



2010 - 2015

STRATEGIC PLAN

**PARA LOS NIÑOS
STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 – 2015
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS STRATEGIC PLAN:

- I. THE JOURNEY FORWARD: OUR NEW VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, VALUES, AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES**
- II. THE STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION**
- III. THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES WE SERVE**
- IV. CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL MODEL**
 - Implications of the Achievement Gap on Traditional Education
 - The Para Los Niños Educational Model
 - The Para Los Niños Change Framework
- A. Strategic Priority 1: Deepen Programmatic Quality – An Integrated Approach**
 - The Integrated Model and the Integration of Mental Health in Charter Schools
 - Child and Family Wellness Centers
 - Moving Toward Integration at School Sites
 - One-Stop Shopping/Co-location Concept
 - Partnerships in the Community
 - Focused Services and Core Geography
 - 2010-2015 Strategic Goals
- B. Strategic Priority 2: Demonstrate Impact on Children and Families – Leading Evaluation and Quality Improvement**
 - Evaluation
 - Leading Research
 - 2010-2015 Strategic Goals

c. Strategic Priority 3: Increase Organizational Strength and Sustainability – Ensuring a Safe and Sound Future

Creating Financial Sustainability
Facilities Maintenance and Infrastructure
2010-2015 Strategic Goals

v. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

vi. CONCLUSION

APPENDICES:

A. STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

B. A DETAILED HISTORY OF PARA LOS NIÑOS

C. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

D. DETAILED OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION SERVICES

E. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL GOALS

F. A DETAILED LOOK AT A PARA LOS NIÑOS CHARTER SCHOOL

G. AN INTEGRATION CASE STUDY

H. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHANGE FRAMEWORK

I. SERVICES PROVIDED AT CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS

J. BUILDING CAPACITY AND STAFFING AT CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS

K. DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARIES OF AREAS SERVED

L. QUALITY ASSURANCE & RESEARCH

M. REFERENCES

TO OUR DEAR FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES, AND FAMILIES:

For the past thirty years, Para Los Niños has worked tirelessly to give children living in the poorest communities of Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties the education, skills and resources required to build a future beyond poverty. Child by child, we have succeeded in achieving this goal, and in the course of teaching, we ourselves have learned. While we are infinitely proud of the work we've done and believe passionately that we have made a difference, our past efforts are simply not enough to change the future.

The reality today is that children are falling through the cracks faster than we can save them. Their potential, and the safety and success of our communities, are at risk on a larger scale than perhaps ever before in our history. Public education no longer serves all children equally and our state and federal system of social services is underfunded and overburdened. Our previous approach to ending the cycle of poverty may have worked well yesterday, but it is not the battle cry of tomorrow.

The devastating effects of a litany of social problems like unequal access to quality education, poverty, homelessness, gang violence, joblessness, domestic abuse, substance abuse, mental health issues, and illiteracy affect thousands of children in our communities every day. The reality of the recent economic climate and the adverse effects of federal and state spending cuts add to these problems and worsen the conditions faced by children living in low income areas throughout Southern California.

We can make a greater impact, and we must. Incremental change is no longer the remedy by which to affect real and sustainable, long-term success. Three decades of experience tell us that significant, sweeping change is necessary to close the achievement gap and help more children, better and faster than ever before.

We have long known that while children may have unlimited potential, their ultimate success is greatly tied to family circumstance. Therefore, educating only the child is a strategy that addresses only one, albeit important, factor in the overall challenge to succeed. In order to eliminate barriers and help children achieve their true potential, we must better address their needs in the context of the family, while providing more complete support for the family itself. The factors that contribute to a continuous cycle of poverty are complex and interrelated, and our service model should reflect this integration of issues accordingly.

The fact is this: in this time of hard choices, more children need to have the kind of comprehensive education, mental health and family support services we provide, and yet, due to cuts in government spending, fewer of them will. Without bold change and private funders who support this work, the cycle of poverty and its associated problems will continue.

We need your help.

Our past strategy has relied heavily on state and federal funding, but our future sustainability requires us to compel more private foundations, corporations, and individual donors to support our work. With guidance from our Board of Directors, we have created a courageous new Strategic Plan for Para Los Niños that continues to put education at the forefront and more formally recognizes the importance of psychological, emotional and physical health on a child's ability to achieve.

We have long known that the basis for achieving success in school begins at home; children who live in fear of abuse, who suffer from neglect, who are hungry or homeless struggle to thrive in school, regardless of their potential or intellect. We are now transforming that knowledge into action by creating a more seamless and integrated delivery of education, mental health and family support services that better support lifelong success for all those we serve.

It is my greatest hope that you will read this plan and be not only inspired, but compelled, to support our efforts in helping children achieve real success in school and in life.

Sincerely,



Gisselle Acevedo
PRESIDENT & CEO
Para Los Niños

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: A BOLD VISION OF CHANGE

In 2009, the Para Los Niños Board of Directors and staff embarked on an in-depth planning process to design a roadmap for growth and development from 2010 to 2015. With this plan, Para Los Niños is committing to a powerful new vision: **To be the model of excellence in integrated urban education, leading to sustainable success in the communities we serve.**

With three decades of experience in working with at-risk children in low income areas, Para Los Niños (PLN) has gained a powerful regional reputation as a leader in our field. We understand the complexity of serving children and families living in poverty, and have built upon this knowledge to successfully educate children whose potential is hindered only by their economic circumstances. We have pioneered this work in communities surrounding Los Angeles with a model of education that works amid the challenges and barriers of urban sprawl, a condition unique to this area of the United States. We are poised to build on our past and create a stronger future by better and more formally integrating educational programs with mental health and family support services in a place-based model to more effectively close the achievement gap, better demonstrate the powerful impact of our work, and achieve national recognition – and broader funding – for our efforts.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: To achieve this vision, Para Los Niños will pursue three broad strategic priorities, which will underpin our overarching goal. The achievement of these efforts will comprise the scope of a \$25 million fundraising campaign to occur over the next five years:

1. Deepen Programmatic Quality: Recognizing the crucial link between success in school and healthy home environments, our model will now more fully integrate education and mental health and family support services in school environments. This change will allow us to better and more deeply, support children and their families in their quest to achieve success in life.


2. Demonstrate Impact on Children and Families: Regional and national recognition and/or replication can be earned only through clear and positive demonstration of success in our efforts to equalize low-income families and close the widening achievement gap in the United States. Our strategic plan thus calls for the development of stronger evaluation systems to measure Para Los Niños' impact on individuals served and to demonstrate the effectiveness of our services.

3. Strengthen Organizational Sustainability: Ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the organization, and improving facilities and infrastructure, is critical to achieving enhanced philanthropic giving, and quality programming.

Deepen
Programmatic
Quality

Demonstrate
Impact

Increase
Organizational
Sustainability



TO BE *THE* MODEL OF EXCELLENCE
IN INTEGRATED URBAN EDUCATION,
LEADING TO SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS
IN THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE.

Our focus on quality, impact, and sustainability will lead to much needed services that prepare children and their families for a future of fulfilled potential. These priorities are fundamental to the agency's success as a leader in the field of urban education, and will serve to shape management accountability and drive acquisition of investments necessary to meet the goals.

The plan to accomplish these priorities is as follows:

PRIORITY #1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY. Para Los Niños is investing in strengthening high-quality educational programs and complementary mental health and family support services that have a demonstrated positive impact on the way children and young adolescents learn, grow, and succeed. Implementing an integrated model will ensure that the children who are served through our early childhood centers, schools, and educational sites are supported holistically through coordinated mental health and family support services. Para Los Niños will strive to set an industry gold standard in urban education and serve as a national leader in this regard. Highlights of this priority include:

- Developing an Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services
- Establishing integrated Para Los Niños Child and Family Wellness Centers
- Achieving improved outcomes for children and families served
- Ensuring agency re-accreditation through the Council on Accreditation

PRIORITY #2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. As Para Los Niños deepens our role in the community by expanding services and serving more individuals, we will make agency-wide investments in designing and implementing stronger evaluation systems. To capture the value added in the lives of the individuals we serve, Para Los Niños will develop a comprehensive evaluation plan, implement data collection systems and procedures, evaluate outcomes regularly, and actively contribute to the field with research on best practices. These investments will enable Para Los Niños to ensure continuous quality improvement, effective allocation of resources, and accountability, demonstrating the impact of our services on the lives of underserved children and families. Highlights of this goal include:

- Developing and implementing an evaluation plan with short- and long-term goals, benchmarks, methodology, and infrastructure needs to evaluate the impact of Para Los Niños' programs and services.
- Launching new and strengthened evaluation systems including the agency-wide Continuous Quality Improvement Plan and full utilization of the agency's adopted data system (Efforts-to-Outcomes by Social Solutions).
- Publishing a report of the agency's evaluation findings, and contribute to furthering research in the sectors of education, social wellbeing and mental health.

PRIORITY #3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY. Para Los Niños will improve organizational infrastructure with a focus on facilities while also reinvigorating our fundraising and marketing strategies. We are dedicated to ensuring our facilities are safe, well-maintained, and properly upgraded. We will implement strategies to ensure adequate short-term funding and long-term sustainability. This goal will contribute to the creation of a more fiscally sound organization that is better able to weather periods of economic instability. Highlights of this goal include:

- Developing and implementing a facilities plan to address asset reallocation.
- Launching a five-year capital campaign to implement the priorities in the Strategic Plan through diverse fundraising strategies.
- Initiating a comprehensive branding and communications strategy in parallel with the fundraising campaign.

The Para Los Niños Fundraising Campaign. To continue addressing the extensive needs of underserved children and families in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties and to meet our three strategic priorities, Para Los Niños is launching a comprehensive five-year development campaign with the goal of raising \$25 million to fund our strategic efforts.

Para Los Niños will generate funds from a combination of government and private sector sources: government grants, representing approximately 16% of campaign revenue, will include contracts for enrollment, per capita case management and service delivery, as well as new

federal contracts and grants; private sector fundraising will encompass approximately 84% of the campaign income and will include foundation grants and program related investments, corporate grants and sponsorships, major donors, and planned giving pledges and bequests.

Para Los Niños will employ new and diverse strategies that build on the strength and success of our fundraising capacity and develop a broader community of supporters. A campaign steering committee, comprised of both Board members and non-Board members, will lead the fundraising effort, making their own gifts and rallying others to invest in the organization's future. Additionally, Para Los Niños will develop multi-faceted fundraising methods to protect our annual fund.

A Refined Mission and Focus. To better reflect the evolution of our vision, Para Los Niños' mission has been expanded from *"Helping children succeed"* to *"Helping children and their families succeed in school and in life."* Para Los Niños is committed to serving not only children, but also their families, without whom success would be significantly more difficult to attain.

Education remains at the heart of our refined focus, providing educational services for children 0-14 through early childhood programs, charter elementary and middle schools, and after-school programs. Comprehensive family support and mental health service systems are coupled with education in order to address the complete needs of children and their families and break down barriers to success. The Para Los Niños approach seeks to provide safe and engaging environments before, during, and after school. This newly integrated model will offer coordinated systems of culturally-relevant support, with community partnerships and professional communities of invested stakeholders.

The Journey Forward. With this Strategic Plan, Para Los Niños is leading the way in defining an innovative and replicable model of success for improving the psychological and physical health and academic and economic well-being of the most vulnerable children and families in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. It is our greatest hope that this pioneering evolution of our thirty-year success will lead to sustainable achievement for the children and families we are so privileged to serve; not just through a particular grade level, but for a lifetime.

The remainder of the plan document describes in more detail our 2010-2015 strategies and implementation timelines. Upon reading this, we hope you are compelled to join us as we create a unique and innovative model of change.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS STRATEGIC PLAN

I. THE JOURNEY FORWARD: OUR NEW VISION, MISSION, PURPOSE, VALUES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

Para Los Niños' new mission statement is:

Helping children and their families succeed in school and in life.

This new statement more than acknowledges our belief that children are influenced by the family and environment in which they live, and accurately reflects our methodology of focusing on the development of children, and support systems for their families and communities. It also reflects our perspective of promoting the educational advancement, and the healthy development, of the whole child, including his/her psychological, social, cognitive, and physical growth.

NEW VISION STATEMENT

To be the model of excellence in integrated urban education, leading to sustainable success in the communities we serve.

Being the model of excellence (as opposed to a model of excellence) in our field is intentionally bold and purposeful language. It asserts that our work is both exceptional and pioneering, that our practices have been proven successful and are worthy of emulation by others– and potentially being replicated beyond our current service areas.

NEW PURPOSE STATEMENT

To amplify the new mission and vision statements and communicate the focus of our day-to-day work, Para Los Niños has a new purpose statement:

Para Los Niños exists to close the achievement gap created by poverty by partnering with children and families in urban communities to support academic achievement and social wellbeing.

VALUES

Para Los Niños has broadened the scope of its organizational values to include the role of families in supporting children and to emphasize the role of convening and empowering communities to attain stronger outcomes. The enhanced value statements are:

Children come first

The family is essential

Excellence in all areas

Respecting and embracing diversity

Empowering communities

Responsive, compassionate, and inspiring to those we serve

Highest ethical standards

Transparency and accountability

Teamwork and collaborative partnerships

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Para Los Niños developed agency-wide guiding principles to capture the organizational philosophy by which we operate. Prior to the strategic planning process, guiding principles existed for separate divisions and programs within the agency. From this point forward, Para Los Niños will operate with one universal set of guiding principles at its core:

1. Every child and family has the right and potential to reach high standards of achievement.
2. Every child and family has the right to be respected.
3. Every child and family has the right to be responded to as individuals with different academic, socio-emotional, physical, psychological and cultural needs.
4. Every child and family has the right to safe environments that facilitate healthy development and learning.
5. Every child and family deserves opportunities to engage with and impact the local community and global society.
6. Every child and family deserves access to culturally appropriate practices.
7. Every child and family has the right to receive integrated services.

II. THE STRATEGIC PLAN INTRODUCTION

Since our founding in 1980, Para Los Niños has played a pivotal role in supporting children and families in some of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties' most underserved communities through high-quality education and comprehensive mental health and family support services.

Throughout 2009, the Para Los Niños staff and Board leadership engaged in creating this five-year Strategic Plan. The Plan serves as a roadmap to achieving our vision of becoming a nationally recognized leader in the field of Urban Education through the development and execution of three strategic priorities:

1. Deepen Programmatic Quality
2. Demonstrate Impact on Children and Families
3. Strengthen Organizational Sustainability

The focus on **quality**, **impact**, and **sustainability** are fundamental to the future success of Para Los Niños as a demonstrated model of excellence in closing the achievement gap among low-income, minority children, and leading to long-term independence and success. These priorities will shape organizational management and accountability, and drive the acquisition of investments necessary to meet our goals.

The remaining document describes in detail these strategic priorities and the plan of action to achieve them.

III. THE CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Para Los Niños presently serves children and families located in some of the most impoverished areas of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, including: Wilshire La Brea, East Hollywood, Pico Union, Boyle Heights, Echo Park, Downtown, Skid Row, Highland Park, USC North, and West Adams. While these areas comprise the core focus of our five-year Plan, we have significant commitments in South and East Los Angeles, as well as Ontario.

The families we serve have an average annual income of \$15-20K, are low-income, working families, single mothers, or extended families living together with children being raised by grandparents or other family members. Over 95% of our charter and after-school students are eligible for a free or reduced lunch, a key poverty indicator.

In terms of ethnic demographics, Para Los Niños serves over 7,000 children and adults, 75% of whom are of Hispanic or Latino origin; another 16% are African American, 3% are Native American, 3% are White, 2% are Asian American and 1% represent a multi-ethnic minority.

IV. CLOSING THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP: THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL MODEL

“If the achievement gap between black and Latino student performance and white student performance had been closed in recent years, the U.S. GDP in 2008 would have been between \$310 billion and \$525 billion higher.” 2009 McKinsey report: *“The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America’s Schools.”*

WHAT IS THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP? The Achievement Gap is defined as the difference in academic performance between students from different economic backgrounds and racial/ethnic backgrounds. These two factors: economic circumstances, and racial/ethnic make-up, have been identified by researchers as the most consistent differentiators among students who fail - and those who succeed - academically.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP ON TRADITIONAL EDUCATION. In many public school systems across America today, a fragmented approach exists to address the learning barriers, behavior and psycho-social, emotional issues faced by children. The implications for low-income and minority children are especially grim and have contributed to a growing achievement gap in underserved areas of the United States. Some recent facts:

- According to the 2009 McKinsey report cited above, students eligible for a free or reduced lunch (for which about 95% of PLN students qualify) are approximately two years of academic learning behind the average, ineligible, student.
- Barely half of African American (54%), Latino (56%) and Native American (51%) students in the United States graduate high school, as compared to 77% of their white counterparts. *Alliance for Excellent Education, 2009.*
- By the fourth grade, Latino and African American students are, on average, nearly three academic years behind their white peers. *National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), July, 2009.*

Research and pioneering efforts by innovative educators indicate that a purposeful, comprehensive and *integrated* system of education, mental health and family support services must be adopted in educational settings if students are to succeed – particularly those living in poverty. Practitioners, policy makers, and school administrators know that while highly qualified teachers are critical to student success, teachers alone cannot ensure all students have equal opportunities to succeed academically.

Based on this research, and three decades of experience, we at Para Los Niños have arrived at a clear understanding that in order to close the achievement gap in underserved communities, children must be viewed from a systematic perspective so that the academic, psychological, cultural, social, emotional and physical aspects are addressed in context.

Our educational model is grounded in the belief that children are part of a larger, complex and dynamic system and thus supports the move toward integration in all educational settings.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL MODEL:

STAGES OF LEARNING/EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. The Para Los Niños Educational Model begins at infancy in Early Childhood, bridges to Elementary School and then to Middle School, and extends through our after-school programs. Each stage builds upon another and all are grounded in our core beliefs. The Para Los Niños approach focuses on all domains of development: cognitive, social/emotional, and physical.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL PEDAGOGY. Our approach to educating children in urban communities is driven by the belief in the potential of each child, regardless of socio-economic circumstance. Inspired by schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy*, the Para Los Niños Educational Approach is influenced by the latest in cognitive research from the National Research Council: *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School* (Bransford et al, eds., National Research Council, 1999); and *How People Learn: Bridging Research and Practice* (Bransford et al, eds., National Research Council, 2000), and the educational philosophies of Vygotsky and John Dewey, who propose that education programs should be based on respect, responsibility, relationships and community, and that children must be active participants in their own learning. Additionally, the approach at Para Los Niños includes instructional methods which satisfy the needs of a predominantly English Language Learner (ELL) population.

We believe that our approach is particularly effective in supporting underserved children because it focuses on the natural development of children, as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment. Furthermore, it involves parents, caregivers and the family as collaborators in the learning process. This approach underpins all of our educational services, which include early childhood development and preschool education, elementary and middle school education, and after-school enrichment. *To learn more about the Para Los Niños educational approach and the Reggio Emilia approach, please see Appendix C.

OUR EDUCATIONAL BELIEFS. We are moving to further develop more effective, coordinated, and comprehensive integrated systems to directly and deeply address the barriers that prevent too many of our children and their families from excelling in school and life. Our beliefs serve as the foundation that informs our evolving approach to education.

