



Uplifting the Power of Culture: Protective Factors for the Health of California's Children


The Children's
Partnership
CHILDRENSPARTNERSHIP.ORG

DECEMBER 2024

Table of Contents



Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	8
Protective Factors for Children of Color	10
Public Policy Impacts on Protective Factors and BIPOC Communities	13
Program Summaries and Examples	17
Recommendations	26
Conclusion	32
Appendix	33
Acknowledgements	39
Glossary	40
Endnotes	42



In 2020, The Children’s Partnership launched a series of fact sheets as part of its “[A Child is a Child](#)” campaign. The fact sheets were intended to provide a snapshot of the health needs of California’s children, highlighting data on the multiple health inequities impacting children of color and other children from marginalized backgrounds. As we worked closely with partners, it became clear that in addition to addressing these inequities, we needed to uplift the strengths of California’s diverse communities, including culture, family and spirituality, to tell the story of who California’s children are.



For children of color especially, culture is a protective factor that plays an essential role in fostering well-being and development. Growing up immersed in cultural traditions and values helps provide children with a strong sense of identity, belonging and self-worth. Over time, these cultural roots become a source of resilience when navigating the adversities and challenges in their lives. However, as Hazim Hardeman, a young, Black man raised by a single mother in Philadelphia who went on to become a Rhodes Scholar said, “Don’t be happy for me that I overcame these barriers. Be mad as hell that they exist in the first place.”¹

In recent years, we have seen a shift in the national narrative regarding who is responsible for raising our children. Historically, the adage, “It takes a village to raise a child,” resonated deeply, particularly within communities of color. However, there has been a noticeable move away from this concept and towards a more individualized nuclear family model. As noted in a recent US Surgeon General’s Advisory, this shift

places increased pressure on families, often isolating them and reducing the communal support that was once integral to raising healthy children.²

While culture and other protective factors can serve as buffers against these changing dynamics for children of color, they are not enough.

As our state and nation’s child population grows increasingly diverse, we must activate efforts and implement strategies that incorporate protective factors to support more effectively the immediate and long term health and well-being of all children, regardless of background.

By reinforcing the importance of cultural practices and traditions in policies, programs and investments, California can recreate aspects of the village model. If our state can operationalize a commitment to uplifting the protective factors that enrich the lives of its diverse families, we can work to ensure that children of color receive the collective support they need to flourish. Recognizing the value of culture not only strengthens individual families, but reinvigorates community bonds, creating a protective environment where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

The following pages provide critical insight into important steps California can take to support the well-being of all of its children. Shifting demographics and the attendant political power they bring provide an opportunity not only to fight against policies and initiatives that take us backward, but to realize a stronger, more inclusive agenda for children and families. The history of our state and our nation are evidence that we have been here before and can therefore change the course of history once more. We remain hopeful in our shared commitment to working together to ensure a brighter, healthier future for our children and for us all.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mayra Alvarez".

Mayra E. Alvarez
President
The Children’s Partnership



Executive Summary



Early childhood is a vital stage of development, with 90 percent of brain growth occurring in the first five years. This means it is crucial to provide young children with safe, stable and nurturing environments, strong caregiver attachments and culturally responsive services. However, many California children, particularly those of color, face systemic barriers to having these needs met, including a lack of resources. Of California’s nine million children, three-quarters are of color and nearly half come from immigrant families. In order to promote the health and well-being of our country’s increasingly diverse children, both now and in the future, it is essential to implement strategies that address the unique needs and challenges of their communities, including the effects of institutional racism.

Conditions or attributes that promote resilience and help mitigate risks to health and well-being, known as “protective factors,” are particularly important in addressing the disparities caused by systemic inequities and racism that disproportionately affect children of color. They are key to supporting the health and emotional development of children of color by buffering against the negative effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).

Due to eurocentric norms, the protective factors of BIPOC communities and their cultural manifestations have been misunderstood. As we consider ways in which we can scaffold families in providing for and educating their young children, it is essential that we consider not only the five protective factors of parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting, concrete supports in times of need and social emotional competence of children, but embrace the culturally specific ways protective factors manifest in BIPOC children and families.

BIPOC community-specific protective factors include:



Connection to culture



Bilingualism/
multilingualism



Strong familial
support/
relationships



Religious and spiritual
engagement/faith-
based community



Community,
social support and
significance



The systemic racism that pervades our nation's laws and public programs is a growing public health concern that affects the well-being of children, their families and their communities. Throughout history, legislative and policy decisions have intentionally and disproportionately harmed marginalized communities, creating barriers to stability, health, opportunity and cultural pride. Rooted in systemic racism, these policies continue to affect marginalized populations adversely, by attacking the protective factors they need to support healthy, thriving children. Examples of such policies include:



The history of family separation impacting enslaved, Indigenous and immigrant families in the United States, creating devastating effects on communities of color across generations.



Discriminatory policies targeting Black hairstyles, which harm Black children's mental health and sense of identity, and create environments that undermine their well-being.



English-only policies that have served as tools for systemic oppression by suppressing cultural expression and restricting access to opportunity.



Misguided rhetoric during the COVID-19 pandemic that exacerbated anti-Asian sentiment and violence in the US.

We must continue to identify policies that are actively harmful to BIPOC families and work to reform or repeal them. In addition to addressing existing inequities, public policy can and should actively support protective factors for BIPOC families while including language guaranteeing that harmful practices will not be repeated.

Our research and policy recommendations aim to inform advocates and policymakers on how understanding the significance of protective factors in promoting resilience and well-being among children of color is essential for addressing disparities in early childhood outcomes. Throughout our brief, we highlight effective programs and practices from community leaders in California, Texas and Hawaii, which will serve as a basis for our policy recommendations.

The following recommendations are centered on how policymakers and advocates can uplift protective factors for communities of color.



RECOMMENDATION 1

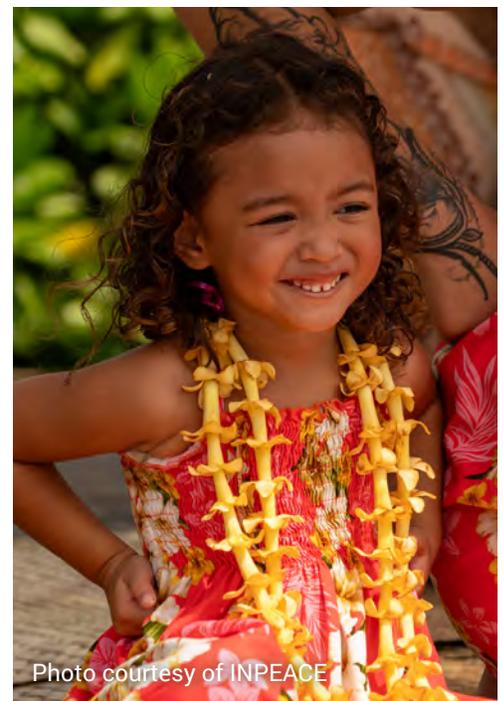
Require development and decision-making around policies and programs impacting young children to include parents and caregivers meaningfully and actively.

Across the sectors of child welfare, health and education, authentically engaging families in decision-making processes is key to systemic transformation. Families, particularly in BIPOC communities, must play a central role in shaping policies and programs to ensure their lived experiences and values are reflected, and that historical inequities and biases are properly addressed. When systems and providers value and integrate families' cultural perspectives, it protects against racial discrimination, results in better outcomes for children and strengthens entire communities.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Ensure equitable funding of early childhood programs by considering historical and current marginalization related to racial discrimination, resource gaps and other disparities.

The allocation of resources is critical for ensuring that programs meet the diverse needs of children in ways that are both effective and culturally responsive. To measure the impacts of these programs, strategic evaluations should assess the experiences and outcomes of families, providers and beneficiaries, while also monitoring system efficiencies. In California, mechanisms such as tiered quality rating systems and the Whole Child Equity Index have been used to help allocate funds more equitably, ensuring that historically marginalized communities receive adequate support and providing additional funding for tribes to incorporate their own cultures into these systems.



RECOMMENDATION 3

Create safe and culturally affirming spaces by building capacity and prioritizing diversity for all providers serving families and young children from prenatal to age 3.

When communities and institutions prioritize cultural preservation and expression, children gain a sense of pride and historical knowledge that helps combat societal biases and systemic inequalities. California must invest in culturally responsive early care and education (ECE) workforce training, support programs for marginalized families, and strengthen funding for initiatives such as family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care to address early care gaps, promote trauma-informed practices and ensure that children and families from diverse backgrounds receive the care and resources they need.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Invest in and expand the infrastructure of care coordination between managed care plans and community organizations to leverage community protective factors and leadership.

An effective early childhood support system requires collaboration between stakeholders, including agencies, community members and organizations, and shared decision-making that centers families as partners in care. Programs and initiatives such as SHARK and ACEs Aware demonstrate how community-driven, cross-sector collaborations can bridge gaps in health care and social services, improve child health outcomes and address the social drivers of health through trusted, culturally responsive support.



Photo courtesy of Stone Soup Fresno

RECOMMENDATION 5

Invest in building networks between early childhood providers, health care, legal services and other family-specific needs by creating wellness hubs or centers.

While systemic barriers have hindered the ability for many families to raise healthy children, a whole-family wellness approach that addresses parents' psychological needs and systemic racism while fostering dignity and empowering communities can transform service delivery. By creating coordinated hubs that offer a range of resources, such as health care, education, legal aid and social services, California can strengthen families—particularly those from marginalized communities—and ensure culturally responsive care and long-term support for holistic well-being.

“

You want children and families to feel safe so they can show up as their authentic selves, being true to who they are, and then together we can learn and grow. When you are truly authentic to yourself, you share your gifts with us and we share ours with you.”

— Sanoë Marfil, chief program officer at INPEACE



Introduction



Photo courtesy of AVANCE

Early childhood is a critical period for social and emotional development. With 90 percent of the brain developing within the first five years of life³ early childhood wellness depends upon the ability to foster, maintain and sustain safe, stable and nurturing environments with healthy caregiver attachments and culturally reflective coordinated services.⁴ Unfortunately, our youngest Californians and their families continue to face systemic barriers to healthy development compounded by a lack of resources to overcome them. Out of California's nine million children, this is especially true for the three in four who are of color, and the half who come from immigrant families. In the United States, one out of every eight children is born in the Golden State. Soon, the majority of US children will be of color; Latine, Black, Asian and more.

Strategies to support child health and development while incorporating ethnicity, culture and circumstance are critical to advancing their well-being. And yet, our systems have not caught up to the needs of our multiracial communities. As our nation and state's child population grows increasingly diverse, we must implement strategies to address the immediate and long-term health and well-being of all children. In particular, these efforts must pay close attention to the diverse cultures of our state's families and the pervasive impacts of institutional racism.

Protective factors are conditions or attributes in children and adults that help mitigate or eliminate risks to their health and well-being and adapt to different levels of hardship.⁵ They may be individual or environmental characteristics or conditions that promote health and emotional well-being, and they play a crucial role in influencing the early development of children of color.⁶ Protective factors can act as buffers to shield children from the negative effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), which disproportionately impact children of color due to historical and systemic inequities rooted in racism. When we prioritize mainstream protective factors like parental resilience or knowledge of parenting and child development, we fail to take into account other unique needs and challenges faced by **BIPOC** (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) children, leaving gaps in support and resources tailored to their specific experiences.





Photo courtesy of Stone Soup Fresno

The more policymakers can prioritize and create opportunities that support the development of protective factors in families of color, the stronger and healthier our communities can become.

As TCP has outlined previously, **anti-racist strategies** are conscious and deliberate efforts to address and eradicate historic and present marginalization and inequalities impacting communities of color.⁷ The following compilation of research and policy recommendations aims to inform advocates and policymakers on how understanding the significance of protective factors in promoting resilience and well-being among children of color is an essential anti-racist strategy for addressing disparities in early childhood outcomes.

This report will:



Provide an overview of protective factors as an anti-racist strategy.



Highlight why protective factors are crucial for child development.



Showcase examples of existing programs and/or policies that utilize protective factors to uplift the strengths of BIPOC children and families.



Share recommendations for policymakers and advocates to uplift protective factors.

