The CDI Learning Exchange
A Story of Collaborative Learning to Strengthen Agencies Working with Young Children and Their Families

Semics LLC
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A Story of Collaborative Learning to Strengthen Agencies Working with Young Children and Their Families

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Semics LLC
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CDI Learning Exchange: The Idea

This is a story about a community of learning organizations. These organizations are mainly nonprofit service providers based in Los Angeles County running programs to improve the learning, health and family cohesion of children in their first five years of life. Throughout 2004 – 2006 these organizations came together to learn, primarily from each other, better practices in implementing and evaluating activities to improve child wellbeing.

The 53 organizations in this account were all recipients of grants from First 5 LA under the banner of a funding program launched in 2002 in Los Angeles County titled “Community-Developed Initiatives.” (CDI) The purpose of CDI was to improve the delivery of services to children ages 0—5 and their families by supporting programs that address specific needs in different communities. These programs were staggeringly diverse—from early child education and child and maternal health to preventing or reducing abuse—but they were all engaged in improving the wellbeing of young children and their families in LA County.

While the ultimate goal in CDI was to achieve measurable gains in child wellbeing (particularly in early learning, health and family safety), the mechanism for this purpose was to strengthen agencies working with children and families in different community situations so the agencies, in turn, could be more effective in achieving desired results. As noted below, the process of strengthening these agencies, among other contributing factors, led to the formation of a collaborative learning community in which participating agency staff could meet periodically to exchange ideas, stories and information about their program’s challenges and solutions.

In September, 2003, First 5 LA engaged Semics, LLC to deliver an initiative-wide evaluation of CDI over a three-year period. While each grantee was required by the CDI grant to do an evaluation of its own results, Semics’ job was to visit grantees at their project sites, observe program activities, collect information about the grantees’ experiences and results, and (later) provide an account of CDI as a whole. This account focused on how CDI grantees as a group had changed their operations with First 5 LA funding, and how these changes had, in turn, led to new and stronger results for children.

A key element in designing the methodology for the initiative-wide evaluation of CDI was the requirement, by First 5 LA, that a “safe haven” be created in which all CDI grantees could exchange knowledge and information. This participatory, interactive forum was needed to foster development of a supportive network from which grantees could draw resources to assist them with individual and organizational challenges in
program implementation and evaluation. It was also seen as a venue for data collection for the initiative-wide evaluation in CDI. Semics LLC and First 5 LA envisioned a series of dynamic gatherings where grantees could meet in a congenial environment to share experiences and expertise. Gathering in this manner would engender a community of practice that empowers its members, and produce a collective fund of knowledge and experience of use to current and future stakeholders.

Semics inaugurated this concept as “The Learning Exchange” (LE), creating a mechanism to strengthen CDI grantees through cooperation, networking, and group reflection. The first CDI Learning Exchange convened in March 2004. Seven more meetings were held over a two-year period, culminating the series in June 2006. All the proceedings were documented, analyzed and disseminated to the initiative’s various stakeholders. Grantees’ opinions about each gathering were gleaned through interviews and written evaluation forms at the end of each Learning Exchange, providing Semics with immediate, candid feedback on activities and content.

This report provides a retrospective of the CDI Learning Exchange as a process for eliciting community and grantee experience, perspectives and communication—all of which served to create a viable community knowledge fund. The concept of eliciting and pooling a fund of community knowledge was a central objective of the CDI Evaluation and also speaks to a core aim of CDI at First 5 LA—to increase all stakeholders’ understanding of the assets, experiences and expertise brought to CDI by community organizations (e.g., familiarity with local needs and conditions, and capacity to adapt to and address real-world challenges in implementing CDI-funded projects in diverse and fluid community contexts.)

The report explores how Learning Exchange processes, connections, activities and outcomes contributed to this understanding, and the differences this greater understanding has made in grantees’ individual and collective project accomplishments in strengthening service capacity and enhancing the well-being of young children in Los Angeles County.

In this story, Semics explores how CDI Learning Exchange activities and content contributed to achieving the goals of the initiative-wide evaluation and of the CDI as a funding program, through a process of eliciting and collecting community knowledge and experience. Far beyond providing information to Semics about the progress of CDI as a whole, the CDI grantees were able to parlay the vast knowledge and experience of the group into a resource which they could use to affirm their strengths, clarify areas for practical improvement and, in the end, build stronger programs.
The Thinking Behind the CDI Learning Exchange

This section highlights literature in the field of organizational learning that provided inspiration and concrete direction for the design and delivery of the CDI Learning Exchange. The principles, strategies and ideas embodied in these sources complement Semics’ experience with adult learning exercises and helped us chart a path for building a community knowledge fund. What follows is a brief description of the key writers and ideas in the field that energized and informed the design and implementation process.

How can the CDI Learning Exchange help members of an organization learn? A good place to start is with the writings of Parker Palmer, a master teacher and the author of The Courage to Teach. Palmer asserts that learning comes from the identity and integrity of the learner (and by extension, the learning organization), rather than from a predetermined instructional technique. Integrity involves acknowledging the whole of the learner, limitations as well as strengths. Common fears faced by learners include fear of failure, of exposure, of feeling foolish, fear of conflict that comes with embracing diversity, and fear of losing identity when one’s ideas are challenged. To alleviate these commonplace anxieties, Palmer advocates a communal learning environment.

This approach to learning is not new. “In classical understanding, education is the attempt to ‘lead out’ from within the self a core of wisdom.” This dialogical, Socratic approach to instruction allows learners to discover the wisdom within themselves, rather than relying on an individual or organization outside themselves to establish meaning. This type of learning counts on a communal process in which the wisdom of the individual is drawn out through mutual inquiry with other community members. As Palmer asserts, “If we regard truth as emerging from a complex process of mutual inquiry, the classroom will look like a resourceful and interdependent community.”

While the standard model of education envisions a group of learners gathered around an expert who disseminates knowledge to them, the communal model of learning, by contrast, posits a group of learners centered on a subject who learn from their mutual study of this subject. A facilitator in this subject-centered approach asks thoughtful questions, deflects responsibility to respond to those questions to other members of the group, connects group members
in dialogue, and continually reframes discussion to reflect individual members’ contributions. Facilitators in a subject-centered environment also use open space in which learners can pursue an approach to the subject that is most relevant to their experience and values.

Physicist David Bohm, in his philosophical treatise On Dialogue, advocates a similarly holistic approach to knowledge and learning. Modern modes of learning, argues Bohm, are fragmented; they break things up which “are not really separate.” Modern ways of thinking create dualistic divisions between people (e.g., the expert and the novice) and between people and things (e.g., human beings and nature).

**The most profound learning comes from a group of diverse individuals embracing their differences as a means of arriving at mutual understanding.**

Conversational Learning is a collection of essays that takes a similar approach to David Bohm, emphasizing that learning comes from conversation which seeks unity in the midst of the diversity of conversational participants. In the essay Learning and Conversation, Ann Baker, Patricia Jensen, and David Kolb assert that “conversational learning that embraces differences as a source of new understanding and questions previous assumptions and prejudices can be called deep learning.” The most profound learning comes from a group of diverse individuals embracing their differences as a means of arriving at mutual understanding.

These authors draw a distinction between conversation as collaboration, and dialogue as discussion and debate. According to this distinction, collaboration among learners leads to a deeper understanding than does challenging each other’s viewpoints through debate. Such a conversation values equally the contributions of all participants. Often such conversation happens in the spaces between more conventional moments of learning, such as the breaks that occur between staff meetings in an organization or sessions at a formal conference.

In the essay entitled Conversation as Experiential Learning, Baker, Jensen, and Kolb define apprehension as “concrete, immediate, tacit, subjective knowing” and comprehension as “abstract, conceptual, linguistic, and objective knowing.” According to these authors, “learning is based on the complex interrelationship of these two knowing processes.” The most effective learning environments are those that recognize the equal validity and interdependent nature of these two ways of knowing.

They suggest that “learning is like breathing; it follows a rhythm of taking in and putting out, of incorporating ideas and experience to find meaning and expressing that meaning in thought, speech, and action.” Facilitators of conversational learning environments must therefore incorporate both the reception and the expression of learning. One method for doing this is to create a hospitable learning space through the use of fabrics, flowers, and other sensory objects so that learners feel they are entering an environment in which the dual nature of learning—sensing and thinking, meditating and acting—can take place.

Roger Schwarz, author of The Skilled Facilitator, is likewise convinced that it is through the conversation of diverse individuals focused on a common task that deep learning takes place and organizations can move forward in pursuing effective courses of action.
He contends that the presence of a skilled facilitator is vital to the success of organizational learning. The facilitator’s primary task is to help the group increase its interpersonal effectiveness by improving its process. Core values that should guide facilitators include providing valid information to group members and remaining neutral on the subject under discussion while leading the group.

According to Schwarz, a group is thriving when the processes and structures used to carry out work maintain or enhance the capability of members to work on subsequent projects and when group processes as a whole satisfy the personal needs of members. Essential elements of group process are problem-solving, decision-making, conflict management, communication, and boundary management. Key elements of group structure include lucid goals, a motivating task, appropriate membership, clearly defined roles, sufficient time, and effective group culture.

The authors of Storytelling in Organizations explore how organizations as a whole become more learning-centered. In the essay entitled How I Came to Storytelling, Laurence Prusak outlines questions that are central to any organization: Where does the knowledge exist within the organization? How do you discover what other people know? How do you know how to behave, particularly when working within an organization for the first time?

Such knowledge comes from storytelling, or, to use the language of Peter Senge, from the creation of an organizational learning history. Successful organizations employ CEOs and top-line managers who know how to motivate stakeholders by telling stories. Storytelling generates organizational change, transfers knowledge, nurtures community, stimulates innovation, education and training, and preserves organizational values.

John Seely Brown encourages organizational leaders to recognize and support “communities of practice,” informal groups within the organization where stories may safely be told and questions asked in the transfer of knowledge. Effective storytelling for knowledge sharing or change advocacy, whether carried out informally in communities of practice or formally at organizational meetings, invites reciprocal storytelling in which listeners in turn envision how they could contribute their own knowledge to the organization.

In addressing limitations to growth, Peter Senge explains how mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking can lead to renewed growth within an organization. Learning capabilities developed through these disciplines can, over time, lead stakeholders to create what they desire, rather than merely react to circumstances. Reflective conversation encourages members of an organization to build a shared understanding of goals and coordinate effective action.

Perhaps the most immediately practical book in this literature review is Senge’s The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook. He describes various levels of sharing vision with stakeholders, from the least effective telling, in which organizational leaders inform employees of the vision, through selling, testing, and consulting,
to co-creating wherein leaders involve stakeholders in crafting a vision they are eager to invest in.

The Learning Exchange incorporated many of the theoretical principles and practical applications put forth by the authors cited above to engage CDI grantees in organizational learning and strategies to grow and strengthen their service capacity.

Works Cited


The Events
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CDI Learning Exchange I

Finding Common Ground

Date: March 19, 2004
Time: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Venue: St. Anne’s
155 North Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

There’s a Story to be told... Come tell it with us.
PROGRAM

8:30 - 9:00  **Registration**  
Sign in so we know who our guests are.  
(We like to be gracious hosts. We’ll even sit you at your table.)

9:00 - 09:20  **The Stone Soup Story**  
A narration of the tale that is the theme of the Learning Exchange.

9:20 - 9:30  **Introducing the Learning Exchange**  
Grant Power of Semics and Amanda Bueno of First 5 LA give us a preview.

9:30 - 9:45  **Icebreaker**  
Teasers, twisters and a tug-of-war. (Did you come in sneakers?)

9:45 - 10:00  **Grantee Profiles**  
Find out who else is working in your neighborhood and what they’re busy with.

10:00 - 10:15  **Story in the Round**  
Rhonda Scott introduces us to a delightful exercise in authorship.

10:15 -10:45  **Group Discussion**  
What makes CDI projects so interesting? True stories from the trenches.

10:45 - 11:00  **Break**

11:00 - 11:15  **Telling of the Tale**  
From many separate segments come the makings of a story.

11:15 - 11:45  **Reflection/Brainstorm — Unwrapping the idea box**

11:45 - 12:00  **What to Expect**  
Preview of the initiative-wide evaluation of the CDI how it comes together.

12:00 - 12:15  **Announcements, Dismissal for Lunch**

12:15 - 1:15  **LUNCH**

1:15 - 2:30  **Workshops (Nothing Formal)**  
Meet with the Semics staff, network with others, pick up tips on evaluation methods.
The first Learning Exchange opened with the telling of the story *Stone Soup*. It is a tale of three war-weary soldiers who coax a whole village into cooking a cauldron of soup from three stones. In the process, the villagers, who were at first wary of the soldiers and unwilling to share what food they had, each brought an ingredient to the cauldron that added to the unique flavor of the soup. In the end there was delicious soup for everyone and a renewed spirit of camaraderie and neighborliness.

*Stone Soup* was read to the audience with theatrical flair, complemented by engaging sound effects. The audience was asked to drop ingredients in a huge pot in the middle of the hall as they were called for in the story. Semics chose *Stone Soup* because this story embodied the essence of the Learning Exchange’s purpose—a forum in which everybody brings something to the experience and everybody partakes of the collective knowledge fund (soup!) that’s been created. All the participants brought valuable ingredients to the Learning Exchange—their experience, stories and expertise, along with their problems and concerns. At the end of the event, they took back with them what their colleagues had shared—answers to questions about similar situations, assurance from finding peers dealing with like issues, and a wealth of information from people working with familiar communities.

*Stone Soup* made the concept of sharing palpable to grantees and served as a transition to the Learning Exchange introduction presented by Grant Power of Semics and Amanda Bueno of First 5 LA. They gave the attendees an overarching view of the LE, expectations for this kick-off event, and a taste of future LE gatherings.

Grantees were then invited to participate in short, lively icebreaker activities to get to know their peers. Following this interlude, Semics presented a powerpoint description of the CDI-funded organizations, the types of services delivered, their target populations, and locations within Los Angeles County and across Service Planning Areas. (SPAs are geographic territories used for planning and delivery of human services across LA County.) This broad brush view of the community of grantees in CDI gave participants a feel for the group’s diversity and breadth of experience.

The content and structure of LE 1 established, thematically, the overall purpose of the Learning Exchange. Semics used the *Stone Soup* story to elicit understanding of how a community builds a knowledge fund and why it has value. The theme of *Finding Common*
Ground, the interactive presentation, and the ensuing small-group activities stimulated buy-in as stakeholders in the building of this fund. Grantees came around to seeing LE as a venue not only for technical assistance, but also for assurance and support so they could better execute their projects. LE 1 was groundbreaking in that it laid the foundation for the congenial formation of a community of practitioners energized by a new collective undertaking.

Grantee Responses

Many grantees expressed appreciation for the program’s creativity and the way the “story in the round” (the telling of Stone Soup) oriented them to the purpose of the LE. One grantee felt this activity highlighted the diversity of projects and people involved in CDI and creative ways they could work together and learn from one another. Another grantee said that he would go back and tell his colleagues that First 5 LA was interested in “stories of transformation in communities, and not just data about activities.”

In keeping with the LE goal of connecting communities and agencies, grantees found that the venue and program structure facilitated meeting and learning about other CDI grantees. A few mentioned that they appreciated learning about the Immunization Registry spearheaded by Pasadena Public Health, as well as other opportunities to connect with programs to which they might refer their clients.

Many grantees were generous with suggestions for topics they would like to see covered at future LE gatherings. These included teen pregnancy, childhood obesity, domestic violence, and children’s medical and mental health services.

Most importantly, a good number of grantees expressed interest in exploring best practices among grantees, planning and conducting program evaluations (given First 5 LA’s expectations), information on other CDI programs (e.g., success stories, implementation strategies, collaboration), leadership and sustainability issues.

Participants were particularly interested in ways to share resources—one grantee suggested a “show and tell” activity allowing grantees to share their own program resources in a hands-on way. Several wanted to know more about any technical assistance that Semics or other grantees could provide (e.g., with reports, evaluations, grant-writing). Finally, some were interested in avoiding duplication of services and expanding coverage to groups not being served.

Participants also offered suggestions for improvement to the day’s structure and content. They wanted more opportunities to “get down to business” by engaging in focused interaction among grantees—whether in circles of learning/sharing or workshops. More time to network, hear directly from other grantees in shared areas, opportunities for collaboration, referrals and sharing resources were a paramount concern. One suggested a kind of “speed-dating” model for sharing ideas in groups (e.g., teams could meet with other teams then rotate after a segment of time.)
The idea of incorporating mentoring opportunities into future LE gatherings was suggested (e.g., Cycle Three grantee learns grant procurement strategies and tools for program implementation directly from Cycle One and Two grantees). Most grantees were interested in learning as much as they could about other grantees’ resources, tools and programs so that they could effectively network and collaborate.

Grantees also offered suggestions on the operational logistics of future LE gatherings, for example, sending out invitations and an agenda sooner, preparing a calendar of future events, color coding name tags according to type of program or service, and inviting the staff involved in day-to-day program implementation.

Grantees expressed interest in being grouped at future meetings in table discussions with CDI grantees who shared common interests. However, when asked on evaluation forms specifically whether they wanted to meet consistently with the same small cluster of grantees or to meet with different combinations of grantees on issues related to their shared concerns, most indicated a preference to meet in a variety of groupings.

