidence-based strategies employed to turn the curve included utilizing assessments effectively, delivering high-quality instruction, using data to tailor instruction and curriculum, and creating trauma-informed environments. Program design elements included increasing access to literacy material, parent-engagement opportunities, and strengthening relationships. Highly qualified staff from the TCDE-Early Childhood Department worked in partnership with the Pre-K programs to implement activities.

Improving **Literacy Spaces**

TCDE worked with the center-based programs to design literacy-rich spaces - incorporating diverse age-appropriate reading materials, designating reading areas, modeling positive literacy practices, and other practices that make reading and writing a visible part of the classroom and routines.

Building **Educator Capacity**

TCDE equipped educators with skills to foster language and literacy development in children through personalized coaching provided by an Early Learning Coach & Specialist. The Coach/Specialist shared instructional strategies, introduced new curriculum (ZooPhonics, etc.), and shared classroom management strategies. To create optimal learning environments, TCDE contracted with a trauma expert who bridged the PreK educators' knowledge on creating safe environments, fostering positive relationships, utilizing trauma-informed and resilience-building instructional practices, and other supportive information that empowered the educators. Professional Development opportunities were also made available to educators in such topics as Neurobiology of the Brain and Behavior, Trauma Responsive and Resilience Building Practices, The Power to Rewire, Adult Self-Awareness and Self-Care to Prevent Burnout, and many other essential topics.

Progress **Monitoring & Program Improvement**

The Pre-K programs used screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tools to evaluate change. The tools were crucial for assessing students' knowledge of literacy fundamentals, the quality of the classroom environment, and teacher practices. These assessments included Phonological Awareness Literacy (PALS), the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), and Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO). The ELLCO assessment measures five key areas: classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading opportunities, and print and early writing supports. TCDE and the educators analyzed the data to gain insights on the individual, class-wide, and program progress; they used the information to adjust strategies and lesson plans to meet the student's needs and make program improvements.

EARLY LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STRATEGIES CONT'D

Building Literacy

CDE created opportunities for families/children to interact with books by placing pre-loaded eReaders (Nooks), loaded with 40 English and Spanish age-appropriate books, in each center's lending library. The Nooks were configured with parental controls and privacy settings; a single administrator manages the devices. Families with children participating in the PreK centers received Raising-A-Reader book bags with four new books each week. The books ranged in developmental levels, topics, and languages. In a single year, the children rotated 100+ multicultural books. Additionally, on several occasions, families had the opportunity to visit Chico State University. The college visits aimed to spark an early interest in learning and were intentionally structured to encourage parent-child conversation with the help of questioning prompts, vocabulary words, and a book selected by the program leads. Pre-pandemic, TCDE collaborated with the PreK educators to organize a learning event where parents and their children engaged in activities promoting learning in various subjects. PreK teachers carefully curated the activities with assistance from the ECE Specialist who supported the lesson plan development around a single anchor book.

Expanding Literacy Opportunities

TCDE partnered with organizations to secure children's authors, who performed at local schools and free community concerts. The authors included local children's author Linda Boydin, bilingual musician and children's author Jose Luis Orozco, who facilitated free educational workshops for families and educators, and New York Times bestselling children's author and musician Eric Litwin. All families in the community also had the option to connect for free to a parent engagement and learning resource app, Ready Rosie. ReadyRosie is "designed to help teachers strengthen the connections between school and home" by offering over 1,500 educational learning videos accessible to families with a login to the app. Additionally, families engaged in Book Drive-Up events coordinated with multiple organizations to deliver information to families with young children (Fire Department, Tehama County Library, etc.). At the drive-up event, families received a book bag containing an anchor book and materials for activities. A week after receiving the book bags, the families connected to the Corning Early Childhood Facebook page to watch a pre-recorded video of a center-based teacher delivering a lesson plan using the items in the book bag. TCDE distributed over 1,000 per year through these events.

"One of the greatest *Successes* that stemmed from the Corning Promise Early Language and Literacy Development initiative was the new and strengthened partnerships."

Teresa Manning
Early Childhood Specialist



EARLY LANGUAGE & LITERACY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM STRATEGIES CONT'D

Addressing **Social- Emotional**

Children in the participating PreK programs experiencing social, emotional, or behavioral difficulties could engage in play therapy with a licensed therapist in Corning. Play Therapy was free to the families enrolled in the center-based programs. This direct service approach addressed the structural barriers often hindering families from receiving help.

BRIDGING ACCESS TO SERVICES

Corning Promise partnered with Northern California Child Development Inc. and Tehama County Health Services Agency - Health Families to support children's growth through home-based early learning, parent education and support, and health programming services. Each program was structured with the recognition that parents are children's first and most influential teachers.

Expanding **Early Learning**

NCCDI offered early education and family support services to 22 families. Each family received approximately 46 yearly visits. The bilingual home visitor followed an evidence-based home visiting model and employed strategies and activities to build parents' knowledge and skills to support healthy child development. NCCDI conducted screenings and assessments at specific intervals to ensure each child was progressing in all areas and, when applicable, referred them to receive additional intervention. The families received age-appropriate books during their participation. NCCDI also invited home-based families to parent-engagement workshops. During the pandemic, weekly visits were an essential connection for families needing community resources to address their immediate needs.