WE BELIEVE...that children learn best when they are offered an approach to learning that develops from a range of first-hand experiences that provide relevance to learning, and through which inquiry, investigation, problem solving and conceptual understanding emerge.

WE BELIEVE...that in this environment, students develop the range of skills that successfully prepares them to continue their education and thrive as citizens in today's complex global society.

WE BELIEVE...that learning opportunities are maximized when children are in a safe and engaging environment, where they are valued for who they are and what they bring to the learning context, and where questioning and inquiry are not only encouraged, but expected.

WE BELIEVE...that children learn best when they can express, interpret and demonstrate their knowledge in many different ways.

WE BELIEVE...that children are dynamic and complex individuals who exist within a family construct. To be successful, education must consider the child's "whole self"—the academic, psychological, cultural, social, emotional and physical—in the context of the family.

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF CHILDREN BY INTEGRATING EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES. Children can achieve their full and true potential only when fundamental barriers to learning are removed or resolved. In poor communities like those we serve in South Los Angeles and Downtown Los Angeles, children face incredible obstacles to learning including poor-quality public education, homelessness, mental health issues, lack of basic needs, domestic violence, illiteracy and a host of other problems directly related to their home or community environments. The concept of providing integrated services in schools and child development centers is an emerging and fundamental shift in how we envision providing support programs and services to enhance our educational pedagogy. To date, three major themes have been identified as critical to integration efforts:

1. The shift from fragmentation to cohesive intervention;
2. the shift from narrowly focused, problem specific, and specialists-oriented services to comprehensive general programmatic approaches; and,
3. the shift toward research-based programming and intervention.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHANGE FRAMEWORK. In order to provide rich learning experiences in underserved urban areas, our integrated model of education, mental health, and family support services aims to create a sustainable, comprehensive, and coordinated system of support to benefit children, their families, and the communities in which they live. Our integrated model achieves this objective by decreasing risk factors and barriers to learning, while increasing protective factors and learning supports. For more detailed information about this framework and the associated underlying research, please see Appendix H.

PARA LOS NIÑOS CHANGE FRAMEWORK

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS
<p>Our Philosophy and Guiding Principles</p> <p>Assessments</p> <p>Constructivist Pedagogy</p> <p>Service Integration and Collaboration</p> <p>‘Whole Child and Family’ Methodology</p> <p>Evidence-based Practices</p> <p>The Environment as a Third Teacher</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Quality Assurance</p> <p>Culturally Competent Practices</p> <p>Community Partnerships</p>	<p>THE PARA LOS NIÑOS INTEGRATED MODEL OF URBAN EDUCATION: <i>Education, Mental Health, and Family Support Services</i></p>	<p>1. INCREASE PROTECTIVE FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High-quality education - Problem solving skills - Critical thinking skills - Parent knowledge of child development - Socio-emotional well-being - Nurture and attachment - Social connectedness <p>2. INCREASE LEARNING SUPPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom-based learning approaches - Crisis assistance & prevention - Supports for transitions - Home involvement in schooling - Community outreach for involvement and support - Student and family assistance <p>3. DECREASE LEARNING BARRIERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deficiencies in basic living resources and opportunities for development - General stressors and underlying psychological problems - Crises and emergencies - Psychosocial problems <p>4. DECREASE RISK FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special needs - Parent psycho-emotional status - Community factors - Societal factors

	OUTCOMES	IMPACT
<p style="text-align: center;">CHILD SUCCEEDS IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE</p>	<p>Academic Achievement</p> <p>School and Work Readiness</p> <p>Community Leadership</p> <p>Socio-cultural Stability</p> <p>Socio-emotional Stability</p> <p>Child and Family Stability</p> <p>Child Abuse Reduction</p> <p>Mental Health and Well-being</p> <p>Healthy Development</p> <p>Baby, Toddler and Family Friendly Environments</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sustainable Success</i></p>

A. STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY – AN INTEGRATED APPROACH.

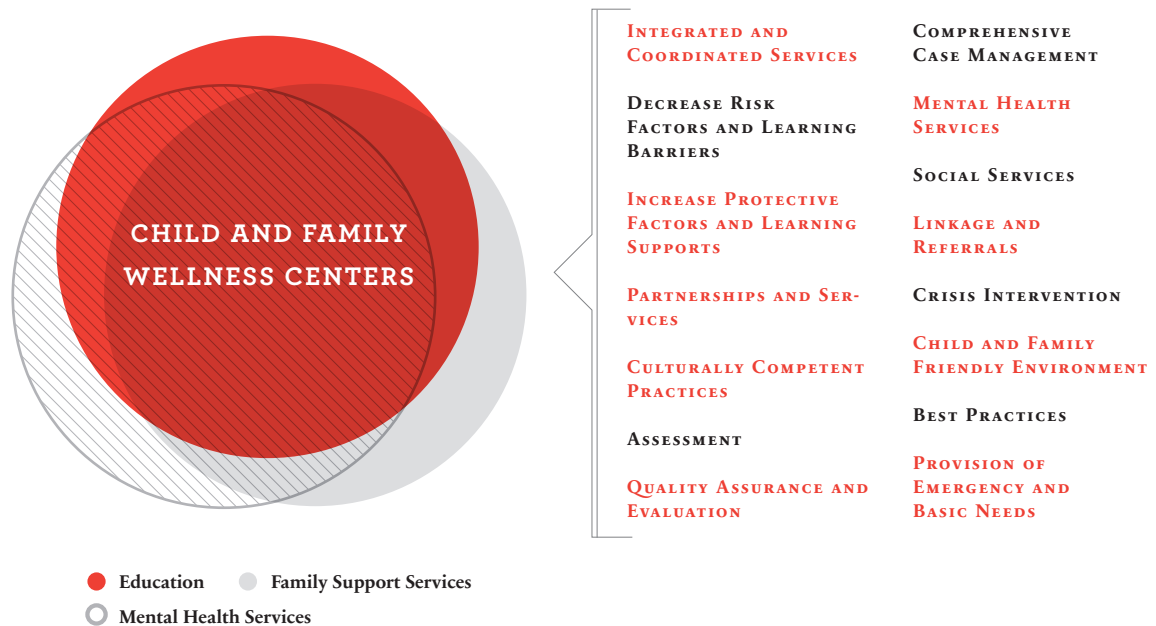
Strategic Priority I describes the actions necessary to develop the Para Los Niños Integrated Model of Education. An integrated approach to education formally recognizes that in order to close the educational achievement gap and achieve long-term success, children and their families must have access to comprehensive and coordinated mental health and family support services that are co-located in educational environments.

THE INTEGRATED MODEL OF URBAN EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH, AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES. The Para Los Niños Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services will provide education and family support services to children and their families living in economically disadvantaged communities, and serve age groups that include infancy through middle school, before, during and after-school. Given the locations and populations we serve, it is imperative that our model be framed and guided by best practices and empirically-based models. These include culturally competent practices, approaches that directly address risk factors and learning barriers, and strengthen protective factors and learning supports, and service integration and assessment models. As part of the strategic Plan, we will be implementing these approaches by integrating mental health and family support services into our charter schools and other educational sites.

EDUCATION-BASED, CO-LOCATED AND INTEGRATED CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS. Research and practical experience has shown that integrating education with mental health and family support services is most effective when these services co-exist in centralized locations. This co-located approach facilitates the creation of a more cohesive and proactive plan of action resulting from the coordination of a team of specialized service professionals, partners and family members, complemented by coordinated, real-time information about the child and his or her needs. For families, this co-located approach creates a more seamless model for accessing services, because it addresses common barriers like transportation, which often hinders families from getting the services they need.

In addition, it is the vision of Para Los Niños that these co-located and coordinated efforts will take place at newly created Child and Family Wellness Centers located on our education campuses. Together with high-quality early childhood education and academic instruction, all children and their families will have access to coordinated mental health and family support services, referrals and linkages, psycho-educational classes and support groups, and an array of prevention and intervention services. We plan to further develop the Child and Family Wellness Centers at these sites by staffing them in a manner that strengthens integration. This will be a three-tiered approach: 1) rotating staff; 2) adding staff; and 3) on-going training for new and existing staff. The model below illustrates the vision for integration of services provided at the Para Los Niños Child and Family Wellness Centers.

COMPREHENSIVE AND INTEGRATED SERVICES
PROVIDED TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



A First Step Moving Toward Integration: The Integration of Mental Health and Family Support Services in our Charter Schools.

During the past eighteen months, Para Los Niños initiated the development of this model through a grant from The California Endowment, which has supported the creation of a concrete framework for effectively integrating mental health and family support services in our charter schools and other education settings. This project facilitated the formation of an Integration Team (comprised of the mental health and family services directors, charter school principals, and other key executive and program staff) to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the mental health and family support needs in the populations served. We are demonstrating ongoing progress through an assessment of needs identified by students, parents, experts, clients, community residents and Para Los Niños staff through surveys and interviews. These findings will be used to enhance integration of mental health and family support services into our charter schools through the adoption of policies, protocols and procedures that guide the collaboration of school, mental health, and family support staff, as well as guide the provision of mental health and family support services on campus. Key deliverables include solutions for funding and long-term sustainability as well as disseminating knowledge and lessons learned to the wider community.

In addition, the practice of integrating education, mental health and family support services has already begun at several PLN education sites, where staff from current Mental Health and

Family Support Programs has collaborated to provide crisis intervention. Flexibility of service provision is currently dependent on contractual and funding requirements.

Enhancing infrastructure through diversified funding and the co-location of Child and Family Wellness Centers will improve child, family, and community access to, and participation in, critical services, improve student connection to their school, increase attendance, academic achievement and behavior, and improve family involvement in scholastic success more generally (Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003). The creation of a single, education-based location where services can be accessed can help parents, who have traditionally felt alienated from their children's school sites, become more connected and involved with the school and with their children's educational experiences (Buttery & Anderson, 1997; Blank, Melaville & Shah, 2003).

“ONE STOP SHOPPING”/CO-LOCATION: As part of the planning of these centers, we examined best practices in the field and identified two key models that have informed our thinking: the “One Stop Shopping” and the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM) as approaches to service provision.

“One-Stop Shopping” or “place-based” services refers to the general concept that services can be made more accessible and service delivery made more efficient by coordinating and co-locating services that are normally provided by more than one agency or program. Federal efforts to promote this idea have included the One-Stop Program of the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) at the U.S. Department of Labor. ETA has funded the planning and implementation of centers that provide an array of employment and training services and information in central locations. In addition, the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is collecting examples of co-location in delivering welfare and child support services. The advantages to co-location are generally perceived as: improved access to services for clients; better case management for each client; stronger inter-agency communication; and greater efficiency of service delivery through less duplication, identification of service “gaps,” and the potential for decreased overhead costs (Employment and Training Administration, 1996; Interstate Conference of Employment Security Agencies (ICESA), 1997; National Performance Review, November 1997).

Integrated Service Delivery Model. Another model we will look at to develop Child and Family Wellness Centers at our educational sites is the Integrated Service Delivery Model (ISDM). The core of the ISDM is a team-based, client-focused primary care approach to providing social, health, child development, education, family support, and other services. This model increases the focus on prevention. Over time, increased use of providers will occur, including social workers, mental health workers, etc. Integration and true collaboration must be developed among service providers with expertise in edu-

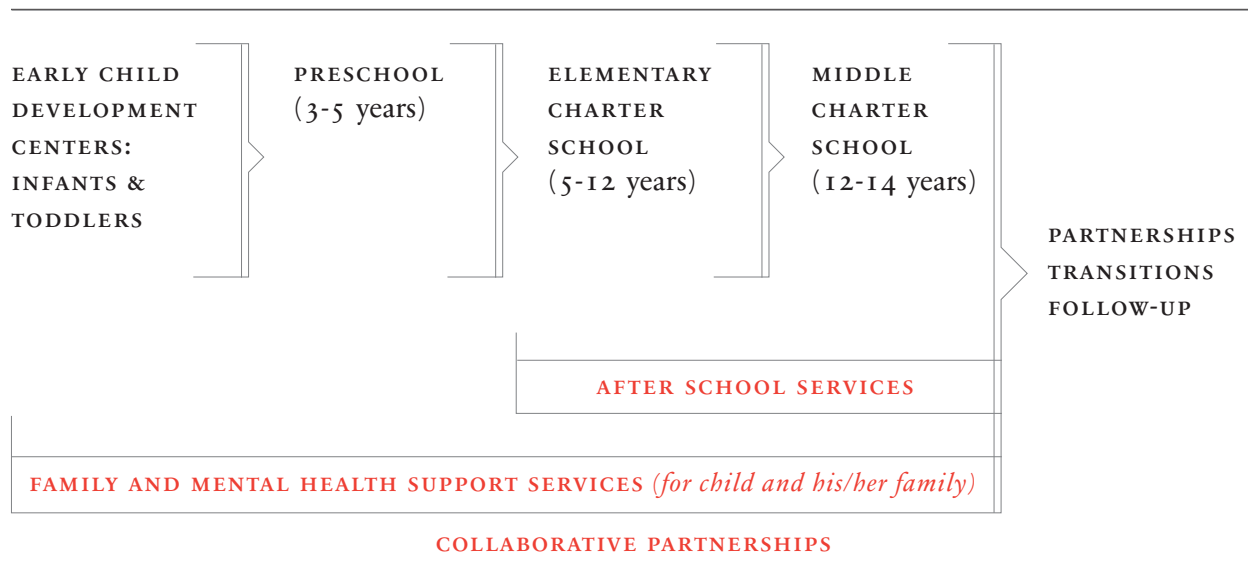
cation, teaching, social work, mental health and family services, who work together to provide clients with a seamless network of support. In this model, family support, health and education services become a single, seamless service, with providers working together, but maintaining their distinct, independent practices. The ISDM combines three key elements to: 1) use a primary community care approach; 2) ensure all providers and their organizations are connected and work together; 3) describe and strengthen core services.

The ISDM model will benefit our organization, and the children and families we serve, by:

1. Coordinating service delivery, which results in more efficient and consistent standards of practice and use of resources.
2. Making access to various Para Los Niños services easier.
3. Providing a consistent set of standards, policies, and procedures across programs.
4. Increasing levels of communication among service providers from different programs, resulting in a more complementary and holistic service plan for individual clients.
5. Providing a seamless array of services for students and their families in our charter schools.

PARTNERSHIPS IN THE COMMUNITY. Effectively achieving integration requires us to expand and deepen our partnerships with other non-profit, faith-based, community and governmental providers. We understand that continuous learning and critical dialogue are important elements to ongoing program evolution, increased innovation in program design and implementation, and overall program quality. It is this understanding that drives our commitment to continue to build and participate in community partnerships. This focus on collaboration allows us to leverage resources, provide complementary services to our clients, and positions our agency within learning communities serving similar populations. We are very proud of our current involvement in strong and sustainable networks that loop families into webs of coordinated resources. We look forward to continuing these efforts in ways that connect children and families with needed services, connect families with one another, and provide families tools to strengthen the protective factors they already have in order to improve their family systems.

FOCUSED SERVICES AND CORE GEOGRAPHY. Because of our reputation as a trusted and caring community partner, through the years Para Los Niños has been asked to address additional community needs, including the plight of emancipating foster youth, the dearth of job training and job opportunities for youth, and other community needs necessitating enhanced service provision. Through the strategic planning process, we reflected on this programmatic expansion and concluded that refining our focus will enable greater opportunities to integrate complementary services and maximize impact on children, families, and our communities.



FOCUSED SERVICES. As a result of this deliberative analysis, one of our objectives for the Downtown/Skid Row (SPA 4) community will be to make available a continuum of education, mental health, and family support services from birth through 14 years of age. This will involve serving children during infancy and early childhood, middle childhood, and early adolescence in addition to providing support services to the families of the children in our education centers.

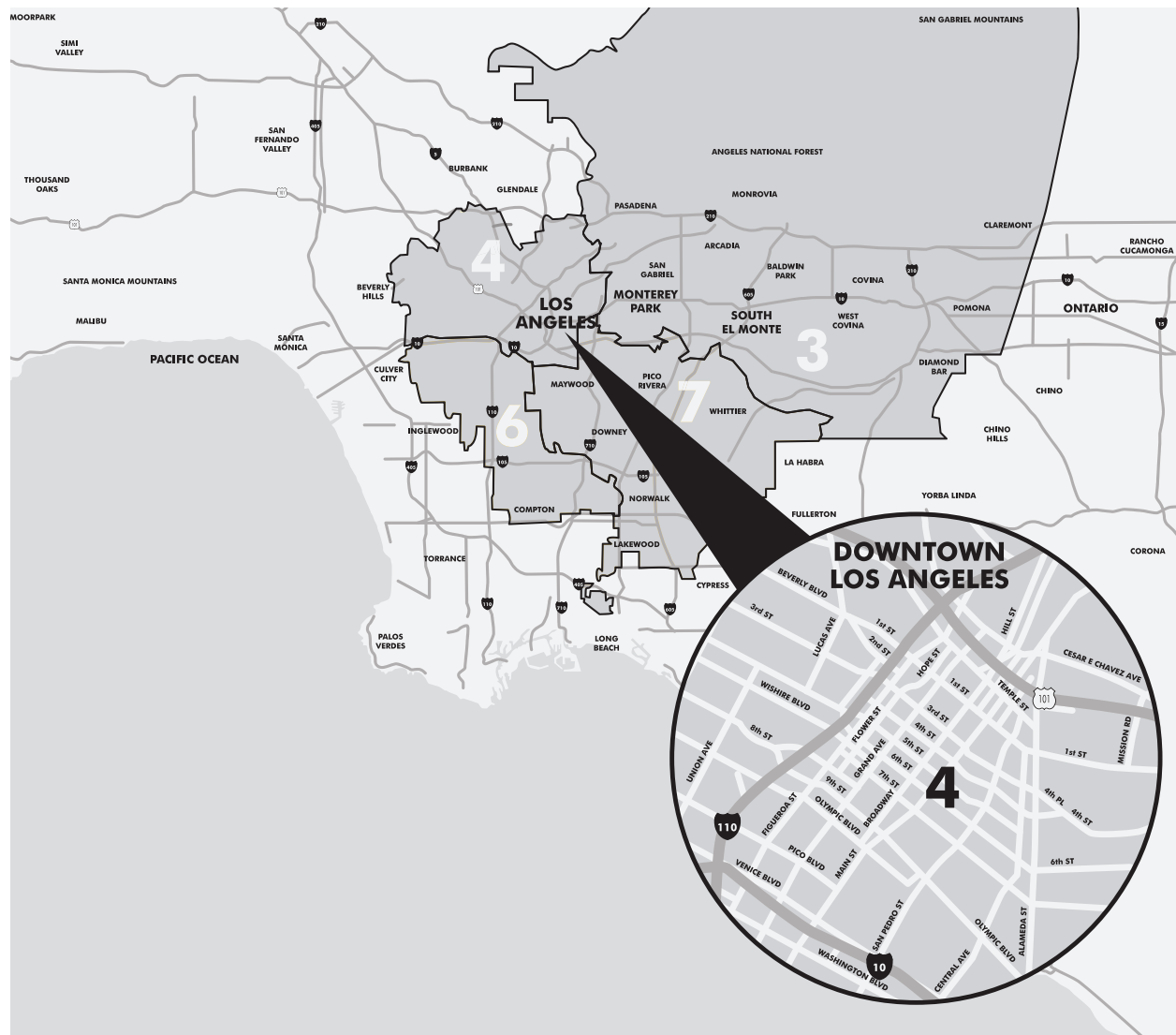
CORE GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENTS. Para Los Niños provides services in high poverty communities located throughout Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. Upon examination of costs, benefits, and fit with the Para Los Niños Integrated Model of Urban Education, it has become clear that focusing on core communities is essential to enabling more effective coordination and integration of services.