Grantees asked that a complete description of other grantees’ projects be included in a resource directory with contact information on each grantee. Other suggestions for the directory included a brief mission statement of each program, a First 5 LA and Semics staff directory, and contact information for the “hands-on” people staffing the programs rather than their supervisors.

Grantees’ eagerness to give suggestions for future LE gatherings, along with the content of their responses, suggested a high level of interest in the Learning Exchange process and a general belief that convening in this manner held potential value to each of them. Most comments indicated that grantees anticipated a rich learning process, and they were eager to begin.
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CDI Learning Exchange 2

Building Common Ground

Date: June 10, 2004
Time: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Venue: Crystal Stairs
650 Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90007

Come Join Us!

Community Developed Initiatives
ALL - GRANTEE
Learning Exchange 2

“Building common ground”
Presentations, Networking, Forums

June 10, 2004
8:30 am - 2:00 pm

Crystal Stairs
First Floor, 650 Figueroa Street,
Los Angeles, CA 90026
(See map on reverse for directions)
PROGRAM

8:30 - 9:00  Registration
Please sign in so we know who our guests are.

9:00 - 9:15  A Quick Look Back and A Quick Preview
A recap of the first Learning Exchange and a preview of today’s gathering.

9:15 - 10:15 Show and Tell
Some CDI grantees briefly present their projects followed by a short Q&A.

10:15 - 11:15 Networking
Meet and discuss with others whose CDI projects are similar to yours.

11:15 - 12:00 LUNCH

12:00 - 12:30 Networking Summary
A presentation of linkages made by CDI organizations in break-out groups.

12:30 - 1:30 Forums
Roundtable discussions on project-related concerns. Choose from three forums.
  • Forum 1  
    CDI Organizations and Operations
  • Forum 2  
    Project Strategies and Service Delivery
  • Forum 3  
    Connecting with Communities

1:30 - 1:45 Break

1:45 - 2:15 The Continuing Story of Working with Communities
Reflecting on what we do for CDI. Sharing emerging project successes and challenges.

2:15 - 2:30 Announcements, Dismissal
Starting New Conversations

In keeping with the theme of building common ground, activities and content at Learning Exchange 2 (LE 2) were designed to deepen the level of connection between participants. This was accomplished through clustering of participants in small group discussions based on affinity of services or interest. Configuring the grantees in this manner stimulated real, in-depth conversation and provided multiple opportunities for grantees to network.

The Show and Tell presentation and opportunity for Q &A that followed offered a much-needed venue for the expression of challenges and difficulties facing the grantees. In this safe forum, issues surrounding project implementation and community outreach to attract program participants were collectively delineated. These concerns were especially important for agencies working at the beginning stage of their projects. Grantees’ feelings of isolation and frustration seemed to decrease as they gained a sense that others were confronting similar issues.

In the networking opportunities segment before and after lunch, and in the topical forums that followed, grantees actively pursued linkages with each other around common concerns and services. These activities facilitated the simultaneous discussion of challenges and the sharing of possible solutions.

For example, several grantees voiced concern about reaching the expected levels of participation in community education programs regarding parenting, literacy, healthcare, and other interventions. Grantees who had been successful in using incentives to overcome these barriers shared creative strategies such as using food-giveaways, small 99 cent store gifts, refreshments, and pictures to double their targeted parent participation numbers.

Discussion threads in the community engagement forum explored how incentives can be especially effective in working with cultural groups whose relationship to time differs from the dominant norm (e.g., rewarding participants for getting to class on time). Grantees explored how to cultivate positive personal relationships as a path to engage target populations, and jointly emphasized the need for program staff to communicate to participants “we are going to make an investment in you.” They concurred on the importance of rewarding participants for their efforts and acknowledging participants’ contributions, and discussed ways to reduce attrition, including maintaining personal contact.

The small-group discussions and forum formats provided Semics with a ring-side seat for data collection. Our Research Associates, who participated fully in LE activities with the grantees, mined for spill-over effects of CDI funding and unanticipated events that
arose during program implementation. For example, one grantee found its organization had grown in flexibility as the program matured. Another noted that better methods of communication within the agency had emerged as a by-product of the need to comply with First 5 LA’s program expectations. One grantee had not anticipated the need to implement new forms of outreach, nor a shortage of physical space due to the rapid growth of its CDI-funded program.

Another issue of importance that fueled the day’s discussions was the need for cultural sensitivity to diverse ethnic groups. Grantees shared stories on the effectiveness of employing bi-cultural trainers and staff, and the obstacles faced in delivery of appropriate services and project implementation when such staff and sensitivity are in short supply.

This candid discussion of cultural sensitivity issues increased all stakeholders’ understanding of the assets community organizations bring to CDI—one of the core goals of First 5 LA. Grantees’ familiarity with local needs and conditions in the diverse communities served by CDI contributed valuable knowledge to the emerging knowledge fund. This pool of growing practical knowledge included real-life stories, and emphasized best practices and tested approaches such as building on the community’s culture, respecting differences in relation to time, and promoting dialogue between service providers and community members.

Communication between service provider and target population was a fruitful area of discussion among grantees. Major lessons grantees culled from this thread focused on making personal connections, active listening, and doing the necessary follow-up. They agreed that being accessible, engaging the community in identifying assets, and planning for change were positive strategies that would help programs evolve as the needs of the communities change.

The importance of accurately assessing community need before creating an intervention emerged as a critical challenge for grantees. Ideas shared to achieve this end included using phone surveys, focus groups, holding community events, conducting door-to-door interviews, and accessing macro-studies of particular cultural groups. Grantees that had assessed needs before creating their program interventions found client needs to be centered around immigration status, economic and healthcare concerns, dealing with generation gaps, assimilation issues especially in immigrant families, and relating to schools. Grantees explored the idea that sometimes agencies need to help communities establish a new cultural norm or value (such as awareness of the risks posed by second-hand smoke or the value of immunizing children against disease.)

First 5 LA’s requirement that CDI-funded agencies complete a program-specific evaluation fueled much discussion at LE 2. Many grantees expressed appreciation for First 5 LA’s flexible approach, saying it had helped agency staff become better decision-makers at the project level. Some grantees opined that the way First 5 LA was handling
project evaluation increased their capacity to deliver services and in turn empowered their
target population. Using anecdotal rather than purely quantitative approaches to program
evaluation gave staff greater capacity to find value in the process, allowing them, in turn,
to convey more positive feelings about the project directly to the parents and children they
served.

One grantee shared that being freed from focusing solely on “hitting targets” allowed
staff to focus on other important priorities, such as boosting teacher morale and creating
a more positive classroom environment. Formal evaluation methods coupled with flexible
expectations for reporting outcomes seemed to strengthen expanding organizations’
commitment to develop their infrastructures and boost staff morale.

On the other hand, some grantees
expressed concern regarding program-
specific evaluation, citing political pressures
on those implementing programs. For
example, one high-profile CDI literacy
project found it very challenging to select
an appropriate evaluation approach for its
program because verifying results in the
target population would require several years.
This time delay created friction between
some of the grantee’s stakeholders and
staff. This grantee shared the coping skills
they used to reduce this friction, including
the adoption of medium-term indicators
and making sure everyone was properly
acknowledged during the long process of
project implementation.

Grantees shared strategies for overcoming bureaucratic barriers at large institutions
by capitalizing on the benefits of the home institution’s established infrastructure and
reputation. They discussed taking advantage of partnerships and the importance of
understanding the institution’s power structure (e.g., “know the roles and responsibilities of
different partners, and learn who has the power to say yes”). One grantee described ways
their program had gained status as a result of the CDI, allowing them to be seen as an
integral part of their institution’s larger treatment process.

Grantees acknowledged that programs can get lost in the shuffle when organizations
experience rapid growth, especially when the program is not high profile. They confronted
the hard reality that inability to grow an efficient infrastructure to accompany rapid
program growth directly affects a program’s sustainability.

New activities introduced by CDI programs presented challenges to bureaucratic
structures and the individuals running them, not only in large institutions, but in
smaller ones as well. Grantees shared problems regarding technical assistance and
frustrations with “red tape” (e.g., inefficient systems for payroll and rules that discouraged
volunteering).

Some grantees shared how they had helped develop new programs in the process of
implementing their CDI projects. Other grantees recounted how they had been successful
in influencing public policy on hunger, medical services, and child care by collaborating with other community groups as well as political advocacy organizations.

Grantees enriched LE discussions with numerous success stories concerning their target populations (e.g., in-home assessments for disabilities among children had detected cases of autism, positive feedback on conferences, increased accreditation for child care providers, doubling attendance at parenting classes).

Grantees also reported on how CDI-funded projects had contributed to the development of agency infrastructure and strengthened their capacity to serve their target populations. With a keen interest in mining this kind of data, Semics encouraged grantees to describe these changes. Examples included helping one grantee increase its physical space, improve aspects of their literacy program, streamline levels of administrative communication, and deepen levels of community connection—changes permanently affecting the organization. “We own it now!” this grantee said, beaming. Another grantee described how the CDI project developed them from a grass-roots, informal organization to an agency with more formalized evaluation techniques and a 70% continuation rate in their parenting programs.

Some grantees stated that CDI funding had contributed to a broadening in organizational vision, not only in what they envisioned, but in how others perceived them. A behavioral day-rehabilitation project situated in a pre-school environment reported that their concept of what children are capable of achieving had grown in their organization so they planned to take their services “to the next level” by linking up with Head Start. Another grantee reported that being part of CDI had conferred greater respect on their agency (they were seen as specialists) and that child development had gained greater value in their organization.

Grantees embraced the opportunities set aside for networking at LE 2. By engaging in formal and informal conversation about shared concerns and complementary resources, they began forming viable connections for inter-agency cooperation. Selected examples include: three grantees decided to coordinate parenting and literacy classes to make optimal use of speakers, information distribution, socializing and networking among parents/caregivers. Many participants exchanged phone numbers with a YMCA representative willing to travel to locations throughout Los Angeles to provide free swimming and CPR classes. One shelter that had 25 excess openings invited another shelter running out of space to send over some client families.

At the end of LE 2, grantees shared from their experiences regarding project challenges.
CDI Learning Exchange 3

Navigating Common Ground

Date: October 1, 2004
Time: 8:30 am to 1:00 pm
Venue: St. Anne’s
155 North Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026

Come Journey With Us!

Community Developed Initiatives
Learning Exchange 3

“Navigating Common Ground”

October 1, 2004
8:30 am - 1:00 pm
St. Anne’s
155 North Occidental Boulevard,
Los Angeles, CA 90026

(See map on reverse for directions)
R.S.V.P. Cecilia Rodriguez
corodriguez@semics.biz
PROGRAM

8:30 - 9:00  Opening
Registration, breakfast, seating

9:00 - 9:45  Welcome and Team-building Activity

9:45 - 10:30  Simulated Talk Show
Operational challenges, obstacles, barriers, responses, strategies.

10:30 - 10:45  Break/Raffle

10:45 - 11:15  Breakout Discussion
Table discussions about project operations — barriers, responses.

11:15 - 11:45  Plenary Report-back and Discussion

11:45 - 12:30  Lunch

12:30 - 1:00  Synthesis, Raffle, Evaluation Forms, Closing Ritual

1:00  Dismissal
CDI LEARNING EXCHANGE 3

Overcoming Implementation Challenges

Building on the theme of navigating common ground, Learning Exchange 3 (LE3) invited grantees to share in detail their specific implementation challenges and successes. This open invitation for all participants to “roll up our sleeves” and get down to the real “meat and potatoes” of project implementation set the tone for this gathering. Grantees were encouraged to reflect on the operational challenges they encountered in the first year of CDI funding and listen to peers, sitting at the same table, who could identify alternative or creative solutions to those challenges. The activities were designed to foster reflective and critical thinking in participatory, interactive forums with peers. The focus was on promoting learning in an ambience of supportive encouragement. From an evaluation perspective, these grantee discussions generated much purposeful data about the ways CDI grantees as organizations were problem solving. Semics analyzed this data to shed light on grantees’ ability to learn and adapt to changing conditions.

CDI to Eye – The Simulated Talk Show

After welcoming and team-building activities, the event commenced with a simulated talk show in which three grantees presented their projects. Harbor-UCLA (South LA Health Projects—Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program), St. Mary Medical Center Foundation (Long Beach Child Care Empowerment Project), and Friends of the Family (Project Good Start) described implementation issues and shared ways they had adapted to address those challenges and solve presenting problems.

Brainstorming for Practical Solutions

Following the talk show activity, grantees were asked to join one of ten roundtable discussions on these topics: child care professional training and development, early childhood education/development, family literacy, enhancing parenting capacity, supporting parents of children with special needs, improving access to healthcare, providing direct healthcare services, promoting nutrition, family abuse prevention, and an evaluator focus group. Participants shared in succession, specific operational challenges they had faced, how they had addressed them, and, when possible, outcomes of their approaches. Grantees with current, pressing challenges were invited to describe those situations to the group and in brainstorming mode, peers suggested possible solutions.
Key operational challenges cited by CDI grantees were overcoming language and cultural barriers in client outreach; retention of volunteers, qualified staff, and clients; recurring logistical problems (e.g., transportation to and from program sites for clients without cars); navigating institutional obstacles in hospital and government sites so program activities could proceed freely; effective collaboration with implementing partners; and obtaining continuation funding for projects. Table discussants provided a wealth of creative options and strategic solutions to many of these challenges.

At LE3, the challenges identified by grantees showed both convergence and variation across groups. The table below lists key challenges for each table, named according to the table’s theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LE 3 TABLE THEME</th>
<th>KEY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY DISCUSSANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Quality Enhancement</td>
<td>Finding age-appropriate books and materials; encouraging collaboration among providers; accessing resources for developmental curricula; recruiting volunteers; motivating parents/staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Professionals’ Training &amp; Development</td>
<td>Finding qualified teachers; upgrading collection of information (immunization); increasing provider attendance at training workshops; increasing parents’ attendance at parent support groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Child Education/ Development</td>
<td>Need for more program space and funding; staff quality; staff turnover; recruitment &amp; screening of volunteers; encouraging parents to participate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy</td>
<td>Retaining volunteers after professional training courses; engaging target population; sustaining funding and reducing funder “supplanting.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Parenting Capacity</td>
<td>Bureaucratic barriers (e.g., IRB approval); managing complex programs; staff turnover; participant access to program activities; bridging parents and providers/agencies; overcoming stigma attached to mental health problems; recruiting parents (esp. fathers); overcoming language/culture barriers with participants; encouraging parent-child bonding; getting the “right” evaluator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for Parents of Children with Special Needs</td>
<td>Recruitment and retention of parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving Access to Health Care</td>
<td>Encouraging families to do follow up check-ups; resources to service new populations; participant access to program sites; finding the right new staff person; bureaucratic delays to health insurance enrollment; under-use of mobile services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing Direct Health Care Services</td>
<td>Bureaucratic resistance to non-traditional therapy (e.g., massage); reducing patient waiting times for care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Abuse Protection</td>
<td>Outreach and coordination of services with LA County agencies; increasing parents’ participation; finding new funding.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Broadly speaking, the challenges identified by grantees appeared diverse in relation to technical or clinical matters (getting the right books and materials; overcoming stigma in mental health situations; reducing patient wait time), but cross-cutting when it comes to addressing program management questions (participant engagement; navigating bureaucracy; working effectively with staff and volunteers). Grantees’ project-specific concerns were mainly geared toward enhancing the quality of services or developing good practices. Broad-based concerns were focused at a strategic level and sought to strengthen the basic supports needed for any program to run smoothly.
Whether challenges were broadly shared or program specific, the solutions brought by almost every table as a response to those challenges were practical, relevant, and creative. As examples, we highlight below the solutions offered in response to challenges shared by three different grantees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>TABLE AT LE 3</th>
<th>CHALLENGE PRESENTED</th>
<th>SOME SOLUTIONS OFFERED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So. California Association for the Education of Young Children</td>
<td>Child care quality enhancement</td>
<td>Lack of collaboration, sense of competition among child care providers.</td>
<td>Recruit mentors to facilitate group-oriented activities; sponsor field trips so providers can visit model programs; include food, fun and team building at meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasadena Public Health</td>
<td>Professional training and development</td>
<td>How to enlist help of healthcare providers to improve the collection of children’s immunization information</td>
<td>Provide incentives to parents and doctors to record and store data; secure written consent from parents; assign staff to visit doctors’ offices to trouble-shoot data access problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Coalition</td>
<td>Enhancing parenting capacity</td>
<td>How to increase relative caregivers’ confidence in bringing their needs to the attention of government, service providers.</td>
<td>Create support system for kin caregivers via playgroups for children; choose one spokes-person &amp; group-train for meetings with agencies; develop “cheat sheet” with basic tips such as “how to navigate the court system.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendix – LE 3 for details.)