Protective Factors for Children of Color

The Strengthening Families Five Protective Factors:

Strengthening Families is a research-informed approach to increasing family strengths, supporting child development and reducing the likelihood of adverse experiences. This framework is based on engaging families, programs and communities in building five key Protective Factors. The five protective factors at the foundation of Strengthening Families are characteristics that have been shown to make positive outcomes more likely for young children and their families, and to lower the risk of child abuse and neglect.⁸

- 1 Parental resilience:** The ability to manage stress when faced with challenging situations and circumstances (e.g., adversity, trauma).
- 2 Social connections:** Having people or groups to turn to for support—emotional, spiritual or otherwise—when it’s needed most.
- 3 Knowledge of parenting and child development:** Understanding how children grow and develop socio-emotionally, physically, cognitively and in other key areas. Knowing how a child’s behavior relates to their developmental stage, and how to meet their changing needs as they grow.
- 4 Concrete support in times of need:** Access to tangible resources and services that meet a family’s specific needs and help alleviate the stress associated with life challenges.
- 5 Social and emotional competence of children:** Healthy family interactions that help children build communication skills, manage their emotions, and form strong relationships.⁹

Research on the five protective factors of Strengthening Families demonstrates that protective factors are necessary for all families to support the social-emotional health of their children.¹⁰ However, when applied to BIPOC children and families, mainstream protective factors often fall short. These factors do not fully take into account the specific cultural, historical, and systemic challenges that BIPOC children face. When looking at the needs of BIPOC children and their families, there are additional protective cultural factors of high importance, which must be prioritized in programs and policies aimed at supporting these families. While unfortunate and damaging narratives suggest that if parents of color were more resilient, knowledgeable or emotionally competent, their children would fare better, these perspectives unfairly blame families of color and overlook how systemic racism undermines essential protective factors.¹¹

Due to eurocentric norms, the protective factors of BIPOC communities and their cultural manifestations have been largely misunderstood. BIPOC communities have historically relied on maintaining strong connections to culture, language and heritage as protective factors for child development while adapting to new languages and cultures. As we consider ways in which we can scaffold families in providing for and educating their young children, it is essential that we look not only at the five protective factors of Strengthening Families, but also at the culturally specific ways in which protective factors manifest in BIPOC communities.

BIPOC community-specific protective factors include:

1 Connection to Culture: Culture refers to the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, language, rituals and practices characteristic of a particular group of people that provide them with patterns for living and interpreting reality.¹² Connection to culture as a protective factor in BIPOC communities is vital for establishing confidence, relationships and pride in early childhood. Highlighting and celebrating their connection to a unique culture provides young children with a sense of identity and rootedness, expands future educational and career opportunities and leads to both psychosocial and physical advantages, such as improved learning abilities, interpersonal skills and sleep.¹³ Research shows that positive mental and physical health outcomes for BIPOC children and youth are consistently related to feeling connected to culture and family, and a strong ethnic identity has also been linked to academic motivation.¹⁴ For example, the transfer of cultural values from their parents has been shown to support children in immigrant families. A strong sense of family obligation as a cultural value within immigrant communities facilitates family cohesion, ethnic identity and improved mental health among young people.¹⁵ Programs to facilitate strong connections to identity and culture for Black youth have similar impacts. Emotional emancipation circles and other liberatory spaces designed for healing can help to address the trauma caused by anti-Black racism.¹⁶

Look to the programs [Barona Indian Preschool](#), [Visión y Compromiso](#) and [Two Feathers Native American Family Services](#) for examples of cultural connection as a protective factor.

2 Bilingualism/Multilingualism: Bilingualism refers to the ability to use two languages in everyday life.¹⁷ As a protective factor, bilingualism supports many aspects of a child's development, including cognitive skills, self-esteem and identity formation. Multilingualism describes the ability to express oneself with a high level of proficiency in three or more languages.¹⁸ BIPOC children who learn to use multiple languages have been shown to display enhanced skills related to attention, working memory, planning, problem-solving and emotional regulation.¹⁹ For children of immigrant families, having access to curricula in multiple languages they speak can help prevent and close learning gaps. Research shows that Spanish oral language skills make "significant direct and indirect contributions" both to oral language skills and word-reading in English, and correlate with future success in school.²⁰ In Asian, Native and Latine communities, bilingualism in small children can also enhance connections with their cultures and adults in their communities. California has an especially large population of bilingual speakers, and by 2035 it is expected that over 50 percent of kindergarteners will have grown up speaking a language other than English.²¹ While misinformation regarding the ability to learn multiple languages in early childhood is common, research indicates that infants have the capacity to develop skills and thrive in two or more languages by employing neuro-cognitive strategies that support their overall development. In order to raise bilingual or multilingual children, however, caregivers need the right resources and support.²²

Look to the programs [INPEACE](#), [Barona Indian Preschool](#) and [Stone Soup Fresno](#) for examples of bilingualism and multilingualism as protective factors.



Our multilingual language program emphasizes the importance of retaining native languages while fostering English language skills, helping children from immigrant and refugee families stay connected to their cultural roots."

— May Gnia Her, executive director of Stone Soup Fresno



3 Strong Familial Support and Relationships: Family represents close networks and emotional connection. Affection, loyalty, unity and clear lines of attachment add to the strength of family as a protective factor. In Latine communities, the word “familismo” describes a sense of obligation to provide economically and emotionally for one’s family members, the reliance on family for support and the perception of family members as behavioral and attitudinal referents.²³ Supportive family dynamics inform the behaviors and attitudes of small children, and have been linked to preventing mental health problems and fostering growth and development.²⁴ Though the term “familismo” is unique to Latine communities, the value of family connectedness as a protective factor is universal for BIPOC children.

Look to the programs [Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors](#) and [Stone Soup Fresno](#) for examples of family connection, or familismo, as a protective factor.

4 Religious and Spiritual Engagement and Faith-Based Community: Religious beliefs that provide a sense of purpose or positive outlook while discouraging harmful behaviors serve as protective factors. Church-based networks may also provide material, emotional or psychosocial resources that are essential to coping with challenges and hardships. For African Americans who are strongly invested in faith-based organizations, spiritual communities can provide high levels of social cohesion and support, and contribute to overall mental health and well-being.²⁵

Look to the program [Ile Omode](#) for examples of religious, spiritual and faith-based engagement as a protective factor.

5 Community, Social Support and Significance: Strong connections to community underscore a collective approach and belief that the well-being of children is a shared responsibility, with extended family members, neighbors and community leaders playing pivotal roles in a child’s upbringing. This dynamic bolsters self-esteem, which is especially important for young children in BIPOC communities, as well as in their parents and caregivers.²⁶ Self-esteem reflects the emotional state and degree of integration one feels within their interpersonal relationships. In other words, self-esteem is a subjective measure of an individual’s relationship with society and the people around them. Studies have found that self-esteem itself is a protective factor for physical and mental health, with high self-esteem leading to better mental health and poor self-esteem associated with a “broad range of mental disorders.”²⁷ Fostering community, social support and significance also depends on having spaces where people who share common characteristics, interests or experiences—often related to identity or background—can engage in recovery and healing. When individuals can talk openly about their challenges and frustrations, and when their opinions feel centered, valued and respected, this protective factor grows stronger.²⁸ When we consider the mental state of parents and caregivers, a sense of belonging and self-esteem are necessary to meet the needs of their children through effective and healthy parenting methods. When parents are struggling, the protective factor of community connectedness and support gives them a trusted place to turn for help.

Look to the programs [AVANCE](#), [Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors](#) and [Barona Indian Preschool](#) for examples of community, social support and significance as a protective factor.

These culturally specific examples expand on the traditional idea of protective factors by honing in on the strengths of BIPOC communities. By incorporating the values and insights of those directly impacted by inequities, we can acknowledge the power of communities, directly address the unique needs of BIPOC children,²⁹ and create more effective and equitable solutions that truly address the root causes of disparities.

How Public Policy Undermines or Uplifts Protective Factors for BIPOC Communities

The systemic racism that pervades our nation's laws and public programs is a growing public health concern that affects the well-being of children, their families and their communities. Throughout history, the negative impacts of legislative and policy decisions have intentionally and disproportionately fallen on marginalized communities, creating barriers to stability, health, opportunity and cultural pride. By directly attacking the protective factors communities of color rely upon, these policies undermine their capacity to thrive and uphold the legacies of racism embedded in our institutions.

The United States has a history of family separation that has disproportionately impacted enslaved, Indigenous and immigrant populations, and left devastating effects on communities of color across generations.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, government assimilation policies removed Native American children from their families and stripped them of their cultural identities. With the 1819 Civilization Fund Act and the 1869 Peace Policy, the US intensified these efforts, establishing over 500 of what are now known as Native American Boarding Schools.³⁰ These institutions had a clear and devastating goal: assimilation through the eradication of Native American culture. Boarding schools mandated the adoption of English names, cut pupils' hair and enacted harsh punishments for speaking their own languages. Children entered these facilities as young as four years old, spending years cut off from the key protective factor of cultural connection. By 1926, the height of these assimilation practices, nearly 83 percent of Native children were enrolled in boarding schools. Many never returned home, and today, Native nations are still contending with the multigenerational impacts of these injustices.³¹ Despite the devastating legacy of family separation, it is still practiced in the US immigration and criminal justice systems. In the present day, government policies of mass incarceration, detention and deportation continue to cause disproportionate harm to BIPOC communities.³²



Discriminatory policies targeting Black hairstyles harm Black children's mental health and sense of identity, creating environments that undermine their well-being.

Following the abolition of African chattel slavery in the United States, discrimination against Black people through “othering” has persisted, with one example being the prevalence of hair discrimination against Black children in educational settings. Policies and practices stigmatizing and penalizing Black hairstyles, including afros, braids, dreadlocks and twists, have persisted for decades. Although lawmakers passed the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, the law ultimately left the definition of racial discrimination to the courts' discretion. As a result, federal courts have often excluded protection against hair discrimination by categorizing it as a “changeable characteristic.” This view overlooks the deep cultural, historical and protective significance of hairstyles like braids, twists and locs for Black people, and systemically reinforces Eurocentric norms. Ambiguous policy protections have led to traumatic encounters for Black children, who have been reprimanded for wearing hairstyles connected to their culture in school, and have often been suspended or barred participating in graduation, prom and other milestones. In extreme cases, such as the viral 2018 incident in which high school wrestler Andrew Johnson of New Jersey was forced to choose between cutting his locs or forfeiting his match, public humiliation may be used.³³ When we fail to protect Black children's right to express their culture among their peers, we fail to foster safe spaces for them to explore their identities and we put their well-being at risk.

“*This is not about hair. This is about race. How many different ways will people try to exclude Black people from public life without having to declare their bigotry?*”

— ACLU of New Jersey, December 21, 2018



Photo courtesy of AVANCE

English-only policies have been tools for systemic oppression. While efforts to restrict the use of languages other than English do not result in a greater sense of unity or cohesion, they do reinforce racist and anti-immigrant sentiments.³⁴ Enforcing English-only education has been shown to hinder academic success for bilingual students. Despite abolishing Native American Boarding Schools, the US still sees attempts to eradicate Native and other non-English languages in its public schools. California grappled with a push for English-only education when voters passed the controversial Proposition 227 in 1998, which required all public school instruction to be conducted primarily in English. This legislation also mandated that bilingual students be placed in one-year English immersion programs before transitioning into mainstream English-only classes, institutionally separating students from their native languages. In the years following, studies on the impact of these instructional mandates revealed that the assumption **English Language Learner (ELL)** students would learn English more quickly and find greater academic success did not hold true. Instead, bilingual education programs, especially those fostering native language development while teaching English, helped ELLs achieve greater academic success than English-only approaches. In addition to providing evidence that strong literacy skills one's the first language can transfer to English and enhance overall academic achievement, these findings showed that fostering an attitude of **additive bilingualism** leads to improvements in self-esteem and intergroup cooperation.^{35,36} Proposition 227 remained the standard for classroom instruction for nearly 18 years before, before mounting research and changing attitudes toward bilingualism led voters to repeal it through **Proposition 58** in 2016.

