



EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND FOSTER CHILDREN

The Local Control Funding Formula: An Opportunity for Early Childhood & Children in Foster Care

According to the new Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) law, most school districts in the state are responsible for using LCFF funds to improve outcomes for children in the foster care system.¹ Each district has created a Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), the expenditure plan for LCFF. The LCAP is reviewed and revised annually by each district.

Early childhood programs have been proven to have the greatest impact on improving outcomes for foster children. There is no other investment that has been proven to deliver as consistent an impact on students or as high as a return on investment as those made in support of high quality early childhood education.² Many districts have recognized this value and have included early childhood strategies in their LCAPs, while others have not. Here's a closer look at what the research has found.

Improving Overall Outcomes

The trauma experienced by children that enter the foster care system in their early years directly impacts their poor educational, career and life outcomes. Studies have shown that children that entered the foster care system as infants and toddlers have higher rates of re-entry into the foster care system, are subject to recurrent maltreatment, and are at greater risk for developing mental and physical health problems.

Research also shows that the absence of attachment for these children to at least one caring and trusted adult can result in developmental delays in their cognitive and learning abilities, interpersonal relationships, and capacity to express and manage emotions and so are more at risk for engaging in delinquent behavior, substance abuse and experiencing depression later in life.

The Scale

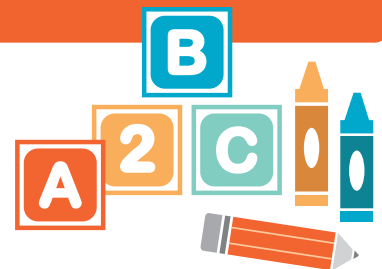
Young children make up the largest single group of children within the foster care system:

- Over a third (38%) of children in foster care are age 0-5 years old
- Nearly half (45%) of the children that have been in care for 12-23 months are age 0-5
- In 2012 alone, 14,671 children age 0-5 entered California's foster care system³

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Now What

Early childhood advocates can take an active role in urging their districts to include early childhood in their LCAP's. Here are three steps you can take:

- 1 Identify specific investments that your district could make to improve the outcomes for foster children
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- 2 Bring your ideas forward to school officials through the LCAP Community Input sessions
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- 3 Get to know your school board members and find your early childhood champions



Contact

For additional information on how you can get involved, contact:



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1. School districts that are responsible for improving outcomes for low-income, dual language learner and foster youth students are those receiving additional Supplemental and Concentration funds through the Local Control Funding Formula.
2. J.J. Heckman (2012) Invest in early childhood development—reduce deficits, strengthen the economy
3. California Child Welfare Council 2013

CHILDREN NOW