The brainstorming for solutions to implementation challenges was significant from an evaluation perspective because it contributed to Semics’ (as well as First 5 LA’s and the grantees’) understanding of how the grantees identify and define their own needs, go about addressing problems, adjust themselves to changing conditions, and ultimately learn from new experiences.
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CDI Learning Exchange 4

Uncovering Hidden Stories

Date: March 4, 2005
Time: 8:30 am to 1:30 pm
Venue: Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1509 Wilson Terrace, Glendale, CA 91206

Community-Developed Initiatives

Learning Exchange 4

Uncovering Hidden Stories
An In-depth Look at Project Evaluation

March 4, 2005
8:30 am - 1:30 pm
Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1509 Wilson Terrace,
Glendale, CA 91206

(See map on reverse for directions)
R.S.V.P. Cecilia Rodriguez
corodriguez@emics.biz
PROGRAM

8:30 - 9:00  Opening
Registration, breakfast, networking, seating

9:00 - 9:15  Welcome / Opening Remarks
A short recapitulation on the Learning Exchange

9:15 - 10:15  Billibonk and the Big Itch
A story and skill builder on “thinking about thinking”.

10:15 - 10:45  Project Evaluation and First 5
Exploring First 5 LA’s Evaluation Framework

10:45 - 11:00  Break

11:00 - 12:15  Evaluation Tools and Methods
Identifying ingrained evaluation practices and perspectives.

12:15 - 1:00  Lunch

1:00 - 1:30  Closing
Summary remarks and announcements

1:30 - 2:30  “Over Coffee and Sweets”
A discussion of First Year Findings of the CDI Initiative-wide Evaluation
(Optional)
CDI LEARNING EXCHANGE 4

Focus on “How To’s” of Program Evaluation

Learning Exchange 4 (LE 4) sought to build on the common ground of shared struggles and successes that grantees had established during the first three Learning Exchanges. The agenda included a review of the CDI Initiative-Wide Evaluation first year findings and another “roll up your sleeves” opportunity for grantees to dig deeper into the process, this time discussing lessons learned from project- or site-specific evaluation activities during the last year. Without deviating too far from Semics’ core role of facilitating the initiative-wide evaluation of CDI, Semics’ aim with LE 4 activities was to support grantees in their efforts to track, measure, and evaluate their project-specific outcomes.

LE 4 activities were designed to help grantees explore the efficacy and appropriateness of the site-specific evaluation methods they had chosen, try out other tools that might be useful, and develop the capacity to reflect on their work in this area. The focus on site-specific evaluation also supported the broader objectives of the CDI Evaluation as a whole.

Most discussions at LE 4 took place among clusters of grantees with common themes (e.g., balancing child care quality and scale, service mobility, cultural fluency). Grantees had ample opportunity to trade stories, brainstorm, adapt ideas and help each other make strides forward in project evaluation. The table groups centered their discussions around 1) methods, definition of outcomes, data collection tools, and indicators used in evaluation; 2) interim findings; and 3) utilization of evaluation findings in project planning, decision-making, and management.

Grantee discussions also illuminated how service delivery enhancements made possible through CDI funding translated into better outcomes for children and their families. This link was made as grantees tracked and observed the results of their new/expanded services.

LE 4 commenced with informal networking around a catered breakfast, accompanied by smooth jazz piano provided by a Semics staff member. After opening remarks, Semics’ Managing Director Grant Power set the tone for the “uncovering hidden stories” theme by sharing an allegorical story with the grantees.

“One night at sea, a ship’s captain saw what looked like the lights of another ship heading toward him. He had his signaler blink to the other ship: “Change your course 10 degrees south.” The reply came back: “Change your course 10 degrees north.” The ship’s captain answered: “I am a captain. Change your course south.” To which the reply was, “Well, I am a seaman first class. Change your course north.” This infuriated the captain, so he signaled back: “Attention! I say change your course south. I’m on a battleship!” To which the reply came back: “And I say change your course north. I’m in a lighthouse!” The point, Grant explained, was to highlight the essential purpose and value of evaluation. “We must uncover the hidden reasons behind the reality we face before we can act or speak effectively.”

Dr. Messele Negash of Watts Labor discusses evaluation tools with colleagues.

July 2006
Grant’s story was followed by a presentation by Amanda Bueno from First 5 L.A. She offered a visually engaging, thematic overview of CDI Learning Exchanges 1-3 through a slide show presentation of past events. This reinforced the purpose of the Learning Exchange as an arena for cross-agency sharing and grantee support that would, in the end, produce a valuable community knowledge fund. She clarified the role of Semics staff as facilitators of dialogue between grantee organizations who could assist participants in networking, collaboration, and program evaluation.

Bueno then shared the story of a young girl who once asked her mother why she always cut off the head and tail of the fish she prepared for dinner. The mother replied that this was the way her mother—the girl’s grandmother—had taught her to cook fish. The girl then asked her grandmother, “Grandma, why do you cut the head and tail off the fish before you cook it for dinner?” The grandmother replied that this was the way her mother—the child’s great-grandmother—had taught her to cook fish. Finally, the little girl approached her great-grandmother and asked her the same question. “Because,” her great-grandmother replied, “the baking pan that I used to cook fish was too small. The fish wouldn’t fit in it unless I cut off the head and tail!”

Amanda used this brief story to illustrate how persistently asking why questions leads one on a trail of discovery that can reveal unexpected answers. She asked grantees to embrace the upcoming activities as problem-solving exercises that could, in turn, open up new ways for them to approach site-level, program evaluation.

Then, grantees listened to a dramatic reading of the children’s story, *Billibonk and the Big Itch* by Philip Ramsey. In this story, Billibonk the elephant has an itch that is causing him discomfort. He uses various methods to try to relieve his itch, though none successful. Through this process, Billibonk fails to realize that the ways in which he solves problems has consequential effects on the other animals of the jungle. With the help of Frankl the mouse, Billibonk goes through a systems thinking approach of probing for the why behind every impasse. They begin to uncover the many layers of the problem and get to the root cause, which turns out to be quite different from what Billibonk had first expected. (See Appendix for the complete story of *Billibonk and the Big Itch*).

**The 5 WHYs Exercise**

Following the Billibonk reading, grantees broke into the first round of small discussion groups to engage in their own “Five Whys” exercise. Facilitators at each table used this simple children’s tale as a springboard to help grantees better understand how to use systems thinking in their own organizational context. Grantees at each table were asked to suggest a challenge they were experiencing related to their CDI projects. One or two of these were selected to be addressed in the exercise. The object was to try to get to the root cause of a challenge by asking a series of why questions until they arrived at the source of
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

The trouble. (See Appendix for details on this exercise). A secondary objective was to give grantees a practical, problem-solving tool they could take back to the site-level and apply when challenges arose.

The focus on systems thinking at LE 4 was designed to address the CDI grantee community as a group of learning organizations, and to illustrate for them the interdependencies within systems, and that there is never just one right answer to any question. Instead, the discipline reveals a variety of potential actions, each of which will produce some desired results and, almost certainly, some unintended consequences somewhere else in the system. The art of systems thinking includes learning to recognize the ramifications and tradeoffs of each action.

It was important that CDI grantees be encouraged to open up to fundamental shifts of mind, individually and collectively. This LE 4 activity was intended to help grantees further cultivate the attributes of a learning organization which builds collaborative relationships and draws strength from the diverse knowledge, experience, and capabilities of its members. Like a learning organization, Semics wanted the grantees to embrace the idea that most of what people know and learn—and most of the knowledge that organizations need to function effectively—cannot be taught through training, but rather, ‘happens’ in day-to-day involvement with their peers. See Appendices for more complete details about the WHY discussions at each table.

Evaluation Tools and Methods

The second discussion session centered on the meaning grantees attached to the term evaluation, and the tools, methods and approaches they were using for CDI program-specific evaluation. Grantees examined a list of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods provided to them as Dr. Gabriel Gutierrez of Cal State Northridge gave his views on various ways to gather qualitative data. Then table facilitators encouraged the grantees to reflect on what evaluation meant to them and to list the varied methods they were using to evaluate their projects, both formally and informally. Some grantees considered evaluation synonymous with results. Others equated it with accountability to taxpayers, funders, and community partners. Still other grantees viewed evaluation as a tool to help identify new ways to improve programs.

In their evaluation efforts, many grantees had utilized conventional, quantitative tools such as surveys, pre-and post-tests, baseline to end-line comparisons, desired results profiles, exit tests, and spreadsheet analyses relating to attendance. (See Appendix for details). They acknowledged that pressure to report outcomes in terms of measurable results and quantifiable benchmarks sometimes influenced the selection of evaluation tools. Some grantees recounted how the evaluation tools and methods they had chosen
fell short in capturing the data that truly reflected their program’s impact. Through trial and error, some grantees came to realize that qualitative methods (e.g. observation, focus groups, interviews, testimonials, project logs, individual service plans) better suited their projects, given the nature of the goals they were trying to achieve through their CDI-funded programs. The need for technical assistance in this area was a constant theme throughout the discussion.

Through grantee conversation and statements, it became apparent that the process of program evaluation prescribed by First 5 LA for CDI funding coupled with Learning Exchange activities had functioned as a change agent for many of the grantees, expanding their knowledge of evaluation methods and tools, and their attitudes about evaluation itself. Participants who had viewed evaluators as specialists providing the outsider perspective, came to accept evaluators as participant-observers integral to the project team. Grantees said that going through the program evaluation process at the site level, and sharing insights about this process with peers at LE gatherings, had given them a better grasp of when to use qualitative or quantitative methods to show outcomes. One grantee wrote that they had gleaned “new ideas on how to expand our evaluation to capture more of [the project’s] richness,” while another came to see “the relationship between evaluation and sustainability” in a new light.

The focus on evaluation methods and tools at LE 4 also helped grantees strengthen their agencies. “It helped us take a look at our program from another angle, see where there were needs for improvement and showed us how to make those improvements,” wrote one grantee. “We utilized the discussions to self-assess our own program,” added another. Another shared that they were able to “enhance services via the tools learned.”

Grantees departed from LE4 with an increased awareness of informal and formal evaluation methods, as well as concrete tools they could employ to uncover root causes to problems encountered in the process.
CDI Learning Exchange 5

Building a Continuing Story

Date: July 29, 2005
Time: 8:30 am to 1:30 pm
Venue: St. Mary Medical Center
1050 Atlantic Blvd. Long Beach, CA 90813
PROGRAM

8:30 - 9:00  **Opening**
Registration, breakfast, networking, ice-breaker.

9:00 - 9:30  **Welcome / Opening Remarks**
An introduction to Learning Exchange 5.

9:30 - 10:00  **Activity - Artifact Sharing**
Exploring the topic of sustainability from grantees’ perspectives through use of objects.

10:00 - 10:15  **Discussion**
Round table sharing on the artifact activity.

10:15 - 10:30  **Break**

10:30 - 11:10  **Panel Presentations**
Four panelists share their experiences and/or perspectives on sustainability.

11:10 - 11:30  **Panel Question & Answer**

11:30 - 12:15  **Open Space Breakout Session**
Grantee-directed discussion on sustainability and other issues.

12:15 - 1:00  **Lunch**

1:00 - 1:30  **Closing Synthesis**
Overview, questions, reflections on the days events, next actions.
Focus on Sustainability

Learning Exchange 5 (LE 5) focused on the forward-looking and pressing theme of sustainability, given that the funding cycle for many of the CDI grantees was nearing a close. Activities were designed to help grantees reflect on how use evaluation and planning to support their efforts to carry on the work they were doing—with or without further funding from First 5 LA. This entailed exploring facets of organizational planning that could assist grantees to strengthen themselves as organizations, and analyzing the ingredients that are conducive to sustainability of programs and results.

Exploring Sustainability Through Artifacts

The first activity explored the concept of sustainability through the use of artifacts. Grantees were encouraged to place an object (or index card with the object noted) in a symbolic pot and share with other participants at the table how that artifact related to the grantees’ notions of sustainability. Although this activity seemed abstract to some grantees (based on their written feedback), the variety of artifacts/objects presented did offer a lively springboard for contemplation about associated topics. Examples included play dough to represent flexibility, a plant representing the need to grow and be nurtured, a mirror and staff photo suggesting the transformative nature of knowledge. Grantees pinpointed key issues in achieving sustainability such as getting the board more involved, exploring new ventures, investing in staff, dealing with staff turnover, diversifying funding sources, adapting to change, increasing community buy-in, and promoting success stories. (See Appendices for a more detailed summary of the artifacts activity).

Panel Discussion

Following the artifact activity, a panel discussion featured four presenters who shared their perspectives on sustainability and offered insight to encourage and strengthen the CDI grantees in attendance.

Nina Hernandez, Executive Director of South Central LA Ministry Project (LAMP) spoke about the impact of First 5 LA’s funding on the development of her agency and related opportunities and challenges in sustaining LAMP’s CDI-funded program.
She said that LAMP originally provided educational services like ESL and parenting classes and moved on to offer conventional, custodial childcare. But when First 5 L.A. money came in, she believed her agency was able to offer better, more integrated educational and childcare services “under one roof.” The First 5 LA grant was the largest amount the agency had received which created a heavy reliance by LAMP on this funding source. Hernandez’s goal was to identify other funding sources to sustain the same level of services after LAMP’s CDI grant ended. For Hernandez, sustainability meant diversifying fund sources and crafting a marketing strategy based on the core values of the staff. She also believed encouraging LAMP’s Board of Directors to be more participatory in the agency’s programs was an effective pathway to sustainability. Hernandez talked about modifying her agency’s scope of work using evaluation as a tool to identify strengths and shortcomings. This strategy provided direction for program development and improvements. She added that, along with evaluation, collaboration with other agencies was an important tool to incorporate into service planning and delivery in order to leverage outcomes.

Hernandez’s anchored her thoughts on sustainability in the agency’s underlying philosophy that LAMP programs should not only work with children to reach their potential but also target care providers and teachers. Every individual involved in the program should be empowered to ensure sustainability is achieved not only when new funding is received, but whenever an opportunity presents to grow and improve service delivery.

Panelist Lisa Brabo, Director of Grants Management at First 5 LA, shared her experience in entrepreneurial ventures with non-profits and the First 5 LA approach. She recalled working with a non-profit agency in rural Wisconsin where low-income families lacked transportation to get to services and jobs. The agency embarked on a program to allow the families to buy cars so they could more easily travel to work and daycare. The agency considered forming partnerships with lending agencies or auto mechanics, but the question remained, how would these families pay? Ultimately, the agency bought inexpensive, used, reliable cars at auctions and sold them to the general public for profit, using the proceeds to support the program for the low-income families—creating a win-win situation for all. (See Appendix for details of Brabo’s story on this agency’s successful strategy for sustainability).

Brabo said the focus of First 5 LA’s approach to sustainability, embodied in its July 2005 Next Five Strategic Plan, is on sustaining results and agencies. The plan doesn’t support pick-up funding (funding a program innovation in the hope that another funder will pick up where the first grant left off.) First 5 LA believes partnering with other funders at the initiative’s beginning is more sound. She talked about First 5 LA’s concept of the relationship between sustainability and capacity building, adding that First 5 LA has initiatives to help grantees after the funding period—primarily with technical assistance.
Reflecting on a comment from the previous session suggesting that First 5 LA could be a conduit to help grantees work with other funding entities, Brabo explained to grantees that First 5 LA intended to meet with funders statewide to make inroads in this area.

Panelist Shari Weaver, Director of the Family Resource Center at Harbor Interfaith Services, a CDI grantee, talked about her agency’s plan for sustainability. Harbor Interfaith was started by a group of volunteers in 1975 as a community food pantry. Within a decade, those volunteers, recognizing the larger issue of homelessness, had established a 90-day homeless shelter program. They now have a full-time staff and offer a range of services including emergency/transitional shelter, follow-up care, and home visits to ensure delivery of services for the homeless population. An after-school tutoring program was added for children in the 12-18 month transitional shelter. In 1997, with only two programs running, Harbor Interfaith was just two paychecks away from closing its doors. Now, the agency runs ten programs with an annual budget of $1.7 million. Its funding is sourced from government (54%) and foundations, private donors and community partners (46%).

Weaver said a diversified funding strategy is key to sustaining programs and organizations. She stressed the value of planning and implementation where goals, objectives and accomplishments are defined, examined and reviewed in a timely manner, and of incorporating data on, and perspectives of, program participants. For example, the agency’s five-year strategic plan included a biannual survey of the homeless and low-income population with the objective of defining and re-defining the agency’s target communities, their issues and concerns, and development of new services to address those emerging concerns. (See Appendix for details on Weaver’s description of Harbor Interfaith Services and strategic plan).

Harbor Interfaith was considering venturing into business to decrease their reliance on funding sources, Weaver explained. The agency was researching viable business ventures that would allow it to maintain its non-profit status. Weaver stressed the importance of collaborating with partners and discussed how such partnerships can help an agency expand the quality and quantity of services delivered to clients.

Weaver emphasized agency visibility. Representatives of agency management did speaking engagements, appeared on television, attended social events, and maintained open communication with community and political leaders. Sustainability can be achieved, Weaver concluded, by a committed team made up of competent and dedicated people who do their job because they want to make a difference in the community.

Panelist Marlon Fuentes represented Two2B Associates, a consulting firm specializing in strategic design and communications. His expertise included helping non-profit organizations utilize best practices from the private sector to improve their own core operations and programs. Fuentes presented a strategic model for sustainability as a conceptual framework—a kind of cognitive shelf where ideas on sustainability can be placed and re-arranged. (See Appendix for Sustainability Diagram).