Misguided policies and rhetoric during the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated anti-Asian sentiment and violence in the U.S. Within the last four years, we have seen a misdirected few calling for policies to further harm and suppress marginalized communities. Even if legislation is never passed, misused policies can still have detrimental effects on the populations they target. While the sudden onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic left the world dazed, the confusion and desperation in the United States was channeled into gross attacks on our Asian communities. As our nation's leaders publicly emphasized the origin of COVID-19 in China, increased anti-Asian sentiment and xenophobia correlated closely with support for anti-Asian immigration policies.³⁷ Politicians who misdirected blame by singling out marginalized groups contributed to the increase in anti-Asian attitudes and incidents of violence. According to statistics published by the FBI, the number of federally recognized anti-Asian hate crimes increased from 158 in 2019 to 279 in 2020 and 746 in 2021.³⁸

The above policy examples from the United States' recent past are not relics isolated to their time in history. The existence of these policies leaves lasting impacts on BIPOC communities, and serves as inspiration for present and future policies aiming to undermine diverse communities' protective factors and continue to contribute to their systemic marginalization.



Addressing family separation through the 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act.

The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act was designed to keep Native children, families and tribes together after decades of Euro-centric child welfare standards threatened the preservation of Native American culture and communities. Following the rise of boarding schools that separated children from their parents, Native Americans faced the realities of repeated family separation for decades into the 20th century. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Native advocates joined together to disavow how American Euro-centrism dismissed Native child-rearing practices and resulted in the devastation of Native communities and culture. The Association on American Indian Affairs, the oldest Native American advocacy group in the United States, conducted studies in 1969 and 1974 that exposed the extent of the damage done to Native families, revealing that 25 to 35 percent of all Indian children had been separated from their families and placed in foster homes, adoptive homes or institutions. Of those placements, 90 percent were in non-Indian homes.³⁹ In response to Native advocacy and these statistics, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) was created to protect the integrity of Native families and their cultures by establishing jurisdictional preferences for tribal authority in custody proceedings involving Native children. ICWA mandates that state agencies make active efforts to prevent the removal of Native children from their families and prioritizes placing children with their extended families, tribes or other Native families. By recognizing tribal sovereignty and ensuring that Native children remain connected to their culture, ICWA addresses historical injustice, works to restore fairness and family connectedness, and ultimately safeguards protective factors for Native children.



Addressing hair discrimination through the CROWN Act of 2019.

The CROWN Act provides crucial legal protections for Black hairstyles, thereby supporting Black children's cultural expression and fostering a more inclusive environment in schools and workplaces. Inspired by the story of Andrew Johnson's forced haircut, California Governor Gavin Newsom highlighted how the lack of explicit protections for Black hairstyles in school settings had allowed for damage to Black identity and expression. In 2019, he introduced The CROWN Act, which stands for "Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair." This policy explicitly prohibits race-based hair discrimination and the denial of employment or educational opportunities due to hair texture or protective hairstyles, including braids, locs, twists and bantu knots.⁴⁰ By July of that same year, the inaugural CROWN Act was signed into law and expanded the definition of race in the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) and state Education Code to ensure protection in workplaces and K-12 public and charter schools. This law acts as a direct safeguard to Black protective factors, ensuring that Black children are free in their most formative years to explore their connections to culture and develop their own personal identities as members of the Black community. Since then, iterations of The CROWN Act have been passed in 26 states and in several major cities, paving the way for continued expansion.

“

[Johnson’s] dignity being exposed, his decision whether or not to lose an athletic competition or lose his identity came into, I think, stark terms for millions of Americans that never had that opportunity. That is played out in workplaces, it’s played out in schools—not just athletic competitions and setting — every single day all across America in ways subtle and overt.”⁴¹

— California Governor Gavin Newsom

Addressing hate crimes through the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act of 2021.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act of 2021 enhances protections for Asian communities by improving hate crime reporting and prosecution while ensuring cultural responsiveness through multilingual resources and targeted crime-prevention efforts. Following the arrival of COVID-19 in the United States, Asian communities were left to advocate for their own safety and protection as misinformation and violence spread. To address the problem, numerous community-based groups joined together to call for a larger response to anti-Asian violence. As a result of community-led efforts, President Joe Biden signed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act on May 20, 2021, criminalizing anti-Asian hate crimes and empowering the US Department of Justice to prosecute such crimes more swiftly. The legislation also made reporting hate crimes more accessible at the local and state levels by boosting public outreach and putting information online in multiple languages, and authorized grants for crime-reduction programs aimed at preventing and responding to hate crimes⁽⁴²⁾. This legislation’s steps to ensure community safety and protect the opportunity to thrive demonstrated support for US Asian communities during a vulnerable time.

“

This violence—it did not come from nowhere, and none of it is new. In my life, my lived experience, I have seen how hate can pervade our communities. I have seen how hate can impede our progress. And I have seen how people uniting against hate can strengthen our country.”⁴³

— Vice President Kamala Harris in response to President Biden signing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act

We must continue to identify policies that are actively harmful to BIPOC families and reform or repeal them. But in addition to addressing these harms, public policy can and should actively support protective factors for BIPOC families, and include language to guarantee that injustices will not be repeated.

Program Summaries and Examples

In this section, we highlight effective programs and practices from community leaders in California, Texas and Hawaii that center and uplift the protective factors of BIPOC children and families. These examples will serve as a basis for the policy recommendations that follow.

Visión y Compromiso—Childcare Provider Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregivers



Established in 2000, Visión y Compromiso is a nationally respected organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underrepresented communities by supporting **promotoras and community health workers**. Through Visión y Compromiso’s Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregivers project, promotoras provide culturally responsive training and lead activities with informal home-based childcare providers in various counties across California, especially Latino and Mixteco communities.



Promotoras are skilled relationship builders and experts on local issues facing their community, using peer-to-peer approaches to increase awareness about health topics, local systems and community resources.”

— Visión y Compromiso

Visión y Compromiso’s FFN Caregivers program highlights the importance of creating and establishing connections to culture in childcare programs. Visión y Compromiso trains FFN caregivers to support healthy child development by sharing the importance of recognizing different learning styles and incorporating each child’s cultural and educational needs into the learning environments they create. By embedding cultural traditions into early childhood education and care, providers send a message to the children in their care about the value of their culture, helping children form a positive self image and sense of belonging. This direct connection to culture serves as a protective factor for young children by building identity, setting behavioral norms and providing a sense of group cohesion that is vital to their growth and development.⁴⁴



Culture [enhances] the life of a child and a community, and does not operate in conflict with American culture.”

— Hugo Ramirez, director of programs at Visión y Compromiso

Two Feathers Native American Family Services



Photo courtesy of Two Feathers Native American Family Services

Two Feathers Native American Family Services (NAFS) was established in 1998 as a consortium of several Tribes providing direct social services to all eligible Native American families in Humboldt County, not just members of Tribal nations. Their goals are to serve those most in need with a strong focus on children and adolescents, and to build more caring, kind and compassionate communities.



TWO FEATHERS
Native American Family Services

Two Feathers' programs use protective factors to challenge the most devastating impacts of colonization on Native communities, which historically have left Native youth not feeling "Native enough" amongst their communities and peers. Two Feathers embeds protective factors in their work with youth ages 9 to 18 through their ACORN Youth Wellness Program, which instills (A)ppreciation of our whole selves; (C)onnecting language, community and culture; (O)ppportunity and access; (R)elationships with others; and (N)urturing nature and spirit. By participating in the program, youth strengthen their pride in and connection to Native heritage and teachings, learning to recognize the long standing relationship between Native people, lands and resources. Teaching of locally based practices, values and traditions positively impacts Native youth and strengthens their cultural identities, which can contribute to a sense of hope and self-efficacy. Another example of protective factors within Two Feathers' programs is the reintroduction of Native language back into youth education. This exposure to multilingualism through Yurok and other Native languages creates a strong foundation for identity development and cultural grounding. Establishing **cultural connection** and **multilingualism** from an early age serves as a protective factor for Native youth and their communities. Without the language of one's ancestors, individual and collective identity is weakened, and cultural traditions are more likely to die out within a few generations.⁴⁵

“

There is a buy-in and respect for the Native teachings. There is a belief you are part of something larger than just yourself. There is a greater sense of community due to the rural nature of where they live, but also how we came up as people of villages. There is a sense of community.”

— Virgil Moorehead, executive director of Two Feathers

AVANCE



Photo courtesy of AVANCE

For nearly 50 years, AVANCE has been creating pathways to economic mobility through innovative, culturally responsive **two-generation (2Gen) programming** in Texas and California. **The Parent-Child Education Program (PCEP)** at the core of AVANCE programming is built around the belief that parents are their child's first teachers and the home is the child's first classroom.



This program integrates culturally responsive parenting education, early childhood development and community engagement to ensure comprehensive support for families. PCEP's curriculum engages parents through their love for their children, offering easy access points to build upon their knowledge. When parents begin PCEP, they often feel immediate connection to their own upbringing and childhood experiences. By incorporating modules focused on bilingualism and biliteracy, and sharing research with parents about dual language (DLL) offerings, AVANCE helps families learn to advocate for their children's educational rights as dual language learners. Parents who complete the program understand the opportunities that come with bilingualism, and how it helps their children stay connected to Latine culture. By intentionally weaving culture, connection and social support into its offerings, AVANCE builds networks for parents and caregivers, and creates opportunities for children to grow up in environments that validate and affirm their bicultural identities.

“

Parents in the program really support each other to make sure everyone's kids have what they need. If one parent is struggling with formula or introducing solid foods, the others are always ready with support and advice. That strong connection helps build lifelong friendships.”

— Teresa Granillo, chief executive officer of AVANCE

Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI)



Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI) is a nonprofit community-based organization established by Sacramento community activists in 1980 to respond to the critical needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) communities, as well as immigrants, refugees and those with limited English proficiency (EP). ARI offers a range of resources, from access to social services and public benefits programs—including health coverage and nutrition assistance—to workforce development for youth and adults.



In addition to advocating for solutions to the unique challenges of marginalized populations, ARI empowers community members to make meaningful contributions and participate actively in civic life with classes in citizenship and English as a second language. With a culturally diverse team of over 25 individuals who speak more than 20 languages, ARI's staff serves the communities they come from. Being trusted messengers with strong local ties allows ARI to respond nimbly to evolving needs, and the organization's operations and policy goals are shaped by continual grassroots engagement. Whether families learn about the programs through word of mouth, social media, community events or email newsletters, ARI's outreach efforts integrate in-language support, connection to culture and other protective factors that make its services accessible and relevant.

ARI offers comprehensive programs for all areas of life, including youth programs centered on AANHPI-specific protective factors. ARI's Youth RISE is a program for young leaders aged 14–24 dedicated to creating positive social change, empowering communities and teaching advocacy. For the last 31 years, ARI's Summer Youth Program has provided at-risk youth with career, life and leadership skills through an intensive two-week academy followed by a guaranteed paid work opportunity, ensuring that each participant gains valuable job skills and experience. Additionally, Youth Link Sacramento serves as a comprehensive hub for resources, programs and support with a dual focus on promoting virtual youth activities and COVID-19 resources, and enhancing the visibility and accessibility of youth organizations in Sacramento. To ensure participation from diverse communities ARI programs are developed, implemented and staffed by culturally and linguistically skilled individuals.

ARI's youth programs run alongside the community's deep cultural practices and traditions. Children in the program have access to ARI's cultural celebrations, including the annual Autumn Moon Festival and Lunar New Year activities, which connect to long-standing traditions in Asian culture. Young people and their families also participate in dance, song and art, cultivating deep cultural understanding and pride. Additionally, ARI offers culturally competent language programs, helping immigrant families expand their opportunities.

Access to ARI's programs helps develop and strengthen cultural identification, which is especially critical for AANHPI youth, and is associated with healthier outcomes and fewer risk-taking behaviors.⁴⁶

Ile Omode

Ile Omode, meaning “House of the Children” in Yoruba, is an all-Black institution providing culturally informed Pre-K through eighth grade education in Oakland, CA. The school was established to address the gaps in traditional education regarding Black culture, history and pride.

Since its founding, Ile Omode has deeply embedded protective factors from the Black community into its curriculum. Children as young as two enrolled at Ile Omode experience a strong connection to their culture, and rituals play a significant role in emphasizing the cultural value of checking in with the spirit. One key ritual practiced at Ile Omode is the pouring of libation, an African

tradition that honors the ancestors who came before them and contributed to the success of Black people. Each day, school ends with the word “Aṣẹ,” or “ashe,” a Yoruba term meaning “power,” “authority,” “command,” “energy” or “life.”