The core geographic focus of the five-year Strategic Plan is Service Planning Area 4. This community encompasses the following areas: Skid Row, Downtown, Wilshire La Brea, Wilshire Center, Westlake, Temple-Beaudry, Mid-City, Chinatown, Hollywood, Pico-Union and Boyle Heights, Echo Park, Downtown, Filipinotown, Boyle Heights, Lincoln Heights, Highland Park, USC North West Adams, and West Hollywood.

In addition, Para Los Niños has significant commitments in South Los Angeles and East Los Angeles, which fall into SPAs 3, 6 and 7. SPA 6 communities include: USC South, Figueroa Corridor, Leimert Park, Hyde Park, Harbor Gateway North, Florence Graham, Athens, Willowbrook, Rosewood, Baldwin Hills South, Hancock Park North, USC East, Watts, Florence-Firestone, Lynwood, Paramount, and Compton. SPAs 3 and 7 include: East LA, Downey, Norwalk, Whittier, Montebello, Huntington Park, South Gate, Bell, La Habra, Pico Rivera, Bellflower, Signal Hill, Lakewood-Cerritos-Artesia-Hawaiian Gardens, La Mirada-Santa Fe Springs, and

Bell Gardens-Bell-Maywood-Cudahy-Commerce. Additionally, we have commitments in Ontario, which is located in San Bernardino County. One of Para Los Niños' important goals for the coming period is to expand the accessibility of mental health and family support services available in core communities, and to deepen the level of integration and coordination of these services. As funding and physical space will permit, we will increasingly cluster children and family services at our educational centers. However, no Child and Family Wellness Centers are scheduled to open in non-core areas during the five-year Plan timeframe.

PARA LOS NIÑOS CORE SERVICE AREAS



* LOCATIONS AND PROGRAMS ARE CURRENT AS OF AUGUST 2010.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1- DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

2010-2015 GOALS:

- Create Child and Family Wellness Centers at current educational centers.
- Institutionalize the Para Los Niños Integrated Model of high-quality education, mental health, and family support services for children and their families.
- Implement the Para Los Niños Integrated Model in core geographic communities.
- Improve student test scores and academic performance over comparable schools serving similar populations in the region.
- Reach or exceed API scores of 800 at Para Los Niños Charter Schools.
- Improve outcomes for children and their families across programs and age-groups.
- Achieve a positive national reputation as a leader in Urban Education and garner national investments as a result.
- Strengthen collaborations in service provision by supporting and convening communities around topics of early childhood development and educational efforts.

B. STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES – LEADING EVALUATION AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Historically, we at Para Los Niños have had a long-standing commitment to quality and the ongoing pursuit of excellence. Now more than ever, as the economic and political landscape has changed, this commitment remains vitally important. To that end, our Five-Year Plan calls for an innovative and effective evaluation plan that will more deeply demonstrate the positive impact of our work, by supporting continuous quality improvement, effective resource allocation, and accountability.

EVALUATION. Through the identification and development of measurement instruments, sampling frameworks, and detailed data collection procedures and systems, useful and relevant results will be analyzed with the kind of rigor required to support the dissemination of results through peer-review publications and conference presentations (or other relevant venues), and to garner attention for our work on a national scale. This evaluation plan will be based on an integrated approach that accounts for impacts across the whole child – the academic, psychological, cultural, social, emotional, and physical components of a child – and includes the context of the family. Based on this, we will develop an agency-wide comprehensive evaluation plan that will include short- and long-term goals, benchmarks, methodology, and infrastructure needed to evaluate:

- Academic achievement
- Child development
- Child and family well-being
- Risk factors and learning barriers
- Protective factors and learning supports

LEADING RESEARCH. As a leader in our field, we view research both as an opportunity and a responsibility. The next five years will provide a particularly unique opportunity to participate in the advancement of knowledge in the field of Urban Education, through the identification of strategic areas of opportunity to close the achievement gap experienced by low-income and/or minority children in urban areas. Among other best practices, our research objectives include an exhaustive literature review of relevant evaluation efforts, focusing on methods, outcomes, and the effectiveness of current approaches.

As our plan is implemented, accreditation, best practices and evidence-based programs, continuous quality improvement processes, evaluation, and data management will become increasingly relevant in our practices, culture, and investments. These will be key areas of focus and growth within the next five years. For more information on Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), Data Management (including Social Solutions' Efforts-to-Outcomes agency-wide

data system), and the Para Los Niños Internal Review Board (IRB) established to oversee all research activities, please see Appendix L.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2 - DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2010-2015 GOALS:

- Develop an evaluation methodology to: (1) assess the Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services, and (2) determine impact on clients served across the agency.
- Create the infrastructure required for effective data collection and analysis to support ongoing assessment of Para Los Niños' programs and outcomes.
- Use more sophisticated and informative evaluation data to drive programmatic quality improvement and to shape organizational decision-making.
- Contribute to the field of urban education and community development and play a key role in informing and shaping educational policy.
- Provide demonstrated, increased accountability to families, funders, and other stakeholders.
- Provide evidence of a high-quality model that can be replicated in other communities.

C. PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY – ENSURING A SAFE AND SOUND FUTURE

To make real and measurable progress in closing the educational achievement gap and reducing urban poverty in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties, small scale, “steady-state” change is no longer enough. We aim to achieve major change by developing an Integrated Model of Urban Education that is based on evidence and best practices, is informed by stakeholders, is responsive to ongoing community needs, and provides experiences in which our children can learn, succeed, and thrive. Achieving large-scale results requires a sustainable organization, poised to weather changes in political and economic climates, and able to commit a major investment of resources toward the realization of a bold goal. In the case of Para Los Niños, where children are at the heart of our work, the achievement of our vision also requires a sound and reliable infrastructure that assures the safety and success of all those we are honored to serve.

We estimate that the visionary and necessary work we propose to undertake will require an investment of \$25 million to achieve. Without this level of investment, goals will need to be pared down and impact will be reduced.

CREATING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

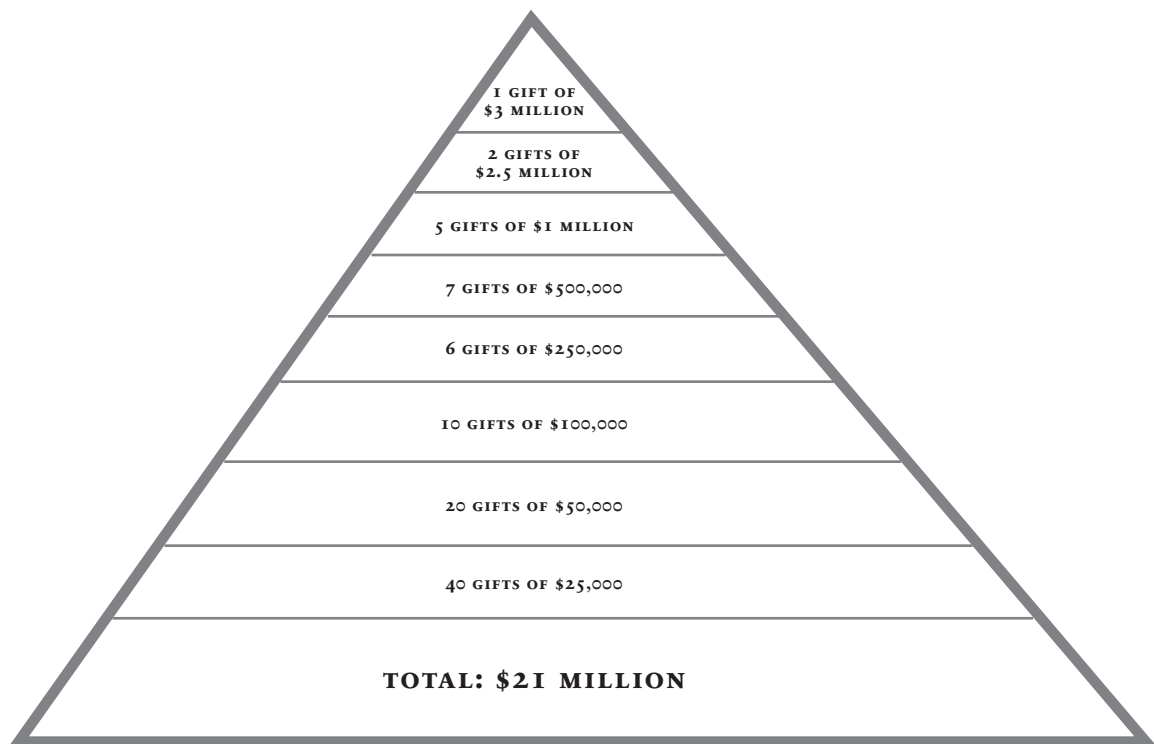
Over the years, Para Los Niños has been over-dependent upon government contracts, whose reliability changes based on shifting political and economic climates. To meet the objectives of the Plan, diversify funding streams, and become less dependent upon government contracts, Para Los Niños will mount a major development campaign, including enhanced private sector fundraising, identification of potential private sector leadership gifts, and early cultivation of prospects. The fundraising plan will identify various funding streams and actions to secure these funds, and is the cornerstone of the Plan’s success.

Underlying the plan are four strategic imperatives:

- **Establish Financial Resiliency to Changing Economic Climates** by building Para Los Niños’ cash reserve.
- **Mine New Sources of Private Sector Support** through a greater investment in fundraising, especially to individual donors and planned giving opportunities.
- **Achieve a Greater Level of Long-Term Financial Independence** by establishing a more permanent source of unrestricted operating income.
- **Elevate Para Los Niños’ Brand Recognition in the Private Sector Marketplace** through stronger branding, marketing and communications initiatives.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT. Funds raised during the campaign will come from two broad income streams: private sector support and government contracts. The strategic intent of the Plan is to fundamentally change Para Los Niños’ funding mix and heavy reliance on government contracts by building an effective and compelling strategy to engage private sector support. Support from the private sector will comprise 84% of the funding, equal to \$21 million raised over the five-year plan period, and will originate from the following sources: foundation grants and program related investments; corporate grants and sponsorships; major donors; and planned giving pledges and bequests.

Below is a preliminary chart of private sector fundraising that summarizes the number and size of grants and donations needed to reach our \$21 million goal by 2015:



Public sources will contribute \$4 million, or about 16% of income generated over the five-year plan period, and will come from contracts for enrollment, per capita case management and service delivery; new family support and mental health grants, and new federal contracts and grants.

MARKETING, COMMUNICATION, AND BRANDING. The development of a comprehensive and strategic communication plan is critical to successfully increase positive awareness, create support from target segments, and drive revenue required to fund the Strategic Plan outcomes. Re-branding work has already begun to position Para Los Niños as a leader in the field of Inte-

grated Urban Education, particularly in widespread geographic areas like that of Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. The crux of the strategic communication plan is the positioning of Para Los Niños as offering an evidence-based, yet unique and innovative model of success in closing the education achievement gap in underserved communities.

FACILITIES MAINTENANCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The safety and well-being of the children and families seeking education and assistance at our facilities is of paramount importance to our organization and our Board of Directors. Likewise, the successful implementation of the Plan relies on a high-quality technology infrastructure for financial management and reporting, as well as data collection, program quality assurance and evaluation of success. The Strategic Plan calls for a thorough review of the facilities asset portfolio including a schedule to address deferred maintenance and maintain the complex physical infrastructure, the implementation of new financial management and human resource technology tools as well as securitization of information and data, and a comprehensive emergency preparedness and disaster recovery plan for all Para Los Niños sites.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3 - INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY 2010-2015 GOALS:

- Mount a major agency-wide fundraising campaign to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.
- Conduct a successful fundraising campaign to raise \$25 million with the support of volunteer leaders and Board Members and expand the agency's reputation, reach, and relationships.
- Improve Para Los Niños' fundraising capabilities and significantly expand individual giving, develop a planned giving strategy, and increase national and regional government and foundation support.
- Build a cash reserve.
- Develop branding, marketing, and communications strategies that support the Strategic Plan.
- Address deferred maintenance in Para Los Niños' facilities and infrastructure.
- Ensure that Para Los Niños is prepared for emergencies.
- Increase Para Los Niños' technology platform (including financial management and accounting systems as well as information management).

V. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

The following timeline is designed to give an overview of the implementation process according to the strategic priority framework. The timeline provides specific benchmarks, and will be used by the Board and staff to ensure that Para Los Niños achieves the desired outcomes, or to guide course correction, as needed.

2010 – 2011 Timeline and Objectives for Implementation

PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

- Identify areas of focus to begin implementation of the Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services.
- Begin to invest in prioritized components of the implementation of the integrated model at the identified core geographic community/school site.
- Develop plans to increase staff qualifications, experience levels, professional development, and retention, especially in relation to peer organizations.
- Develop new strategies to ensure all programs are maintained at full enrollment and contracts are maximized.
- Develop a plan for identifying and focusing resources needed for the implementation of the Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services and for transitioning components no longer cost effective or inconsistent with the strategic vision.
- Develop materials, procedures and policies needed for implementation of integration efforts.
- Assess and redesign agency organizational structure and staffing model as needed.
- Begin the remodel to develop the first Child and Family Wellness Center.
- Prepare the agency for the COA Re-accreditation process and the Charter School for certification processes.

PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Conduct a preliminary assessment of evaluation needs for all programs, including Para Los Niños' Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services for children and their families.
- Develop an agency-wide comprehensive evaluation plan including short- and long-term goals, benchmarks, methodology, and infrastructure needs to evaluate:
 - Academic achievement
 - Child development

-
- Child and family well-being
 - Risk factors and learning barriers
 - Protective factors and learning supports
 - Design the infrastructure and data management tools needed to implement the evaluation plan, including customizing the Social Solutions' Efforts-to-Outcomes (ETO) software and developing evaluation policies and procedures.
 - Ensure high standards of quality assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement plans by strengthening and expanding the agency's CQI program.
 - Recruit additional individuals to serve on the Para Los Niños Internal Review Board to oversee the review, selection, monitoring, and supervision of external research proposals.
 - Complete implementation of ETO data system.
 - Assess and analyze existing client outcome and formative assessment data and create a comprehensive report to share findings with non-profit and policy arenas.

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Begin a review of Para Los Niños' facilities asset portfolio and develop a facilities plan to evaluate assets and make the best use of Para Los Niños' facilities and programs according to the Strategic Plan.
- Develop the framework for a major campaign to raise sufficient funding for the achievement of the Strategic Plan priorities, goals, and outcomes.
- Implement new financial management and human resources technology tools.
- Develop policies for building and using cash reserves.
- Assess staffing needs, create and fill positions or contractual agreements to manage the fundraising campaign, conduct a campaign feasibility study, refine the campaign framework, and launch the major agency-wide fundraising campaign.
- Develop multi-faceted methods to protect Para Los Niños' annual fundraising while conducting the campaign.
- Recruit a Steering Committee (to include non-Board and Board members) to provide leadership for the campaign and secure leadership gifts.
- Develop a strategy for engaging the Para Los Niños Board in substantive fundraising.
- Assess current perceptions, descriptions, and media coverage of Para Los Niños and develop an enhanced visual identity and branding and update all collateral materials.
- Expand and implement a more comprehensive emergency preparedness plan including safety and emergency supplies, appropriate storage, and staff training.

2011 – 2012 Timeline and Objectives for Implementation

PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

- Create and fill needed staff positions to ensure successful integration and leadership aligned with strategic plan.
- Invest in computer hardware and software to increase administrative effectiveness and programmatic impact.
- Open the first school-based integrated Para Los Niños Child and Family Wellness Center (CFWC) as a prototype for replication to offer place-based child and family therapy, crisis intervention, counseling, prevention and intervention outreach and education, and case management services as integrated/coordinated components of services available to students and their families.
- Complete Charter School certifications.
- Identify critical community partners and develop strategic relationships, formal and informal collaborations to complement strategic vision and integrated model.

PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Begin systematic investments in evaluation technology, data management tools, and capacity building to implement the Para Los Niños evaluation plan.
- Implement the first phase of the evaluation plan and closely monitor and adjust methodology as needed.
- Gather baseline data, analyze demographic information, and write preliminary report for internal stakeholders.
- Adjust yearly and long-term goals informed by data as needed.
- Ensure ETO data system is fully functioning agency-wide.

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Begin implementation of investments to address deferred maintenance in Para Los Niños' facilities.
- Reach 30% of campaign goal (from all sources including governmental contracts, leadership gifts, and foundation grants).
- Enhance donor stewardship and engagement through acknowledgement, regular communication, and events.
- Launch the comprehensive Para Los Niños communications strategy including publications, advertising, public relations, community, government relations, and donor/funding community components.

2012 – 2013 Timeline and Objectives for Implementation

PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

- Assess effectiveness and utilization of Child and Family Wellness Center model, adjust, and expand as possible by funding opportunities.
- Open the second CFWC.

PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Develop research and evaluation collaborations with expert entities as appropriate and needed.
- Implement needed changes to the evaluation plan and implement the second phase.

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Develop a comprehensive plan for facilities acquisition and management that complements Para Los Niños' integrated model and core geographic focus.
- Reach 60% of campaign goal.
- Maintain steady stream of enhanced communications with all audiences and stakeholders.

2013 – 2014 Timeline and Objectives for Implementation

PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

- Achieve API ratings of 800 or above for all schools, meet federally-established AYPs based on student test scores, and reach positive outcomes on all other student performance measures at the elementary and middle school in comparison to past performance and to other schools serving similar populations in the region.
- Open the third CFWC.
- Expand staffing to meet the integration model needs.

PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Begin preliminary evaluation data analysis and create comprehensive internal and external reports.

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Begin implementation of facilities plan.
- Announce the campaign publicly after reaching benchmark of 75% of campaign goal.
- Assess marketing capacity and strengthen areas as needed.
- Continue to enhance the Board's role in providing communications strategy and counsel.

2014 – 2015 Timeline and Objectives for Implementation

PRIORITY 1: DEEPEN PROGRAMMATIC QUALITY

- Assess the potential to select a second community to begin to implement the integrated model.
- Begin to plan for the necessary investments in prioritized programmatic components to implement the integrated model in an additional community.
- Open the fourth CFWC.

PRIORITY 2: DEMONSTRATE IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- Write a white paper about Para Los Niños' evaluation plan, methodology, and approach to developing a model of integrated urban education, mental health, and family support services.
- Explore publication possibilities and publish at least one paper.

PRIORITY 3: INCREASE ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

- Reach 100% of campaign goal (by 12/31/2015) and celebrate accomplishments.
- Transition campaign donors into annual donors.
- Integrate campaign leadership onto Para Los Niños Board.
- Develop a communication/dissemination strategy based upon the evaluation findings and outcomes of Para Los Niños' high-quality model including targeted audiences in the region and nationally.