Fuentes explained that sustainability revolves around three key elements: organizational structure, social marketing, and fiscal strategy. Organizational structure needs to establish a feedback mechanism so that the organization’s vision, the way the
organization is run, and the kind of people who run it are in sync. Social marketing, said Fuentes, is creating an external and internal method of analysis to help identify the unique value of the organization to its community. He maintained that using this model would create a balanced scorecard in which financial goals are aligned with customer value. He boiled it down to being able to identify what the agency does best.

What matters most in striving for success, say some, is often reduced to “what you know,” while others contend it is “who you know.” But Fuentes says the formula for success is “who knows what you know.”

The third component, fiscal strategy, focuses on managing funding portfolios from traditional funding sources to developing business ventures. Fuentes stressed that each organization should formulate a systematic funding methodology that combines appropriate funding sources. He pointed out the characteristics of well-sustained organizations and illustrated concepts such as “Delivery Outcome” (how the organization delivers its unique value to the community), “Differentiation Outcome” (how the community understands what is being given to them), and “Development Outcome” (how the funding portfolio supports the infrastructure). Achieving sustainability, Fuentes concluded, lies in the ability to balance these three elements.

Open Space Activity

At the beginning of LE 5, participants were asked to identify topics or issues related to sustainability that they wanted to brainstorm around. Semics staff noted their ideas, tallied them, and grouped grantees into discussion tables around these topics during the Open Space Activity. Below is an example of one of those conversations.

The diagram on the opposite page is a conceptual mind map of the Open Space table discussion at LE 5 focusing on one aspect of the participants’ understanding of the challenge of sustainability: staff issues.

The mind map, created by Semics staff as part of its documentation of LE 5 activities, organizes the main points into a coherent picture in which the various strands of the discussion can be located and linked. As shown above, a key issue for grantees at the table was staff turnover. On the left side of the mind map, various factors contributing to staff turnover were identified: lack of incentives, management background, pay scale, need for collaboration, and so on. No single factor was prejudicially selected as dominant, but rather the discussion elicited a list of factors that, in various combinations, can be seen as driving staff turnover in various settings. Note that the turnover problem was also endemic in First 5 LA at the time, not just grantees of CDI. So the search for solutions (right side) provided a potential benefit to both the funder and the grantees.
Solutions proposed at the table included staff development workshops, being strength-based, cross-training, and making management more reachable. Through this brainstorming process, discussants sought to identify pathway options to prevent and reduce turnover. The underlying assumption was that high turnover is generally not conducive to sustainability of an organization or program.

See the Appendices for more mind maps from the Open Space session.
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CDI Learning Exchange 6

Connecting to a Larger Family

Date: December 2, 2005
Time: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Venue: Japanese-American Museum
369 East First St., Los Angeles, CA 90012
PROGRAM

8:30 am  **Opening**
Registration, breakfast, networking

**Welcome / Opening Remarks**
An introduction of the Learning Exchange and the day’s activities, and a look at desired goals and outcomes.

**Fun, Fun, Fun**
A fun activity that helps us get to know each other.

**Constructing Our Community Tree**
Building a visual representation of the connections and relationships among the programs, projects and services within geographic service areas.

**Synthesis, Questions and Comments**
Summing up group presentations.

**Break**

**A Family Reunion**

**Synthesis, Questions and Comments**
Summing up group presentations.

**Lunch**

1:30 pm  **Closing**
Reflecting on the day’s activities and next steps.
CDI LEARNING EXCHANGE 6

Enlarging the Tent

Learning Exchange 6 (LE 6) invited a larger cohort of grantees funded by First 5 LA into the CDI community of grantees. The concept was to create a congenial venue where CDI grantees could meet and exchange ideas with other, non-CDI agencies involved in the same work. Semics and First 5 LA envisioned that non-CDI grantees, who had not experienced the CDI Learning Exchange’s interactive, participatory format, could benefit from the experience, and their inclusion would at the same time broaden the network for CDI grantees.

CDI grantees were already familiar with the peer-learning, dialogic format of the Learning Exchange and had readily embraced it. Some of the newcomers, however, required a little time to adjust to the approach. Despite this learning curve, and minor discomfort (expressed through post-event surveys), inviting First 5 LA’s other grantees “into the mix” proved fruitful in encouraging an exchange of ideas and networking. Their presence enriched the growing community knowledge fund, and allowed Semics to test the event format as a prospective model for a resource network, as described in the Next 5 Strategic Plan (a blueprint document for First 5 LA during the period 2004—2009.

It also provided Semics and First 5 LA with additional data about the potential interactions and collective results of grantees operating in similar geographic areas and providing similar services related to achieving Next Five outcomes. LE 6 thus offered a glimpse of a collaborative learning community discussing a place-based approach to service-delivery.

Building the Community Tree

Grantees, representing organizations from three of First 5 LA’s funding initiatives (CDI, Family Literacy, and School Readiness), were grouped first according to the Service Planning Areas (SPAs) they serve. Each grouping was provided with various arts and craft materials and invited to collectively construct a community tree representing current and/or potential connections among projects and services for children 0-5 in their geographic areas. Rather than defining explicitly what the parts of the symbolic tree should represent, Semics purposefully left this activity open to interpretation. It was up to each grantee group to identify issues and connections among their projects, represent them symbolically (e.g., roots, trunk, branches, leaves) and present their concept of the community tree to the
whole gathering. (See Appendix for details on the symbols and themes each group chose for their table.)

Grantees of SPA 1 and 2 focused on early literacy, case management, family literacy, early intervention for children with emotional and behavioral difficulties, mommy and me programs and generally helping families to connect with one another and build self-reliance. The various parts of their community tree represented funding, the grantees themselves, their programs, and the communities, parents and children they serve.

One grouping of SPA 3 grantees agreed that parts of the tree should represent the core services they provided—parent support and parent-child interaction groups, home visits, counseling, pre-kindergarten programs, ESL, and early childhood education. They also chose to represent adult literacy, health access and screenings, community outreach, reading books to children during medical visits, and book distribution by pediatricians. These grantees were in the same SPA but they were unfamiliar with each other’s programs, although this did not impede their interaction. The Semics facilitator noted that the activity stimulated much discussion among them, facilitating the exchange of new, useful information that could lead to collaboration and pooling of resources.

SPA 4 was comprised of grantees that were also unfamiliar with each other prior to meeting at LE 6. Their discussion focused on parent-child bonding, parental knowledge of school readiness, pre-kindergarten literacy, building leadership skills in parents, mental health, provider training, access to healthcare, and self-sufficiency for families. The Semics facilitator noted that despite the introductions each grantee made to the group about their respective projects, the grantees said they didn’t have enough information to come up with common themes or connections.

One CDI grantee and three school readiness grantees comprised SPA 6. The school readiness grantees had worked together before and knew about services for children within their SPA. They readily agreed on representations for cultural diversity and competency, accessibility, and user-friendly services. With further discussion, the group agreed to add family programs, attachment, and bonding. Additional themes they decided to represent included connectivity, accessibility, bureaucratic challenges, and their target populations. They also found symbols to represent unexpected outcomes (e.g., families bonding with one another or learning from each other). What seemed to bond the group most, according to the Semics facilitator at this table, was the meaning participants attached to the tree’s “fallen fruit,” (unsuccessful cases and those who fell through the cracks due to “red tape”).

Grantees at another table came from three different SPAs (6, 7 and 8). Although their agencies provided an array of services targeting very different populations, these participants actively engaged in finding out about each other. They agreed that knowing the different community-based organizations in their SPAs increased opportunities for partnership, collaboration, service coordination and leveraging of funds. Participants
discussed how to represent funding, program staff and volunteers, partnerships, collaboration, and issues linked to sustainability and evaluation. The Semics facilitator observed that most of the participants exchanged business cards with the intention of furthering their knowledge and resource exchange later. One participant from a large institution who sometimes felt distanced from grassroots organizations commented that this activity offered a great opportunity to connect.

SPA 8 grantees chose symbols to represent funding sources, organizations and agencies serving the communities and the different services provided. They added flowers and fruit to their tree to represent the positive outcomes of their labor (5 year-olds ready for school). All the grantees agreed with one participant’s suggestion that what they had created was a “tree of life.” A second group of SPA 8 grantees discussed how to symbolize community organizations, First 5 LA, and the parents and children their projects served. They also chose to represent utilization of resources and the concept of “cross-pollination.”

The “Family Reunion” Activity

In this second round of table discussions, grantees were grouped according to the kind of service(s) they provided. Arts and crafts materials, including many magazines with varied images were provided to each table. Grantees were invited to cut out images from these magazines to create one or two pages of a family album representing the results and outcomes they hoped to achieve through their First 5 LA-funded projects. Grantee family groups were organized around common services such as home visits, family literacy, early childhood literacy, health, pre-natal to 3 years, family support, parenting, accreditation, early intervention, and multiple services.

Most of the groups posted pictures on the foam panel provided. One group made a three-page album using images of a family surrounded by concept words (e.g., support, unity, foundation, strength, laughter, joy, team, flexibility, acceptance, peace, love, kindness, growing, change, learning, teaching). This group focused the activity tightly on their four goal areas—health and well-being, child development, family functioning and parent empowerment.

Another group decided to craft what they called “a piece of art” to communicate the legacy of their work. Every person at the table threw out phrases that captured the essence of their project’s goals (e.g., instill pride in families, overcome obstacles, success in school, help parents find the tools). These phrases were woven together with the images they selected for their family album.

One group representing provider capacity cut out squares to simulate picture frames with red borders. The pictures they selected from magazines represented a healthy lifestyle for children, play and discovery. They wrote themes important to them on heart-shaped
cut-outs (e.g., create community programs that will continue, ensure health, safety, readiness to learn, build networks to sustain program efforts).

The family literacy group created a family album representing “future leaders,” showing the legacy they hoped to leave. They organized the panel board into four quadrants representing elements of their family literacy programs (early childhood education, parenting education, adult education and parent-child interactive literacy activities).

The pre-natal to 3 year old group chose images to represent family lifestyles ranging from before service intervention to post intervention. They used unhappy, unhealthy and uneducated images changing into happy, educated and healthy as a result of First 5 grants and the services.

Grantees focused on early intervention services brainstormed on a variety of themes such as parent education, children becoming active community participants, and influencing policy changes. One participant suggested their theme should be policy advocacy at local, state and federal levels. Their family album included representations of the media, which they felt plays a pivotal role in decreasing stigma, promoting services, and increasing public awareness about the importance early childhood intervention.

The final grantee group offered multiple services and focused their family album on community empowerment, awareness, literacy, families and children interacting, and learning. They included a river of tools in their landscape to represent services that help families better navigate the system.

Grantee feedback on LE 6 included a significant number of complaints about the length of time spent on craft-oriented, symbolic activities (e.g., the community tree and family album). The gist of these complaints was that real networking opportunities were more valuable to the grantees than time spent constructing things with scissors and paper.

Semics drew a larger lesson from the inclusion of non-CDI members as well. When introducing a wider audience to an unusual or unfamiliar event or activity, organizers should plan ample time to explain the event’s purpose in advance of the experience. New grantees from non-CDI initiatives did not receive this advance orientation because, among other things, First 5 LA staff, who were contact points for the newcomers, were themselves not fully prepared to explain the LE experience. Reaction to the table activities was understandable in this light. To the extent that criticism about the craft-oriented activities also came from CDI grantees, Semics acknowledged the need grantees expressed for more networking and agreed to include more activities that facilitate direct connection and reflective discussion in future LE designs.
Participants work hard on their table projects while getting acquainted.

LE 6 ends with a view of the forest and the trees.
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CDI Learning Exchange 7

What’s in the Soup?

Date: April 7, 2006
Time: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Venue: St. Anne’s
155 North Occidental Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90026
PROGRAM

8:30  Opening
     Registration, breakfast, networking

9:00  Welcome, Intro & Orientation

9:15  “What’s In the Soup” Activity
     Sign on and Network break

9:30  The CDI Learning Exchange Story (revisited)

9:45  Table Discussion #1 - Measures That Matter

11:00 Break

11:15 Table Discussion #2 - What’s Your Story?

12:00 Lunch

12:45 Report-out on Table Discussion #2

1:00  Summary and Synthesis

1:30  Announcements

1:45  Recognition Awards

2:00  Closing Ritual
CDI LEARNING EXCHANGE 7

Reflecting on our Results

The Learning Exchange experience showed grantees that the unique ingredients each of them brings to the community does, indeed, enrich the symbolic soup created by their efforts. Learning Exchange 7 (LE7) invited grantees to partake of results coming to the surface through evaluation of their projects. Evaluation of the results was of vital interest to all stakeholders, beginning with First 5 LA. But project staff, participants, stakeholders, and decision-makers all wanted to know how the projects had actually contributed to an increase in the well-being of young children and their families, and how strengthening service providers had contributed to their effectiveness.

LE 7 was designed as a participatory forum in which grantees could share key findings from their site-specific evaluations to fine tune their projects. Grantees were encouraged to share outcome measures and narrative stories that demonstrated achievement of (or divergence from) their project’s goals. Equally important were the lessons grantees had garnered from the experience of achieving those results.

Semics emphasized that the focus was not on proving the success or failure of a program, but rather on the value of the feedback that evaluation provides for learning and improvement of future programs. Through grantee discussion activities, Semics was able to gather data on what changes seemed to matter most to project participants, as well as information on the utility, relevance and practicality of the CDI-funded interventions to project participants.

After a short recap of past Learning Exchanges, grantees were given a moment to reflect on the impact their CDI-funded projects was making on children 0-5, families, and/or providers. After looking at poster boards from prior Learning Exchanges on display throughout the meeting hall, they filled out index cards describing their project’s impact, walked over to a giant, paper soup pot pinned to the wall and added their ingredients to the pot with a tack. Grantees gathered around this visual, symbolic soup pot and were able to absorb—by a quick reading of the posted cards—a panoramic view of CDI’s reach and effects.

Examples of CDI’s broad yet overlapping areas of impact posted by grantees included “more children are being readied for school; disease prevention is contributing to children’s improved health; parents are learning to advocate for their children and becoming more self-sufficient; childcare providers are increasing their professionalism and networking opportunities.”
Following the large group activity, grantees broke into small groups according to the category of participants their CDI project served (e.g., parents, child care providers, children 0-5). Each grouping included a Semics facilitator who guided the participants through two consecutive discussion activities.

**Activity 1 - Measures that Matter**

In round table format, grantees were encouraged to talk about evaluation results in their projects that were measurable, and the associated tools and methods they were using to collect and track such changes at the participant level (e.g., narratives, charts, spreadsheet, graphs).

Grantees providing developmental assessment, mental health, and childcare services to young children found professional assessment instruments (e.g., Denver II, Ages and Stages, KSEALS) and survey tools (parent/client satisfaction) well suited to their projects. When children or families were serviced over a long period of time, monthly tracking on specific criteria proved useful (Individual Training and Service Plan, Individual Education Plan).

Grantees involved in public awareness or education (literacy) campaigns made extensive use of pre- and post-test tools. In some cases, grantees compared pre-and post-test data they had gathered against a control group that had not participated in the intervention or received the service.

Other grantees conducted evaluation through observation activities over time (e.g., noting changes in child care settings after the provider had undertaken training for licensure), focus group discussions, and varied feedback forms clients filled out. Outcome studies where the end goal was prevention or mitigation of a certain (undesirable) benchmark were also used (e.g., only two of 15 teen mothers became pregnant again due to grantee intervention vs. an historical level of 6).

**Activity 2 - What’s Your Story?**

Table groupings of grantees for the second activity remained the same as in Activity 1, based on target population. Participants at each table were encouraged this time to set aside the metrics, and instead share real stories about children, parents and people whose lives had changed by participating in their CDI-funded projects. These narratives would provide context and deepen the meaning of the measured results discussed in Activity 1.

Grantees at each table shared stories of struggle, pathos, dedication and success. For example, kindergarten teachers of two graduates of a CDI-funded childcare center sent letters to the grantee praising the school-readiness of the graduates, and their above average performance in school. Another grantee reported that their mobile screening unit had identified cases of childhood diabetes and obesity at a health fair. Their immediate action (education, nutrition plan, referrals) had helped the children avoid potentially serious medical consequences. Another grantee told the story of a mother who was very resistant to having her child assessed for a learning disability. Through the grantee’s
supportive services, the mother finally agreed to the assessment, which indicated her child had autism. Early intervention services for the child were initiated and the mother became a vocal advocate for children with special needs.

Other emerging themes included:

• Early screening and intervention with young children identified and addressed education, health and mental health issues before they worsened.

• Services for teen mothers and their babies identified and averted destructive behaviors.

• Focusing on literacy skills increased family bonding and empowered parents to be advocates for their children.

• Parent support groups were effective as change agents and helped retain program participants.

• Child care providers wanted to grow professionally when they realized there are standards and received training in achieving these standards.

Grantee feedback on LE 7 included comments that the storytelling “validated the importance” of their CDI projects and that the activities “were useful and relevant” to their work. They consistently expressed that they know their target population better, are doing more follow-up to avert client attrition, and derive deep gratification from the work they are doing (which helps decrease staff turnover and strengthen agency capacity).