In addition to teaching the significance of African words, Ile Omode uplifts the spirit by acknowledging the creative energies surrounding us and honoring the ancestors by recognizing the cultural contributions they have made. Students learn the names and stories of their familial ancestors, as well as historical figures, fostering a deep sense of reverence for the past. Through these practices, Ile Omode creates a **faith-based community** that supports the spiritual and cultural growth of its students, and develops a nurturing environment that honors the past while preparing Black children for the future. Studies among Black youth demonstrate the protective nature of being involved in religions comprised of shared beliefs, practices and traditions, which can support positive outcomes for Black youth.⁴⁷ Ile Omode centers protective factors like **multilingualism, connection to faith based community** and **connection** to culture in their early childhood education model to help students connect with their cultural heritage, reinforcing a sense of identity and belonging and cultivate the next generation of Black leaders who honor the traditions of the past.



Photo courtesy of Ile Omode

“

Our children, today’s children, represent our tomorrow. They give us an indication of our future as a people. Ile Omode joins parents in the task of nurturing the development of superior children.”

— Ile Omode Website

“

The success we see is about their character and how they use our teachings to solve their own problems, and how they use our teachings to innovate and solve the problems of our community.”

— Bonisile Ikemba, associate director of Ile Omode

INPEACE



Photo courtesy of INPEACE

INPEACE (Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture) has empowered Native Hawaiian communities through education and culture since 1994. INPEACE focuses on nurturing the growth and development of keiki (children) through models focused on 'ohana (family). INPEACE's mission is to see Native Hawaiians culturally grounded and thriving in their communities, guided by values such as "ohana, aloha" (love, compassion), "pilina" (relationships), "mālama" (care), "kuleana" (responsibility) and "pono" (integrity). INPEACE now operates 11 programs across three islands, all encouraging families to bring their young children to learn about developmental milestones, interaction strategies and cultural education.



INPEACE's Keiki Steps program was designed to foster essential protective factors by bridging the gap between home and school through a culturally grounded parent-participation model. This approach promotes children's development and school readiness by teaching parents and caregivers through an Indigenous lens that draws upon Hawaiian cultural concepts such as "mo'okū'auhau" (genealogy), "nohona 'ohana" (traditional family systems), "oli" and "mele" (chant and song) and "ha'i mo'olelo" (storytelling). This **connection to culture**, in which traditional Hawaiian practices are integral to the curriculum, fosters a strong sense of identity and belonging in children, preparing them for success in education and life. Additionally, the program promotes **cultural-based healing** and **community connectedness** through "Ka'ahahele," in which children engage in inquiry-based explorations of their Native community, and "Kilo," which encourages observation and learning from nature and the environment. This relationship to land is crucial for the Native Hawaiian people, as it not only strengthens cultural ties, but instills a sense of responsibility and respect for the natural world. The Keiki Steps parent-child interaction preschool program also incorporates the protective factors of **multilingualism, connection to culture, family** and **community**, laying a firm foundation for young Hawaiians that ensures they are culturally grounded, confident and ready to thrive in their educational journeys.

Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors



Photo courtesy of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP-OD) was founded 17 years ago with an early childhood curriculum that honors and supports parents as the leaders of their families and their child's first, and most influential, teachers. Through the program's 10 interactive bilingual English and Spanish sessions, parents and caregivers build strong foundations in key aspects of early childhood development and other subjects relevant to parenting young children. Offered across 42 states and in Guatemala, these programs are embraced by diverse international communities.



**Abriendo Puertas
Opening Doors**

AP-OD's parenting program weaves community protective factors into its programming and learning environment. A peer-to-peer model in which parents and caregivers are taught by program alumni highlights the valuable protective factor of **connection to peers**, and allows parents to learn alongside people who deeply understand how identity, culture and generational knowledge influence their experiences as parents. Having at least one positive social connection that offers emotional, spiritual, educational and practical support can help mitigate the risks of loneliness and isolation in parents.⁴⁸ This type of support is also associated with enhanced mood, greater ability to be present with children and increased feelings of well-being, competence and satisfaction. These benefits correspond to reduced levels of depression, anxiety and anger. By facilitating connection to community and social supports, AP-OD creates safe and authentic spaces, where parents and caregivers can develop the best versions of themselves for their children.

“

Parents [who join AP/OD] are able to [reflect] on themselves in this role and recognize [that] their own parents did the best they could with what they had. Parents are primed to continue the discussion and grow and learn. Some communities don't go to a psychologist so this in some ways facilitates healing. It can be like unpacking family baggage that comes with not having the resources at the time but now [having] the willingness to unpack these things at home. Through listening to the learned experiences of the community and family, they gain respect for the people and space.”

— Christina Gonzalez, implementation and advocacy manager at AP/OD

Barona Indian Preschool

The Barona Indian Preschool, located on the Barona Indian Reservation, is a unique educational institution serving Native American students, specifically Kumeyaay children. Since its founding in 2002, the Barona Indian Preschool has integrated culturally rich, individualized teaching. The Preschool offers a personalized approach to education that allows for a deep connection to the Kumeyaay heritage, and provides students with strong academic and cultural foundations. The protective factors embedded in Barona Indian Preschool are especially crucial for Kumeyaay children to foster identity, resilience and a sense of belonging that will support academic and cultural growth.



The core of Barona’s Early Childhood Program curriculum is its dedication to preserving Kumeyaay traditions. Through culturally grounded activities that honor ancient traditions, such as making “shawii” from acorns, children actively participate in traditional practices that root them in their heritage. Students and educators also use Kumeyaay terms and cultural references to strengthen the children’s connection to their ancestral language. This immersion in cultural practices and language is critical for building both linguistic skills and cultural identity. Introducing Kumeyaay children to their native language within an academic and cultural framework also offers a significant developmental advantage. **Multilingualism** has been shown to enhance cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills and academic achievement, all of which are bolstered in a supportive and culturally resonant learning environment like Barona Indian Preschool. For Native children, being educated in space that honors their ancestors, traditions and spiritual beliefs offers a powerful foundation of purpose and identity. The pride and deep sense of belonging that this **connection to culture** fosters is essential for the emotional and social development of Kumeyaay children, and ensures that they grow up with a strong sense of who they are and where they come from.



Photo courtesy of Barona Indian Preschool

The children at the Barona Indian Preschool benefit from the small class size, which encourages collaboration and strong peer relationships. By learning alongside other Native children from their community, they form bonds based on shared cultural experiences, traditions and mutual support. This peer connection reinforces community values, which strengthens emotional well-being. The program’s respect for language as part of cultural preservation helps equip Kumeyaay children with the linguistic skills to navigate their own community and the broader world. Through these protective factors, the Barona Indian Preschool provides Kumeyaay children with a holistic and culturally rich education that empowers them to succeed academically while remaining deeply rooted in their traditions.



The sense of community our teacher fosters inside the classroom through language preservation and food, and all of these things that are protective factors, help the children understand who they are as young native people.”

— Rhonda Welch-Scalco, member of Barona Band of Mission Indians

Stone Soup Fresno



Photo courtesy of Stone Soup Fresno

Inspired by the folk tale of the same name, Stone Soup Fresno was founded 34 years ago to support Southeast Asian refugee families and foster community resilience. The founders aimed to create a space where cultural traditions could thrive and children received quality education that respected their backgrounds. Today, Stone Soup Fresno is a vibrant hub dedicated to culturally responsive early childhood education and comprehensive support services for all of Fresno’s diverse families.



Stone Soup Fresno’s three early childhood programs integrate protective factors for small children of all cultural backgrounds. Playgroup, the organization’s longest-running early childhood program, offers a culturally enriching environment for children ages 0 to 5. Grounded in **multicultural** traditions, Playgroup incorporates games and storytelling from around the world to help children build social and emotional bonds while learning **cultural awareness** and inclusion. The preschool program serves children from various backgrounds in a **multicultural** space that reflects the diversity of Fresno’s heritage. By including traditional songs, stories and activities, the preschool fosters a sense of belonging and appreciation for diversity. Stone Soup Fresno’s after-school language program, called Learn Hmong, promotes **multilingual learning** for all children, emphasizing native language retention alongside English skills. It connects Asian immigrant families to their roots while enriching the experience of non-Hmong children as well. This dual focus on language and culture reinforces community ties and family bonds.

Through its commitment to cultural exchange and learning, Stone Soup Fresno fosters resilience, mutual respect and a sense of belonging, serving as a model for culturally grounded early childhood education.



All of our programs were created because families told us that’s what they wanted. We stopped creating programs and then hoping people will come, and instead listened to community need. That’s definitely one model that we have always since stayed true to.”

— May Gnia Her, executive director of Stone Soup Fresno

Recommendations

Throughout history and up to the present day, various policies and practices have limited the ability for BIPOC communities to raise healthy, thriving children. However, applying a framework focused on protective factors can actively help to change the policies, behaviors and beliefs that perpetuate racist institutions and disparate outcomes.⁴⁹ To create nurturing environments that support positive development and allow children of color to reach their full potential, it is essential for programs and policies to identify and uplift the protective factors of diverse communities. The five recommendations that follow provide actionable anti-racist strategies to nourish and empower communities of color through their unique protective factors.

RECOMMENDATION 1

Require development and decision-making around policies and programs impacting young children to include the active and meaningful engagement of parents and caregivers.



The AP/OD process brings family healing and is a community gift given to their children. We want the impact of our program to strengthen our communities for generations. The gift of the community is how these families flourish and grow through their direct participation in the program.

— Christina Gonzalez, implementation and advocacy manager at AP/OD

Across a variety of disciplines, including child welfare, juvenile justice, education, early childhood and health, family engagement is a critical tool for systemic transformation.⁵⁰ However, for family engagement to be authentic and thus effective, families must be systematically included in the planning, development and evaluation of policies and programs that promote children’s development, learning and wellness.⁵¹ Although families are experts in their own lived experiences, children and parents of color have historically been served by systems and programs designed without their input. As a result, BIPOC communities may face resistance, bias and lack of understanding around different child rearing practices. But when families engage with systems and providers who understand and value their cultures, they are less likely to experience the damaging effects of racial and ethnic discrimination.⁵² By incorporating cultural values and protective factors to support healthy development, policies can benefit children, families and entire communities.

Research on family engagement has identified four domains that enable family engagement to be effectively integrated into child-serving systems. They are: 1) representative input from those who reflect the demographics, needs and experiences of those being served; 2) transparency on how input is incorporated into the decision-making process; 3) involvement of parents and caregivers in decision-making processes and evaluating outcomes; and 4) commitment from leadership.⁵³





Photo courtesy of AVANCE

Programs such as Head Start (HS) and Early Head Start (EHS), which have roots in the 1960s, view parents and caregivers as essential partners in educating and supporting the overall development of young children. By establishing formal leadership and policy-making roles for parents and community members through a Policy Council, these programs involve families in deciding which services best meet their needs. Family engagement is also included in EHS/HS performance standards to prioritize their lived experiences. Furthermore, regulations detailing how to operationalize family engagement in daily practice helps EHS/HS, “raise the quality standard to reflect science and best practices, and streamline and simplify requirements so programs can better understand what is required for quality services.”⁵⁴ Per the performance standards, “A program must integrate parent and family engagement strategies into all systems and program services to support family well-being and promote children’s learning and development. Programs are encouraged to develop innovative multi-generation approaches that address prevalent needs of families across their program that may leverage community partnerships or other funding sources. This includes communicating with families in a format that meets the needs of each individual family.”⁵⁵ By prioritizing family engagement in this comprehensive manner, Early Head Start and Head Start not only enhance the educational experience for children in the program but foster a collaborative environment that centers the knowledge and lived experiences of those they serve. Other programs serving children and families should strive for opportunities to replicate these expectations in their own statutes and regulations.

In California, the newer Hope, Opportunity, Perseverance and Empowerment (HOPE) for Children Trust Account Program also shows promise as a model to replicate and expand upon. Established through Assembly Bill 156, HOPE aims to close racial wealth gaps and confront issues of intergenerational poverty with a new financial investment program specifically intended for the state’s most vulnerable children.⁵⁶ Members of HOPE’s board of directors, advisory workgroup and staff agreed that the program could not be designed without significant direction from youth who were likely to be beneficiaries of the program.⁵⁷ In order to accomplish this, they convened HOPE’s Youth Panel of Experts (YPE) to help shape the program’s rollout in different communities.