VI. CONCLUSION

In an ideal world where no child experiences hunger, neglect, illiteracy or fear, and every family has the tools to succeed, the relevance of Para Los Niños would – happily – cease to exist. Until that day, we remain focused on addressing the inequalities that form the underlying causes of the educational achievement gap in the United States today. To that end, Para Los Niños will dedicate the next five years to the successful implementation of the strategic priorities that we believe will lead to the development of an innovative and replicable model of integrated education. Achieving these priorities will make meaningful progress toward eliminating the achievement gap and enabling children and their families to achieve sustainable success in the classroom and beyond.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS 2010-2015 STRATEGIC PLAN

APPENDICES:

- A. STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
- B. A DETAILED HISTORY OF PARA LOS NIÑOS
- C. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL APPROACH
- D. DETAILED OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION SERVICES
- E. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL GOALS
- F. A DETAILED LOOK AT A PARA LOS NIÑOS CHARTER SCHOOL
- G. AN INTEGRATION CASE STUDY
- H. THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHANGE FRAMEWORK
- I. SERVICES PROVIDED AT CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS
- J. BUILDING CAPACITY AND STAFFING AT CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS
- K. DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARIES OF AREAS SERVED
- L. QUALITY ASSURANCE & RESEARCH
- M. REFERENCES

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

In March 2009, Para Los Niños embarked on a year-long strategic planning process to guide the organization's development through 2015. The goal of the project was to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that will result in a clear, compelling vision of the agency's future and a realistic roadmap to guide future program and administrative growth, along with the corresponding resource development. We contracted Draper Consulting Group (DCG), a capacity building consulting firm, to assist in this effort by helping to design and facilitate the planning process. An organization-wide strategic planning process was developed to address critical opportunities and challenges and to lead staff and Board leadership through the creation of the strategic vision.

Over the course of twelve months, the staff and Board of Directors of Para Los Niños worked to develop and analyze questionnaires and interviews, and guided numerous strategic planning sessions. Additionally, the Para Los Niños staff participated in internal work groups, meetings, research, and material development, all in support of the development of the strategic plan.

The planning process included the full participation of all the Directors, Principals, and Executive Team members in crafting the Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health and Family Support Services. Consensus and commitment to a common, unifying vision was an important and inspiring outcome which required the diligence and commitment of the agency's Board and staff, especially the Executive Management Team, Principals, and Directors, and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board. We acknowledge the contributions and insights from each of the following members of Para Los Niños' leadership:

*Acknowledgements as of date of public release.

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APPENDIX B: A DETAILED HISTORY OF PARA LOS NIÑOS

Right in the midst of all that despair and sorrow stands an anomaly, a place of vigor to counterbalance, even if it is to a small degree, the dreadfulness of the vicinity. It's called Para Los Niños, and it is a fountain of hope, or life itself, in a wasteland of humanity.

Fernando I. Dominguez, *Daily News*, February 9, 1981

In 1979, a *Los Angeles Times* reporter named Grahame Jones wrote an in-depth investigative story about the plight of children living on Skid Row, a part of downtown Los Angeles best described as “hell on earth.” The article entitled, “The Children of Skid Row,” captured the essence of impoverished children living in the shadows of society exposed to environments with which children should never have contact. Energized by the *Times* article, Tanya Tull, an experienced social worker and teacher, was moved to act. Her vision was to create the first children’s social service agency on Skid Row, to be called Para Los Niños/For the Children. Designed to be an oasis in the middle of the squalor, stench, and sadness of Skid Row, Para Los Niños was to provide hope and state-of-the-art services to children from many races, ethnicities, and developmental backgrounds.

With the help of Joel Simon, a local attorney providing his services *pro bono*, and the support of Nina van Pallandt, an actress who would become the first board chair of the new non-profit, Ms. Tull incorporated Para Los Niños on December 7, 1979. In January of 1980, when Tom Bradley was mid-way through his second term as Mayor of Los Angeles and an estimated 10,000 people lived on Skid Row, Para Los Niños secured an initial \$5,000 grant and leased an old 5,000 square foot eyelash factory at 845 East 6th Street, in the heart of Skid Row. The space was soon thereafter renovated and licensed to operate as a childcare facility to serve 51 children. Para Los Niños opened its doors and began serving children on January 5, 1981.

From Skid Row’s debilitating urban playing fields, Para Los Niños emerged as a safe and nurturing environment for the poorest children in Los Angeles and their families. The county’s geographic distribution, its population’s racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and linguistic diversity, and an influx of immigration, makes it a unique environment requiring careful consideration of elements such as transportation, culture, community resources, and potential partnerships when developing and implementing service models. Because of its size and population, Los Angeles County is divided into eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs). The SPAs 3, 4, 6, and 7 include the greatest concentrations of poverty in the city of Los Angeles. SPA 4 includes Los Angeles’ Skid Row, a 50 block area of downtown which encompasses the largest homeless population in the United States. These high-poverty communities face particular challenges such as overcrowded schools, high teacher turnover rates, and low academic achievement. Direct correlations have been found between high-poverty neighborhoods and low-quality public schools. Other factors associated with living in poverty have also been shown to nega-

tively affect academic achievement and include: parental level of education, environmental toxicity, poor nutrition, chaotic or unstable homes, and exposure to domestic violence, all of which make efforts to eliminate the educational achievement gap synonymous with the battle against poverty. The result is that children who are raised in poverty do not have access to opportunities or support for optimal development at home or in school, and therefore, the cycle continues.

Para Los Niños' roster of services now includes educational services at seven early childhood development centers, a charter elementary and charter middle school, and after-school programs across. Our family services program has grown to service a spectrum of needs from basic supplies such as food and diapers, to family preservation through in-home counseling and parent education. We provide clinical and mental health services and have strong partnerships with agencies expert in providing critical services outside our spectrum. In the past five years, programs have been added to specifically address the challenges of youth entering the workforce, prepare foster youth for independent living, and create demonstration communities that support the growth and development of young children and their families. Throughout time, Para Los Niños has always kept its core focus – helping to empower poor children and their families to rise up out of poverty and succeed.

Since 1980, Para Los Niños has grown to serve over 7,000 children, youth, and families each year. As the needs of its constituencies have changed, Para Los Niños has grown into a complex, multi-faceted organization providing comprehensive family services that help mitigate the challenges faced by low-income families living and working in urban environments. To respond to these needs, Para Los Niños has expanded geographically and programmatically, with sites throughout the region, each of which provides a continuum of learning through significant educational components, including an elementary school and most recently, a middle school. This impressive expansion has required developing new areas of expertise and skill sets, recruiting a broad range of professionals, and obtaining diverse accreditations and licenses. It has meant developing the infrastructure to manage organizational and programmatic complexity as well as multi-site operations and public accountability.

In the past 10 years, Para Los Niños' budget has grown from \$5.7 million to over \$25 million, and income generation has expanded to include a host of local, regional, and state government grants and contracts. Private sector resources have also expanded and Para Los Niños now enjoys a strong reputation among foundations, corporations, and donors. Funding has been immediately directed toward expanding our programming to meet critical community needs, but financial reserves have not kept pace. Despite growing sources of income the cost to maintain facilities and to meet the increasing needs of clients has made it difficult to maintain or build reserves.

Through a year-long strategic planning process, Para Los Niños' Board and staff have reflected upon this growth and developed opportunities to build on Para Los Niños' impressive strengths, identify solutions to key challenges, and pave the way for long-term sustainability. Para Los Niños seeks to expand our reputation by becoming the model of urban education for children and families living in inner city communities.

APPENDIX C: THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL GUIDING PHILOSOPHY. The following guiding principles were developed to support our educational approach:

1. Every child has the right to develop the skills to ask deep questions and to think critically.
2. Every child has the right to a school and classroom environment that continuously changes to stimulate and deepen learning.
3. Every child has the right to use his or her primary language as a building block for literacy.
4. Every child has the right to be an active participant in his or her own thinking and learning.
5. Every child has the right to learn through rich firsthand experiences that provoke thinking and language development.
6. Every child has the right to express, interpret and demonstrate knowledge in many different ways.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL APPROACH AND THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH TO EDUCATION The educational approach at Para Los Niños is informed and inspired by various philosophies, approaches and research. The Reggio Emilia approach to education is one of the most salient sources of consideration and inspiration for us. The following provides a simple summary of that approach and some of the main elements we have considered and adapted to fit our context. The Reggio Emilia approach to education was developed for municipal child-care and education programs serving children six and under. It was started after WWII by pedagoga and psychologist Loris Malaguzzi and the parents of the villages around Reggio Emilia, Italy, all of whom were trying to create schools that would foster the critical thinking and collaborative skills necessary to rebuild a democratic society.

These parents and educators believed that the ultimate individuality of a child is most greatly formed during his/her early years of development. This led to the creation of the Reggio Emilia Approach, which is based on values of respect, responsibility, and community through exploration and discovery. Key to the Reggio Emilia approach is a supportive and enriching learning environment which is grounded in the following principles:

- Children should be envisioned as competent, and full of potential.
- Children have an ability to learn through different kinds of experiences.
- Children have relationships with other children, with adults, with the environment and the materials found in the environment.
- Children have endless ways and opportunities to express themselves.

Early childhood programs that have adopted this educational model say, most often, that they are attracted to Reggio Emilia because of the way it views and respects the child.

PARENTS PLAY A VITAL ROLE. Parents are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. Teachers include parents in the activities of the school and involve them in many ongoing experiences. It is common to see parents collaborating within classrooms throughout the school and this philosophy does not end when the child leaves the classroom. Most parents who choose to send their children to a Reggio Emilia program modify their own image of the child within their parenting and life at home.

Parents are also included in discussions about school policy, child development concerns, and in the planning and development of the children's own experiences.

TEACHERS GET INSPIRED TOO. The role of the teacher is to be that of a learner alongside the children. Educators carefully listen, observe, interpret and document children's work and the growth of community in their classroom. They provoke, co-construct, and stimulate individual thinking, as well as children's collaboration with peers. Teachers are committed to reflection about their own teaching and learning.

Teachers learn about each child, not just what is typical of children in general. The teacher in Reggio Emilia is the researcher, the learner, and the strategic contributor to the child's capacity to learn.

When observing a teacher who has been schooled in the Reggio Emilia approach, you may hear sentences such as the following being said: "The child is worthy of being listened to." "Listen, observe, interact, and learn from the child." "Do not place the child in adult-designed or arbitrary time slots of adult management systems." "If the child is misbehaving, find out why, find out what the child is trying to communicate, find out how you can interact with the child." "The teacher's job as an adult is to encourage the child to communicate his feelings and support the child toward a positive resolution of the problem."

To summarize, under the Reggio Emilia approach, the primary role of a teacher is:

- To co-explore the learning experience with students.
- To provoke critical thinking, and to stimulate ideas, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- To take ideas from the children and return them for further exploration.
- To organize aesthetically pleasing materials and those which support thoughtful decisions about educational experiences, in collaboration with parents.

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- To give visibility to learning processes through mediums such as videotapes, tape recordings, and portfolios.
 - To collaborate with the children and see the connections they are making in learning and experiences.
 - To help children express their knowledge through representational work.
 - To form a collaborative environment among other teachers, parents and children.
 - To engage in dialogue about student projects with children, their parents, and other teachers.
 - To foster a connection between home, school, and community.

DOCUMENTING PROJECTS. Documentation is central in the Reggio Emilia approach. Documenting a child’s work communicates all that occurs in the classroom, provides a visual representation of a child’s creative process, and provides opportunities for children to revisit a particular experience. Documentation is a process that involves observation, reflection, collaboration, interpretation and analysis, and is a meaningful tool for professional development.

Multiple forms of documentation exist, including photographs, audiotape transcripts, videotapes, note taking and the actual product of a child’s work, all of which create a multi sensory “memory” of an activity. Documentation gives visibility to the way knowledge is built, and posting the documentation encourages children to learn from one another and to appreciate the process of developing different experiences.

Teachers and children often work on projects in small groups. The types of projects that teachers and their classes may work on can differ in a number of ways. For example, the topic of investigation may derive directly from teacher observations of children’s spontaneous play and exploration. Project topics can also be selected on the basis of academic learning, social learning, or a concern on the part of teachers or parents. Or, they can come from serendipitous events that capture the attention of the children and teachers. Projects are often conducted as a support, or overlay, to a curriculum.

In short, projects:

- Can emerge from the ideas and/or interests of children and their teachers.
- Can be introduced by teachers after observing children in action in different contexts.
- Should be developed over time, should provide context so new ideas can emerge, should invite different points of view, should have potential for negotiation and agreements, should be able to be revisited to see progress and analyze learning processes.

Reggio Emilia teachers place a high value on building a positive attitude and responding to children’s predisposition to enjoying the unexpected. Projects often begin with teachers ob-

serving and having a conversation with children about different topics of interest. Based on children's responses and interactions with other children, teachers can generate questions and create opportunities that provoke children to further explore the topic.

Projects may last one week, one month or could continue throughout the school year. Throughout a project, children and teachers make decisions about the direction of study, the ways in which the group will research the topic, the medium that will best demonstrate and showcase the topic, and the selection of materials needed to represent the work.

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT. In the Reggio Emilia approach great attention is given to the look and feel of the classroom because the classroom or school environment is considered the "third teacher." Space is organized for small and large group work and also small intimate spaces for one, two or three children. Documentation of the work is displayed at eye level for both children and adults. Common space available to all children in the school may include dramatic play areas, block areas, dress-up areas, puppetry theaters, music areas, and worktables for children from different classrooms to come together.

Such a welcoming environment encourages children and teachers to engage in activity and discovery. Wall-sized windows, mirrors placed on floors, walls, and ceilings, establish a space filled with opportunity. The Reggio Emilia approach integrates nature into the learning processes so that the child learns to appreciate the physical and structural elements of his/her environment. Whenever possible, architecture is designed to encourage playful, meaningful and joyful encounters.

THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN. As children and teachers proceed in an investigation, generating and testing their hypotheses, they are encouraged to depict their understanding through one of many symbolic languages, including drawing, sculpture, dramatic play, writing, reading, theater, dance, shadows, etc. They work together toward the resolution of problems that arise. Teachers facilitate and then observe debates regarding the extent to which a child's drawing or other form of representation lives up to the expressed intent. Revision of drawings and ideas is encouraged, and teachers and the children collaborate together to revisit projects and modify each other's work in the collective aim of better understanding topics and concepts. Teachers foster children's involvement in the processes of exploration and evaluation, acknowledging the importance of their evolving products as vehicles for exchange.

REPRESENTATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. The Reggio Emilia approach calls for the integration of the graphic arts as tools for cognitive, creative, linguistic, and social development. Presentation of concepts and hypotheses in multiple forms of representation – print, art, construction, drama, music, puppetry, and shadow play – are viewed as essential to children's understanding of experience.

COLLABORATION. Collaborative group work, both large and small, is considered valuable and necessary to advance cognitive and social development. Children, teachers and parents are encouraged to dialogue, critique, compare, negotiate, hypothesize, and problem solve through group work. Within the Reggio Emilia approach, multiple perspectives promote both a sense of group membership and the uniqueness of self. Their high emphasis on the collaboration among home school community supports the learning of the child.

Source: First Presbyterian Nursery School

The aspects described above are some of the most influential Reggio Emilia elements which have been adapted in our own educational approach. We have included such elements in our own approach at the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels. We strongly believe that children who live in poverty need education which addresses and incorporates these elements in a culturally and linguistically relevant manner, to ensure the early and continuous development of critical thinking skills, creativity, and the confidence required to succeed and move out of poverty.

PROGRAM CONTINUITY ACROSS EDUCATIONAL STAGES

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND LITERACY. In our Early Childhood programs, we use the child's primary language (most often Spanish) as a vehicle for developing communication skills in English. In context and through a systematic and developmental approach, Early Literacy methodology introduces transferable letter sounds in Spanish and English- and thus, builds capacity for two literacy options in elementary school - English only or Bilingual Literacy. The Para Los Niños Elementary Charter School builds upon the strength of the student's language when entering Kindergarten and offers parents either program for literacy learning. At the Para Los Niños Middle School, students continue the process of English acquisition. Here, all instruction is delivered in English. Each faculty member holds either a special Bilingual, Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) credential or a Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certificate and is supported in the classroom with a bilingual colleague in order to support the mastery of English Language Development (ELD) standards for all students.

CONTENT AREAS OF STUDY. Our Science, Social Studies and Mathematics curricula seamlessly bridge Pre-Kindergarten to Kindergarten and Elementary to Middle School by organizing learning around overarching concepts and big ideas while focusing on the development of Academic Language within these domains. Children actively engage in student driven inquiry projects and are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their conceptual understanding using representation through "a hundred languages" (the many different modes and means of expression – music, movement, words, art media, etc.) that children use to demonstrate their thinking, a practice essential for English Language Learners.

THE ARTS. The Arts play an essential role in the demonstration of children’s understanding of concepts and ideas. Throughout the learning process, students are offered opportunities to show their understanding in a multitude of ways: two dimensionally, through sketches and drawings, three dimensionally, through models and construction, through the performing arts, such as plays, dance and song, and through textual and oral representation. These opportunities to represent ideas offer children multiple entry points into the learning process, help to deepen conceptual understanding and serve as an assessment tool to help inform instruction.

PARENT/CAREGIVER EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT. Parent or caregiver participation is an essential component of the Para Los Niños Educational Model. Throughout the stages of education, parent workshops, parent leadership opportunities, and parent involvement create a learning community and a valued partnership in the education of the child.

THE ROLE OF TEACHERS AS RESEARCHERS. The philosophy of Teacher as Researcher fosters a data-driven environment for teachers to monitor student progress and utilize reflective teaching practices to continuously refine instructional content and methods. By merging research and practice, teachers can make instructional decisions that move students forward toward the learning goal. Teachers are provided with opportunities to develop a curriculum and plan lessons that are driven by student ideas. Assessment and learning goals are aligned at every educational stage. Observations, documentation of student work, and data from standardized assessments complete the picture for analyses within similar and comparative groups.

Through Social Solution’s *Efforts-to-Outcomes*, the data-system utilized throughout the agency to track services and client outcomes, teachers have access to a longitudinal and holistic perspective of a child’s development in the context of their family while also providing opportunities to evaluate success of our educational strategies.

Collaborative planning is an essential component of The Teacher as a Researcher philosophy. Teachers work together to formulate experiential lesson plans that drive student inquiry, vocabulary building and critical thinking. Particular attention is paid to the unique needs of English Language Learners. Discussion time is built into all lessons. Through these discussions with children, ideas for instructional content and classroom projects often arise. The teachers’ role is to infuse these ideas into curriculum planning, and considerable thought is given to the materials needed, and how parents and/or the community may actively support these efforts.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. A teachers’ professional growth is key to student achievement. Through carefully planned and coordinated professional development, our faculty builds “pedagogical content knowledge” which serves to strengthen their core experience. Pedagogical content knowledge gives teachers the knowledge and strategies needed for providing instruction in particular disciplines, which is different from knowledge of general teaching

methods. In developing pedagogical content knowledge, teachers discuss the methodology of practice within specific content areas so that conceptual understanding, language acquisition and skill building are taught effectively. Engaging and relevant professional development also serves to promote staff satisfaction, commitment and professionalism among our faculty and staff.