One grantee wrote that LE 7 activities helped them to “take a look at our program from another angle, see where it needs improvement and how to make those improvements.”
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CDI Learning Exchange 8

Telling our Stories, Remembering our Achievements

Date: April 7, 2006
Time: 8:30 am to 2:30 pm
Venue: The California Endowment Center for Healthy Communities
1000 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012
PROGRAM

8:30 am  Opening
Registration and breakfast

Welcome!

Learning Exchange Voices

Panel Presentation:
Impacting Neighborhoods by Investing in Children, Families, and Providers

10:30 am  Break

Grantee Exhibits and Video Presentations

Table Discussion:
Special Moments” You Have Never Heard About!
“Uh-oh, now what have we done?”

12:00 pm  LUNCH

Grantee Stories: Sustaining Results
What Grantees Are Doing

Open Forum

Closing

1:30 pm  Till We Meet Again!
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

CDI Learning Exchange

CDI LEARNING EXCHANGE 8

Looking Back at All That’s Been Done

The final Learning Exchange culminated in a celebration of CDI program achievements purposefully designed to inspire and invigorate the grantees regardless of whether they were at midpoint in their projects, or at the end. LE 8 kicked off with a panel presentation on “impacting neighborhoods by investing in children, families and providers.” First 5 LA Commissioners Harriette Williams and Nancy Au were featured panelists, along with CDI grantees representing The Heart Touch Project (Tina Allen), Pasadena Collaborative Literacy Project (Fiona Stewart) and the Wilmington Community Clinic (Suzie Mendoza).

The grantees panelists described their projects’ scope and mission, detailing the challenges faced along the way. For example, the Wilmington Community Clinic had to modify the formal structure of its parenting classes when staff realized parents were uncomfortable with it. Although they still used the original curriculum, the less formal environment engaged parents more effectively and motivated them to advocate for more learning activities of this nature, suggest curriculum topics, and recommend the program to other parents.

The Pasadena Collaborative Literacy Project reported survey data showing early graduates were still using the knowledge they had learned through the program. The project gave participants access to higher education, and, in an equally significant way, helped to develop and sustain a network of early childhood mentors.

Commissioner Nancy Au emphasized that the diversity of projects in CDI is in keeping with First 5 LA’s principle of honoring the diversity and individuality of communities. She highlighted the need for projects to seek ways to sustain their program’s impact, despite declining revenue available from the tobacco settlement supplying First 5 LA funding. Lastly, she emphasized the need for building linkages between different funding streams and other providers to address the core issue of poverty at the community level.

Commissioner Harriette Williams stressed the importance of innovation and sustainability. Sustainability, she asserted, should be anchored in training because people retain knowledge and skills acquired through hands-on training. She spoke passionately on community empowerment—and commended the grantees for listening to grassroots voices and acting on the issues that matters to...
them. She applauded the Pasadena Collaborative Literacy Project for strengthening early childhood communities and undertaking a comprehensive evaluation.

The panel was followed by an exhibit of grantee project information including several multi-media presentations from selected grantees.

Grantees then joined in small group discussions centered around special moments. Semics facilitators at each table encouraged grantees to think of these as anything from challenges, mistakes, and problematic decisions to simply unexpected situations or ripple effects (good, bad, happy or sad) which comprise the unique CDI experience.

With the standing rule that “what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas!” applied generously to the free-wheeling discussion, and no note takers recording commentary, grantees shared candidly about insights gleaned from their mistakes, assumptions, and misconceptions. In the final wrap-up to this exercise, representatives from several tables shared some of these “ah hah! moments” with attendees as a whole.

Emerging themes included innovative approaches to address participant retention, prevent attrition, and overcome resistance. Grantees also shared ways they had learned to navigate bureaucracy, cut red tape, weather staff turnover, and smooth stakeholders’ ruffled feathers. They stressed the importance of regular reality checks on the project mission, and the importance of cultivating a self-sufficiency mindset in participants so they are prepared to carry on with positive change in their lives when program funding ends. Grantees also realized the value that regular “reality checks” would have in helping them prepare, as learning organizations, for a post-CDI future.

Grantee feedback on LE 8 expressed satisfaction with the panel presentation and exhibits. “It was a great, creative way to learn and experience what’s going on at other centers.” They liked hearing “different perspectives” from the First 5 LA commissioners, and the opportunity to network with “kindred spirits.” One stated that “sharing the ‘oops’ moment is what I liked best.” Another said the event provided a “feeling of closure—that as a whole, we have accomplished a lot.”
Reflections on the CDI Learning Exchange

Semics believes that CDI’s legacy lies chiefly in its contribution to grantees’ individual and collective project accomplishments vis-à-vis service strengthening and enhancing child wellbeing. As the primary designer and convener of the CDI Learning Exchange, Semics here offers its own retrospective on how the Learning Exchange process added to this contribution.

Strengths of the Learning Exchange

As a methodology, the Learning Exchange was designed with the aim of growing the grantees’ capacity to reflect and learn as organizations. Grantees were encouraged to bring their best insights to the table at each LE gathering, and in turn apply at the site level what they had learned through LE. The hope in this process was always that the application of growing community knowledge by the grantees would translate into greater success in serving children and families.

Evidence of heightened capacity across the CDI grantees can be seen in their engaging Semics in a deepening dialogue about the issues that mattered to them. Indeed, by LE 5 the grantees were able to push the dialogue and take equal responsibility for setting the agenda. For example, data from LE 5 on sustainability compelled Semics to broaden this theme and pursue it in follow-up Site Immersion visits. Our concept of sustainability had focused narrowly on how to continue programs after funding ended, but we quickly realized, through grantee feedback at LE 5, that they wanted to focus on how to sustain their purpose and mission as agencies. That required more attention to long-range, strategic planning. This situation pushed Semics to accommodate the desired direction of inquiry expressed by a critical mass of the grantees.

Semics sought to embrace this deepening dialogue in part by convening an advisory panel of grantees for input and guidance prior to LE 6, LE 7 and LE 8. The advisory panel’s insights proved extremely important in framing and preparing for these meetings. For example, the idea of making LE 8 a celebratory bash with mobile exhibits showcasing CDI project accomplishments came from the grantee participants in the advisory panel.

The relevance of LE to the grantees was enhanced by a high level of responsiveness and flexibility. Semics used a dialogic, grantee-as-expert principle to fine tune the design and implementation of LE’s eight gatherings. The data gleaned from surveys filled out by grantees after each event also provided a prime vehicle for recalibration. Grantee feedback on what was effective and what didn’t work guided changes in LE content, structure, and the design and production of take-home material.

A key to the high participation of grantees at the Learning Exchange, at least initially, was the pattern of interaction between Semics staff and CDI grantees in between LE meetings. Semics was engaged in a process of ongoing site immersion (SI) that provided the initial connective tissue between the grantees and Semics, making their participation
Learning Exchange Launched for Community Developed Initiatives
Grantees from all funding cycles gather

The Exchange launched an online Community Directory

Learning Exchange Goes Online

The Exchange is a resource for learning about the CDI project. It supports learning, connecting, and networking among Learning Exchange participants through various media.

First, Semics created a dedicated website featuring colorful documentation, with photos, of the proceedings at each meeting as well as discussion pages (in a Forum) for dialogue on topics of interest in between meetings. (See the Appendices for excerpt pages from the CDI website.)

Second, Semics produced a newsletter for each meeting featuring engaging articles on current topics, a review of the prior LE gathering, a sneak preview of the topics for today, grantee stories, reflections on key themes such as participant engagement and results measurement, and notices of upcoming grantee events.

Implementation Challenges

While the Learning Exchange can be said to have successfully nurtured grantees’ expertise to strengthen CDI results, it is also true that, like the grantees themselves, the Learning Exchange did have its share of challenges. We describe a sampling of these challenges below.

First, the CDI Evaluation highlighted the importance of providing technical assistance for grantees regarding evaluation. However who should provide it, and how, was never fully worked out. In a sense, LE filled the gap because it provided a venue for continuing peer learning. Grantees
used the event to talk about challenges (e.g. recruiting, retaining participants for parenting classes), and applied approaches that other grantees had found effective (informal structure, incentives, involving participants in creating curriculum). Consequently, LE gatherings provided a de facto way for grantees to give each other informal, peer-based technical assistance. This was important to grantees because technical assistance was not formally programmed into CDI as a whole at its inception.

First 5 LA’s Grants Management Department had wanted to be involved in the planning and design of LE, but because LE was to be primarily a data collection venue, their involvement wasn’t designed in by Semics on the view that LE’s main purpose departed from Grants Management’s mandate. With hindsight, it became apparent that Semics’ reluctance to include Grants Management from the beginning led to problems later. In particular, different understandings regarding whose role it was to provide technical assistance (TA) to grantees, what TA should consist of, and how it should be delivered, resulted in some conflict between Semics and the Grants Management Department.

During the design and concept phase, greater communication between Semics and Grants Management should have been undertaken in order to examine expectations, clarify roles and create buy-in. It was important to identify where functions begin to overlap, and iron out roles and responsibilities, ahead of implementation. Not doing so created challenges once the process got underway.

Second, LE’s unfamiliar format threw participants off. LE’s design rests on a model of adult, non-formal education which elicits dialog and builds on the expertise that each grantee brings to the collective table. Activities were geared for participants to learn from each other and for Semics and First 5 LA to learn from them. Initially, many grantees didn’t fully realize their own level of expertise, were reluctant to acknowledge it, or expected to hear from other experts in their field serving as formal trainers.

Many anticipated that LE would tell them what they needed to know and expressed frustration with the unfamiliar learning format. Although it took a while for some grantees to feel comfortable with the notion that the meetings were structured based on the idea that they were the experts, many adjusted rapidly after attending just one LE gathering.
Third, some grantees initially didn’t understand the need for an initiative-wide evaluation of CDI nor Semics’ role in the effort. This can be attributed to the fact that Semics was engaged as the initiative-wide evaluator almost a year and a half into the CDI funding program. By then, “all the trains had left the station,” so to speak. Although introduced to grantees by First 5 LA, Semics encountered and had to overcome resistance from some grantees who had difficulty embracing a new player.

Lessons Learned from the Learning Exchange

Grantee feedback from each meeting suggested possible design modifications to future applications of the Learning Exchange. These modifications include organizing content around specialized objectives grantees are trying to achieve, synthesizing the day’s discussions systematically so their relevance would be more obvious to all, including program participants (e.g., parents, childcare providers) in appropriately structured learning exercises with grantee staff, giving greater emphasis to network-strengthening activities such as holding region- or interest-based cluster meetings, and reorganizing the content of the CDI Learning Exchange website.

In its current configuration, the online website material is probably too broad to be truly helpful to grantees. A redesign would organize content around specific grantee missions (e.g., literacy, mental health) and offer practical tools for implementing their scope of work. If the CDI Learning Exchange website is treated as an essential element of initial planning, presented to grantees at the LE kick-off event, and marketed creatively throughout the series, it, too, could function as a supportive mechanism that strengthens agencies and contributes to better outcomes for young children and their families in Los Angeles County.

In conclusion, The goals of CDI were to address the needs of this target population, while elevating the capacity and sustainability of communities, families and service providers to achieve participant outcomes in health, early learning and safety. The CDI has been widely embraced as an important capacity development initiative of First 5 LA – important because it targeted strategic investments in various ways to strengthen the service delivery infrastructure in LA County and, as a result, supported the achievement of desired outcomes for children.

Within this larger program of accomplishment, the CDI Learning Exchange provided a dynamic mechanism by which grantees created a network of mutual support and reflection. It assisted them in improving their work, and helped them find creative pathways for collaboration. At the same time, LE generated data on the reflections, perspectives and experiences of the collective of CDI grantees which in turn shed light on the real-time, real-world process of achieving outcomes in diverse communities and managing change at the agency level.
From a program implementation standpoint, the CDI Learning Exchange provides a model of an emerging resource network by, and for, grantees consistent with the programmatic strategies being implemented more broadly at First 5 LA. From an evaluation perspective, the LE also offers an example, in combination with Site Immersion, of a means of inquiry that facilitates ongoing and in-depth learning about what works well in various communities, how things work, and why.
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APPENDIX

Attendance Data
## CDI Grantees

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<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Grantee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1736 Family Crisis Center</td>
<td>King/Drew Medical Foundation</td>
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<td>Asian Pacific Health Care Venture Inc.</td>
<td>Korean Youth &amp; Community Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bethany Lutheran Child Care Center (Trinity Evangelical)</td>
<td>L.A. Child Guidance Clinic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Black Women for Wellness</td>
<td>L.A. Conservation Corps</td>
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<td>Bundle of Joy Daycare, Inc.</td>
<td>L.A. Gay &amp; Lesbian Center</td>
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<td>California Council of Churches</td>
<td>Memorial Women’s at Long Beach Memorial Medical Center</td>
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<td>Center for Pacific Asian Family</td>
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<td>Child &amp; Family Guidance Center</td>
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<td>Child Care Information Service</td>
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<td>Our Saviour Center (Cleaver Family Wellness Clinic)</td>
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<td>Crystal Stairs, Inc.</td>
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<td>El Proyecto del Barrio</td>
<td>The Heart Touch Project</td>
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<td>The HELP Group/ Child and Family Center</td>
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<td>Friends of the Family</td>
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<td>Happy Bear School</td>
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<td>Harbor Interfaith Services</td>
<td>University of Southern California (LAC-USC Medical Center)</td>
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<td>Harbor UCLA Research and Educational Institute</td>
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<td>Huntington Memorial (Pasadena Hospital Association)</td>
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<td>Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park</td>
<td>YMCA of Greater Long Beach</td>
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Grantee Attendance

In the last three years, Semics has facilitated eight Learning Exchanges. Overall, these events have been well received by CDI grantees. An average of 33 CDI grantees (61%) was represented at each of the Learning Exchanges. The chart below shows the number of CDI grantees that were represented at each of the Learning Exchanges.

Of the 54 grantees involved with CDI, 52 of CDI grantees (96%) have attended at least one of the Learning Exchanges while only 2 grantees (4%) did not attend any. In addition, 64% of the CDI grantees have attended more than half of the Learning Exchanges. Six grantees have attended all eight Learning Exchanges. These grantees are: Child Care Information Service, Children’s Hospital Los Angeles (Child Health Works Project), Citrus Valley Health Partners, Harbor UCLA Research and Education Institute, Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, and Pasadena Public Health.

The greatest number of grantees was represented at Learning Exchange 2, while the lowest number of grantees was represented at Learning Exchange 6 and 7.
Participant Attendance

The exchanges have averaged about 59 participants per event. Forty-seven of the CDI grantees (87%) have had more than one staff member attend the Learning Exchanges. The chart below only illustrates the participant attendance of CDI grantees project staff at each event. This chart does not include the attendance of First 5 LA staff.

Although Learning Exchanges have had a good number of attendees for each event, the attendance has not been steady. There was a gradual decrease in the number of attendees from Learning Exchange 2 to Learning Exchange 6, an overall decrease of 43% during this period. Reasons for this decline may be the timing of the event. For instance, Learning Exchange 5 was scheduled right when year-end reports were due to First 5 LA. Events scheduled either before or after report due dates often resulted in low attendance because grantees were busy finishing up their products. Another explanation for the low attendance rate may be the expiration of CDI funding periods. Although expired grantees were still invited to Learning Exchanges, many grantees chose not to attend after their contracts had ended. It is important to note that eight grantees had expiring contracts on August 31, 2005, before the December 2, 2005 Learning Exchange 6. For this reason, coupled with the busyness of the holiday season, Learning Exchange 6 produced the lowest attendance rate.

Despite the decline in attendance, the Learning Exchanges concluded with a sharp increase in numbers for the final two events. The greatest number of attendees showed up to Learning Exchange 8, a 73% increase from Learning Exchange 7 and 113% overall increase from Learning Exchange 6. This sudden surge in attendance is partially attributed to the fact that this was the last Learning Exchange, which highlighted overall achievements of CDI grantees. However, the number of grantees represented also increased significantly from Learning Exchange 6 to Learning Exchange 8.
APPENDIX

Materials and Resources
MATERIALS and RESOURCES

Program Schedule:

8:30 - 9:00  Registration
Sign in so we know who our guests are. (We like to be friendly, but it’s not like we’re going to eat you at your table.)

9:00 - 9:20  The Stone Soup Story
A narration of the tale that is the theme of the Learning Exchange.

9:20 - 9:30  Introducing the Learning Exchange
Grant Power of Semics and Amanda Burro of First 5 LA give us a preview.

9:30 - 9:45  Icebreaker
Teasers, twistiers and a tug-of-war. (Did you come in sneakers?)

9:45 - 10:00  Grantee Profiles
Find out who else is working in your neighborhood and what they’re busy with.

10:00 - 10:15  Story in the Round
Rhonda Scott introduces us to a delightful exercise in authorship.

10:15 - 10:45  Group Discussion
Understanding what makes CDI projects so interesting. True-to-life stories from the trenches.

10:45 - 11:00  Break

11:00 - 11:12  Setting of the Tale
From many separate segments come the making of a story. What comes up when what you worked on is stitched together with what others had written.