To support meaningful change, solutions must effectively include those who are most impacted, along with service providers, agency staff and other key stakeholders.⁵⁸ Head Start/Early Head Start and HOPE are already demonstrating how programs can engage youth, parents and community members, and include their voices in operational mandates.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Ensure equitable funding for early childhood programs by considering systemic racism, resource gaps, outcome disparities and other forms of current and historical marginalization.

For programs and services to meet the needs of children across our diverse communities, the distribution of resources matters. Making funding decisions with consideration for the specific populations—and cultures—being served not only improves the quality of care, but allows for more accurate measurements of progress.

In order to fully understand the impacts of culturally aligned programs, it is important to identify suitable strategic evaluation approaches, such as assessing the experiences and outcomes of beneficiaries and providers, and monitoring systems efficiencies and operations.⁵⁹

When considering how best to allocate funds equitably in early learning programs, California should consider utilizing tiered quality rating and improvement systems to provide larger reimbursements to programs that serve historically marginalized communities and ensure livable wages for program staff who come from those communities.⁶⁰ Using quality funding from the Child Care and Development Fund is one mechanism for supporting child care providers serving historically marginalized communities. For Native American tribes, this commitment should provide additional funding to implement quality rating systems that reflect their cultures, along with technical assistance when requested. Tribal consultation should be facilitated to determine how to best support tribes in this process.

In California, the Whole Child Equity Tool will provide a data-driven, child-centered approach that can help the state identify communities where multiple, compounding and intersectional factors beyond poverty affect children's growth and development. This tool will offer a more nuanced look at what communities are facing, and can help state and local leaders make informed decisions targeting new resources and design policies with the greatest impact, specifically across child-focused systems, including early learning and care, physical and mental health, education, community safety, and economic well-being.⁶¹ The Equity Tool uses several indicators to ensure a targeted approach that reaches the highest-need communities. By utilizing the Equity Tool to track how California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and General Child Care and Development Program (CCTR) funding is allocated, we can better understand how to provide funding that meets the cultural needs and expectations of our communities.



Photo courtesy of AVANCE

RECOMMENDATION 3

Create safe and culturally affirming spaces by prioritizing diversity and building capacity for all providers serving families and young children prenatal to age 3.



Photo courtesy of Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors

As demonstrated by the program examples throughout this brief, children gain access to a wealth of historical knowledge, moral codes and spiritual beliefs when communities, systems and institutions of care emphasize cultural preservation and expression. Cultural enrichment empowers them with an appreciation for their heritage and helps to instill pride, which is vital to combat the societal biases and systemic inequalities they may encounter. But for children of color to receive the cultural connection they deserve, the early care and education workforce must be equipped with the proper tools and trauma-informed methods to respond to their needs. Building workforce capacity is necessary to bolster resilience and improve the social and emotional health of young children and their caregivers.⁶²

California must invest in representation among early care and education (ECE) personnel, prioritize training aimed at countering bias and teach trauma-informed care.⁶³ Developing a more proficient early childhood workforce would better serve children of color exposed to environmental stressors and racial bias, as well as their families, by bringing additional resources and information.

The number of infants and toddlers in California far exceeds the supply of available child care, and access to subsidized care is even more limited. It is estimated that 36 percent of the state's children, ages 2 and under, are eligible for subsidized care. Yet only 14 percent enrolled.⁶⁴ California also has the nation's largest population of children who are learning another language in addition to English. As part of this work, we must strengthen funding streams for programs such as family, friend and neighbor (FFN) care, which fills gaps in early care and education deserts with culturally responsive care. FFN providers who speak the home languages of the children and families they care for should also receive the necessary support to pursue licensing, education and training as part of the ECE workforce.⁶⁵

Investing in trauma-informed programs helps to direct families to additional socio-emotional and mental health resources.⁶⁶ Conducting infant and early childhood mental health consultations (IECMHC) in ECE and other nonclinical settings is a particularly effective strategy for providing critical socio-emotional support and addressing mental health challenges among young children. As they conduct IECMHC, mental health professionals work collaboratively with early childhood professionals, pediatricians and other service providers to identify at-risk children, strengthen teacher-family relationships, and refer additional resources. Such cross-disciplinary approaches help ensure young children from diverse communities are effectively served and cared for.

Another core component of a strong ECE system is competitive salaries and benefits for early care and education providers. Compensation should reflect the demanding nature of these roles, the experience they require and their critical importance in child development.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Invest in and expand the infrastructure of care coordination between managed care plans and community organizations to leverage community protective factors and leadership.

As outlined in TCP's Equity Through Engagement report, an effective system of support for early childhood development requires leadership, sustained effort and collaboration between stakeholders, including cross-agency partners, community members and community-based organizations (CBOs).⁶⁷

System transformation requires fundamental shifts in power toward shared decision-making and centering families and communities as expert partners in designing and delivering care.



Community-driven, cross-sector collaborations, such as Accountable Communities for Health and ACES Aware, can serve as bridges between managed care plans, social drivers of health and early childhood community supports, which work together to impact child health outcomes. For example, the Strong Healthy And Resilient Kids (SHARK) program at the LA County Department of Health Services (DHS) Rancho Los Amigos Medical Center provides trauma-informed primary care to children with complex medical needs who have also reported adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). SHARK incorporates community health workers (CHWs) into its work and leverages community relationships to enhance services for young children and their families. Prior to the state's 2019 investment in the SHARK program, there was no county-wide model for providing trauma-informed, culturally responsive care for children experiencing developmental delays or behavioral challenges in addition to ACEs. The average wait time for services before SHARK was 26 days, and many patients waited years with no access to care. Early analysis of the CHW pilot shows that approximately 25 percent of children achieved "meaningful reduction in symptoms" or met their care goals within three months

of enrollment. Because of these interventions, children with ACEs are getting connected to the services they need and experiencing improvements in sleep, less anxiety symptoms and bullying.⁶⁸

With the ambitious goals for reforming Medi-Cal put forward by California's DHCS, managed care plans are equipped with the right incentives to deliver quality medical care to children and respond to their health related social needs in partnership with community based organizations. As experts on their own needs, communities and families must be at the center of any efforts to address children's health equity and improve child well-being.⁶⁹ By funding programs like ACEs Aware, we create tremendous opportunities to expand access to Medi-Cal services and other resources via trusted community-based providers.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Create wellness hubs and centers to build networks connecting early childhood providers with health care, legal services and other family-specific needs.

As outlined above, a variety of systemic barriers have hindered the ability for many families to raise healthy, thriving children. A whole-family wellness approach to better meet the needs of California’s children should include “systematic attention to the parents’ well-being and psychological needs; remedies to sources of discrimination; and the fostering of dignity, love and healing within the context of empowered communities.⁷⁰” A holistic, interdisciplinary system to better meet the needs of a family, focused on culturally and linguistically responsive strategies that are healing-centered and not reliant on a medical diagnosis, represents a transformation in the delivery of health and social services.⁷¹ Multisystem and multidisciplinary approaches to early childhood supports, such as Whole Family Wellness Hubs and Community Wellness Centers, strengthen families and communities by addressing **health-related social needs**, filling care gaps for families with young children and while providing culturally responsive services.



The concept of a “hub” utilizes a continuum approach to care that includes screenings, mental and physical wellness, literacy, early childhood education with dual language immersion and more. Early childhood and health care would also be combined with child welfare, social and legal services in one easily accessible place, and additional resources tailored to the local community’s needs would be delivered through coordinated partnerships between providers. As outlined by California’s Reparations Task Force, these centers would collaborate with community organizations to offer space for families to access a variety of early learning, health care and mental health programs, plus additional offerings to instill positive racial identities in African American children.⁷² Early Head Start, child care and home visiting programs can institute formal partnerships, for example, with health care, mental health and legal services to ensure that parents of color, immigrant parents, LGBTQ+ parents and members of other marginalized communities have the holistic support to meet their needs.⁷³

As California continues to reform its Medi-Cal program to address health-related social needs, this model would be supported by an alternative payment structure characterized by collaborations between providers and health plans, such as CACHI and others piloted across the nation. For example, at The Children’s Bureau, the Magnolia Community Initiative provides a network of more than seventy service providers offering families a comprehensive spectrum of care, ranging from health and childcare to financial and immigration services. While private funders, along with some state and locally funded grants, have supported these efforts, a long-term public commitment is needed to expand and refine these models.⁷⁴ Until providing collocated services is possible, providers must create referral networks to meet the comprehensive needs of families and communities, particularly those of color.

In order to prioritize early childhood development, California must work to create a coordinated system of programs, policies and services that promote healthy families and respond to the needs of the state’s diverse communities.

Conclusion



Photo courtesy of AVANCE

Throughout this brief, we have shared examples of how a commitment to supporting and centering community-defined protective factors can serve as an anti-racist strategy in caring for children and families, especially for the healthy development of BIPOC children. While the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among California's children of color is a significant issue in itself, systemic barriers further exacerbate the negative impacts of these experiences. To effectively combat this and other disparities, our approaches must be rooted in anti-racist strategies that acknowledge and embed culturally relevant protective factors while targeting the historical and systemic inequities facing BIPOC communities.

By acknowledging the strength and leadership of its communities and implementing the recommendations in this brief, California can build robust infrastructures that not only support culturally affirming early care, but ensure that programs are aligned with the values and needs of the communities they serve. This approach is aimed at significant long-term change by working to eliminate racially disparate health outcomes and ensuring that young children and their families are able to reach their full potential.

The programs highlighted here, and many others, demonstrate how utilizing protective factors can uplift the strengths of BIPOC children and families in order to better support their well-being. The policy recommendations emphasize enhancing system navigation and supporting infrastructure that makes access to high-quality, culturally affirming services more equitable.

Addressing the multifaceted challenges facing California's children requires a concerted effort to implement policies that promote their health and well-being, regardless of background. By prioritizing and supporting protective factors across cultures, and applying frameworks that challenge racist policies and beliefs, we can create nurturing environments that set every child up for success.



Cultural democracy—the right to maintain a bicultural identity as a survival strategy for people of color in response to living with the tensions of conflicting cultural values and subordination.”⁷⁵

— Manuel Ramirez (III.) & Alfredo Castañeda

Visión y Compromiso—Childcare Provider Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregivers

Established in 2000, Visión y Compromiso is a nationally respected organization dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underrepresented communities by supporting over 4,000 **promotoras and community health workers**. Today, Visión y Compromiso is the only statewide organization in California that provides comprehensive, linguistically and culturally responsive leadership development, capacity building and advocacy training for this crucial workforce.



Promotoras are skilled relationship builders and experts on local issues facing their community, using peer-to-peer approaches to increase awareness about health topics, local systems and community resources.”

— Visión y Compromiso

Through Visión y Compromiso’s Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregivers project, promotoras provide resources, contribute culturally responsive training and lead activities with informal home-based childcare providers in various counties across California, especially Latino and Mixteco communities. By using a strength-based approach and popular education methods, Visión y Compromiso’s FFN caregiver program is building the leadership of individual caregivers, who are integral to the health, stability and well-being of their communities.

Visión y Compromiso’s FFN Caregivers program highlights the importance of establishing connections to culture in childcare programs. Visión y Compromiso trains FFN caregivers to support healthy child development by sharing the importance of recognizing different learning styles and incorporating each child’s cultural and educational needs into the learning environments they create. By embedding cultural traditions into early childhood education and care, providers send a message to the children in their care about the value of their culture, helping children form a positive self image and sense of belonging. This direct connection to culture serves as a protective factor for young children by building identity, setting behavioral norms and providing a sense of group cohesion that is vital to their growth and development.

Two Feathers Native American Family Services

Two Feathers Native American Family Services (NAFS) was established in 1998 as a consortium of several Tribes providing direct social services to all eligible Native American families in Humboldt County, not just

members of Tribal nations. Their goals are to serve those most in need with a strong focus on children and adolescents, build more caring, kind and compassionate communities and promote stability and security for Native families. The children, youth and families Two Feathers serves can access **culturally congruent care** that includes a range of resources, programs and cultural activities.

