



Oakland Starting Smart and Strong

Year in Review
2020





About Us:

Oakland Starting Smart and Strong is a collaborative that envisions an early childhood system where all Oakland children and families have access to opportunities to realize their full potential. Our aim is to ensure that every adult in a child's life – whether a formal educator like a preschool teacher or an informal caregiver like a family member – has the tools they need to support that child's health and development.

A Message from:

Priya Jagannathan

OSSS
Director

Christie Herrera

OUSD
OSSS Co-Chair

Kym Johnson

BANANAS, Inc.
OSSS Co-Chair

In the new year, Oakland Starting Smart and Strong (OSSS) commits to ensuring the historic events of 2020 that revealed long standing systematic racism are used as a catalyst for change. We must redirect resources to build on the strength and resilience of communities of color, and ensure that children and families are supported in their early years.

We are happy to share with you the highlights from our work in 2020. OSSS has made great strides in realizing our vision of developing an early childhood system where all Oakland children and families have full and equal access to opportunities to reach their full potential.

While we are proud of these results, there is work to be done to ensure our efforts are centered around the expressed needs and self-determination of communities of color. In 2021, we will continue to reflect on our current practices and commit to taking bolder action.

We hope you will join us!

Improving Quality in Formal Early Childhood Education

Goal: All publicly funded Oakland early childhood sites will offer high-quality programming to Oakland children and families.

2020 Highlights

- Developed and implemented the Resilient Oakland Communities and Kids (ROCK) trauma informed care professional development series
 - Planned and hosted the 2nd Annual Oakland Early Learning Symposium
 - Developed and piloted two workshops based on "Improving Early Learning Outcomes for Boys of Color: 10 Promising Practices" report
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- Over **500 Early Learning professionals** participated
 - All workshops had over **90% participant satisfaction rates**
 - ROCK Evaluation shows **increased use** of trauma responsive classroom strategies



Supporting Informal Caregivers

Goal: Expand programs to serve more families and caregivers of young children, especially in areas with limited services, and in culturally responsive, linguistically appropriate ways.

2020 Highlights

- Expanded professional development opportunities and resources for informal caregivers
- Along with our partners and generous funders, supported the work of the Oakland 0-5 Family Resource Center (FRC) Network convened by Lotus Bloom



- **8 community-based agencies** participated in the 0-5 FRC Network
- FRC Network focused on meeting **basic needs of families** during the pandemic
- Expanded ROCK series to **include informal caregivers**





Healthy Development

Goal: OUSD and other providers are more equipped to screen, identify, and serve children who have developmental, social and cognitive needs.

2020 Highlights

- Continued developmental screenings at all OUSD Pre-Ks with increased supports in multiple languages
 - Improved the process of delivering developmental screening results to families
 - Funded a study to identify emerging developmental screening practice improvements and policy issues
- 
- **67% of families completed developmental screenings** across OUSD Pre-K sites so far this school year
 - Engaged stakeholders across health and early childhood education sectors to **align screening practices**



Improving Oakland's Early Childhood System

Goal: Oakland's early childhood system and supports will be stronger, more sustainable and able to offer greater access to higher quality services to children and families.