SAFE SCHOOL GUIDELINES. Our schools are committed to providing all children with a safe, nurturing and respectful environment. Our Safe School Guidelines set expectations based on values of respect, equity and fairness. Students participate in Safe School activities that are designed to help children understand and practice such concepts as integrity, self-reliance, kindness, fairness and responsibility. The Safe School curriculum includes the use of “Cool Tools,” which gives children a common language for resolving conflicts and methods to cope with bullying, peer taunting, exclusion and other socialization issues. [The Safe School curriculum was designed by the UCLA Lab School (www.labschool.ucla.edu/ -)].

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT. At Para Los Niños, the classroom environment is considered the “third teacher.” Teachers carefully organize thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating objects, books, and other materials for students to consider and question. Space is allocated for small and large group projects, and small intimate spaces are provided for one, two or three children to engage in learning. The classroom environment extends out of the classroom and into hallways as public displays of grade-level work that incorporate state standards. Children’s classroom work, along with visual representations of educational concepts, and collections made from field trips, are displayed at the eye level of both children and adults. Common areas become the vehicle for creating a stimulating community environment that reflects behavioral expectations, academic standards, and student inquiry.

WELLNESS. Health, wellness, and safety for all individuals at our schools are an ongoing priority. Multifaceted guidance and support services are a part of the fabric of school life. We strive to build resiliency in children and young people by creating an environment in which peaceful and safe interactions are expected and supported not only by written policies, professional development, and student-focused experiences but by providing students specialized professionals, such as Family Advocates and School Counselors, who are readily available to offer assistance. Family Advocates provide a trusted resource on the campuses by providing direct assistance to students and their families. Students whose success is challenged by poverty, lack of parental educational attainment, family conflict, emotional difficulties, gangs, substance abuse, early sexual activity, or any of the other risks that confront inner-city youth can work with their Family Advocate to identify workable solutions to their problems. The school staff also includes mental health clinician, and therapists, who can provide critical one-on-one therapy to students in need of support, and who can facilitate therapeutic groups which help students develop positive peer relationships. Family Advocates and School Counselors also maintain close collaborations with many other community organizations to which we refer students and families often.

APPENDIX D: DETAILED OVERVIEW OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

The educational services provided by Para Los Niños include early childhood development and preschool education, elementary and middle school education, as well as after-school enrichment.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Grounded in the principles of respect, responsibility and community, the overarching theoretical and philosophical approach to early childhood education is student-centered, engages families as partners, and encourages exploration and discovery based on the interests and developmental levels of young children.

The Para Los Niños Early Childhood Services Mission Statement:

Para Los Niños Early Childhood Services views all children as curious, intelligent, capable, and rich in potential and prepares them to become critical thinkers, lifelong learners and successful, productive members of their community.

The Early Childhood Education Services are made up of the following components:

ACADEMIC (Infant/Toddlers and Preschool Children). The academic curriculum is geared toward helping young children learn about themselves and the world around them through investigation and discovery, as well as through art, dramatic play, and social interactions; literacy and numeracy are introduced and woven through all projects and experiences. Infants and toddlers have the opportunity to explore what is socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful. Ideas or themes emerge by responding to the interests, questions, and concerns generated within the environment. Learning is connected with experience and prior knowledge.

CONTINUITY OF CARE. The Para Los Niños Early Childhood program is grounded in the belief that infants and toddlers do best when they receive continuous care by the same child development professional. This continuity of care is reinforced by placing each child in a small group and allowing them to interact with a primary caregiver each day. Trust is one of the most important building blocks to future learning, and is encouraged by the primary caregiver who learns the signals and cues of infants in his/her care, and responds accordingly.

PARENT EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT. All parent involvement practices are inspired by the principles, values, and goals of the Reggio Emilia approach. Consistent with our goal to provide family centered educational services, we incorporate elements of the Reggio Emilia approach, which encourages the ongoing exchange of ideas between parents and teachers as an essential means of developing innovative strategies for educating young children. The ap-

proach is strong in its identification of best practices for nurturing parent-teacher relationships. Early Childhood teachers provide meaningful daily feedback to parents about classroom projects, conduct regular parent meetings to discuss their child's development, and design flexible lesson plans that allow for parent participation and parent input into curriculum priorities.

The parent education within the Early Childhood Services curriculum serves to enhance parents' ability to identify and capitalize on learning opportunities that nurture their child's growth in a variety of developmental domains. It also encourages parents to communicate with teachers about their child's developmental progress and provides opportunities to reinforce that progress at school and at home.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHARTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School Mission Statement:

The Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School serves the children of working families in downtown Los Angeles. In doing so, we strive to cultivate and to celebrate the potential within each child, and equip our students with the skills, knowledge and confidence necessary to pursue excellence and succeed in a multi-cultural world. The School provides a nurturing, safe environment that inspires critical thinking, imagination, self-reliance and respect for others.

The educational program in the Para Los Niños Charter School includes a strong concentration on literacy and is made up of the following components:

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT. The Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School offers an educational option for parents: Dual Literacy or English-only instruction. Through the Dual Literacy program, literacy skills are developed in Spanish while the skills to develop English literacy are scaffolded (supported based on child's ability and performance at each level). Transferable skills are taught in English through the content areas of Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, using our constructivist approach tailored for English Language Learners. Teachers are trained to create educational environments that provide experiences which develop language and conceptual knowledge. Teachers use the *Standards Side By Side* developed by the San Diego Office of Education to link the California Standards to our Dual Literacy program.

Students who are not in the Dual Language Program can participate in the Structured English Language Development Program, which is geared toward students who are not necessarily fluent in English, but have been exposed to English and come to school with English as their dominant language. These students begin their literacy learning in English and learn academic English in science, social studies and math along with their peers. English Language

Development also focuses on vocabulary development, grammar, and syntax and language fluency in listening, speaking, reading and writing, through daily English instruction. Student progress is monitored through portfolios at each of the language production levels.

READING AND WRITING. Our language arts curriculum is primarily based on research from Teachers College at Columbia University and The Reading and Writing Institutes. The Reading and Writing Institute program, developed at Columbia University, includes key elements such as: Reading Aloud with Accountable Talk; Guided Reading; Shared Reading; Independent Writing; and Independent Reading. Children practice reading through decodable books aligned with Words Their Way in the early grades, and then chapter and non-fiction books as they progress. In daily reading “workshops,” students are explicitly taught the strategies and habits of effective reading; they learn to talk, think and write well about their reading, and to live richly literate lives. Literature Circles and Research Circles are added in the fourth grade to support the understanding of expository text.

Writing is developed from the earliest stages alongside reading. Children use their knowledge of sounds and symbols to communicate their ideas. They learn to organize and structure ideas, to write in a variety of genres, and to use the conventions of print appropriately (Calkins, *The Art of Teaching Writing*). In writing “workshops,” students learn to observe their lives and the world around them, and to collect, draft, revise, and publish well-crafted narrative and expository texts.

In addition to being taught as specific curricula, reading and writing are integrated into each content area. For example, students keep journals in their science classes, where they record what they have learned and their reactions to the material. In this way, they learn to effectively synthesize and communicate the subject matter.

MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, SOCIAL STUDIES, AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT. With subjects such as math, science and social studies, students are faced with the challenges of building both a conceptual understanding and the “Academic Language” required to master a particular domain of study. Through a strong experiential base, children are systematically instructed in the vocabulary and syntactic structures of each subject – also called the Academic Language of math, science, social studies, art, and music. Language development is promoted through the use of purposeful dialogue between teacher and students rather than through specific drills. Teachers have developed a lesson plan template that includes specific planning for English Language Learners, who gain a deeper understanding of each concept, and develop a larger vocabulary as they delve deeper into bigger concepts throughout the year. The continuity provided by the year-long concentration of study in science and social studies enables students to practice vocabulary usage and develop more complex sentence structures.

ARTS. The visual and performing arts are integrated into each subject described above. At the Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School, participation in the arts:

- Serves as a critical means to express thoughts, ideas and feelings in a creative and productive manner;
- Helps integrate subjects and apply the theory of multiple intelligences in the instructional program;
- Develops creative and critical thinking skills;
- Drives English Language development;
- Increases academic achievement by demonstrating conceptual understanding;
- Promotes student teamwork;
- Pictorially, theatrically or thematically demonstrates students' learning.

As part of the school's experiential approach, art is incorporated into many facets of the curriculum and is well integrated with subjects such as science or social studies. For example, students may study a science concept and then provide a visual interpretation of that concept through clay or painting. Alternatively, students may study a civilization in social studies, and then learn traditional songs or dances associated with it. This serves to engage students on broader levels and deepens their knowledge of and connection with the subject matter.

TECHNOLOGY. Students use technology as a tool for inquiry and creativity. Students learn keyboard skills, word-processing and online research skills. They use computer graphics and multimedia programs for larger projects. Students also have opportunities to study applications of the computer in the real world through interaction with business professionals and use of the Internet.

In every Para Los Niños elementary classroom there are four computers with safe Internet access and one printer. Additionally, there is a rolling laboratory of ten laptop computers with wireless Internet capability. This rolling lab is used by classes throughout the school when additional computers for certain activities are needed. Teachers and students also have opportunities to use the LCD projector for visuals, and for demonstrating knowledge through PowerPoint presentations. Additionally, the school uses digital cameras for use with presentations, projects and displays.

SAFE SCHOOL. Teachers take time each day to address behavioral issues through Safe School Circles. For example, if bullying occurs, the teacher may stop the class for a few minutes to bring attention to the situation and guide students in developing skills to stop the bullying. The Safe School curriculum enables children to develop their individual communication skills, gives teachers an opportunity to listen, and distributes responsibility to all members of

the school community. The Safe School curriculum provides a preventative and responsive means of developing social skills and language that supports students in developing life-long socialization skills.

PROJECT WORK. Social Studies and Science projects emerge through our in-depth studies of concepts, ideas, and interests which arise within the group. Throughout a project, teachers help children make decisions about the direction of study, the ways in which the group will research the topic, the representational medium that will demonstrate and showcase the topic, and the selection of materials needed to represent the work. At the Para Los Niños Charter Elementary School, all projects are designed to address state content standards in Science and Social Studies while literacy and mathematics are infused in a purposeful manner.

TEACHER PLANNING. At the elementary school, the teacher is a teacher-researcher; a resource and guide as she/he lends expertise to children. Within such a teacher-researcher role, educators carefully listen, observe, and document children's work, while they provoke, co-construct, and stimulate thinking and collaboration among children. Each teacher has the responsibility to share their observations of children at their weekly grade-level planning meetings with our director of pedagogy. These discussions enable teachers to determine the next steps in a child's conceptual development.

DOCUMENTATION. Similar to portfolio assessments, documentation of children's work-in-progress is viewed as an important tool in the learning process for children, teachers, and parents. Pictures of children engaged in or discussing their experiences, and their interpretation of experience through visual media are displayed as a graphic presentation of the dynamics of learning. Documentation provides evidence of learning and growth in knowledge for the child, teacher and community.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHARTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Para Los Niños Charter Middle School Mission Statement:

The Para Los Niños Charter Middle School provides students with a rigorous, relevant, and interdisciplinary arts and sciences curriculum in a nurturing and safe environment. We seek to equip students with the critical thinking skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary to pursue excellence in high school and college, and to succeed in a multicultural world. We aim to inspire in our students integrity, voice, imagination, self-reliance and respect for others.

The Para Los Niños Charter Middle School implements five core components to ensure that our students not only graduate from high school, but graduate from college and become leaders and innovators: (1) Academic Excellence, (2) Imagination, (3) Community, (4) Wellness,

and (5) Citizenship. These components are consistent with recommendations of a landmark 2008 report by the United Way of Greater Los Angeles, entitled, “Seizing the Middle Ground: Why Middle School Creates the Pathway to College and the Workforce.” The recommendations in this report include: smaller schools, elementary/middle school continuity, looping (looping is the practice of placing the same group of students with one teacher for multiple, consecutive years), community service, and summer programs; all of which the Para Los Niños Charter Middle School exemplifies.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. Grade-level teams of teachers work together to design project-based learning experiences that encompass the core subjects, meet state standards, and engage students’ curiosity and ideas. We aim to provide learning experiences that are relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory, and that promote dialogue among students and teachers.

We provide the following instructional practices and programs to build academic success for students in each content area:

Balanced Adolescent Literacy. Our English/ Language Arts curriculum is based on research from the Columbia University Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, and is supplemented by California state adopted language and literature materials.

Mathematics. The Para Los Niños Middle School math curriculum uses California state adopted materials, which are aligned to the California Standards in mathematics. We supplement these materials with resources and manipulatives that support mathematic concepts, problem solving and critical thinking. The math curriculum is designed by teachers to involve students, and stresses thinking, reasoning and applying lessons, while integrating calculators and computers appropriately. This curriculum focuses on developing language in math by providing students with opportunities to read, write, and talk about their mathematical learning in order to further develop their literacy skills. Teachers review monthly math benchmark assessments to monitor student progress and to provide timely interventions to students who need support. The goal for our 8th grade students is the completion of Algebra I so that they will be prepared for college preparatory courses in high school.

Social Studies and Science. Learning in the content areas is guided by cogent, overarching concepts or big ideas at each grade level that serve as an organizing principle to the academic subject area. The 6th grade studies “Continuity and Change Over Time” as an organizing principle for the study of Earth Science and Ancient Cultures. The 7th grade studies “Interdependence” as an organizing principle for Life Science and the Middle Ages to Early Modern History. Finally, the 8th grade studies “Power” as the organizing principle for Physical Science and US History. These bigger concepts provide context and connections to the California Standards and provide a meaningful framework for the courses of study.

Social Studies and Science teachers use a student-centered project or inquiry based approach to learning. Students engage in the study of the curriculum through carefully structured projects that culminate in an exhibition of learning. Skill building, mastery of state standards, and academic language development are featured within the framework of project learning. Moreover, the middle school collaborates closely with the California Science Center, implementing a specially designed science curriculum that provides experiential learning opportunities for our students and intense professional development for teachers, both at the school and at the Center's "Big Lab."

TECHNOLOGY: 21ST CENTURY SKILLS. Not only do our students at Para Los Niños face a sizable academic achievement gap, they also face a widening technology gap. We know that if students are to succeed in high school and college, they must have sophisticated information management and media literacy skills. Our middle school integrates technology use into all curricular areas. Teachers receive focused professional development in using technology tools such as interactive white boards, social networks, and web 2.0 tools so that they can leverage technology to support student achievement. Students work on laptop computers and teachers create electronic portfolios of their work, while collecting, comparing, and analyzing assessment data for each student. This information is captured in a web-based database, through which parents can access student information and communicate with teachers about their child's academic progress.

TEACHER PLANNING. The middle school educational model requires teachers to collaborate intensely and often. To this end, each teacher has a daily individual preparation period in common with other grade-level teachers. In addition, each grade level teaching team meets formally two times per week to plan curriculum, interdisciplinary projects, and review student assessments. The entire faculty meets once a week for professional development which is managed and organized by the principal. Systematic and collaborative teacher planning time supports student academic success. The use of data in developing teaching plans and tracking progress towards goals is of high importance. Teachers and administrators utilize continuous assessments and benchmarking for this purpose.

IMAGINATION. The middle school also partners with various Art Education partners to provide a wide variety of arts education experiences for our students as an integral part of their education. Meaningful arts experiences are essential for low-income, inner-city students because they facilitate the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills; provide opportunities for self-expression, self-confidence, and teamwork; increase motivation to attend school; and broaden student horizons, helping them to grow beyond the boundaries of the impoverished communities in which they live to become participatory citizens of the artistically vibrant, multicultural landscape of Los Angeles and its surrounding communities.

COMMUNITY. The middle school provides a strong, family-like sense of belonging and community, which is critical to the success of middle school students. Teams of teachers “loop” with students from grades 6 to 8, so that students have the same teacher in a core subject for all three years. Each student and family is assigned an advisor for all three years, and each student has an advisory period daily with his or her advisor and a small group of students. The advisor not only serves as an adult advocate for each individual student over the course of middle school, but serves as the personal liaison between parents and the school. There is a clear link between family involvement and higher levels of student achievement and improved student well-being. Partnership between families and teachers is essential both to the success of middle school students and in building a successful community of learners.

Students and teachers actively participate in the civic life of Los Angeles and its surrounding communities. Through community partnerships and service learning projects, education becomes relevant, authentic, and empowering, and students grow to be resourceful participants in their world. We believe the purpose of education is to help young people navigate their own futures, to become agents of change for themselves, their families, and their neighborhoods, and we actively take advantage of the experiences available in downtown Los Angeles. Our students participate in programs at Colburn School, in the Music Center, the Ketchum YMCA, and use the resources of the Los Angeles Main Library.

All middle school students are eligible and encouraged to participate in our after-school program, which operates year-round, including summer vacations. We know that high-quality extended school time is key to students’ academic success and well-being at school. Our after school program provides targeted academic interventions to struggling students and academic extensions to those students who are ready to move beyond. The teachers articulate the goals for each individual student with the after-school site supervisor so that tutoring and academic support for students is systematic, organized, and purposeful.

GROWTH

The Para Los Niños Charter Middle School now serves 6th grade students. In the next years, it will grow by adding a grade level each year. A new facility will be secured and allow for this growth.

THE PARA LOS NIÑOS AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Para Los Niños provides structured after-school programs that specifically support our charter elementary and middle schools through extended academic services, and character development of positive and productive social skills. Curriculum frameworks such as the My Values Project emphasize the role of personal choice and making responsible decisions among school-age children. With a goal of supporting our elementary schools and our Safe School component, this after-school curriculum focuses on incorporating values determined by the

program stakeholders in the events, experiences, and projects that are developed by the teachers. In addition, our Road Map to Success curriculum framework for middle school students implements six strength/asset-based core components that have been empirically found to be highly effective and successful in supporting academic achievement while at the same time reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors among middle school youth. Through the delivery of these best practices our after-school program supports our schools' mission and further develops college bound leaders and innovators. Our after-school programs aim to support the education, physical health, mental health, safety and economic well-being of our students and their families.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL-AGE STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

The **My Values Project (MVP)** creates a culturally relevant overlay to the after school programs by asking students to critically and thoughtfully examine their values in the context of the world in which they live. By seeking our stakeholders' own answers to the question of personal values we minimize the possibility of imposing values or cultural agendas of a dominant culture on our students. Our objective is to discuss student values and how this affects learning in a medium that is culturally relevant. Learning is driven by the culture of the students' families, their histories and communities and through examination and participation in the creation of stories, art, language, games and project-based experiences that reflect the values that are important to them.

Road Map to Success (RMS) was built upon the foundations of youth development and is intended to provide opportunities for our early adolescents to process and develop the cognitive, social, and emotional skills and abilities required to navigate through life. This curriculum framework coordinates experiences to reflect six strength/asset-based core components that have been empirically shown to be highly effective and successful in supporting academic achievement. These components include:

- Academic Enrichment
- Family Involvement
- Health and Wellness
- Community Awareness and Advocacy
- Leadership
- Arts and Culture

Through the experiences and opportunities that support these components, the program creates experiences that address the development of social and cognitive skills that the students will utilize in the future to make healthy and positive choices.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. After-school programs have significant impact on student academic success and the healthy development of young people, particularly as it relates to keeping children in underserved communities free from gang activity, substance abuse, crime, and neighborhood violence. Para Los Niños greatly values such programs for their contribution to student achievement, and is committed to supporting professional development in this field. To continually strengthen the knowledge and acumen of our instructors, a series of professional development opportunities are consistently offered. Topics are determined through a needs assessment survey which identifies areas of professional development most needed by after-school team members.