By incorporating cultural traditions and principles that encourage a balance of emotional, mental, physical and spiritual health, Two Feathers protects the best interests of Native children.

Two Feathers intentionally embeds protective factors in its programs to challenge the most devastating impacts of colonization on Native communities, which historically have left Native youth not feeling “Native enough” amongst their communities and peers. Two Feathers embeds protective factors in their work with youth ages 9 to 18 through their ACORN Youth Wellness Program, which instills (A)ppreciation of our whole selves; (C)onnecting language, community and culture; (O)ppportunity and access; (R)elationships with others; and (N)urturing nature and spirit. By participating in the program, youth strengthen their pride in and connection to Native heritage and teachings, learning to recognize the long standing relationship between Native people, lands and resources. Teaching of locally based practices, values and traditions positively impacts Native youth and strengthens their cultural identities, which can contribute to a sense of hope and self-efficacy. Another example of protective factors within Two Feathers’ programs is the reintroduction of Native language back into youth education. This exposure to multilingualism through Yurok and other Native languages creates a strong foundation for identity development and cultural grounding.

AVANCE

For nearly 50 years, AVANCE has been creating pathways to economic mobility through innovative, culturally responsive **two-generation (2Gen) programming** in Texas and California. AVANCE’s ultimate goal is equitable access to the resources that allow children, caregivers and childcare providers to reach their full potential. The organization’s unique approach and programming is designed to ensure school-readiness for young children and to create opportunities for parents and providers to build social and economic capital.

The **Parent-Child Education Program (PCEP)** at the core of AVANCE programming is built around the belief that parents are their child’s first teachers and the home is the child’s first classroom. Founded in 1973, this program integrates culturally responsive parenting education, early childhood development and community engagement to ensure comprehensive support for families. PCEP’s curriculum engages parents through their love for their children, offering easy access points to build upon their knowledge. When parents begin PCEP, they often feel immediate connection to their own upbringing and childhood experiences. By incorporating modules focused on bilingualism and biliteracy, and sharing research with parents about dual language (DLL) offerings, AVANCE helps families learn to advocate for their children’s educational rights as dual language learners. According to survey data, parents who complete the program understand the opportunities that come with bilingualism, and how it helps their children stay connected to Latine culture. By intentionally weaving culture, connection and social support into its offerings, AVANCE builds networks for parents and caregivers, and creates opportunities for children to grow up in environments that validate and affirm their bicultural identities.

Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI)

Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI) is a nonprofit community-based organization established by Sacramento community activists in 1980 to respond to the critical needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs) communities, as well as immigrants, refugees and those with limited English proficiency (EP). ARI offers a range of resources, from access to social services and public benefits programs—including health coverage and nutrition assistance—to workforce development for youth and adults. In addition to advocating for solutions to the unique challenges of marginalized populations, ARI empowers community members to make meaningful contributions and participate actively in civic life with classes in citizenship and English as a second language. With a culturally diverse team of over 25 individuals who speak more than 20 languages, ARI’s staff serves the communities they come from. Being trusted messengers with strong

local ties allows ARI to respond nimbly to evolving needs, and the organization's operations and policy goals are shaped by continual grassroots engagement. Whether families learn about the programs through word of mouth, social media, community events or email newsletters, ARI's outreach efforts integrate in-language support, connection to culture and other protective factors that make its services accessible and relevant.

Through its Youth Development Center, ARI offers comprehensive programs for all areas of life, including youth programs centered on AANHPI-specific protective factors. ARI's Youth RISE is a program for young leaders aged 14–24 dedicated to creating positive social change, empowering communities and teaching advocacy. For the last 31 years, ARI's Summer Youth Program has provided at-risk youth with career, life and leadership skills through an intensive two-week academy followed by a guaranteed paid work opportunity, ensuring that each participant gains valuable job skills and experience. Additionally, Youth Link Sacramento serves as a comprehensive hub for resources, programs and support with a dual focus on promoting virtual youth activities and COVID-19 resources, and enhancing the visibility and accessibility of youth organizations in Sacramento. To ensure participation from diverse communities ARI programs are developed, implemented and staffed by culturally and linguistically skilled individuals.

ARI's youth programs run alongside the community's deep cultural practices and traditions. Children in the program have access to ARI's cultural celebrations, including the annual Autumn Moon Festival and Lunar New Year activities, which connect to long-standing traditions in Asian culture. Young people and their families also participate in dance, song and art, cultivating deep cultural understanding and pride. Additionally, ARI offers culturally competent language programs, helping immigrant families expand their opportunities.

Access to ARI's programs helps develop and strengthen cultural identification, which is especially critical for AANHPI youth. Cultural identification serves as a protective factor by promoting a sense of affiliation with the specific spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of their AANHPI communities. Among youth, this feeling of belonging has been associated with a reduction in risky and harmful behaviors.⁷⁶

Ile Omode

Ile Omode, meaning "House of the Children" in Yoruba, is an all-Black institution providing culturally informed Pre-K through eighth grade education in Oakland, CA. Founded by three master teachers inspired by the Black histories movement and scholarship promoting cultural pride and Black contributions to the world, the school opened in 1986 to address the gaps around Black culture, history and pride in traditional education. Rooted in African-centered education, Ile Omode's philosophy draws from scholars who have identified common values across African cultures, and aims to resurrect these values within Black communities by way of early childhood education. The school's mission is to cultivate new Black leaders who honor the traditions of the past while being fully aware of their role in contemporary society.

Since its founding, Ile Omode has deeply embedded protective factors from the Black community into its curriculum. As an all-Black school, it provides an environment where students see themselves represented in the staff and their peers, which fosters a natural sense of belonging and family. Children as young as 2 enrolled at Ile Omode experience a strong connection to their culture, and rituals play a significant role in emphasizing the cultural value of checking in with the spirit. One key ritual practiced at Ile Omode is the pouring of libation, an African tradition that honors the ancestors who came before them and contributed to the success of Black people. This daily practice helps students connect with their cultural heritage, reinforcing their sense of identity and belonging. Through these cultural connections, Ile Omode's curriculum supports the protective factor of connection to culture, nurturing confident and culturally aware Black youth.

Other rituals that play a significant role at Ile Omode emphasize the cultural value of checking in with the spirit. These include acknowledging "Mama Earth," the living spirit of the earth, and the cardinal directions. Each day, school ends with the word "Aṣẹ," or "ashe," a Yoruba term meaning "power," "authority," "command," "energy" or "life." In addition to teaching the significance of African words, Ile Omode uplifts the spirit by acknowledging the creative energies surrounding us and honoring the ancestors by recognizing

the cultural contributions they have made. Students learn the names and stories of their familial ancestors, as well as historical figures, fostering a deep sense of reverence for the past. For example, the preschool is named after Mama Jasiri, a significant figure in the institution's history, and the first ancestor the children learn about. Every Monday, the entire school participates in spiritual practices to reinforce unity and a collective sense of faith.

Through these practices, Ile Omode creates a **faith-based community** that supports the spiritual and cultural growth of its students, and develops a nurturing environment that honors the past while preparing Black children for the future. Ile Omode believes that raising successful and culturally aware leaders is a collective effort that requires families, educators and community members working together.

INPEACE

INPEACE (Institute for Native Pacific Education and Culture) has empowered Native Hawaiian communities through education and culture since 1994. The organization started with the Ka Lama Education Academy, which actively recruits individuals within the Native Hawaiian community to become educators. With a mission to improve the quality of life for Native Hawaiians by providing educational opportunities and promoting self-sufficiency, INPEACE focuses on nurturing the growth and development of “keiki” (children) through models focused on “‘ohana” (family). INPEACE’s mission is to see Native Hawaiians culturally grounded and thriving in their communities, guided by values such as “‘ohana, aloha” (love, compassion), “piliina” (relationships), “mālama” (care), “kuleana” (responsibility) and “pono” (integrity). INPEACE now operates 11 programs across three islands, all encouraging families to bring their young children to learn about developmental milestones, interaction strategies and cultural education. INPEACE remains committed to empowering individuals, families and communities through these efforts, ensuring that Native Hawaiians are well prepared to lead and thrive in their cultural heritage and community.

INPEACE went on to strengthen its grassroots approach with an early childhood development program Keiki Steps. Born from one parent’s desire to provide her child with early education despite not qualifying for any programs available at the time, Keiki Steps was designed to foster essential protective factors by bridging the gap between home and school through a culturally grounded parent-participation model. For over 25 years, this approach has promoted children’s development and school readiness by teaching parents and caregivers through an Indigenous lens that draws upon Hawaiian cultural concepts, such as “mo’okū’auhau” (genealogy), “nohona’ohana” (traditional family systems), “oli” and “mele” (chant and song) and “ha’i mo’olelo” (storytelling). This **connection to culture**, in which traditional Hawaiian practices are integral to the curriculum, fosters a strong sense of identity and belonging in children, preparing them for success in education and life. Additionally, the program promotes **cultural-based healing** and **community connectedness** through “Ka’ahale,” in which children engage in inquiry-based explorations of their Native community, and “Kilo,” which encourages observation and learning from nature and the environment. This relationship to land is crucial for the Native Hawaiian people, as it not only strengthens cultural ties, but instills a sense of responsibility and respect for the natural world. The Keiki Steps parent-child interaction preschool program also incorporates the protective factors of **multilingualism, connection to culture, family** and **community**, laying a firm foundation for young Hawaiians that ensures they are culturally grounded, confident and ready to thrive in their educational journeys.

Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors (AP-OD) was founded 17 years ago with an early childhood curriculum that honors and supports parents as the leaders of their families and their child’s first, and most influential, teachers. The organization provides parents and caregivers with local programs designed to enhance their knowledge, leadership skills and support systems, all of which are crucial for preparing their young children for school success. Through AP-OD’S 10 interactive bilingual English and Spanish sessions, parents and caregivers build strong foundations in key aspects of early childhood development and other subjects relevant to parenting, including early literacy and math, technology, health and advocacy. Participants in the

program also build relationships to help one another integrate what they learn into their daily lives. Offered across 42 states and in Guatemala, these programs are embraced by diverse international communities.

AP-OD's parenting program weaves community protective factors into its programming and learning environment. A peer-to-peer model in which parents and caregivers are taught by program alumni highlights the valuable protective factor of **connection to peers**, and allows parents to learn alongside people who deeply understand how identity, culture and generational knowledge influence their experiences as parents. Having at least one positive social connection that offers emotional, spiritual, educational and practical support can help mitigate the risks of loneliness and isolation in parents.⁷⁷ This type of support is also associated with enhanced mood, greater ability to be present with children and increased feelings of well-being, competence and satisfaction. These benefits correspond to reduced levels of depression, anxiety and anger. By facilitating connection to community and social supports, AP-OD creates safe and authentic spaces, where parents and caregivers can develop the best versions of themselves for their children.

Barona Indian Preschool

The Barona Indian Preschool, located on the Barona Indian Reservation, is a unique educational institution serving Native American students, specifically Kumeyaay children. Since its founding in 2002, the Barona Indian Preschool has integrated culturally rich, individualized teaching. The Preschool offers a personalized approach to education that allows for a deep connection to the Kumeyaay heritage, and provides students with strong academic and cultural foundations. The protective factors embedded in Barona Indian Preschool are especially crucial for Kumeyaay children to foster identity, resilience and a sense of belonging that will support academic and cultural growth.

The core of Barona's Early Childhood Program curriculum is its dedication to preserving Kumeyaay traditions. Through culturally grounded activities that honor ancient traditions, such as making "shawii" from acorns, children actively participate in traditional practices that root them in their heritage. Students and educators also use Kumeyaay terms and cultural references to strengthen the children's connection to their ancestral language. This immersion in cultural practices and language is critical for building both linguistic skills and cultural identity. Introducing Kumeyaay children to their native language within an academic and cultural framework also offers a significant developmental advantage. **Multilingualism** has been shown to enhance cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills and academic achievement, all of which are bolstered in a supportive and culturally resonant learning environment like Barona Indian Preschool. For Native children, being educated in space that honors their ancestors, traditions and spiritual beliefs offers a powerful foundation of purpose and identity. The pride and deep sense of belonging that this **connection to culture** fosters is essential for the emotional and social development of Kumeyaay children, and ensures that they grow up with a strong sense of who they are and where they come from.