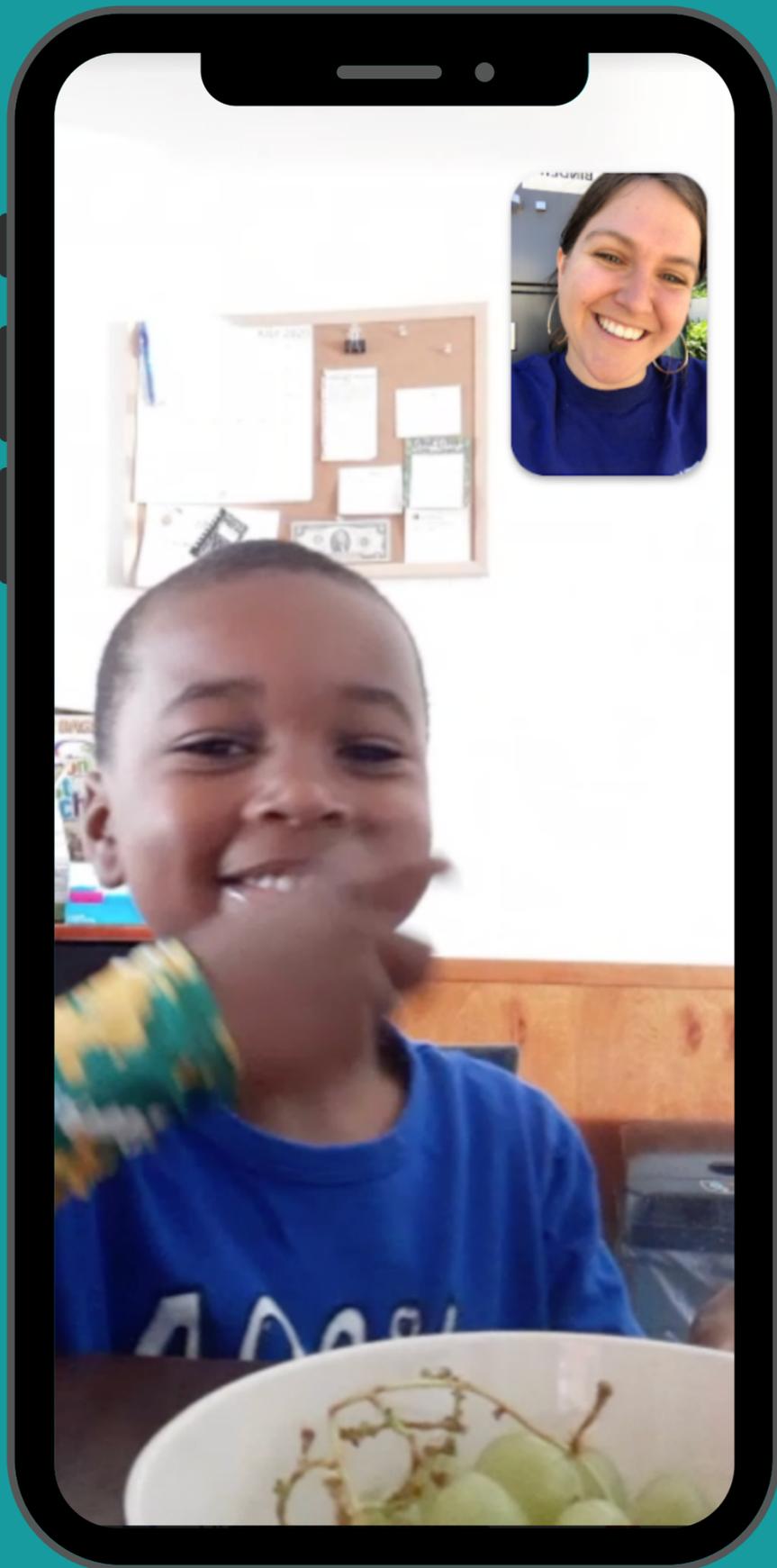
2020 Highlights

- Enhanced policy and advocacy work by hiring OSSS Policy Analyst
- Completed 2nd Early Development Instrument (EDI) assessment of OUSD kindergartners
- Improved transparency of EDI data dashboard and began community engagement using EDI results
- Formalized OUSD Kindergarten transition practices



- **Released 2020 Policy Agenda** and Ballot Initiative Recommendations
- EDI data collected on **93% of OUSD kindergarten students**
- Kinder Transition Form Google App **launched**

Supporting Early Learning During the Pandemic



Raised and administered funds for COVID-19 relief on behalf of partners

Redesigned ROCK and Early Learning Symposium for online format

Co-hosted a COVID-19 webinar with Mayor Libby Schaaf that featured community partners and elected officials



Putting Anti-Racist Values into Action

Introduced the 10 Promising Practices for Boys of Color to address the impacts of systemic racism and nurture the resilience of families

Centered our policy agenda around the priorities of parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators, who are primarily women of color