APPENDIX E: THE PARA LOS NIÑOS EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Our schools help children succeed through an instructional program guided by our understanding of the three critical components necessary to succeed fully in our global society:

1. The development of general and specific knowledge related to academic disciplines.
2. The development of general skills critical to academic and personal success.
3. The development of character and a sense of community.

These critical components frame our educational objectives.

KNOWLEDGE. We expect that all students will be able to articulate and demonstrate their understanding of key concepts in each content area using a variety of methods and tools.

1. We expect all students to achieve proficiency in the California Content Standards.
2. We expect that all students will develop and be able to appropriately use content specific vocabulary.

SKILLS. Students enrolled at our schools will participate in classroom, school, and community based experiences designed to foster the development of general skills critical to academic and personal success:

1. We expect students to think critically and solve problems.
2. We expect students to work productively as members of a team.
3. We expect students to present their ideas articulately to a variety of audiences.
4. We expect students to utilize a variety of tools, including technology, to solve problems and communicate ideas.
5. We expect our students to be responsible for their own success and growth.

CHARACTER AND COMMUNITY. Beyond the knowledge and skills necessary to participate successfully in society, we expect our students to develop a sense of personal integrity within the context of the communities in which they reside. We understand that it takes a special kind of resilience for children raised in poverty to avoid the socially destructive activities that are often prevalent in their homes and neighborhoods, and we strive to provide them with access to the resources necessary to make strong choices.

1. We expect students to articulate their hopes, dreams, and challenges.
2. We expect students to be leaders as well as team-members.
3. We expect students to develop the ability to constructively resolve conflict.
4. We expect students and their families to be knowledgeable about the resources available to support the development of a personal sense of safety and well-being.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX. The Academic Performance Index (API) is a single number between 200 (poor)-1000 (excellent) assigned to a school in order to provide a comprehensive picture of student achievement as measured by state mandated standardized tests (e.g. CST, Cat/6). Schools are each given annual API targets designed to move all students toward proficiency in Math and English Language Arts as required by state and federal mandates (NCLB). We are committed to show progress annually in order to have all of our schools exceed API scores of 800 by 2014, as this score has been determined by the state as a baseline standard for a good school. API scores relate only to elementary and middle school achievement.

ADDITIONAL PERFORMANCE MEASURES. In addition to API score assessment, Para Los Niños will develop a comprehensive evaluation plan, implement data collection systems and procedures, evaluate outcomes regularly, and actively contribute to excellence in the field with research on best practices.

APPENDIX F: A DETAILED LOOK AT A PARA LOS NIÑOS CHARTER SCHOOL

Our experience in working with infants-8th graders in schools along with an on-going examination of current research in education and best practices around the country has informed our understanding of how learning best occurs. We understand that:

- Children learn best when the learning is purposeful and has personal meaning.
- Children learn best when actively involved in the learning process through hands-on and first-hand experiences.
- Most children perform best in literacy when they have first established fluency in their primary language.
- Learning to ask questions is fundamental to extending learning that contributes to becoming life-long learners.
- Learning increases when children are in safe environments where they feel comfortable to take risks.
- Children learn best when specific and purposeful attention is paid to the development of a relevant and interactive school environment.

RESEARCH-BASED. We rely first on research about effective teaching and learning for all students and then look at how practice and pedagogy applies to the demographic we serve. Our educational program is founded on contemporary socio-cultural research, in which knowledge is constructed as students and teachers work together toward common goals (Tharp, et al, 2000). Rooted in the discourse of L.S. Vygotsky, this constructivist theory of education believes that development occurs when the learner engages in the use of the tools of learning (e.g. language and skills) toward a meaningful outcome (Vygotsky, 1978). With this as the core of our understanding of how all people learn, our curriculum and instructional practice is strongly influenced by recommendations from the National Research Council and the schools for young children in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

MAKING LEARNING MEANINGFUL. Three major findings from the report *How People Learn* (National Research Council, 1999) suggest that curriculum developers and professional development providers should reference the following principles in order to ensure best practice in their instructional program:

1. Learners' preconceptions about how the world works must be engaged so that they may grasp new concepts and information in a meaningful manner.
2. When knowledge is learned in the context of a conceptual framework, learners will develop a deep foundation of factual knowledge and they will know how to organize that information in ways that facilitate retrieval and application.
3. Learners must be in control of their own learning by defining goals and monitoring their progress in achieving them.

At our Charter Schools we apply these principals in several ways:

- 1. Student as Individual.** Because students are well-known, teachers are able to draw both from student personal experience and from common experiences developed in the context of the school in order to connect new learning to prior understanding of concepts. Additionally, our emphasis on student voice in the classroom dialogue and on teachers' use of guiding questions as an instructional technique allows teachers to have an ongoing understanding of the evolution of student thinking.
- 2. Thematic Curricula.** Our Scope and Sequence includes the framing of the content standards with "Big Ideas." The connections between the content standards and a larger conceptual framework allow students to create deeper and more meaningful connections to the material.
- 3. Teacher as Researcher.** Classroom assessment strategies include an on-going cycle of student goal setting and reflection on accomplishments. Rigorous documentation of student work and progress accompanied by systematic and guided reflection on that work toward setting meaningful goals facilitates student meta-cognition about their academic achievements.
- 4. The Physical Environment- The "Third Teacher?"** The environment is seen as an integral part of the instructional program. Presenting an environment that is aesthetically beautiful is seen as an important part of respecting students. The classroom environment is organized in a way which supports both student-teacher and student-student interaction, often in small group settings. The environment offers opportunities for discovery, research, extended explorations, and problem solving. The environment includes the systematic documentation of student work, often through photography and the inclusion of student reflection on work in progress.

INSTRUCTIONAL FRAMEWORK. All work at Para Los Niños is framed by what we understand about best practice designed to meet the needs of our population of predominantly economically disadvantaged students and English Language Learners. We know that for most children, literacy acquisition is most effective when skills and content are initially introduced in a child's first language and then transferred in a systematic and supportive fashion into a second language. For that reason, the Charter Elementary school offers families a choice of a Dual Literacy Program and an English-Only Program for all students. All students participate in an English Language Development program.

We believe that children learn best when they are offered a relevant curriculum, where learning develops from a range of first-hand experiences through which students are able to ask questions, investigate solutions, solve problems and build conceptual understanding. Ultimately, students will develop the range of skills that successfully prepares them to continue

their education and thrive as citizens in today's complex global society. We also believe that children's learning opportunities are maximized when they are in a safe environment, where children are valued for who they are and what they bring to the learning context, and where questioning and inquiry are not only encouraged, but expected.

TEACHING METHODOLOGIES. At Para Los Niños we know that how we teach is as important as what we teach and that how children learn is powerfully linked to what they are able to do. Our school teachers list the California Content Standards as content area objectives in their curriculum and, simultaneously, prioritize the development of higher order thinking skills, such as the ability to solve problems, generalize ideas and skills, negotiate and compromise as a member of a team, and articulate and represent their ideas to others. Teachers pay careful attention to the creation of a purposeful environment and the development of relationships and community. Our school teachers employ several targeted methodologies designed to accomplish the goals of our academic programs.

- **Building Relationships.** When a student and his or her family are well-known and able to engage in candid conversations about factors contributing to the success of the child, education can be personalized. In order to achieve that goal, the structure of our instructional program encourages the development of deep and sustained relationships between educational /school staff, family support service staff, and families. At the middle school level each student is assigned an advisor for the duration of his or her tenure. Advisors are much more than a homeroom or core content area teacher, although they are those as well. Advisors act as primary contacts facilitating the integration of a high-quality education program with, when needed, social, and family support services. Additionally, advisors are responsible for documenting student progress and developing evidence-based goals for future achievement with families and students.

Our middle school model is one in which entire grade level teams of teachers loop with students through 6th, 7th, and 8th grade. Students, families, and an entire team of nurturing professionals work together for a three-year period toward the same objective, building a foundation for academic success. Team looping allows teachers to track, build on, and celebrate student progress over time; develop relationships with families where honest conversations can take place; and, in the event of staff turnover, it allows for continuity in service to students and their families.

- **A Culture of Empowerment.** At the core of each teacher's interactions with students and families is a belief in the capacity of each child to be highly successful. Student strengths are identified, celebrated, and used as the foundation for future learning. Conversations with students and parents emphasize what students can and will accomplish. Students are expected to produce high-quality work and participate

in experiences that are challenging. Para Los Niños places students, their ideas, their conversations, and their goals at the center of all learning. Teachers act as guides, facilitating the acquisition of skills necessary to achieve individual goals. Teachers instruct through a curriculum of inquiry. We assume that every one of our students will become a productive and contributing member of society and facilitate the development of the tools necessary to do so.

- **Constructing Environment.** At Para Los Niños the environment in which students learn is considered a critical element of the instructional program, and, as such, careful attention is paid to the construction of safe and stimulating environments. Once safety is established, the environment opens up as a place with carefully organized, thought-provoking and stimulating objects, books, and other materials. Our intent is to create space in which children can be inquisitive, explore their world and discuss their feelings and observations. The environment extends to all areas of our facilities and includes displays and visual representation of children and families participating in our programs. Common areas become the vehicle for creating a stimulating community environment that reflects expectations and standards, and which celebrates achievement.
- **Professional Development.** Professional development for teachers is managed, organized, and typically conducted by the Principal in collaboration with the Para Los Niños Director of Pedagogy. The school leaders meet regularly and individually with staff members to address specific areas of needed growth in addition to regularly planned professional development periods. Our curricular and assessment programs are rigorous and require specialized skills, therefore, we support our teachers by giving them access to experts in the field and time needed to explore and implement our programs to the fullest. In Los Angeles, we are fortunate to be surrounded by universities in which some of the most exciting and cutting-edge research and thinking about education is occurring. We continuously work on strengthening our relationships with these universities and draw from their ongoing understanding of best practice in education. Para Los Niños is committed to providing high-quality staff development through established relationships with local universities, as well as on our own knowledgeable staff and pool of consultants, to ensure that teachers are well prepared to implement our educational programs.

Para Los Niños teachers are professional educators at various stages in their professional careers. We believe that their professional skills should be nurtured and grown in the same way that our student's academic skills are attended to. Our teachers are well known and are given access to the highest degree of professional development and support we can provide. We recognize the high rate of teacher turnover in many new, inner-city charter schools, and we combat that statistic by creating an invigorating atmosphere of respect, support and professionalism leading to the highest standards in educational practice.

THE CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS. The California Content Standards are embedded in our project-based, inquiry focused curriculum. They act as a context for the interactive educational environment in which students explore ideas and as a reference for teachers and parents looking for opportunities to gauge student progress.

Our curricular program, framed by science inquiry, includes rigorous, standards-based core programs. All of the state mandated content standards in Mathematics, English-Language Arts, English Language Development and Social Studies are addressed as we build student capacity toward the overarching goal. Additionally, technology standards based on the National Educational Technology Standards (NETS) are included. NETS standards are applied at each grade level in a manner consistent with grade level appropriate content and expectations. Para Los Niños charter schools comply with all applicable provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act and other state and federal mandates.

APPENDIX G: A CASE STUDY ILLUSTRATING THE IMPACT OF INTEGRATING EDUCATION, MENTAL HEALTH, AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

The barriers to optimal development of children and their families in urban communities mandates the implementation of an innovative and integrated support model that responds to the comprehensive circumstances and needs of our families. In this innovative model, mental health and family support services are integrated into community and education sites, creating coordinated systems of support. Working collaboratively with community partnerships and professional communities of invested stakeholders, this type of integrated model addresses the education, physical health, mental health, safety and economic well-being of children and their families.

OVERVIEW: In December 2009, the need and effectiveness of this integrated model was illustrated when staff from Para Los Niños, the Family Services division, and teams from the Charter Elementary and Middle schools worked together to prevent an eleven-year-old Charter Middle school student from being referred to the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and placed into foster care. Through the integration, coordination and co-location of mental health and family support services within Para Los Niños school sites, the Para Los Niños staff involved in this case utilized culturally responsive and strength-based best practices in working with this child and family in crisis, ultimately facilitating a safe and permanent connection between the child and his extended family.

BACKGROUND: At the time this situation occurred, Jeffrey was an intelligent, creative and charming eleven-year-old middle school student who had attended Para Los Niños since pre-school. Jeffrey's mother, Karen, was a devoted single mother who worked tirelessly to provide for her son as a part-time employee with a Para Los Niños After-School program. In September of 2008, Karen had begun to experience extreme emotional and financial challenges resulting from abandonment by her ex-husband. Over time, her financial situation worsened, resulting in her inability to cover living expenses and leading to an imminent eviction. When the Para Los Niños' Elementary Charter School Principal became aware of these difficulties, Karen and Jeffrey were referred to the Family Services Division of Para Los Niños. Immediately, food vouchers, counseling and support towards acceptance into a temporary housing assistance program were provided by Family Services. Three months later, Karen and Jeffrey settled into transitional housing with a local housing program which would help them obtain permanent, low-income housing, along with complementary and coordinated social and family support services. Jeffrey was able to continue as a student with Para Los Niños, and he flourished working with the same teachers, curriculum, and friends he had always known.

A TRAGIC TURN: Sadly, in November 2009, just as permanent, low-income housing was finally granted, Karen became terminally ill. Jeffrey had been taking the bus to school each day while his mother was rapidly deteriorating, all the while keeping the information to himself.

Ultimately, the homeless transitional housing program notified Para Los Niños staff of Karen's illness and her placement in the intensive care unit of a local hospital, but there was no knowledge of any other relatives to care for Jeffrey; thus, protocol was for DCFS to locate a foster home.

As reported publicly, the over-burdened foster care system in the United States, where LA is no exception, presents many obstacles and challenges for children placed within its care. Throughout the country, young people who have been placed in foster care are at higher risk for unemployment, poor educational outcomes, health issues, early parenthood, long-term dependency on public assistance and increased rates of incarceration and homelessness once they transition out of the foster care system. <http://www.cwla.org/programs/fostercare/agingoutsources.htm>

- In California, 65% of youth leaving foster care do so without a place to live.
- Over 70% of all California Penitentiary inmates have spent time in the foster care system.
- In Los Angeles, 50% of transitioning youth will be homeless within eighteen months of discharge, and research shows that only 1% to 5% of foster youth ever graduate from college. <http://www.ballantinesbiz.com/everychild/emancipatingfosteryouthstatistics.htm>.

This grim prognosis for Jeffrey's future made the search for an alternative living situation an urgent priority for those involved in his case. Every effort was made to prevent involvement with the foster care system by maximizing and utilizing the expertise, networks and passion of the Para Los Niños staff and its relationships with community agencies.

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED: A Para Los Niños Family Services Family Advocate was sent to the hospital to assess the situation and arrived to face a dire situation; Karen was being sedated for intubation due to her inability to breathe on her own and had just been told she was not expected to live. Karen provided information about a distant cousin who lived in New Jersey and could raise Jeffrey, then became unconscious and remained alive but gravely ill for many weeks. Family Services acted immediately, ensuring that Jeffrey had temporary placement with a close friend and neighbor. Staff reviewed the address book Karen had in her purse in search of the cousin mentioned, and a telephone number was discovered. Together with the hospital social worker, Karen's cousin, "Jim," was located. He and his wife agreed to raise and love Jeffrey as their own child, and made plans to introduce him to his many relatives.

A Care Planning Team made up of family support, mental health, and other service providers was created to coordinate and manage the situation. Accommodations were arranged for Jim to come to Los Angeles and engage in the assessment and planning process, during which short-and long-term solutions were identified to support Jeffrey following his mother's death. For the next two months while Karen remained alive, weekly, coordinated phone meetings

took place to respond to immediate concerns, to discuss Jeffrey's physical and emotional state, his ongoing educational progress, and to prepare for the transition ahead. Family Services maintained daily contact with Jim and Jeffrey, as well as Jeffrey's temporary caregiver.

THE RESULT: The coordinated work between the Para Los Niños school teams, the Family Services team, and the mental health and family support service partners with whom Para Los Niños has strong relationships was integral in facilitating a positive outcome for Jeffrey. Following Karen's memorial service, Jim returned to New Jersey with Jeffrey in his care.

CONCLUSION: The integration of the comprehensive services and expertise that lie within the Para Los Niños agency and with its strategic partnerships, coupled with responsive cross-division coordination, resulted in a positive outcome. This child and his family were identified in serious crisis, supported throughout the crisis, and responded to in a relevant, appropriate and productive manner that resulted in a concrete plan to secure safety and long-term stability for Jeffrey.

APPENDIX H: THE PARA LOS NIÑOS CHANGE FRAMEWORK

LEARNING BARRIERS AND LEARNING SUPPORTS. Progressive schools, like Para Los Niños Charter Schools, focus on addressing the entire student. Like ours, these schools are moving from a two-tier approach to a three component framework. In the two-tier approach, the focus is on improving instruction and school management. The third component is referred to by various names including “Learning Support Component,” “Enabling Component” or a “Comprehensive Student Support System” (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2006). This third component serves as the foundation for developing a truly integrated and comprehensive approach in which learning barriers, mental health, and other bio-psychosocial concerns are embedded in the school’s mission. This pioneering effort recognizes that all three components are essential, complimentary and overlapping.

The primary goal of this approach is to align processes and ensure the promise of a comprehensive, highly effective system for children and their families (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2006). The focus is on students and families, and the context in which they live, learn, work and play. A basic assumption underlying this new Learning Support intervention application is that initially, the least restrictive and nonintrusive forms of interventions are required to address problems and accommodate diversity.

This emerging approach calls for more than simply expanding services to address learning barriers. It is focused on enhancing strategic collaborations and partnerships to develop comprehensive approaches that strengthen students, families, schools and communities to maximize learning and overall wellbeing. The emphasis on this model is to develop, over time, a full continuum of systematically interconnected school and community interventions that encompasses (a) a system for promoting healthy development and preventing problems, (b) a system for responding to problems as soon after onset as is feasible, (c) a system for providing intensive care (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2006).

Learning Barriers. As Para Los Niños looks to further integrate our mental health and family support services into our school environments, a critical issue is defining what we must do to enable all students to learn and all teachers to teach effectively. This means focusing on those students who are motivationally ready and able to profit from “high standards” curriculum and instruction, as well as also addressing the needs of those encountering external and internal barriers that interfere with their benefiting from improved instruction. These are known as barriers to learning and include all those factors that make it difficult for teachers to teach effectively (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2004). School-wide approaches to addressing learning barriers are especially important where large numbers of students are affected. Although some youngsters have disabilities, it is important to remember how few start out with internal problems that interfere with learning to read and write. Even those who do have these problems can benefit from recognition of the assets, strengths, and/or protective factors that can counter deficits and drive success.