The children at the Barona Indian Preschool benefit from the small class size, which encourages collaboration and strong peer relationships. By learning alongside other Native children from their community, they form bonds based on shared cultural experiences, traditions and mutual support. This peer connection reinforces community values and further strengthens emotional well-being by ensuring that Kumeyaay children are surrounded by peers who understand and celebrate their common identity. The program's respect for language as part of cultural preservation helps equip Kumeyaay children with the linguistic skills to navigate their own community and the broader world. Through these protective factors, the Barona Indian Preschool provides Kumeyaay children with a holistic and culturally rich education that empowers them to succeed academically while remaining deeply rooted in their traditions.

Stone Soup Fresno

Inspired by the folk tale of the same name, Stone Soup Fresno was founded 34 years ago to support Southeast Asian refugee families and foster community resilience. The founders aimed to create a space where cultural traditions could thrive and children received quality education that respected their

backgrounds. Today, Stone Soup Fresno is a vibrant hub dedicated to culturally responsive early childhood education and comprehensive support services for all of Fresno's diverse families.

Stone Soup Fresno's longest-running early childhood program, Playgroup, is a vibrant and culturally enriching environment designed to promote **peer connection** and learning through play for children ages 0 to 5. The program is deeply grounded in the rich traditions of the families it serves, and incorporates elements of their diverse cultures, such as games and storytelling, to build strong social and emotional bonds. Playgroup promotes cultural awareness, inclusion and empathy by encouraging children to interact together and learn about each other's traditions and experiences in a space that honors diversity.

Stone Soup Fresno's preschool program is a dynamic learning environment that is structured around the needs of working families and families who are pursuing higher education. The preschool welcomes all children, creating a **multicultural** space where they learn from one another. Like Playgroup, the preschool curriculum incorporates cultural traditions from the families it services, including songs, stories and activities, to ensure that children feel seen and valued. This culturally grounded approach further fosters a sense of belonging and an appreciation for diversity.

Stone Soup Fresno's after-school language program, called Learn Hmong, **promotes multilingual learning** for all children, emphasizing native language retention alongside English skills. It connects Asian immigrant families to their roots while enriching the experience of non-Hmong children as well. This dual focus on language and culture reinforces community ties and family bonds.

Stone Soup Fresno's after-school program called Learn Hmong offers a rich multilingual learning opportunity for all children, regardless of background. By emphasizing the importance of retaining native languages while fostering English skills, Learn Hmong helps children from immigrant and refugee families stay connected to their cultural roots. At the same time, it enriches the experience of non-Hmong children by exposing them to a diverse linguistic environment, enhancing cognitive development and fostering mutual respect and understanding among peers. The program also encourages parents to be involved, often incorporating family activities that celebrate Hmong customs. This dual focus on language and culture reinforces community ties and family bonds that resemble the Latine concept of **familismo**. Stone Soup Fresno's focus on inclusion, tradition and exchange makes it a model for culturally grounded early childhood education.

Acknowledgements



Writing, research and analysis for this brief was provided by **Jamila Michael, Eva Rivera, Maddie Ribble** and **Mayra E. Alvarez**. We also thank other current and previous TCP team members who supported the development of this brief, **Angela Vázquez, Maya Meinert** and **Gabriella Barbosa**.

TCP would like to extend our deepest appreciation to our peers and partners for their thoughtful review and helpful conversations in the preparation of this brief: **Hugo Ramirez**, director of programs; **Debbie Arthur**, director of development; **Alejandra Reyes**, regional program manager; *Visión y Compromiso*; **Virgil Moorehead**, executive director of Two Feathers Native American Family Services; **Bonisile Ikemba**, primary grade teacher at Ile Omode; **Dr. Teresa Granillo**, chief executive officer at AVANCE; **Sanoë Marfil**, chief program officer at INPEACE; **Rhonda Welch-Scalco**, former chairwoman and current TCP board member; **Sheilla Alvarez**, director of government affairs for Barona Band of Mission Indians; **Doreena Wong**, policy director; **Eddie Hu**, program director; **Andrew Menor**, policy coordinator at Asian Resources, Inc. (ARI); **May Gnia Her**, executive director of Stone Soup Fresno; and **Christina Gonzalez**, implementation and advocacy manager at Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors.

Thank you to **Joe Rihn** for editorial support and to **Dirango** for their support with layout and design.

TCP is grateful to the **Hilton Foundation**, the **Kellogg Foundation**, the **David and Lucile Packard Foundation** and the **Pritzker Children's Initiative** for supporting the development and production of this brief, as well as their ongoing support for TCP's broader advocacy agenda for children.

Additive bilingualism

Additive bilingualism emphasizes developing both primary and secondary languages to build the learner's linguistic repertoire without undermining their native language. This approach has been shown to support bilingual proficiency and cognitive benefits.⁷⁸

Anti-racist strategies are conscious and deliberate efforts to address and eradicate contemporary and historical forms of marginalization and inequality impacting communities of color.

BIPOC is an acronym for Black, Indigenous (and) People of Color. The term is used to acknowledge that not all people of color face equal levels of injustice, and that Black and Indigenous people are most severely impacted by systemic racial injustices.⁷⁹

California Proposition 58 (2016) was a ballot measure that repealed the restrictive provisions of Proposition 227 (1998), which mandated English-only education in public schools. Proposition 58 restored local control and flexibility in language instruction, allowing public schools to offer bilingual education and dual-language immersion programs alongside English-only instruction.

Culture refers to the beliefs, values, behaviors, customs, languages, rituals and practices that provide a particular group of people with patterns for living and interpreting reality.

Dual Language Learner (DLL)

Dual Language Learners are children birth to age 5, who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time, or are learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language.⁸⁰

English Language Learner (ELL)

English language learners are students who are not yet proficient in English and are in the process of developing their English language speaking, reading, writing and listening skills. ELLs come from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and require specialized instructional strategies to support language acquisition and academic achievement.⁸¹

Familismo

Familismo is a Latine cultural value centered on the importance of loyalty, closeness, cooperation and contribution within the nuclear family and extended networks of kinship.⁸²

Health-related social needs (HRSN)

Health-related social needs are the socio-economic factors most closely related to health outcomes. HRSNs include access to stable and quality housing, healthy food, employment, personal safety, reliable transportation and affordable utilities. When these needs are unmet, individuals can experience increased health risks and lapses in care that result in higher downstream medical costs and worse overall outcomes. Unmet also HRSNs perpetuate health inequities throughout underserved communities.⁸³

Othering is a process of marginalization, disempowerment and social exclusion that assumes divisions between "us" and "them" based on ascribed background, racial identity or socio-economic status.⁸³ Othering is understood as a central function of institutional racism and other structural injustices.

Parent-Child Education Program (PCEP)

Built around the organization's belief that parents are their children's first teachers, and that the home is their first classroom, the Parent-Child Education Program (PCEP) has been at the core of AVANCE's programming since 1973. PCEP is an evidence-based and culturally responsive two-generation program that supports Latino families with young children on the path toward economic mobility.⁸⁵

Promotoras and Community Health Workers

According to the National Association of Community Health Workers and the American Public Health Association, “community health workers are frontline public health workers who are trusted members of and/or have an unusually close understanding of the community served.” Delivering services through community health workers, promotoras and representatives (abbreviated together as CHW/P/R) can be an anti-racist solution for inequities in children’s health care.⁸⁶

Protective factors are conditions or attributes in children and adults that help to mitigate or eliminate risks they encounter to their health or well-being, and can help them adapt to different levels of hardship.

Two-generation (2Gen) programming

Two-generation approaches exist on a continuum from child-focused to parent-focused, with the unifying goal of supporting the entire family system. 2Gen approaches also consider how broader contexts—including educational and employment systems, social environments and government policies—can enhance family well-being. Research shows a strong connection between healthy child development and the parents’ economic, psychological and social well-being. As a result, initiatives that support both parents and children produce greater benefits than those focused on one or the other.⁸⁷

1. Michael Gillespie, "Hazim Hardeman, North Philly Student, Named Temple's First Rhodes Scholar," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 19, 2018, <https://www.inquirer.com/education/a/hazim-hardeman-rhodes-scholar-temple-north-philly-20181219.html>.
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Parents Under Pressure: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Mental Health & Well-Being of Parents* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.), <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/parents-under-pressure.pdf>.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Essentials for Childhood: Steps to Create Safe, Stable, Nurturing Relationships and Environments* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, 2014), <https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/media/pdf/essentials-for-childhood-framework508.pdf>.
4. Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, *Reimagining Behavioral Health: Strategies for Advancing Health Equity* (Washington, DC: Georgetown Center on Poverty and Inequality, 2021), <http://www.georgetownpoverty.org/issues/health-human-services/reimagining-behavioral-health>.
5. Center for the Study of Social Policy, *About Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2018), <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>.
6. "Protective Factors at School," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, last modified March 23, 2023, https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/protective_factors_schools.htm.
7. The Children's Partnership, *Policing and its Harmful Impacts on Child Wellbeing* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2020), <https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/TCP-Policing-Child-Health-FINAL.pdf>.
8. "Strengthening Families," *Center for the Study of Social Policy*, <https://cssp.org/our-work/project/strengthening-families/>.
9. Center for the Study of Social Policy, *About Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2018), <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/About-Strengthening-Families.pdf>.
10. Center for the Study of Social Policy, *Branching Out and Reaching Deeper: Building Stronger Partnerships to Support Families* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2018), <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Branching-Out-and-Reaching-Deeper.pdf>.
11. W. Akua, "What Is Deficit Thinking? An Analysis of Conceptualizations," *Currents* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–22, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/currents/17387731.0001.110/--what-is-deficit-thinking-an-analysis-of-conceptualizations?rgn=main;view=fulltext>.
12. Center for the Study of Social Policy, *Branching Out and Reaching Deeper: Building Stronger Partnerships to Support Families* (Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2018), <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Branching-Out-and-Reaching-Deeper.pdf>.
13. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Children in Immigrant Families* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ChildIsaChild_Immigrant-2024-FINAL.pdf.
14. Elisha Kuhlman, "Family Connectedness and Identity," in *Immigrant Families*, ed. Patricia J. M. Kuhlman (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2016), <https://open.lib.umn.edu/immigrantfamilies/chapter/8-2-family-connectedness-and-identity/>.
15. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Children in Immigrant Families* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ChildIsaChild_Immigrant-2024-FINAL.pdf.
16. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Black Children's Health* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ChildIsaChild_BlackChildrensHealth-2024-0221.pdf.
17. Helen Pinderhughes, Susan J. B. Smith, and Jerry M. C. Johnson, "The Effect of School Climate on Adolescent Mental Health: A Review of the Literature," *Psychiatric Services* 69, no. 10 (2018): 1045–1052, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6168212/>.