Recruited BIPOC, community based and parent led organizations for leadership roles, such as Committee Chairs, Lead Planning Team and Task Force membership



Building Impactful Partnerships

OSSS raised **\$320,000** to support families and organizations impacted by COVID -19

The number of partners working together on joint activities or as a formal team **increased by 38%** after 5 years of OSSS

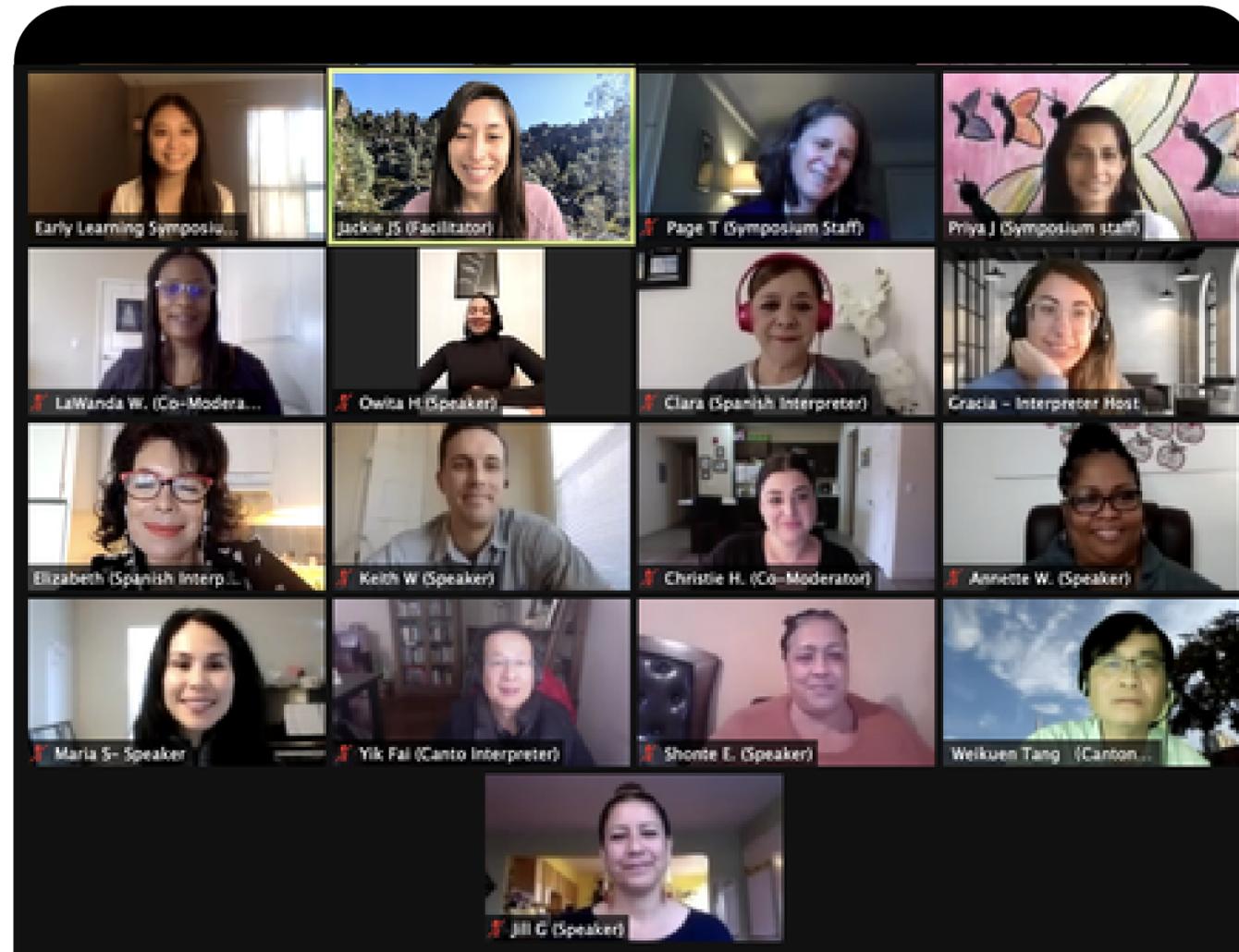
"Oakland Starting Smart and Strong is a tremendous table of passionate pro-kid advocates all of whom are coming together to make sure families have the support they need to raise their kids in our city."