The majority of barriers to learning seen in schools stem from situations where external barriers are not addressed, and where learner differences require some degree of personalization that is not accounted for. Problems are exacerbated as youngsters internalize the frustrations of confronting barriers to development and learning, and the debilitating effects of performing poorly at school (Adelman & Taylor, 1993; Allensworth, Wyche, Lawson, & Nicholson, 1997; Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development’s Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, 1989; Comer, 1988; Dryfoos, 1990, 1998; Sarason, 1996; Schorr, 1997). Barriers to learning can be categorized as institutional, personal or impersonal. Each type included negative attitudes, lack of mechanisms and skills, or practical deterrents. Para Los Niños’ high-quality Integrated Model of Urban Education, Mental Health, and Family Support Services will address all barriers to learning as listed in the table below:

LEARNING BARRIERS	DESCRIPTION
<i>Deficiencies in basic living resources and opportunities for development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of food in the home • Inadequate clothing • Substandard housing (including being homeless) • Lack of transportation • Income at or below the poverty level (e.g. due to unemployment or welfare status) • Lack of after-school supervision for child • Lack of youth recreation and enrichment • Immigration-related concerns (e.g. limited English proficiency, legal status) • Lack of home involvement in schooling • Lack of peer support • Lack of community involvement • Lack of school support services • Lack of social services • Lack of physical health
<i>General stressors and underlying psychological problems associated with:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External stressors (objective and perceived) and deficits in support systems • Competence deficits (low self-efficacy/self-esteem, skill deficits) • Threats to self-determination/autonomy/control • Feeling unrelated to others or perceiving threats to valued relationships • Emotional upsets, personality disorders, mood disorders and other psychopathology
<i>Crises and emergencies</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal/familial (including home violence) • Subgroup (e.g. death of a classmate or close colleague) • School-wide (e.g. earthquake, floods, shooting on campus)

<p><i>Difficult transitions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated with stages of schooling (e.g. entry, leaving) • Associated with stages of life (e.g. puberty, gender identity, job and career concerns) • Associated with changes in life circumstances (e.g. moving, death in the family)
<p><i>Psychosocial problems</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health problems • School adjustment problems (including school avoidance, truancy, pregnancy, and dropouts) • Relationship difficulties (including dysfunctional family situations, insensitivity to others, social withdrawal, peers who are negative influences) • Deficiencies in necessary skills (e.g. reading problems, language difficulties, poor coordination, social skill deficits) • Abuse by others (physical and sexual) • Substance abuse • Over-reliance on psychological defense mechanisms (e.g. denial, distortion, projection, displacement) • Eating problems • Delinquency (including gang-related problems and community violence) • Psychosocial concerns stemming from sexual activity (e.g. prevention of and reactions to pregnancy or STDs) • Psychopathology/disabilities/disorders

Learning Supports. Learning supports are resources, strategies, and practices that provide physical, social, emotional and intellectual assistance intended to address barriers to learning and teaching in ways that enable all students to have an equal opportunity for success at school. For schools to be most effective, learning supports need be woven and embedded into a comprehensive, multifaceted and cohesive system of classroom and school-wide interventions that need to be fully integrated within the instructional environment (Center for Mental Health in Schools at UCLA, 2004). In short, it is imperative to rebuild supports for learning as an integral component in enabling all students to have an equal opportunity to learn in school. The goals of having comprehensive learning supports include: 1) reducing student dropout; 2) reducing teacher dropout; 3) re-engaging students in classroom learning; 4) narrowing or eliminating the achievement gap.

The Para Los Niños high-quality Integrated Model will address the Learning Supports as listed in the table below:

LEARNING BARRIERS	DESCRIPTION
<i>Classroom-Based Approaches</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening the classroom door to bring available supports in (e.g. peer tutors, volunteers, aids trained to work with students-in-need; resource teachers and student support staff work in the classroom as part of the teaching team) • Redesigning classroom approaches to enhance teacher capability to prevent and handle problems and reduce need for out of class referrals (e.g. personalized instruction; special assistance as necessary; developing small group and independent learning options; reducing negative interactions and over-reliance on social control; expanding the range of curricular and instructional options and choices; systematic use of peripheral interventions) • Enhancing and personalizing professional development (e.g. creating a Learning Community for teachers; ensuring opportunities to learn through co-teaching, team teaching, and mentoring; teaching intrinsic motivation concepts and their application to schooling) • Curricular enrichment and adjunct programs (e.g. varied enrichment activities that are not tied to reinforcement schedules; visiting scholars from the community) • Classroom and school-wide approaches used to create and maintain a caring and supportive climate • Emphasis at all times is on enhancing feelings of competence, self-determination, and relatedness to others at school and reducing threats to such feelings.
<i>Crisis Assistance and Prevention</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring immediate assistance in emergencies so students can resume learning • Providing Follow up care as necessary (e.g. brief and longer-term monitoring) • Forming a school-focused Crisis Team to formulate a response plan and take leadership for developing prevention programs • Mobilizing staff, students, and families to anticipate response plans and recovery efforts • Creating a caring and safe learning environment (e.g. developing systems to promote healthy development and prevent problems; bullying and harassment abatement programs) • Working with neighborhood schools and community to integrate planning for response and prevention • Staff/stakeholder development focusing on the role and responsibility of all in promoting a caring and safe environment

<p><i>Support for Transitions</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming and social support programs for newcomers (e.g. welcoming signs, materials, and initial receptions; peer buddy programs for students, families, staff, volunteers) • Daily transition programs (e.g. before school, breaks, lunch, after school) • Articulation programs (e.g. grade to grade – new classrooms, new teachers; elementary to middle school; middle to high school; in and out of special education programs) • Summer or intersession programs (e.g. catch-up, recreation, and enrichment programs) • School-to-career/higher education (e.g. counseling, pathway, and mentor programs; broad involvement of stakeholders in planning for transitions; students, staff, home, police, faith groups, recreation, business, higher education) • Staff/stakeholder development for planning transition programs/activities
<p><i>Home Involvement in Schooling</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing specific support and learning needs of family (e.g. support services for those in the home to assist in addressing basic survival needs and obligations to the children; adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, English-as-a-second language, citizenship preparation) • Improving mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home (e.g. opportunities at school for family networking and mutual support, learning, recreation, enrichment, and for family members to receive special assistance and to volunteer to help; phone calls from teacher and other staff with good news; frequent and balanced conferences – student-led when feasible; outreach to attract hard-to-reach families – including student dropouts) • Involving homes in student decision making (e.g. families prepared for involvement in program planning and problem-solving) • Enhancing home support for learning and development (e.g. family literacy; family homework projects; family field trips) • Recruiting families to strengthen school and community (e.g. volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities; families prepared for involvement in school governance) • Staff/stakeholder development to broaden awareness of and plan programs to enhance opportunities for home involvement.

<p><i>Community Outreach for Involvement and Support</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning and implementing outreach to recruit a wide range of community resources and support • Staff/stakeholder development on the value of community involvement and opening the school to expanded forms of community activities and programs • Mechanisms to recruit, screen, and prepare community participants • Orienting and welcoming programs for community participants • Programs to enhance a sense of community • Policies and mechanisms to enhance and sustain school-community involvement (e.g. support for maintenance; celebration of shared successes; “social marketing” of mutual accomplishments).
<p><i>Student and Family Assistance</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing support as soon as a need is recognized and doing so in the least disruptive ways (e.g. pre-referral interventions in classrooms; problem solving conferences with parents; open access to school, district, and community support programs) • Referral interventions for students & families with problems (e.g. screening, referrals, and follow-up – school-based, school-linked) • Enhancing access to direct interventions for health, mental health, and economic assistance (e.g. school-based, school-linked, and community-based programs) • Follow-up assessment to check whether referrals and services are adequate and effective • Mechanisms for resource coordination to avoid duplication of and fill gaps in services and enhance effectiveness (e.g. school-based and linked, feeder pattern/family of schools, community-based programs) • Enhancing stakeholder awareness of programs and services • Involving community providers to fill gaps and augment school resources • Staff/stakeholder development to enhance effectiveness of student and family assistance systems, programs, and services

PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS. In addition to addressing learning barriers and increasing learning supports, our long history of working with children and their families enables us to more deeply understand the direct correlation between a child’s well-being and that of the family’s. As such, our experience, along with research, compels us to examine the complex intersection of risks that our children and families experience, and the strengths and resiliencies our children and families possess.

To guide our work, we have explored the risk and protective factor literature and its focus on child and family factors, and strengths in families. The risk and protective factor literature is a growing body of research in family wellness and maltreatment prevention science that has

contributed to reframing child maltreatment prevention and family wellness efforts to include a focus on promotion (i.e., increasing protective factors) as well as on prevention (i.e., reducing risk factors) (e.g. DePanfilis & Dubowitz, 2005; Wulzyn, 2008). The protective and risk factors were developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). In 2001, CSSP conducted an extensive literature review and held conversations with hundreds of parents, practitioners, and national experts. In 2003, CSSP researched exemplary early care and education programs across the country. Based on this research, for the first time, the correlation between early childhood programs and reducing abuse and neglect was documented. Consequently, the finding of this research was used to create a logic model that described the Strengthening Families approach based on the Protective Factors. Over the years, several states adopted the Strengthening Families approach.

Risk Factors. At Para Los Niños, our families present a multitude of risk factors. Risk factors may be found within the individual (e.g. a temperamental difficulty, a chromosomal abnormality) or the environment (e.g. poverty, family violence). Individual developmental pathways throughout the life cycle are influenced by interactions among risk factors that impact the probability of poor outcomes in life in a variety of manifestations (Myers et al, 2002; Thomas et al, 2003). Risk factors have been found to be highly correlated with both child maltreatment and poverty (Knitzer, 2000). Para Los Niños will address the following risk factors: 1) poor child and parent relationship; 2) child and family stressors; 3) child and family crises such as domestic violence, substance abuse, etc; 4) mental health illness and others.

Protective Factors. To effectively and comprehensively support families toward more stable and thriving places, risk factors must be addressed as well as protective factors enhanced. While the cumulative burden of multiple risk factors is associated with greater developmental vulnerability, the cumulative buffer of multiple protective factors is associated with greater developmental resilience (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

The Strengthening Families Approach and Protective Factors Framework includes a set of six interrelated protective factors correlated with maintaining family wellness and reduced child maltreatment: 1) parental resilience; 2) social connections; 3) knowledge of parenting and child development; 4) concrete support in times of need; and 5) social and emotional competence in children 6) nurture and attachment processes. Para Los Niños will continue to focus on increasing all protective factors through our Integrated Model.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS	DESCRIPTION
<i>Parental Resilience</i>	The ability to establish positive relationships, including attachment to a child; capacity to cope with stresses of daily life and recover from challenges.
<i>Social Connections</i>	Having friends, family members, neighbors, and others who provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents.
<i>Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development</i>	Having accurate information about child development, appropriate developmental expectations, and knowledge of alternative discipline techniques. The ability to respond appropriately, warmly, and consistently to the basic needs of infants and young children and to foster a strong and secure parent-child attachment.
<i>Concrete Support in Times of Need</i>	Having financial security to cover basic needs and unexpected costs; formal supports like TANF, Medicaid and job training; crisis services including mental health, domestic violence and substance abuse.
<i>Children's Social and Emotional Competence</i>	A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively.
<i>Nurturing and Attachment Processes</i>	A child's ability to develop empathy through nurturing relationships, and positively attach with his/her caregivers.

APPENDIX I: SERVICES PROVIDED AT THE CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS

An array of culturally relevant and appropriate mental health and family support services will be housed at the Child and Family Wellness Centers to provide integrated, coordinated and comprehensive services that will decrease learning barriers and risk factors, while increasing protective factors and learning supports for all children and families served by the Centers.

ASSESSMENT FOR EVERY CHILD AND FAMILY. The children and families served by Para Los Niños are often characterized by multiple factors placing them at-risk for negative future outcomes including academic failure, juvenile delinquency, poor physical and mental health, and adult poverty. While we know most of our clients come to us with varying degrees of life challenges, each individual child and family presents unique needs and strengths. Within our available resources, Para Los Niños will strategically work towards assessing each child and family that comes to our educational sites in order to best serve them. We will look to empirical research for information about best practices in this area. One example is the Response to Intervention (RtI) strategy for ensuring that each client is directed to the appropriate support services. Response to Intervention has been in use for decades, often within the context of identifying and supporting Special Education students. More recently it has been expanded for use with a general population of students. The RtI model uses a tiered strategy for identifying the level of preventative intervention appropriate to the needs of an individual client (Materials created by the IRIS CENTER (<http://iris.peabodyvanderbilt.edu/> for the National Association of State Directors of Special Education's Idea Partnership, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, 2007)). Based on well-articulated outcomes, the Para Los Niños staff, together with the family and community members when appropriate, will assess a child's (along with his/her family) capacity in academic achievement, social skills, home environment, and mental health. Children will then be linked to appropriate services in education (e.g. general education program, remedial support program, intense intervention program) and, if necessary, other mental health, and/or family support services.

CENTRALIZED SERVICES. In line with the vision of more fully and deeply integrating mental health, family support services and education programming, we will provide centralized services at the Child and Family Wellness Centers where children and families can obtain needed services including, but not limited to, mental health and family support services, referrals and linkage, and psycho-education classes and support groups. The mental health, crisis intervention, case management and other mental health and family support services currently offered within our Mental Health, Family Services Divisions, Youth Development and Youth Workforce Services, according to specific grants and programs, will be strategically integrated within Para Los Niños educational settings given available resources and infrastructure. This co-located model will facilitate the service coordination process more easily as all programs will have greater access to each other. Thus, this will allow for increased communication and the ability to work collectively for the holistic treatment of the child and their family.

CULTURALLY COMPETENT PRACTICES. Para Los Niños has long been known and recognized for its attention to cultural relevance and competence in service delivery. The Strategic Plan and its effort to move towards an integrated model provide a unique opportunity to formalize our culturally competent practices.

At Para Los Niños we believe that integrating culturally competent practices into programming must go beyond the typical “culturally sensitive” practices of delivering services in a participant’s primary language, matching participants and providers on the basis of race and ethnicity, and incorporating traditional child rearing practices into a program’s curriculum. We therefore embed culturally competent practices into all of our services.

Most Para Los Niños students are bilingual. Bilingual students often encounter a number of educational barriers that can influence their performance in schools including prejudicial racial attitudes, intolerance to linguistic and cultural differences, lower levels of expectations from school professionals, a lack of access to adequate or higher level educational services due to tracking, and the implementation of policies and regulations insensitive to the needs of culturally different students (Cummins, 1989). Consequently, we believe it is critical that these cultural characteristics and differences must be examined in the context of how they influence the students’ functioning within assessment and classroom situations, schools, families, and communities (Tharp, 1989). We will address issues of discrimination, ethnic identity, acculturation and acculturative stress in order to avoid any severe negative impact.

In short, Para Los Niños will continue to ensure culturally competent practices by continuously studying, implementing, and adjusting appropriate practice models, such as the Children and Adolescent Service System Program (CASSP) cultural competence model. This model was developed for the field of children’s mental health and appears to have the necessary theoretical foundation to lend itself to various service disciplines involving children, families, communities of color, and, at least theoretically, to non-ethnic cultural groups. Its major emphasis is on behavior in as much as it (a) covers attitudes, practices, policies, and structures and (b) has implications for both line staff and administrative personnel. In contrast to earlier models, the principles and elements of the model are more concerned with behavior than awareness and sensitivity (Lefley & Pederson, 1986).

As with all of our services and past programs, community partnerships will continue to be an essential component of our practice, allowing additional expertise to be accessible to our clients through the Child and Family Wellness Centers.

The following are some of the services that will be available to children and their families:

- Strength-based and family involved service coordination
- Family Student Success Team meetings
- Psycho-education classes and support groups
- Prevention and intervention counseling and support for domestic violence, substance abuse, gangs, etc.
- Full scope of mental health services
- Parenting classes
- Financial Literacy
- School Readiness support services
- Workforce Development
- Family-Group Decision Making meetings
- Home-based counseling and case management
- Comprehensive case management
- Children's support groups
- Father groups
- Legal services through partnerships
- Provision of emergency basic services such as food vouchers, utility assistance, housing vouchers, etc.
- Linkages to services
- Partnership services such as health, housing, etc.
- Other services provided as determined to be appropriate given the availability of resources and infrastructure.

APPENDIX J: BUILDING CAPACITY AND STAFFING AT THE CHILD AND FAMILY WELLNESS CENTERS

Para Los Niños has multiple educational sites in different locations in Los Angeles County. We plan to further develop the Child and Family Wellness Centers at these sites by staffing them in a manner that deepens and strengthens integration to implement all learning supports and increase protective factors. This will be a three-tiered approach: 1) rotating of staff; 2) adding additional needed staff; and 3) ongoing training.

ROTATION OF EXISTING STAFF. Representatives from existing respective mental health and family support service programs will be assigned to Para Los Niños Child and Family Wellness Centers on a rotating basis. These sites will serve as both triage and field based service sites for each program, and facilitate the consultation process by providing greater access to primary contacts and parents. The rotation of service providers will allow for both increased communication between education, social, and family support service providers and continued communication within programs.

ADDITIONAL STAFFING. Preliminary plans to offer fully integrated services at the Child and Family Wellness Centers include seeking funding opportunities to create the following new positions and teams:

- **Wellness Team/Council-** For community agencies, such as Para Los Niños, that have multiple sites, it is important to create an oversight team that can implement the distinct phases and steps required for the integration model. This team will consist of The California Endowment Integration Team, as well as other key constituents, and build on the work previously conducted by the Integration Team. The Wellness Management and Council Team will be responsible for on-going, multi-site, resource-oriented mechanisms that provide leadership, facilitate communication, coordination, integration and quality improvement of all activities the sites have for addressing barriers to learning and risk factors. The Council will also be responsible for promoting healthy professional development by increasing learning supports and protective factors; and, they will be responsible for monitoring, tracking and leading on-going efforts to make systemic changes to the agency's capacity and infrastructure to implement the integration model. In addition, the Council will be responsible for conducting resource mapping analysis of those school sites identified to have a Child and Family Wellness Center. Further, they will be responsible for developing and creating needed project manuals such as crisis response teams, cultural competency practices, etc. Finally, they will be responsible for engaging established community partners and creating important formal and informal partnerships in the community.
- **Site Collaboration Teams-** In the identified Child and Family Wellness Centers, teams will include service staff, community partners, parents, older students,

police officers, nurses, teachers and other community constituents and service providers. The focus of this Team is to provide specific services to the students and their families focused on increasing learning supports and risk factors, and decreasing risk factors and learning barriers, so that students are successful in school and life.

- **Wellness Coordinators at each of the Child and Family Wellness Centers**-These positions will ensure that services are integrated and that the needs of the children and their families are being addressed. They will oversee all day-to-day operational and program issues at the sites. They will be responsible for overseeing the Site Collaboration Teams. All wellness coordinators will be part of the Wellness Management and Coordination Team.
- **Integration Trainer/Facilitator**-This position will train PLN staff as well as key community constituents on the technical aspects of the integration model. Specifically, this position will assist teachers, mental health, and family support practitioners, community partners, parents, etc. in regards to day-to-day practices needed to ensure that mental health, family support services and educational services integration is fully embedded in our programming.

ONGOING STAFF TRAINING ON BEST PRACTICES. We will provide continuous training to all mental health, family support services, and other relevant staff at the Child and Family Wellness Centers to ensure that we are indeed providing best practices along with culturally competent practices.