18. Danica G. Hays and Karina L. Mendez, "Protective Factors in the Lives of Immigrant Youth: A Qualitative Study," *Multicultural Perspectives* 16, no. 4 (2014): 202–211, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1053855.pdf>.
19. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Children in Immigrant Families* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/ChildsaChild_Immigrant-2024-FINAL.pdf.
20. Mariëlle J. L. Preevoo, Eliane C. B. F. van den Heuvel, Tessa M. J. Scherpenzeel, and Jantina A. van der Veen, "Within- and Cross-Language Relations Between Oral Language Proficiency and School Outcomes in Bilingual Children with an Immigrant Background: A Meta-Analytical Study," *Review of Educational Research* 86 (2016): 266–302, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315584685>.
21. Krista Byers-Heinlein and Casey Lew-Williams, "Bilingualism in the Early Years: What the Science Says," *PubMed Central* 7, no. 1 (2018): 95–112, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6168212/>.
22. Laia Fibla, Jessica E. Kosie, Ruth Kircher, Casey Lew-Williams, and Krista Byers-Heinlein, "Bilingual Language Development in Infancy: What Can We Do to Support Bilingual Families?" *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8866745/>.
23. Jazmin A. Reyes and Maurice J. Elias, *Fostering Social-Emotional Resilience among Latino Youth: The Importance of Cultural Values and Familism* (2008), <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b5882f8b98a78554648ca48/t/5bcf541ce4966bfe71c25659/1540314140494/Fostering+social-emotional+resilience+among+Latino+.pdf>.
24. Esmeralda Valdivieso-Mora, Casie L. Peet, Mauricio Garnier-Villarreal, Monica Salazar-Villanea, and David K. Johnson, "A Systematic Review of the Relationship between Familism and Mental Health Outcomes in the Latino Population," *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (October 24, 2016), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5078495/>.
25. Darius Reed and Raymond Dewayne Adams. "Risk and Protective Factors Specific to African American Youth," *Journal of Family Strengths* 20, no. 2 (2020): Article 5, <https://digitalcommons.library.tmc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1435&context=jfs>.
26. American Psychological Association, "Relationships Help Build Self-Esteem, and Self-Esteem Contributes to Better Relationships, Study Shows," news release, Last modified September 26, 2019, <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/09/relationships-self-esteem>.
27. Qiaolan Liu, Min Jiang, Shiyong Li, and Yang Yang, "Social Support, Resilience, and Self-Esteem Protect against Common Mental Health Problems in Early Adolescence: A Nonrecursive Analysis from a Two-Year Longitudinal Study," *Medicine* 100, no. 6 (2021): 1, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7850671/>.
28. Valeria Chambers, "Black Peer Support: A Role in Mental Health Recovery." *Harvard Health Blog*, April 8, 2021, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/black-peer-support-a-role-in-mental-health-recovery-2021040822340>.
29. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Latine Children's Health* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/ChildsaChild_Latine-2024.pdf.
30. "U.S. Indian Boarding School History," *National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition*, <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/education/us-indian-boarding-school-history>.
31. National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition. *NABS Newsletter* 7, no. 1 (September 2020). <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NABS-Newsletter-2020-7-1-spreads.pdf>.
32. Anita Sinha, "A Lineage of Family Separation," *Brooklyn Law Review* 87, no. 2 (2022): 445, <https://brooklynworks.brooklaw.edu/blr/vol87/iss2/1>.
33. Rick Rojas, "N.J. Wrestler Forced to Cut Dreadlocks Still Targeted Over Hair," *NBC News*, December 20, 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/n-j-wrestler-forced-cut-dreadlocks-still-targeted-over-hair-n957116>.
34. Amado M. Padilla, "The English-Only Movement: Myths, Reality, and Implications for Psychology," *American Psychological Association*, <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/english-only>.
35. Diane August and Timothy Shanahan, "Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth," *Journal of Literacy Research* 42, no. 3 (2006): 341–348, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254116496_Developing_literacy_in_second-language_learners_Report_of_the_National_Literacy_Panel_on_Language-Minority_Children_and_Youth.
36. Amado M. Padilla, "The English-Only Movement: Myths, Reality, and Implications for Psychology," *American Psychological Association*, <https://www.apa.org/pi/oema/resources/english-only>.

37. Huang, Justin T., Masha Krupenkin, David Rothschild, and Julia Lee Cunningham. "The Cost of Anti-Asian Racism during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Nature Human Behaviour* (January 19, 2023), <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-022-01493-6>.
38. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *FY 2023 SE Report*, September 2023, https://www.usccr.gov/files/2023-09/fy-2023-se-report_0.pdf.
39. "Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)," *National Indian Child Welfare Association*, Accessed 2024. <https://www.indian-affairs.org/icwa.html>.
40. "About," *The CROWN Coalition*, <https://www.thecrownact.com/about>.
41. Kathleen Ronayne, "California Becomes 1st State to Ban Hairstyle Discrimination." *AP News*, April 20, 2021, <https://apnews.com/article/5a4136956f7f4169addacfcfb94a31a6>.
42. "Bill Text: S.9 - 117th Congress (2021-2022)," *NPR*, <https://apps.npr.org/documents/document.html?id=20784480-bills-117s9>.
43. Camilo Montoya-Galvez, "Biden to Sign the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Bill as Anti-Asian American Attacks Rise," *NPR*, May 20, 2021. <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/20/998599775/biden-to-sign-the-covid-19-hate-crimes-bill-as-anti-asian-american-attacks-rise>.
44. Jazmin A. Reyes and Maurice J. Elias, "Fostering Social–Emotional Resilience among Latino Youth," *Psychology in the Schools* 48, no. 7 (2011): 723–737, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b5882f8b98a78554648ca48/t/5bcf541ce4966bfe71c25659/1540314140494/Fostering+social-emotional+resilience+among+Latino+.pdf>.
45. Onowa Mclvor, Aaron Napoleon, and Karyn M. Dickie, "Language and Culture as Protective Factors for At-Risk Communities," *International Journal of Indigenous Health* 5, no. 1 (2009): 1232, <https://doi.org/10.18357/ijih5120091232>.
46. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Black Children's Health* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ChildIsaChild_ACIAAC-AA_2024.pdf.
47. Jocelyn R. Droege, W. LaVome Robinson, and Leonard A. Jason, "Suicidality Protective Factors for African American Adolescents: A Systematic Review of the Research Literature." *SOJ Nursing & Health Care* 3 (2017): 1–5, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7747935/>.
48. Corinne M. Plesko, Zhiyuan Yu, Karin Tobin, and Deborah Gross. "Social Connectedness among Parents Raising Children in Low-Income Communities: An Integrative Review." *Research in Nursing & Health* (December 2021), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9292156/>.
49. "What is Anti-racism?," *Boston University Community Service Center*, <https://www.bu.edu/csc/edref-2/antiracism/>.
50. The Children's Partnership, *Reimagining Medi-Cal: Collaborating with Families and Communities to Advance Child Health Equity* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, September 2022), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ETE_Final-Report_Sept20.pdf.
51. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. "The Family Engagement Inventory: A Brief Cross-Disciplinary Synthesis." *Children's Bureau Express*, July/August 2017. <https://cbexpress.acf.hhs.gov/article/2017/july-august/the-family-engagement-inventory-a-brief-cross-disciplinary-synthesis/56c28f711b7a8910517620efe54bcb3c>.
52. Enrique W. Neblett, "Racial, Ethnic, and Cultural Resilience Factors in African American Youth Mental Health." *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* 19 (May 9, 2023), <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-072720-015146>.
53. The Children's Partnership, *Family Voices Matter: Listening to the Real Experts in Medi-Cal Children's Health* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, June 2022), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/TCP-CCT_Family-Engagement-Brief_Full-Brief.pdf.
54. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "1302.1 Overview," *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-1-overview>.
55. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, "1302.50 Family Engagement," *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations*, <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-50-family-engagement>.

56. California, *Chapter 569, Statutes of 2022*, codified in Chapter 16.1 (commencing with section 18997.5) of the Welfare and Institutions Code (HOPE Act).
57. California State Treasurer's Office. *HOPE Act Summary*, February 1, 2024, <https://www.treasurer.ca.gov/hope/documents/summary.pdf>.
58. Center for Health Care Strategies, *AECM Alignment Framework Brief* (April 16, 2024), https://www.chcs.org/media/AECM-Alignment-Framework-Brief_041624.pdf.
59. Ibid.
60. Rosemarie Allen, Darielle Blevins, Evandra Catherine, Veronica Fernandez, Walter Gilliam, Lisa Gordon, Mary Louise Hemmeter, et al. "Start With Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education." Arizona State University Center for Child and Family Success, December 2021. <https://childandfamilysuccess.asu.edu/sites/default/files/2021-12/14-priorities-equity-121621.pdf>.
61. Vickie Ramos Harris, "Building the Nation's First Whole Child Community Equity Tool," *Catalyst California* (blog), July 27, 2024, <https://www.catalystcalifornia.org/blog/ab2832-building-nations-first-whole-child-community-equity-tool>.
62. The Children's Partnership, *The Effect of Hostile Immigration Policies on California Children's Early Childhood Development: A Policy Brief* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, November 2019), <https://www.childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/TCP-Immigration-Final-Brief.pdf>.
63. Ibid.
64. "Increasing Access to High-quality Early Learning and Care for Infants and Toddlers," *Early Edge California*, <https://earlyedgecalifornia.org/birth-to-three/>.
65. UnidosUS, *Latino Inclusion and Integration: Policy Agenda 2023* (Washington, DC: UnidosUS, July 2023), https://unidosus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/unidosus_lii_policyagenda.pdf.
66. The Children's Partnership, *The Effect of Hostile Immigration Policies on California Children's Early Childhood Development: A Policy Brief* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, November 2019), <https://www.childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/TCP-Immigration-Final-Brief.pdf>.
67. The Children's Partnership, *Reimagining Medi-Cal: Collaborating with Families and Communities to Advance Child Health Equity* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, September 2020), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ETE_Final-Report_Sept20.pdf.
68. The Children's Partnership. *Community Health Workers Advancing Child Health Equity Part II: A Policy Brief*. Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, May 2024. <https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CHW-Child-Health-Equity-5.0-compressed.pdf>.
69. The Children's Partnership, *Reimagining Medi-Cal: Collaborating with Families and Communities to Advance Child Health Equity* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, September 2020), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ETE_Final-Report_Sept20.pdf.
70. The California Children's Trust and First 5 Center for Children's Policy, *Whole-Family Wellness for Early Childhood: A New Model for Medi-Cal Delivery and Financing*, Concept Paper, September 2019. <https://cachildrenstrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Whole-Family-Wellness-for-Early-Childhood.pdf>.
71. Kali Grant, et al, *Reimagining Behavioral Health: A New Vision for Whole-Family, Whole-Community Behavioral Health* (Washington, DC: The Georgetown Center for Poverty and Inequality, 2019), <https://www.georgetownpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Georgetown-Behavioral-Health-03022020-online.pdf>.
72. California Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans, *The California Reparations Report*, 2023, <https://oag.ca.gov/system/files/media/full-ca-reparations.pdf>.
73. The Children's Partnership, *The Effect of Hostile Immigration Policies on California Children's Early Childhood Development: A Policy Brief* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, November 2019), <https://www.childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/TCP-Immigration-Final-Brief.pdf>.
74. The Children's Partnership, *Legal Partnering for Child Health: A Policy Brief* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, February 2020), <https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/TCP-Legal-Partnering-for-Child-Health-FINAL-Print.pdf>.
75. "Proposition 227: Myth vs. Reality," Mora Modules, <https://moramodules.com/proposition-227-myth-vs-reality>.

76. The Children's Partnership, *A Child is a Child: California Children's Health Snapshot of Black Children's Health* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, 2024), https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/ChildIsaChild_ACIAAC-AA_2024.pdf.
77. Corinne M. Plesko, Zhiyuan Yu, Karin Tobin, and Deborah Gross. "Social Connectedness among Parents Raising Children in Low-Income Communities: An Integrative Review," *Research in Nursing & Health* 44, no. 6 (2021), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9292156/>.
78. Jim Cummins, *Language, Power, and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2000).
79. Merriam-Webster, s.v. "BIPOC," accessed November 18, 2024, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/BIPOC>.
80. "Dual Language Learners (DLLs)," *Early Edge California*, Last modified 2023, <https://earlyedgecalifornia.org/ece-priorities/dual-language-learners/>.
81. U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition, *English Learner Glossary*, <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learning-terms.html>.
82. Arline T. Geronimus, John Bound, and Michael Neidert. "On the Validity of Using Census Geocode Characteristics to Proxy Individual Socioeconomic Characteristics," *American Journal of Public Health* 90, no. 6 (2000): 944–950. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2947026/>.
83. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. *Health-Related Social Needs (HRSN) Coverage Table* (Baltimore, MD: Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, 2024), <https://www.medicaid.gov/health-related-social-needs/downloads/hrsn-coverage-table.pdf>.
84. Nurcan Akbulut, and Oliver Razum, "Why Othering Should Be Considered in Research on Health Inequalities: Theoretical Perspectives and Research Needs," *SSM - Population Health* 20 (November 5, 2022), <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9672483/>.
85. "Parent-Child Education Program (PCEP)," *AVANCE*, <https://www.avance.org/programs/pcep/>.
86. The Children's Partnership, *Community Health Workers Advancing Child Health Equity Part II: A Policy Brief* (Los Angeles, CA: The Children's Partnership, May 2024), <https://childrenspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CHW-Child-Health-Equity-5.0-compressed.pdf>.
87. "What Is 2Gen?" *Cornell Project 2Gen*, <https://2gen.bctr.cornell.edu/what-is-2gen>.