11:12 - 11:45  Reflection/Brainstorm — Unwring the idea box

11:45 - 12:00  What to Expect
Semics gives a preview of what initiative-wide evaluation of the CDI would look like and how it comes together. (Throw in your questions before someone else beats you to it)

12:00 - 12:15  Announcements, Dismissal for Lunch

12:15 - 1:15  LUNCH

1:15 - 2:30  Workshops (Nothing Formal)
Small get-togethers that you might find useful. Meet with the staff of Semics, network with other organizations, or pick up a few tips on evaluation methods.
**MATERIALS and RESOURCES**

*The “Stone Soup” Summary Booklet*

---

**Stone Soup**

Those soldiers trudged down a road in a strange country. They were on their way home from the wars. They had not eaten for two days and were tired and very hungry.

As they marched until suddenly, they saw the lights of a village.

“Maybe we’ll find a bite to eat there,” said the first. “And a lot to sleep in,” said the second. “No harm in asking,” said the third.

Now the peasants of that place feared strangers. When they heard that these soldiers were coming down the road, they talked among themselves.

“Here come soldiers. They are always hungry. But we have little enough for ourselves. And they hurried to hide their food.”

They pushed the sacks of barley under the hay in the loft. They lowered buckets of milk down the wells. They spread old quilts over the carrot bins. They hid their cabbages and potatoes under the beds.

They hung their meat in the rafters. They hid all they had to eat. Then— they waited.

The soldiers stopped at the house of Paul and Françoise. “Good evening to you,” they said. “Could you spare a bit of food for three hungry soldiers?”

“We have no food for ourselves for three days,” said Paul. Françoise made a sad face. “It has been a poor harvest.”

The three soldiers went on to the house of Albert and Louise. “Could you spare a bit of food? And have you some corner where we could sleep the night?”

“Oh no,” said Albert. “We gave all we could spare to soldiers who came before us.”

“Our beds are full,” said Louise.

At Vincent and Marie’s the answer was the same. It had been a poor harvest and all the grain must be kept for seed. So it went through the village. Not a peasant had any food to give away. They all had good reasons.

The family had used the grain for feed. Another had an old sick father to care for. All had too many mouths to fill.

The villagers stood in the street and sighed. They must be sick.” Great tables were placed in the square. And all around were lighted torches.

Such a soup! How good it smelled! Truly fit for a king. But then the peasants asked themselves, “Would not such a stone soup—and all from a few stones, it seemed like magic!”

“Ah,” sighed the soldiers. “A good stone soup.” The roosters crowed, the doves cooed, and the chickens sang. And the soldiers dropped the stones into their pot. “But no use asking for what you don’t have,” the soldiers said. “But first a table must be set.” Great tables were placed in the square. And all around were lighted torches.

**Why soup? To be more exact, why stone soup?**

Everybody has something to bring to the table and in this case to the soup cauldron and each addition contributes to the unique flavor of the dish. The learning exchange is much like the making of stone soup.
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

MATERIALS and RESOURCES

Learning Exchange Launched for Community Developed Initiatives
Grantees from all funding cycles gather

CDI Resource Directory Released

First Issue of “The Exchange”
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

MATERIALS and RESOURCES

Child Care Quality Enhancement

What is the Learning Exchange?
- A gathering of CDI grantees
- An open and informal forum to share lessons learned
- Concerns, challenges, share experiences and trade stories in regard to their projects
- A venue for learning from each other about their projects
- A space for validating and strengthening place- and community-based organizations recognized for their contributions to knowledge
- A place where SEMICS can be involved in how they are advancing, how they work, and how they can benefit community-based organizations, service delivery groups, and other partners

What is First 5 LA?
- A study of broad effects of the state's 15 programs
- Complements site-specific reviews
- A resource for enhancing the quality of child care

What are the objectives of the Learning Exchange?
- Document project experiences
- Understand CDFwide experiences
- Evaluate key aspects of CDI projects
- Analyze and document results
- Simulate experience and benefit
- Project sustainability
- Inform future funding
- Encourage ongoing learning

How does my organization participate?
- Learn how organizations can participate
- Develop new initiatives and strategies
- Capitalize on collaborative best practice

What is SEMICS?
A group of multidisciplinary professionals
- Providing strategic planning, evaluation, and program development services
- Creating tools/relationships to connect organizations and neighborhoods
- Promoting organizational learning and community development

Feedback Table

Drop-off Your SURVEY FORMS HERE

Registration
A - K

July 2006
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

CDI Learning Exchange

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

Continued from Page 3

Adding Value...

Facilities are also able to improve their in-class experience with each other during weekly team meetings. In addition, seven staff members are mentoring their experienced counterparts. Staff members at all levels of the project were engaged in the process of creating a comprehensive evaluation tool for the project. This not only met the need to understand the purpose and goals of the evaluation instrument, but gave them a voice in determining the best methods for implementing the part of project as well.

Because CDI has developed an organizational culture that enables them to work with staff partners and community to assess the community and to adopt practices that promote organizational...
A Short History of the Development of a Community Knowledge Fund

CDI Learning Exchange

www.cdilearningexchange.com

MATERIALS and RESOURCES
Home Page
www.cdilearningexchange.com
Resources Page
Events Page

Welcome to the website of the CDI Learning Exchange.

What is CDI?
The Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI) program was designed to allow agencies to design projects and programs that address the needs in their communities. It is one of two distinct "funding approaches" identified and developed by First 5 LA in its role of partnering with communities to improve the well being and school readiness of children aged 0-5.

What is the Learning Exchange?
The Learning Exchange is a quarterly gathering of CDI funding grantees. It is an open and informal forum where individual CDI project teams can air emerging project concerns, share experiences and trade project stories. Each CDI project is unique, and grows at its own pace. By participating in a periodic Learning Exchange, all CDI grantees can benefit directly from the experience gained by other project teams. The Exchange is an important form of validating project struggles, successes, and emergent lessons in a forum where all participants are equals.

More than a network of different community-based organizations, the Learning Exchange represents a venue for reinforcing the processes by which communities recognize, accumulate, and validate pragmatic forms of knowledge. As the initiative-wide evaluator of the CDI, Semics serves as the facilitator of this Learning Exchange process.

4th Learning Exchange
Uncovering Hidden Stories
March 4th, 2005
Glendale Adventist Medical Center
1500 Wilson Terrace
Glendale, CA 91206
8:30 am - 1:30 pm

This was the most recent event.

CDI Learning Exchange
 cdilearningexchange.com

CDI Learning Exchange

The Exchange is a newsletter for the participants of the CDI Learning Exchange and serves as a supplemental medium of information about the grantees, the Learning Exchange, community events and other relevant information.

PDP files of past issues are available for download
Vol. 1, Number 1
Vol. 1, Number 2
Vol. 1, Number 3

Resource Directory
The Resource Directory is a list of嘉宾s from the three CDI funding cycles of First 5 LA. Learn who these organizations are, what their projects are all about and other valuable information.

ON-LINE Evaluation Resources
A list of helpful links to tools or resources that can help you in your evaluations.

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CDI Learning Exchange
208-61 79th Ave., Glendale, CA 91205 323-792-4110

July 2006
APPENDIX

Additional Data from Selected Table Activities
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Learning Exchange 3 Table Activity

*Peer solutions.*

Grantees put forward challenges that face them and solutions are suggested by their peers at the table.

**Table 1: CHILD CARE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Stairs</td>
<td>Need for age-appropriate books, materials for providers</td>
<td>Material development to involve incorporating diverse dolls and puppets to go with the books; have parents make books with children (offer an incentive such as refreshments or inexpensive gifts/certificates). Some corporations match funds literacy and book purchases (i.e. Nestle).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Need to systematize procurement of popular and appropriate childcare materials for the convenience of providers.</td>
<td>Create separate catalogs for 0-3 and 3-5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| SCAEYC               | Lack of networking and collaboration, sometimes competitive atmosphere among providers | • Assign mentors and have them facilitate some meetings and create group settings. Promote field trips FCC providers, which take the form of visiting different programs with their mentor. Homes and centers can visit one another.  
• Hold meetings with a social component (i.e. meal, fun activity).  
• Implement team-building activities among providers when they attend classes.  
• Hold a meeting/workshop where FCC providers and centers who have worked together share their experiences in networking (the goal here, is to make them work as educators of young children and not to compete among themselves). Take ethnic or multicultural classes.  
• Form smaller groups of support for providers in same area, such as potluck, “girls night out”, movie night. |
|                      | Cultural, personality, or philosophical differences among technical assistance staff when addressing providers. | • As a project or agency, assist the providers to search for money in order to bring into their facility.  
• Conduct classes/training in provider’s facility/center.  
• Conduct needs survey of target population.  
• Provide staff with research-based information.  
• Agree to disagree but always present a unified front with clients.  
• Have one-on-one meetings to prevent misunderstanding. |
|                      | Problems with scheduling of classes; finding substitute teachers             | • Conduct online classes.  
• Negotiate for universities to credit workshop hours and incorporate into their coursework.  
• Seek dedicated funding stream for substitutes for providers to attend class or utilize network of providers to share such costs. |
|                      | Communicate schedule with parents.                                          |                                                                                                      |
| The Help Group        | Lack of resources in the developmental component.                           | • Resource and referral agencies have trainings and special projects that can provide technical assistance directly.  
• Have in-house guest speakers. (SCAEYC is offering assistance.)  
• Tap community colleges which offer free training for as long as the staff works with children 0-5. |
| California Council of Churches | Difficulty in establishing network of faith-based child care providers due to low participation. | • Have an information booth at community events or organization front desks.  
• Find one or two motivated people and form a phone tree within neighborhood or SPA’s.  
• Start a newsletter with information on different faith groups on a quarterly basis.  
• Create physical resource centers.  
• Contact R and R to get the information out  
• Do a mailing out to entire database. Create central location where these centers can come and get as much information as possible.  
• Make announcement at Sunday service regarding upcoming events. |
### Table 1: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Harbor Interfaith Services (H.I.S. Tots)     | Difficulty in recruiting parent volunteers     | • Incentives i.e. once a month lottery/giveaway for parents who come in required times and who volunteers most in a month.  
• Have 1 or 2 motivated parents who can speak to others and begin networking.  
• Do a survey asking what their needs are and how they would like to get involved.  
• Have a suggestion box encourage staff to connect with parents i.e. give photos of child, anecdotal notes Hold session/workshop on the importance of parent involvement.  
• Home visitation to discuss parents’ needs and how they would like to be involved.  
• Have a Family Day.  
• Offer a variety of volunteer activities which parents can choose from.  
• Connect with North Valley Caring Services. Have them to share their successes in relating to parents and the community and draw lessons from them. |
| Harbor Interfaith Shelter (Family Resource Center) | Problem related to motivating parents/staff. | Have a mentoring/buddy program in which active parents are paired off with the passive ones in undertaking social activities.  
Delegate responsibilities to families who are driven and self-sufficient to assist staff.  
One-on-one meetings with families who are new to the program to track their progress. |

### Table 2: CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Los Angeles Child and Guidance Clinic | Connections for Children | Parents difficulty/ refusal to accept mental health services (“stigma of mental health”) | • Try the church and school to take up the issue of mental health especially before parents of other ethnicity/culture.  
• Change the name of the program; refrain from using the word “mental health”; make the term less clinical – e.g., use the word “family advocacy” instead of “therapy”  
• Conduct home visitation to build relationships or create support group formats leading to one-on-one interactions later on.  
• Present materials without referring to mental health, i.e. “learning social skills”, “how to make friends” |
| South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP) |  |  |  |
| Bethany Lutheran Child Care | Pasadena Public Health |  |  |
| Child Educational Center | Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center |  |  |
| LA Child Guidance Clinic | Connections for Children | Lack of bilingual presenters | • If possible, obtain database from the resource and referral center to market agency to target population; collaborate with these local R&R so they refer clients to the agency.  
• Hold a conference in target area to attract clients from the area instead of going from one center to another.  
• Connect with other agencies that already have relations with childcare centers; find out what are their needs/interests and help provide resources for these interests/needs; this will pave the way to build a relationship.  
• Offer “freebies” (small tokens that would be useful in the childcare centers) to those that open their centers; in turn, these centers can be used to reach out to “one of their own”  
• Develop flyers/brochures or a five-minute video about the agency for distribution to providers  
• Offer an evening of care for the providers – serve dinner, give free materials which they can use in the daycare, i.e. books, toys, even handouts for parents  
• Adopt a “sense of a family” approach, making the clients feel that their best interests are in mind so that trust is established. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Table 2</strong></th>
<th><strong>CHALLENGES</strong></th>
<th><strong>SOLUTIONS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **South Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP)** | Office space (lease) is not secure due to landlord’s objections to program content. | • Check other lease options in the area.  
• Invite the concerned landlord to observe the program. Ask the constituents (people being served) to talk to the landlord to explain the community’s needs for the program.  
• Ask other sympathetic key people to talk to the landlord on the program’s behalf.  
• Seek help and support from “higher ups” who may be influential. Check laws on rights of lessees.  
• Examine closely the provisions of the lease agreement. |
| **Bethany Lutheran Child Care** | How to find more qualified teachers | • Search from programs like “The Children’s Collective”.  
• Source out from work-study programs of community colleges.  
• Recruit from neighborhoods, i.e. grandmas and stay at home moms and give them a flexible schedule.  
• Place ads at schools to reach out to new graduates who are more interested in acquiring experience rather than the compensation aspect.  
• Try working on the concept of volunteer teachers.  
• Provide incentives to current staff to recruit friends.  
• Recruit from churches. Try the Regional Occupational Program (ROP) network.  
• Incorporate into the program an internship component where people can come and help and in effect, learn while they work. |
| **Pasadena Public Health** | How to improve the collection of immunization information (how healthcare providers can help) | • Offer parents incentives for keeping their child’s immunization card; offer doctor’s offices incentives as well for giving the information.  
• Explain to providers how access to immunization records can benefit both client and providers.  
• Secure a written consent from the parent to access immunization records because a licensed facility is required by law to keep immunization records for 0-5 year-olds.  
• Have a staff member assigned to visit doctors’ offices where most problems are encountered when it comes to access. Try to discuss things with the people concerned; building personal relationships can be of help. |
| **Child Educational Center (CEC)** | Increasing attendance for workshops offered to providers. | • Create an online application; give potential applicants ID and password so they can access information specific to a certain conference.  
• Create a website about the services being offered.  
• Charge a minimal fee to give people a sense that what is offered is valuable service.  
• Do presentations at coalition meetings.  
• Work through a person of influence like the director of an agency to encourage staff to attend trainings being offered. Offer staff training for free. |
| **Frank Lanterman Regional Center** | How to get more parents to participate in parent support groups. | • Market services to all childcare centers in the area; at least one or two from among those contacted will be interested.  
• Contact schools which have special needs children.  
• Contact the likes of Pacific Clinics, the API Mental Health Program of LA Mental Health Dept. or Mount Carmel Cambodian Center in Long Beach.  
• Establish partnerships with fellow grantees like St. Mary’s Medical Center, CCIS and LAMP. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION/DEVELOPMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1736 Family Crisis Center Watts Labor Community Action Center The Better World (collaborative partner of the LA Conservation Corps) Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park Child and Family Guidance Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHALLENGES</strong></td>
<td><strong>SOLUTIONS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough space for play equipment.</td>
<td>Alternate days with different groups of kids. Rotate equipment. Use all available space. Clean house; throw away what is not needed. Take play equipment to a nearby park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring parents and children at play.</td>
<td>Get volunteers from college. Assign a parent each day to do monitoring work. Use video cameras. Use seniors through the Dept. of Aging. Rotate staff on a weekly schedule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of money.</td>
<td>Charge more. Hire a grant writer; try to tap different funding sources. Use college students as volunteers. Enter into collaboration to leverage dollars. Undertake fundraising Activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unqualified staff. High turnover.</td>
<td>• Offer incentives. • Tap college students/seniors as volunteers. • Staff development training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parent involvement</td>
<td>• Mandatory participation. • Outreach volunteers. • Fee reduction. • Incentives (food, coupon, toys). • Saturday or night meetings. • Staff should be present when parents pick up kids. • Tack a note in the cubby hole. • Tack a note to the child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in the parking lot.</td>
<td>• Have police patrol the area. • Get permission from First 5 to do capital improvements in 2nd year. • Install “no parking” sign. • Tap volunteer security guard. • Put cones in the driveway. • File grievance with the City.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to get community feedback.</td>
<td>• Mail out survey to neighborhood/community. • Install a drop box. • Disseminate a number to call to give feedback. • Conduct short interviews as participants leave the park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need volunteers for the literacy program.</td>
<td>• Provide incentives. • Internships/school credits. • Senior Program, Dept. of Aging. • Community service people. • Outreach to nutrition sites. • Preschool teachers. • Churches and other organizations that refer volunteers. • Outreach to universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteers refuse to go through screening, fingerprinting, TB testing and training.</td>
<td>Retired teachers. Senior citizens. Find volunteer organizations that have already screened and fingerprinted volunteers, i.e. Cal State LA EPIC. Get law enforcement to do fingerprinting on site. Mobile unit for TB testing. Provide lunch and have as much training as possible on one day. College interns. Find organization that pay for fingerprinting. Outreach to hospital or clinics for nurses or student nurses. Always give the assurance that training and background investigation are beneficial.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4: FAMILY LITERACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **CCIS**             | • Get volunteers from those that have taken the courses to talk to potential participants about the benefits and great experience. Outreach with help from developed partner in each city.  
|                      | • Change flyers, make sure they are clear and friendly and full of incentives (invest in incentives to give throughout the duration of the class and at the end like swing set and play equipment for their centers).  
|                      | • Develop courses with short duration.  
|                      | • Organize culminating activity i.e. picnic, fair, outing instead of giving college credits or a job fair that shows how to apply the new college credits and to connect with employers.  
|                      | • Piggy-back your flyer with the state licensing commission’s warnings of expiration; design your flyer to appear like they are receiving a lost license notice. This will make them sit up and notice.  
|                      | • Provide referral incentives.  
|                      | • Increase the “waiting list”.  
|                      | • Identify other groups in the city where potential participants can be sourced out.  
|                      | • Conduct classes in another language i.e. Spanish. |
| **Monrovia Bookmobile** | • Build alliances with people of influence in the area.  
|                      | • Set up shop at local school, supermarket, Laundromat.  
|                      | • Interact with school in that area to catch parents who bring their older kids, and then may be able to participate with their younger ones right after.  
|                      | • In line with partnering with schools; go to the one that knows you or has “buy-in” already; do a pilot; keep the site that responds more or the best 2 times a week; make face-to-face interaction and phone calls directly speaking to the person “in charge”; be prompt.  
| **Friends of the Family** | To secure the park you could provide the sheriff a mini report on gang activity during hours you would be at the park; this may help them see safety is a serious concern. |
| **WIC**              | Sustainability Adaptability is crucial to a program looking for new funding. |
|                      | Funders do not fund pre-existing projects. |