- OSSS Funder

What's the word on OSSS?

"Having an open kind of conversation, not just having the person presenting to us and just feeding us information. I love that kind of environment."

- *ROCK Participant*



"I appreciated that this [workshop] actually talked about bias in education and education of young children."

- *Boys of Color Workshop Participant*

"We are building awareness of what each organization is doing through OSSS. It's helpful to have these relationships to reach out to specific people that can help to align efforts for children and communities."

- *OSSS Collaborative Member*



The success achieved in 2020 would have not been possible without the commitment of our Lead Planning Team, Task Force, Committee members, and OSSS staff and consultants. All while they carried out the mission of their own organizations during a time of crisis.

We are also grateful for our philanthropic and public agency partners, those that directly fund the OSSS collaborative and those who fund components of the work. The flexibility provided by funders to respond to the pandemic brought respite and relief to many families.

Thank you!



Lead Planning Team

- Paula Ambrose
 - Kenneth Rainin Foundation
- Pedro Arista
 - Hellman Foundation
- Neva Bandelow
 - Alameda County Office of Education
- Alisa Burton
 - City of Oakland, Head Start
- Andrea Bustamante
 - OUSD Community Schools
- Jennifer Cabán
 - Alameda County Social Services Agency
- Ellen Dektar
 - Alameda County Early Care and Education Program
- Clarissa Doutherd
 - Parent Voices Oakland
- Dawn Edwards
 - Lotus Bloom Family Resource Center
- Lisa Erickson
 - Alameda County Public Health Dept.
- Amanda Feinstein
 - Oakland Promise
- Lisa Forti
 - First 5 Alameda County
- Juile Hadnot
 - ALL IN Alameda County
- Christie Herrera
 - OUSD Early Childhood Education
- Angela Louie Howard
 - Lotus Bloom Family Resource Center
- Priya Jagannathan
 - Oakland Starting Smart and Strong
- Kym Johnson
 - BANANAS, Inc.
- Sanam Jorjani
 - Oakland Literacy Coalition
- Carla Keener
 - First 5 Alameda County
- Shaheena Khan
 - Kenneth Rainin Foundation
- Kiko Malin
 - Alameda County Public Health Dept.
- Pecolia Manigo
 - Bay Area PLAN
- Betsy Merzenich
 - Hellman Foundation
- Kyra Mungia
 - City of Oakland, Office of the Mayor
- Tanisha Payton
 - Parent Voices Oakland
- Bernadette Sangalang
 - David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- David Silver
 - City of Oakland, Office of the Mayor
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 - First 5 Alameda County
- Maria Sujo
 - OUSD Kindergarten Readiness
- Jeff Sunshine
 - David and Lucile Packard Foundation
- Erika Takada
 - Engage R+D
- Sandy Taylor
 - Oakland Fund for Children and Youth
- LaWanda Wesley
 - OUSD Early Childhood Education
- Andrea Youngdahl
 - TA Liaison



Kym Johnson
Executive Committee
Co-Chair



Staff and Leadership



Christie Herrera
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Jackie Jimenez-Subrata
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Andrea Youngdahl
Technical Assistance



Collaboration
Funders

the David &
Lucile Packard
FOUNDATION

HELLMAN FOUNDATION



Kenneth
Rainin
FOUNDATION



Coming in 2021

Release of the ROCK evaluation report and continuation of ROCK Professional Learning Communities

School readiness community engagement and education using the EDI and Asset Mapping

Next stages of the Boys of Color Promising Practices Workshop

Release of the developmental screening research report

And much more...



Oakland Starting Smart & Strong

Many of our Year in Review photos are courtesy of
[Hasain Rasheed](#) and [Maryam Salassi](#)

Keep in touch:
oaklandsmartandstrong.org