Focusing on **Relational Health**

The TCHSA Health Families/Healthy Beginnings offered support through a home visitation program to approximately 11 families. The Health Families Tehama model focuses on "early childhood relational health" - grounded in a framework designed to enhance family functioning and reduce risks by strengthening protective factors through cultivating and strengthening the parent-child relationship and promoting healthy growth and development of children. The number of visits varied depending on the needs of each family. Before the pandemic, a dedicated Public Health Nurse supported the families; however, the nurse was transferred to a new unit when the pandemic started.

DEVELOPMENTAL TRACKING OF ALL CHILDREN UNDER 5

First 5 Tehama, partnering with Help Me Grow (HMG), oversees an initiative that conducts developmental screening of children under five living in the Tehama region. To reach more children, First 5 Tehama hosts screening clinics in various locations, identifying sites and events with the help of community agencies. By proactively seeking children to screen to ensure they are meeting developmental milestones, potential issues can be detected, which allows for early interventions. After the initial connection, HMG workers communicate with families, share community resources as needed, and rescreen children at recommended intervals. The HMG staff are most often from the communities they serve; their community connection helps boost receptivity from community residents because they come from similar life experiences, languages, and ethnicities and understand the socioeconomic situations of the families they serve.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Corning Promise partnered with First 5 Tehama to administer an evidence-based Positive Parenting Program that strengthens the knowledge and skills of parents to engage in positive parenting and enhance family resiliency. In 2021 and 2022, First 5 Tehama began the foundational work of building competencies of local practitioners to deliver Triple P to families in the Tehama County region. Data collected from parents/guardians post-participation showed an increase in their confidence and comfort in their parental role, an improvement in the quality of parent-child interactions, and an enhancement in the family's mental health. Research on the effectiveness of Triple P has shown that it helps to reduce child maltreatment and behavior problems, and the children tend to do better in school.

First 5 Tehama trained 41 early childhood system leaders/practitioners on implementing trauma-informed strategies in diverse work settings. These system leaders, ranging from health care workers to social workers and educators, learned from trauma experts and each other. Beyond the project implementation, First 5 Tehama continued to convene groups quarterly for professional learning opportunities. Over the years, the leaders have continued to work together, coordinating services to enhance family support.

HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL BRIDGING

The leaders engaged in horizontal and vertical bridging activities to offer a more comprehensive approach to support the healthy development of early learners:

Horizontal Bridging

During the federal Promise Neighborhood funding window between 2017-2024, over 20 educational leaders from private Pre-K programs, state preschools, and early/head start programs actively participated in structured learning sessions designed for mutual learning and development.

Vertical Alignment

To strengthen the continuity of learning for the young learners, educators from the Corning Pre-K centers and Kindergarten teachers from CUESD came together to focus on vertical alignment activities that ensured children moving from preschool to kindergarten had a smooth transition. Facilitated by expert trainers from Be GLAD ("Guided Language Acquisition Design"), the team discussed developmental learning goals, coordinated curriculum and instructional practices to create vertical cohesiveness, and focused on supporting English Language Learners. The educators met virtually and in person to learn key strategies while incorporating planning time. See begladtraining.com for more information about their teaching theory.

Since 2018, the City of Corning has offered diverse recreation and enrichment opportunities to children of all ages. Some classes offered to early learners include parent-engagement workshops, ballet classes, tiny tots learning, and many other enrichment opportunities. The City of Corning procured 8.5 million to sustain the recreation program beyond the grant life.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED TOGETHER

Storytelling in Numbers

The accomplishments, represented in numbers, remind us that we can achieve more by working together. These are only a few of the many successes:

800+

Number of Books Distributed each Year at the Book Drive Up Event

7

All Center-Based Pre-K Programs Made Significant Growth on the ELLCO

26+

Number of Pre-K Educators who participated in Trauma-Responsive & Resilience-Building PD

100%

Families in Need of Early Intervention, Enrolled in Home-Based Programs, were Referred for Services

750+

Number of Community Members who attended the Eric Litwin (Author) Community Events

30+

Number of Additional Children Received Early Learning Services Per Year

84%+

Percent of Incoming Kindergarten Children Met Age-Appropriate Developmental Milestones Starting in 2020

25+

Pre-K and Kindergarten Educators Participated in Vertical Articulation PD together in 2020

About Corning Promise

Since 2017, the Everett Freeman Promise Neighborhood (“Corning Promise”), a community initiative of the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians Tribe, has served as a backbone entity maintaining strategic coherence and direction, evaluating progress, ensuring compliance with grant regulations, encouraging greater collaboration and using data to inform system improvements. Operating in a decentralized model, relying heavily on the partners to implement the solutions, Corning Promise learned to maintain synergy while respecting the partners’ autonomy and expertise.