*Talk to funders about definition of “supplanting” and organize ways to lobby First 5. Show them our successes.*
## Table 5: Enhancing Parenting Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Harbor UCLA                   | New Horizons  
|                               | LA Gay and Lesbian  
|                               | Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment  
|                               | LA Child and Guidance Clinic  
|                               | Center for Pacific and Asian Family (CPAF)  
<p>|                               | North Valley Caring Services |
|                               | CHALLENGES                                                                  |
|                               | Establish alliances with hospital decision-makers and service delivery front-liners like the nurses. |
|                               | Determine what is most important; talk to assigned Program Officer at First 5 to modify scope of work so that goals become more realistic; break up desired outcomes into small weekly installments so that they do not appear to be overwhelming. |
|                               | Provide in-house training, incentives to keep staff; set aside budget for staff development; do exit interviews to know reason(s) for leaving; undertake periodic assessments of personnel; provide job descriptions for all positions; provide training to teachers which would earn for them units in Early Childhood Education even to the point of collaborating with the Education Director to incorporate mental health into the training curriculum. |
|                               | Organize core staff who are primarily dedicated to those workshops and programs; create part-time staff positions for weekend slots. |
|                               | Get vans to pick up participants. |
|                               | Continue collaborating with the teachers. |
| Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment | Increasing confidence of caregivers in interfacing with government and service agencies in identifying and articulating needs. |
|                               | • Create a supportive system for families through play for children; provide spiritual guidance through partnering with churches; incorporate fun alternatives into the structure of the program. |
|                               | • Choose one representative from the kinship group to be a spokesperson and help facilitate the discussions or trainings. Members can then see the successes as they are played out through the representative. |
|                               | • One-on-one support/case management (each family has a “point person” they can call if they run into an obstacle. |
|                               | • Create “cheat sheets” that are basic and related to needs of clients, e.g., how to navigate the court system. |
| LA Child and Guidance Clinic  | Difficulty generating referrals from teachers because of the stigma attached to the mental health issue. |
|                               | How to get fathers involved, especially among API and Latino communities. |
|                               | • Staff training on machismo and other barriers for males in Latino and API communities in order to develop new strategies for outreach to fathers; create more programs that focus on father/child participation. |
|                               | • Introduce father-friendly incentive like raffle with sports tickets as prizes; Father’s Day event with translation. |
|                               | • Provide services in the evening and weekends so that the fathers who are mostly working can attend. |
| LA Child and Guidance Clinic  | Language barriers with Asian participants |
|                               | Possibly recruit volunteers to help with translations and in building a language bank. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Center for Pacific and Asian Family (CPAF)** | Develop and strengthen mother-child bonding | • Host events, i.e. fairs to promote positive relationships or a literacy/homework program where mothers are trained to work with their children on schoolwork.  
• Education on the effects of domestic violence on children.  
• Continue one-on-one small group activities and encourage small progress (don’t expect huge changes to occur. Building bonds takes a long time.  
• Incorporate something in the program that allows them to feel and forgive themselves first so they can move on and learn new skills (it could be painful for a mothers to acknowledge that her situation and life choices are having such an impact on her child).  
• Organize mother-child support groups. Organize play groups, fieldtrips where the parent feels she is in control of her time to spend with her children.  
• Mothers who are out of shelter can be trained to become some kind of peer counselors. |
| **North Valley Caring Services** | Need for an Evaluator who is more oriented on the qualitative aspect rather than the quantitative aspect of evaluation. | Other grantees to provide the agency with list of evaluators; ask either Semics or First 5.  
The requirement of First 5 to report not just the quantitative output but the “process” of arriving at the output (background and context). | Develop system to record observations and process; agency has already staff assigned to track down and bring together data. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Support for Parents of Children with Special Needs</th>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **King/Drew Medical Foundation** | Community Coalition  
Frank D. Lanterman  
Children’s Hospital LA (Learning and Growing Together) | Recruitment and Retention (given that target population are within the age group 14-19 and who at such young age are already parents) | • Proposed solutions are concrete and practical but at the same time creative; use the school system i.e., connecting with teachers who may play a key role in linking the project with its clientele, the teen-age mothers. The pitfall of this approach, however, is that school drop out rate among this target group is high.  
• Network with the faith-based organizations already in the Learning Exchange. The project staff of King/Drew had already been introduced to Rev. Kathy Cooper-Ledesma for a possible start of a working relationship. |
| **Community Coalition** | Recruitment and Retention (given that target population are predominantly grandmothers who claim to have relatively more physical limitations that prevent them from getting involved in the program). | Use of incentives to draw in participants, such as serving free lunch at least twice a month or the “photo album” approach in which each participant will keep an album containing pictures of her participation in project activities. |
| **Frank D. Lanterman** | Recruitment and Retention (given that parents of children with special needs are already saddled with so many hospital-based appointments and can no longer spare additional hours to engage in additional activities) | The following “nurturing” type of incentives can be utilized by Lanterman and the CHLA (Child Health Works). For Lanterman (which functions as a regional center), a key area to work on in enhancing program participation is to strengthen support services particularly in the aspect of childcare (regional centers would pay for childcare for a specific number of hours a month to relieve parents of special needs children. This will give them opportunity to the pursue other interests. The CHLA project can hire personnel from the Early Education Centers (EEC) to provide extra hours of childcare. |
| **Children’s Hospital LA (Learning and Growing Together)** | Recruitment and Retention (given that the CDI was confined to CHLA patients with Spina Bifida aged 0-5). | CHLA (Learning and Growing Together) is working towards expanding target group to include cases of hydrocephalus as well; sourcing out participants from other hospitals is another course of action and shortening duration of training (i.e., from 11 weeks down to 5 weeks) is up for testing. |
### Table 7: IMPROVING ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **El Proyecto del Barrio** | How to get families to return for follow-up visit. | • Consider evening/weekend hours for working parents.  
• Family Day/Night.  
• Get community leaders buy-in either formally or informally to pass on the word about the new clinic in town.  
• Provide medical services while at the same time educating parents/families.  
• Do follow-up calls to establish relationships with families.  
• Offer incentives for follow-up visits.  
• Join other community events to reach and encourage more families to make follow-up visits.  
• Utilize the local church network. |
| **Asian Pacific Healthcare Venture** | Need for additional funding to serve other ethnic groups i.e. Latino, Russian and Armenian communities. | Mapping out neighborhoods to show First 5 the patterns of unmet needs.  
Need for transportation service.  
Need to hire an in-house social worker. |  
Contact LA Access and call OSCAR for van/shuttle.  
• Connect with educational institutions for interns.  
• Coordinate with regional centers. |
| **Citrus Valley Health Partners** | Due to bureaucratic barriers, access to healthcare insurance is becoming more complicated; thus, staff is more involved in troubleshooting because enrollment in healthcare insurance is taking 4-8 weeks instead of what it should only be taking 2-4 weeks.  
Underutilized mobile clinic services (stationing the mobile clinic van within church premises and scheduling clinic hours after church services). | Slow down outreach so as not to have a backlog.  
Adopt a seasonal schedule and select more strategic locations for the van. Bring van to other community events. |
### Table 8: PROVIDING DIRECT HEALTHCARE SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Heart Touch</strong></td>
<td>Considering the nature of the project (which is administering infant massage especially to those with special healthcare needs in a hospital setting) the main challenge is having to deal with the hospital bureaucracy and making them at the least open to concepts and practices which are not part of the mainstream of western medicine. What makes it more complicated is the type of population i.e. the infants confined in the NICU, the sensitive character of the patients, and the prevailing &quot;cultural norms&quot; regarding the care of this population (the overprotective approach to care-giving). The conditions create an accessibility problem for project implementors.</td>
<td>Build alliances within the hospital hierarchy; find an advocate from within. Expand to other settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wilmington Community Clinic</strong></td>
<td>Managing the “flow of patients” so as to avoid long “waiting time” (long wait times discourage people from utilizing the services).</td>
<td>Mobilize staff to bring in arts and crafts which can be used for presentation to patients in waiting room; use waiting time creatively and make it event-filled and an educational opportunity for patients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 10: FAMILY ABUSE PROTECTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SOLUTIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LA Co USC</strong></td>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>• Connect with the key personnel of the DCFS offices the agency is serving; hold workshops for DCFS personnel. • Secure list of foster families to establish database of potential participants in training/ educational workshops which may be conducted for this group. Send flyers, emails to DCFS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shields for Families</strong></td>
<td>Not enough time for staff to get together.</td>
<td>• Hold agency-sponsored breakfast with incentives for attendance. • Use of technology to bring together staff i.e. chat room (in-agency), Listserv. • Have each center choose a representative to discuss with the others developments, struggles and concerns; this can be done on a rotation basis • Put out a monthly evaluation form for staff; this can serve as a forum to voice out their concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Union Station Foundation</strong></td>
<td>Lack of resources.</td>
<td>• Build relationships with community organizations for referral purposes. • Increase staff capacity to provide direct counseling. • Seek funds from alternative sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CPAF</strong></td>
<td>Difficulty in getting parents’ involvement.</td>
<td>• Classes should be timed so that it is convenient for moms to attend i.e. evenings. • Give incentives for moms’ participation. Expand training of staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Learning Exchange 4 Table Activity

*Getting to the root with the WHY exercise*

Grantees are asked to choose a challenge that faces their programs or organizations and post a series of “whys” that are answered by the people at the table. They are asked to keep asking why until they get stuck.

## TABLE 1

**Grantee Participants:**
- Harbor UCLA - South LA Health Projects (SLAHP)
- California Council of Churches
- Child Care Information Service (CCIS)
- Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center
- Eisner Pediatric and Family medical Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge:</th>
<th>First 5 LA Contract Requirements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WHY...</strong></td>
<td>are First 5 LA contract requirements a problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First 5 requires something that community groups cannot / will not commit to</td>
<td>Potential partners cannot meet requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY...</td>
<td>are they so stringent?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To limit First 5 exposure/liability</td>
<td>Perhaps First 5 wants to achieve higher standards, or it could also be that they are ill-informed or advised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY...</td>
<td>is the approach ONE SIZE FITS ALL?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less administratively burdensome / expensive for First 5 to contract with all CDIs in pro-forma fashion</td>
<td>Makes for an easier process for First 5 to manage the grantees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract requirements must generalize across organizations in order to simplify monitoring and political / legal accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHY...</td>
<td>isn't there another way to do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There isn’t another way until First 5 LA changes insurance requirements for grantees’ contractors</td>
<td>There are two choices; first is accommodate current requirements and second is obtain exemption from First 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 2
Grantee Participants:
- Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
- CHLA Child Health Works
- The HELP Group
- New Economics for Women
- North Valley Caring Services

Challenge: Difficulty reaching certain populations in school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>Difficulty reaching certain populations in school?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School possibly not helping with the outreach process/ not being supportive</td>
<td>What methods of outreach are you using</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of incentives</td>
<td>Perhaps more of the African-American mothers work/not enough time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessions are not tailored to them, separating Spanish and English</td>
<td>African-American parents don’t want to listen to translated part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents don’t trust “outsiders”</td>
<td>Fear of being questioned about parenting/ impact on self-esteem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3
Grantee Participants:
- Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment
- CHLA Child Health Works
- The HELP Group
- New Economics for Women
- North Valley Caring Services

Challenge: Getting participation for in-house training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>Getting participation for in-house training a problem?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of time for the staff; lunch overlap is not feasible (one-half hour vs. one hour for rest of agency)</td>
<td>There is not enough buy-in from teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because there is no coverage for staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Center cannot afford to set aside time for staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>can’t the Center afford to set aside time for staff?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient number of teachers / caregivers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are there not enough teachers / caregivers?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is there lack of funding?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring back-up teachers was not projected as a need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cutbacks from funding sources and / or limited number of funding sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Challenge: Not getting enough mental health referrals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>Not getting enough mental health referrals.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not enough information about referrals (referrals are not sourced from disability list)</td>
<td>Lack of interagency referral concurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottlenecks occur in the sense that people are caught in a waiting list</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are there not enough mental health referrals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of information about referrals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is there not enough information about referrals?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because there seems to be no clear definition of roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does there seem to be no clear definition of roles?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High turnover on the part of staff making referrals</td>
<td>Because for every new staff / coordinator, they need to be brought up to speed about the collaboration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 3

**Grantee Participants:**
- Child and Family Guidance Center
- CHLA (Learning and Growing Together)
- Harbor Interfaith Services Family Resource Center
- Harbor Interfaith Services (HIS Tots)
- New Horizons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge:</th>
<th>Losing our control group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY...</td>
<td><em>are we losing our control group?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time between 1st and 2nd control</td>
<td>Very little incentive to participate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th><em>are they not motivated to participate?</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No incentive and too long</strong></td>
<td>They may forget/no commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th><em>is the contact (11 months) too long?</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Program design</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th><em>is contact not made in between visits?</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Funding does not permit it</strong></td>
<td>Not sure how to address contact before end of evaluation period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants relocated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants relocated</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th><em>is the original plan not working now?</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Too many participants / what needs to change to make it work? Assessment or evaluation tools?</strong></td>
<td>No incentive; maybe now, there are less alternative resources for families but more needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recruitment or incentive technique could have changed</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge:</th>
<th>Program participant retention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHY...</td>
<td>are participants not staying?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact of services</td>
<td>Utilizing feedback from patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative services</td>
<td>Clients do not see the long-term benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do not see the value after birth or after a few months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Patients think in terms of short-term solutions rather than long-term growth and maintenance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information being given at the orientation</td>
<td>Lack expectation setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance coverage that affects assignment to a particular medical center / relocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**
*do they not feel the impact of the services or see the value?*

| View childrearing itself as done independently, within the family | Program does not understand patients' needs and concerns | Not being conveyed in a culturally sensitive manner | No peer connection or model being offered | Need to go back to work soon after | Services do not offer concrete solutions for the short-term |

**Challenge:** Program scheduling

**WHY...**
*is scheduling difficult for our families?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working families</th>
<th>Parents working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Other social commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-tasking</td>
<td>Child care not provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of babysitting services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA County is so large-travel time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**
*do working families have trouble attending my activities?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheduling inconvenient for families</th>
<th>Travel can be expensive / gas costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple demands on non-working hours</td>
<td>Weekdays vs. weekends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of relevance of activities</td>
<td>Low priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social / institutional / personal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**
*are the services I provide a low priority to participants?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents need to meet basic needs of kids / families</th>
<th>School activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extra-curricular activities</td>
<td>Parents do not see the value of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based activities</td>
<td>Do not see the value (long-term vs. short-term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services not well understood / do not know how they can benefit</td>
<td>Outreach? / selling points?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population / demographics has changed</td>
<td>No current assessment of emergent community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting parenting advice / support from other sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Participants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connections for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Education Center, CalTech / JPL Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Central LA Ministry Project (LAMP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIELD for Families Project</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenge:** Providers not responsive to services (this came from a referral agency which undertakes in-home training of providers)

**WHY...** are providers not responding to our services?

| Not enough marketing of services | Cultural / economic factors; time / location; investment vs. payoff | Unfamiliar agency in the service area. What is the demographic of the clientele you are serving? Is the demographic of the outreach workers comparable to that of the clients the agency is trying to reach? | Small community network that is fearful of expanding | Providers do not realize the potential benefit of the services | There should be collaboration from the other resource and referral agencies; be visible in the cities that are new |