APPENDIX K: DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARIES OF AREAS SERVED

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY’S SPA 4, SPA 6, AND SPA 7		
SPA 4	SPA 6	SPA 7
<p>Ethnic Diversity: Latino Majority</p> <p>Latino (54.1%), Western European Whites (17.3%), Asian (16.8%), African-American (5.1%).</p> <p>Latinos are a majority in: Pico Heights (60.1%), Echo Park (58.3%), Highland Park (66.6%), Downtown (82.9%).</p> <p>Most common language spoken at home: Spanish (46.1%), English (26.0%), Korean (5%), Tagalog (4.7%) speakers.</p> <p>Downtown area - highest Spanish-speaking rate in the service area (68.7%).</p>	<p>Ethnic Diversity: Latino Majority</p> <p>Latino (65.9%), African-American (28.2%), Western European White (2.8%), Asian (1.6%).</p> <p>Primary language spoken in most homes throughout the service area: Spanish. Firestone (81.9%), Lynwood (76.6%), and USC E. (73.5%).</p>	<p>Ethnic Diversity: Latino Majority</p> <p>Latino (70.9%), Western European White (14.8%), Asian (9.1%), African-American (2.9%).</p> <p>Latinos account for over 90% of the population in East Los Angeles, Bell Gardens and Bell Maywood.</p> <p>Primary language across: Spanish (54%), English (28.9%), Asian languages (few percentage points).</p> <p>Highest Spanish-speaking rates in county: East Los Angeles (84.4%) and Huntington Park (81.9%).</p>
<p>Age Distribution: Uneven Distribution of Children</p> <p>Children ages 0-15: (23%) Downtown community: child population is 28.7% of total.</p>	<p>Age Distribution: Youngest Population in the County</p> <p>Children ages 0-15: (30%), 25 years of age or less: (47.9%)</p>	<p>Age Distribution: Youthful Population</p> <p>Age 26 and under: (43.1%).</p>

CHILDREN/YOUTH IN STRESSED FAMILIES		
<p>Poverty – SPA 4</p> <p>Second highest poverty rate in the county. Majority (51.3%) living beneath the 200% FPL (higher than the countywide rate: (38.7%)).</p>	<p>Poverty – SPA 6</p> <p>Highest poverty rate in county. Majority (60.6%) living beneath the 200% FPL (higher than the countywide percentage).</p>	<p>Poverty – SPA 7</p> <p>Overall poverty rate: (39.5%).</p>
<p>Unemployment Rate – SPA 4</p> <p>Unemployment rate (self-reported): (9.1%). Above the countywide rate: (7.4%).</p>	<p>Unemployment Rate – SPA 6</p> <p>Unemployment rate (self-reported): (11.4%). Highest in county. Above countywide rate (7.4%).</p>	<p>Unemployment Rate – SPA 7</p> <p>Unemployment rate (self-reported): (7%). Close to the countywide rate (7.4%).</p>
<p>Disrupted Families – SPA 4</p> <p>Overall DF ratio: (1.6). Below countywide average: (2.2). Highest rate in county.</p>	<p>Disrupted Families – SPA 6</p> <p>Overall DF ratio: (2.0). Slightly lower than countywide average: (2.2).</p>	<p>Disrupted Families – SPA 7</p> <p>Overall DF ratio: (2.3). Similar to countywide ratio: (2.2).</p>
TRAUMA EXPOSED INDIVIDUALS		
<p>Child Abuse – SPA 4</p> <p>Child Abuse and Neglect Base Rates= CAN Rates Overall CAN Rate: (1.20). Greater than county Rate: (0.96). Downtown: (1.92) and USC N:(1.61) had CAN Rates greater than 84% or more of the county’s communities, (i.e., greater than 1 standard deviation from the mean).</p>	<p>Child Abuse – SPA 6</p> <p>Second highest CAN rate seen across service areas. Palmdale and Watts: (2.15) highest CAN Rates in county. Hancock N.: (1.66), Florence Firestone: (1.51), and Compton: (1.67) had CAN Rates greater than 84% or more of the county’s communities.</p>	<p>Child Abuse – SPA 7</p> <p>Overall CAN Rate: (0.94). Very close to countywide rate: (0.96). East LA had highest CAN Rate: (1.76), greater than 84% the county’s communities.</p>

CHILDREN/YOUTH AT RISK FOR SCHOOL FAILURE		
<p>4-year Dropout Rate</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Over a quarter of all students in Los Angeles County drop out from high school over a four-year period.</p>	<p>4-year Dropout Rate</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Over a quarter of all students in Los Angeles County drop out from high school over a four-year period.</p>	<p>4-year Dropout Rate</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Over a quarter of all students in Los Angeles County drop out from high school over a four-year period.</p>
<p>High School Graduation Rates – SPA 4</p> <p>Lowest graduation rates across all ethnic groups: (59.4%).</p>	<p>High School Graduation Rates – SPA 6</p> <p>Lowest graduation rate: (55.7%).</p>	<p>High School Graduation Rates – SPA 7</p> <p>Overall graduation rate: (84.8%).</p>
<p>English Fluency – SPA 4</p> <p>Fluency rate: (54.3%).</p>	<p>English Fluency – SPA 6</p> <p>Fluency rate: (52.7%).</p>	<p>English Fluency – SPA 7</p> <p>Fluency rate: (68%).</p>
<p>3rd Grade Reading Level – SPA 4</p> <p>Third graders scoring at or above the 50th percentile: (23.3%).</p>	<p>3rd Grade Reading Level – SPA 6</p> <p>Third graders scoring at or above the 50th percentile: (15.9%).</p>	<p>3rd Grade Reading Level – SPA 7</p> <p>Third graders scoring at or above the 50th percentile: (27.7%).</p>
CHILDREN/YOUTH AT RISK OF OR EXPERIENCING JUVENILE JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT		
<p>School Discipline – SPA 4</p> <p>Overall suspension rate: (2.5%). Below countywide rate: (3.7%).</p>	<p>School Discipline – SPA 6</p> <p>Overall suspension rate: 4.8%. Above countywide rate: (3.7%).</p>	<p>School Discipline – SPA 7</p> <p>Overall suspension rate: (3.5%). Similar to countywide rate: (3.7%).</p>
<p>Juvenile Felony Arrests</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Males: (84.2%), Females: (15.8%). Majority: Hispanic youths: (57.5%), African-American youths: (30.3%).</p>	<p>Juvenile Felony Arrests</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Males: (84.2%), Females: (15.8%). Majority: Hispanic youths: (57.5%), African-American youths: (30.3%).</p>	<p>Juvenile Felony Arrests</p> <p><i>Countywide Data/Summary Only:</i> Males: (84.2%), Females: (15.8%). Majority: Hispanic youths: (57.5%), African-American youths: (30.3%).</p>

Homelessness – SPA 4	Homelessness – SPA 6	Homelessness – SPA 7
<p><i>Age Groups</i> Majority: Age 25-55: (64.8%), Age under 18: (13.8%), Age 56+: (12.7%), Age 8-24: (8.7%).</p> <p><i>Ethnicity</i> Majority: Black/African-Americans: (56.8%), Hispanics or Latinos: (17.3%), Whites: (16.3%).</p>	<p><i>Age Groups</i> Majority: Age 25-55: (64.0%), Age under 18: (15.3%), Age 56+: (14.2%), Age 18-24: (6.5%).</p> <p><i>Ethnicity</i> Majority: Black/African-Americans: (81.7%), Hispanics or Latinos: (12.3%), Whites: (3.5%).</p>	<p><i>Age Groups</i> Majority: Age 25-55: (63.4%), Age under 18: (15.5%), Age 56+: (13.1%), Age 8-24: (7.9%).</p> <p><i>Ethnicity</i> Majority: Hispanics or Latinos: (43.4%); Black/African-Americans: (24.7%), Whites: (24.7%).</p>

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE FOR ONTARIO, SAN BERNARDINO

Children and families served by our Ontario programs come from extremely underserved and high-risk areas of San Bernardino County, where poverty, unemployment, under-education, and violence are endemic - often to the extent that children’s physical, emotional, social and cognitive development is impaired. All families participating in our programs in Ontario are classified as low or very-low income. Recent surveys of the families we serve show that the average income ranges from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per family. One-hundred percent of children at the elementary schools in the area qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

San Bernardino County ranks 27th out of 58 counties in California in poverty and 29th in child poverty. 36% of the county’s population was estimated to live under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. Other indicators of need: one-eighth of all births in Ontario are to teen mothers, homelessness in San Bernardino County increased 39% between 2005-2008 and nearly one-quarter of the homeless population is families with children.

EDUCATION. Educationally, the drop-out rate is lower than in Los Angeles Unified School District, with 82% of Ontario high school students graduating, and 74% in San Bernardino County high schools (as opposed to 50% in LA). For black and Latino students, the rate is higher -- 26.2 and 23.6 percent respectively. Still, according to a 2008 report by the Public Policy Institute of California, the number of adults with less than a high school diploma (22%) will exceed the share of jobs available for workers at that education level (17%), even with an anticipated job growth of 20% between the years 2004-2015.

APPENDIX L: QUALITY ASSURANCE & RESEARCH

Historically, Para Los Niños has had a long-standing commitment to quality and the ongoing pursuit of excellence. Now more than ever, this commitment, along with the related evaluation and quality improvement activities, is of vital importance. The development of clear objectives, proper implementation, monitoring, and evaluation strategies for our strategic plan will be critical to our success in the next five years. Accreditation, best practices and evidence-based programs, continuous quality improvement processes, evaluation, and data management will therefore become of increased relevance in our practices, culture, and investments and will be key areas of focus and growth over the next five years.

Quality comes to life at Para Los Niños through the development, implementation, and continuous adjustments of the following:

- Accreditation and Best Practices
- Continuous Quality Improvement Plan
- Data Management: ETO
- Evaluation plans
- Research collaborations

The Para Los Niños Quality Assurance & Research (QA&R) division oversees the listed areas, maintaining the organization's Council on Accreditation's (COA) accreditation status, implementing the Continuous Quality Improvement program, designing and overseeing program evaluation, and research collaborations.

PARA LOS NIÑOS AND COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION. Para Los Niños has been accredited by Council on Accreditation (COA) since 1999, and will continue to maintain accreditation by successfully completing the rigorous COA re-accreditation process every four years. Maintaining COA accreditation is a critical component of the agency's commitment to quality and excellence, as it ensures our programmatic and administrative practices are aligned with best practices. COA accreditation also promotes self-evaluation and guides our continuous pursuit of improvement.

Through the process of accreditation, Para Los Niños is evaluated against best-practice standards, which are developed by COA using a consensus model with input from a wide range of service providers, funders, experts, policymakers and consumers. COA sets forth the highest Standards of Administration & Quality Service, providing guidelines for: effective management, accountability, ethical practice, quality service, and continuous improvement at every level.

COA is an international, independent, not-for-profit, child- and family-service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization. COA was founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America (now the Alliance for Children and Families). Originally known as an accrediting body for family and children's agencies, COA currently accredits 38 different service areas and over 60 types of programs. Among the service areas are case management services, child and family development support services, social development and enrichment services for children and youth, and youth independent living services. The COA Mission: The Council on Accreditation partners with human service organizations worldwide to improve service delivery outcomes by developing, applying, and promoting accreditation standards. The COA Vision: COA envisions excellence in the delivery of human services globally, resulting in the well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

The Value of Accreditation. COA accreditation verifies that Para Los Niños is operating with credibility, integrity, and the highest level of achievement. COA accreditation is very valuable to all stakeholders and supporters of Para Los Niños. COA accreditation focuses on helping our organization grow stronger—stronger in terms of its governance, its management and its services. COA accreditation is an objective and reliable verification that Para Los Niños has earned the confidence and support of all stakeholders.

In our current outcomes-oriented environment, we are increasingly called upon to demonstrate the impact of services. Accreditation is designed to be a framework within which we can measure a variety of our achievements, and serve as a catalyst for change that builds on our organization's strengths and helps us achieve better results in all areas.

COA has the sponsorship and support of over 24 national and international organizations and is developing a leadership role in the global community through its collaboration with other countries. As a result, as an accredited organization, Para Los Niños has access to invaluable resources.

We will continue to rely on the ongoing process of COA Accreditation within the next five years to positively impact our agency and clients, resulting in improved service delivery, improved internal processes and procedures, improved employee morale, recognition from governments, foundations and grant makers, and the COA Community/Network.

CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT. Para Los Niños' commitment to quality comes to life through the agency-wide Continuous Quality Improvement Plan (CQI). The overall purpose of our CQI plan is to advance efficient, effective service delivery and achievement of strategic and program goals. At Para Los Niños, continuous quality improvement is an integrated and ongoing process used to assess and improve organizational performance and to meet standards for quality outcomes. The CQI Plan provides a clear map for an organization-

wide process inclusive of staff and stakeholders, which uses data to identify areas of needed improvement and implement improvement plans in support of achieving performance targets, program goals, client satisfaction, and positive client outcomes.

The following are the main objectives of CQI:

1. Identify agency systems and procedures in need of improvement.
2. To promote program effectiveness for positive client outcomes.
3. To create, maintain and improve quality guidelines to ensure continuous internal monitoring for program operations.
4. To ensure that adequate documentation exists for all services.
5. To provide a mechanism to communicate recommendations for systematic growth.

The CQI plan for the next five years will ensure the following planning and implementation processes are areas of focus for our agency:

1. Long-term planning: The Strategic Plan.
2. Short-term planning: Yearly Program Goals, and Yearly Program and Department Improvement Plans.
3. Internal Quality Monitoring: Case/file Reviews, Performance Improvement Program Reports, Annual Performance Evaluation Reports, Client Satisfaction Surveys, Staff Training Evaluations, and Quality Assurance Reports.
4. Feedback Mechanism: Reports to the Board of Directors, Program Directors Meetings, CQI Committee Meetings, Staff Newsletter, and other agency activities and communications media.

DATA MANAGEMENT. The collection and proper utilization of data are essential elements in the agency's evaluation, research and CQI efforts. After a comprehensive review of existing data-system options, Para Los Niños purchased Social Solutions' Efforts-to-Outcomes (ETO) Software. In 2007, Para Los Niños began implementation of Social Solutions' Efforts-to-Outcomes (ETO) Software. During the next five years we will complete all phases of the system's customized development and implementation.

The Social Solutions' ETO system provides the agency with a flexible and comprehensive platform for improving, measuring and demonstrating impact, providing direct service staff with a tool to make their jobs easier and improve their effectiveness, providing administrators with a resource to improve decision-making, and providing funders with a demonstrated return on investment. The ETO Software is a secure, flexible, comprehensive, web-based Software for Human Services organizations. This software is being customized based on the program and administrative needs of our programs, enabling the agency to track information across

unique programs, easily generate graphical reporting and demonstrate the effects of efforts on program outcomes. This, in turn, improves internal controls, communication, evaluation, and accountability. Additionally, this data-system helps demonstrate and celebrate the daily victories of our direct service staff, improve service, gain efficiency and receive more funding.

In addition to supporting the direct interactions with our clients, this software will enable Para Los Niños to track and manage each of the key relationships that support our program and organizational success; track statistics at the individual, family, program, site, and organizational level and manage volunteer and other outside entity relationships. By capturing the time and effort put into achieving outcomes within the context of these relationships this data-system will help us continually improve services delivery. Additionally, it is expected to improve our understanding of the relationships that underpin our success and as a result be better able to serve participants, measure outcomes and demonstrate results.

RESEARCH. The next five years will provide a particularly unique opportunity for us to participate in the advancement of knowledge in the areas relevant to our clients and services by establishing strategic research collaborations. This shall also be an important tool in our evaluation efforts, and continuous quality improvement processes. We view research both as an opportunity and a responsibility.

Para Los Niños has at its disposal a valuable resource to advance the knowledge base needed for better understanding of families, children, and individuals of all ages. The agency is uniquely positioned to provide access to certain client constituencies, (e.g. child development, after school services or family preservation groups), for research purposes. This, together with the agency's professional responsibility to increase knowledge, makes it an attractive milieu for researchers representing diverse disciplines (e.g. education, child development, social work, psychology, etc.). As an employer of over 400 staff, research using staff members as subjects could prove beneficial in reducing work related stress or designing improvements in service delivery.

The potential volume of research possibilities suggests the need for an organized and structured research review procedure to ensure that staff, and particularly students who may be assigned to the agency, are not unnecessarily distracted from their core service and administrative functions, and to protect their safety and manage participation that is in their best interests. A particular research proposal may offer predictable benefits at a cost that is too great for the organization to absorb. Assessing the ratio between presumed benefit and cost to the organization is an essential purpose of the agency's research review process. Ensuring that the benefits of research significantly outweigh potential risks to individual participants is a key objective of the research review process.

In response to this reality, Para Los Niños has developed agency-specific Research Policies and Procedures, and established its own Research Internal Review Board (IRB) in order to ensure appropriate protection of clients, staff and stakeholders within the scientific and evaluative processes. All research designs carried out at Para Los Niños will need to be approved by the Para Los Niños Internal Review Board (IRB), follow the Para Los Niños Research Review Policy and Procedures, and adhere to the highest ethical standards, as described in the Para Los Niños Ethical Standards for Research.

The Para Los Niños Internal Review Board. The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) regulations have empowered Internal Review Boards to approve, require modifications in planned research prior to approval, or disapprove research. Internal Review Boards perform critical oversight functions for research conducted on human subjects that are *scientific, ethical, and regulatory*.

The Para Los Niños Internal Review Board is the committee that is formally designated to approve, monitor, and review any research involving agency clients or staff with the aim to protect the rights and welfare of the research subjects. The role of the Para Los Niños IRB will be particularly important in the upcoming years, as strategic partnerships are developed and effective and useful research projects are targeted and monitored.

The Para Los Niños Internal Review Board follows the HHS and OHRP regulations and requirements. It is comprised of a group of internal and external stakeholders who hold expertise in various different areas, including the scientific and academic processes, practitioners, advocacy and management leaders. The Para Los Niños IRB maintains a Federalwide Assurance Form, which is an OHRP-approved assurance of compliance with the HHS regulations (45 CFR 46.103) for the protection of human subjects.

The IRB review is designed to assure, both in advance and by periodic review, that appropriate steps are taken to protect the rights and welfare of humans participating as subjects in a research study or evaluation project. To accomplish this purpose, the IRB reviews research protocols and related materials (e.g. informed consent documents and investigator brochures) to ensure protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects of research. Additional objectives of the IRB protocol review are to assess the ethics of the research and its methods, to promote fully informed and voluntary participation by prospective subjects who are themselves capable of making such choices (or, if that is not possible, informed permission given by a suitable representative) and to maximize the safety of subjects once they are enrolled in the project.

EVALUATION. The development of a comprehensive evaluation plan for the next five years will provide a structured system to assess the impact our services have on clients, track and

monitor agency short- and long-term objectives, and will serve as an accountability framework useful for all stakeholders. The design of such a plan will be one of the main tasks of the agency's Quality Assurance & Research division during the first year of the strategic plan implementation.

An important matter to consider in the development of this evaluation design is a proper balance between the need and use of data, and the time and energy utilized by clients and staff engaging in measurement and data collection. Efforts to achieve this balance will need to consider appropriateness of indicators, measurement tools, and contractual evaluation requirements.

The design, implementation, and tracking of the evaluation will take place as a cooperative process via the CQI Committee in partnership with relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX M: REFERENCES

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