**WHY...** do they not realize what we have to offer?

| Have not heard enough about it? | They are busy; it's hard to make time outside their work to focus on professional development; change is challenging for many | They have not been told - they do not know the payoff; not convinced | Maybe it would be best to see the after effects of clients who have benefited | They have not been provided a full scope of the actual services that they can take advantage of yet; are the services readily accessible to them? | Are all of the services they provide clearly marketed or advertised? Have they had an “open house” or big event to draw people like a conference with guest speakers - high profile |

**WHY...** do they not perceive the value and benefits of our services?

| Afraid to commit to a program? | Are they afraid of being scrutinized? | It has not been proven / defined; what will they do with it? | They have not heard success stories they can relate to that inspire them to commit to participation | All people, by nature, are cynical, services provided are life changing, so it would be predictable to be concerned as to the way the services will change their lives | Not being able to let go of “history” with past resource and referral agencies; the agency concerned may need to offer “tangible items” in order to foster trust |
### TABLE 6

**Grantee Participants:**
- Asian Health Care Venture, Inc.
- Pasadena Public Health Department
- WIC Program - Public Health Foundation Enterprises

**Challenge:** Not meeting the clinical goal in terms of numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>is the agency not meeting its numbers?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No full-time doctor (pediatrician)</td>
<td>Access</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**

**is access a problem?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Having to deal with immigrant families</th>
<th>Economic factors confronting target population i.e. low income</th>
<th>Staff coordination with respect to setting of appointments (participants at this table were in agreement that this lies at the core of the access problem)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project caters to only Asians; though target population may be specific, translation poses a major challenge considering that said target group speak several languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 7

**Grantee Participants:**
- Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC)
- Friends of the Family
- Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park - Dept. of Pediatrics

**Challenge:** Providers having implementation difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>are providers having difficulty?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Do not see the big picture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational attainment</th>
<th>Function fixes</th>
<th>Information not conveyed properly</th>
<th>Language barrier</th>
<th>Financial / personal factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**WHY...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Used to routine</th>
<th>Do not know how to look at the big picture</th>
<th>Lack of mentors to guide them</th>
<th>Overwhelmed by the big picture</th>
<th>Technical assistance is not user-friendly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of mentors to guide them</td>
<td>Overwhelmed by the big picture</td>
<td>Technical assistance is not user-friendly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don't providers know how to look at the big picture?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning styles</th>
<th>Ineffective staff</th>
<th>Level of understanding</th>
<th>Lack of communication</th>
<th>No feedback mechanism</th>
<th>Resistance to change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The big picture is overwhelming</td>
<td>Low self-esteem</td>
<td>Do not know how to navigate resources</td>
<td>Unclear goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHY...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there no feedback mechanism?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational levels of providers</th>
<th>Lack of coordination among technical assistance staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE 8</td>
<td>Grantee Participants:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Huntington Memorial, Pasadena Hospital Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Heart Touch Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilmington Community Clinic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>El Proyecto del Barrio</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge:</th>
<th>Low / inconsistent turnout for parenting classes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>are parents not coming?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Life circumstances</td>
<td>Not every topic may pertain to their needs / issues with their children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too busy</td>
<td>Not enough interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel it is not priority / comfortable with present methods</td>
<td>Lack of awareness of what they will learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation issue</td>
<td>Length of class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of class / reminder should be in place / survey, phone calls should be made</td>
<td>Lack of incentives to make them come back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>are the classes not a priority?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certain ethnic groups place work above parenting</td>
<td>Concern with basic needs - greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are worried about bills, feeding kids, jobs, social issues that end up taking priority</td>
<td>Feel that their methods are fine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The parents do not think they need to be told how to raise their kids</td>
<td>Not in the pyramid of life (from basic needs i.e. food and water to physiologic needs to psychosocial needs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other struggles, pressures distract or discourage participation (money, relationship, time)</td>
<td>The issue discussed in these classes has no relevance to their lives / needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not see a need for it / they are doing fine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHY...</th>
<th>is there a (perceived) disconnect with the parents’ “core” realities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of support relationships between parents in the classes</td>
<td>Successful parenting to them is about feeding, keeping kid safe in community and not providing educationally enriched environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The class does not address their specific individual issues and needs</td>
<td>Parenting comes naturally / too much time and energy goes to life concerns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting is just another 9-5 job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### TABLE 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Participants:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citrus Valley Health Partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Pacific Asian Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA of Long Beach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Challenge:**

**Effects of community capacity building and relationship building on health promotion**

**WHY...**

**does community capacity and relationship building strengthen / support health promotion?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sharing resources across agencies</th>
<th>Sharing responsibility</th>
<th>Community capacity building addresses two of the largest barriers that people face with regards to health promotion: access and linkage</th>
<th>People are all connected, so it’s a community issue</th>
<th>Capacity building reduces duplication of services</th>
<th>Builds trust among providers = increased quality of services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**WHY...**

**does building trust among providers increase quality of service?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individuals will not utilize providers, they feel will not be beneficial to them, then individuals will not seek help to get the information / providers will not be able to evaluate, improve or change their services based on feedback</th>
<th>Shared responsibility for improving health status</th>
<th>Establishing trusting relationships among providers result in a stronger referral network and an improved continuum of care</th>
<th>What agreements have been made about client/agency outcomes?</th>
<th>What distinctions have been made between partnerships and long-standing collaboration?</th>
<th>Who is the driver?</th>
<th>Collaboration between community will make the service better by using their own strength-consistent message across service domains</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Learning Exchange 5 Table Activity
Exploring the topic of Sustainability through artifacts

Each grantee places an artifact — object/index card in the pot and proceeds by sharing with the rest of the participants at the table how that artifact relates to the grantee’s notion of sustainability.

TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee participants</th>
<th>Asia Pacific Health Care Ventures</th>
<th>Child and Family Guidance Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citrus Valley Health Partners</td>
<td>Excel Family Intervention Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilmington Community Clinic</td>
<td>First 5 Program Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artifact presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPTY WATER BOTTLE</td>
<td>Water is a vital resource and as such symbolizes financial resources to sustain programs. Empty because resources are running out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEART</td>
<td>The heart must always be healthy to perform life-sustaining functions; in this instance, the heart symbolizes the community which needs continuity of services and continuity involves financial resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANT</td>
<td>To grow needs nutrition (funders)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOME</td>
<td>Needs to be maintained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JELLO</td>
<td>Shaky, melting if left in the open; needs to be kept in a refrigerator all the time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ideas that emerged:</td>
<td>Board Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversifying funding sources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Building relationship with the community, local businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong evaluation component</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorporation of a “for profit” component i.e. vending machine, fund raising, making money on-line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Donors’ List</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 2

| Grantee Participants                  | Child Care Information Service (CCIS)                                  |
|                                      | Frank D. Lanterman Regional Center                                    |
|                                      | Harbor Interfaith Services                                            |
|                                      | South Central LA Ministry Project (LAMP)                               |
|                                      | Southern California Association for the Education of Young Children (SCAEYC) |
| Ideas / Notions presented associated With Sustainability | Food • Survival • Funding • Seeking Resources • Recognizing Success • People Strong R&D • Buy-in • Need for Services • Ideas/Innovations • Maintaining Flexibility • Motivation • Evolving • Promoting What You Do (publications, speaking engagements) • Networking • Exploring New Ventures • Strong Board of Directors • Political Climate • Competent Staff • Money • Diverse Funding • Evaluation • Financial Support • Technology • How Do You Create A Better Board? Getting The Board Really Involved • Building A Foundation • Corporate Sponsorship Endowments/ Investments • Policy Change • Identify things We Do Well • Staff Turnover Feedback |
### TABLE 3

**Grantee participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Harbor-UCLA South LA Health Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorial Women’s at Long Beach Memorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monrovia Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC Program Public Health Foundation Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA of Greater Long Beach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Ideas / Notions presented associated With Sustainability**

- Money • Staffing (quality) • Continuity of Services/Lasting Collaborations • Selective Research • Program Integrity • Community Involvement / Ownership • Individual Contribution Strategic Plan / Multiple Funding • Diverse Sources • Staff Education • Knowledge / Cultural Change • Networking • Continuity and Change

**Challenges**

- Funding sources • start-up • packaging/sell it • proposal/grant writing

### TABLE 4

**Grantee participants**

| Center for Pacific Asian Family (CPAF) |
| CHLA (Child Health Works) |
| CHLA (Learning and Growing Together) |
| Pasadena Public Health |
| The Heart Touch Project |
| St. Mary Medical Center Foundation |

**Artifact presented**

- MIRROR/PHOTO OF STAFF
  - Represents knowledge, being pro-development and the role of being a transformed

- PLAY DOH
  - Ability to adapt

- GRADUATION PHOTO
  - Represents strength in numbers, rely on each other (teamwork)

- NEWSLETTER / LITERATURE
  - Stories of volunteers

- LEGO BLOCKS
  - Connections with the community

- DOLLS
  - Children

- SELF/STAFF
  - Staff going out to educate agencies

**Other ideas that emerged**

- Partnership/Collaboration • Maintaining Established Services • Outreach • Growing As An Organization • Advocacy / Policy • Maintaining Staff • Client Outcomes / Results • Keeping Patient Base • Expanding Programs • Money / Funding • Helping Clients Become Self-Sustaining (empowerment) • Flexibility / Change in dealing with evolution of programs and community needs • Adaptability to systemic changes • “Thinking Outside The Box” • Problem Solving • Creating More Community Awareness • Evaluation Plays A Big Part
| TABLE 5 |
|-----------------|------------------------------------------------|
| **Grantee participants** | Connections for Children  
Crystal Stairs, Inc.  
Friends of the Family  
LA Gay and Lesbian Center  
New Horizons Family Center  
Wilmington Community Clinic |
| **Artifact presented** | **COMMUNITY GARDEN OF LOVE**  
The stones forming the base of the plant symbolize something concrete like education and information to participants and with this mindset, sustainability, as a program goal has started to be pursued from day one of implementation; the seeds/plants are the participants who are growing and learning e.g. gaining skills, language proficiency through ESL classes, thus enabling them to facilitate classes, go to different places and as parents, more than anything else, they can take care of their children. The said artifact also represented growth and empowerment. Such can be achieved because of people and the community which are the key elements to program sustainability. With people who are informed and educated, they become providers of services and ultimately become mentors for other providers. |
| **MONEY** | To sustain programs, organizations need to bring in proposals to get money |
| **PERSEVERANCE** | A way to sustain program beyond funding period because of people and the energy of the staff. This is one characteristic of human service agencies. |
**Grantee-directed Open Space discussions**

Grantees decide on topics they want to discuss and designate tables for each. Attendees are encouraged to move from table to table and join the discussions. The talks are monitored and notes are taken using mindmaps.
Learning Exchange 6 Table Activity
Family “Albums” bring issues to fore

Groups of Grantees are asked to make “albums” — by cutting from magazines and other printed material — that best illustrate their feelings on issues confronting their programs.

TABLE B - HOME VISITS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>California State University Dominguez Hills</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawndale Elementary School District</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach Unified School District</td>
<td>Family Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shields for Families, Inc.</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group posted images of children talking while they play, of hands holding and a picture of a family in the middle of the other images to represent the following outcomes that they would like to achieve:
- kids to be able to graduate from college and get good jobs
- for the school superintendent to see the school as an infant to — school rather than kinder through — school
- children who are happy, playful and safe
- decreased violence
- family playing a central role in the lives of children
Home visitation hopes to achieve health, comfort and love. In the process “you never know what you’re going to get when you walk through the door”.

TABLE C - FAMILY SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bellflower Unified School District</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excel Family Intervention Programs</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Children’s Center of the Antelope Valley</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watts Labor Community Action Committee</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA of Greater Long Beach</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Alongside pictures of families, of children playing and dancing, of women engaged in physical fitness activities and of tall structures in metropolitan areas are captions like “Healthy Mind, Body + Spirit For All”, “Makes Dreams Come True”, “We Keep Our Promises”, “Peace and Love”, “100% Life”, “Power”, “Inspirations”, “Happy Families”, “Future”, “Family Navigational System”, “Collaboration”, “Interconnected”.

Likewise, it was emphasized, at least by one participant at this table about the need for a family plan to serve as a navigational system towards achieving goals.

TABLE D - FAMILY SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bienvenidos Children’s Center Inc.</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drew Child Development Corp.</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hathaway Children and Family Services</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Services Association</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Coordinated Services</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bay Center for Counseling</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Station Foundation</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vista del Mar Child and Family Services</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike the rest who posted pictures on the foam board panel, this group made a 3-page album with the picture of a family on the cover and around the edges were words such as support, unity, foundation, strength, laughter, joy, team, flexibility, acceptance, peace, love, kindness, growing, change, learning and teaching. The group decided to focus on four goal areas, namely; health and well-being, child development, family functioning and parent empowerment.
The group collectively decided to work on what they called “a piece of art” that would communicate what they wanted the legacy of their work to be. Every person at the table would throw out words that she/he felt captured what was seen as goals. The following were those shared by the participants:
- “We want children to become caring and productive adults in society.”
- “Parent leadership in the community, the home and in schools”
- “Parents can take classes to continue with their growth and education.”
- “Have parents learn the tools to help each other and their children and create linkages.”
- “Create a community that supports the child’s experience.”
- “Instill pride in families.”
- “Overcome obstacles.”
- “Help parents find the tools.”
- “Empowerment”
- “Advocacy”
- “The ultimate goal is leadership.”
- “Become advocates.”
- “Success in school”

Parenting is loving, caring, grasping, connecting, empowering and loving the diversity and the need to nurture and support each other.

The all-women group cut out squares to simulate picture frames with red borders. The pictures which they selected from magazines provided were for them representative of a healthy lifestyle for children as well as play and discovery. Heart-shaped figures were also cut out on which to write common themes to be decided by the group. The following were the views expressed which were common to the participants:
- to create community programs that will continue
- bring about awareness for parents and community
- a better quality of life for children that would ensure health, safety, readiness to learn, play and discovery
- build network in order to continue with program efforts
- make full use of resource and referral centers
- maximize utilization of existing resources
### TABLE G - PROVIDER CAPACITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Information Service</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Resource Center</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connections for Children</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Stairs</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reseda Community Adult School</td>
<td>Family Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Bay Center for Counseling</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California Association for the Education of Young</td>
<td>Community-Developed Initiatives (CDI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (SCAECY)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants at this table seemed to have a view that at all times the goal of the Learning Exchange should be networking and an opportunity for organizations to learn about one another. So much so, that an apprehension was expressed about engaging in activities of this sort as impeding the attainment of the goal of the learning exchange. In the end, the group came up with what could resemble a billboard/ad for their organizations instead of a family album. Everyone at the table exchanged contact information, discussed possible areas for collaboration and just expressed willingness and enthusiasm to work with one another on future projects.

### TABLE H - FAMILY LITERACY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Care Information Service</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Institute of LA</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaiser Permanente Baldwin Park</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reach Out and Read)</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rowland Unified School District</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group output had a picture of children in the center with the heading “Future Leaders” which was indicative of what they expressed as the legacy they would leave behind after funding from First 5 ceased. Further, the group unanimously decided to divide the board panel into four quadrants representing the four components of the family literacy program to include, early childhood education, parenting education, adult education and parent-child interactive literacy activities.

### TABLE I - HEALTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bundle of Joy</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citrus Valley Health Partners</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King/Drew Medical Foundation</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach Unified School District- Reading Readiness and Preparation Project</td>
<td>School Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasadena Public Health Department</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Foundation-WIC</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington Community Clinic</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Much of the time was spent by the group looking for pictures. This left little time to discuss and agree as to what the pictures would represent in terms of goals and aspirations of the projects.

### TABLE J - PRE-NATAL TO 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTEE</th>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citrus Valley Health Partners</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Beach Memorial Hospital - Women's Lactation Services</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington Community Clinic</td>
<td>CDI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The images selected by the group represented lifestyles of families from the present to the future. On one end, the pictures depicted a lifestyle which is unhappy, unhealthy and in a state of being uneducated. In the middle of the board were images representing First 5 grants and the services being provided as a result thereof bringing forth a happy, educated and healthy society in the future as represented by images found on the other end of the board. The group came up as well with a color scheme in which the color blue depicted unhappiness while red was excitement and vibrancy.
The group brainstormed and came up with a variety of responses such as parents learning something, children becoming participants in the community and influencing policy changes. As to the images to represent these responses, the suggestions were links or chains, pictures of families and a television representing media coverage. One participant articulated that the theme should be policy and advocacy which could be categorized into local, state and federal levels. The pictures that were actually cut out were those of families, a platform shoe to represent policy platform, buzz words and chains to represent linkages. Three different colors of construction paper were used to represent policies at the local, state and federal levels. In the end, the group adopted the theme of policy and advocacy and seeing themselves as advocates.

In summary, the group would like to look at their output from 3 dimensions. At the local level are families enjoying parks and communities, prenatal services, education and awareness. At the state level are policy changes and at the federal level are increased funding, standards, access, services. The media play the role of promoting, decreasing stigma and increasing public awareness about the importance of educating the children.

The central image was the sun with rays containing words which served to be the goals/aspirations for this group, namely: community empowerment and awareness. Around the image of the sun, pictures of books (literacy), families and children interacting (learning and hope) were pasted. Images of buildings were drawn representing communities where the grantee organizations at this table operate. Part of the landscape was a river (of tools) to represent services to help families navigate the system.