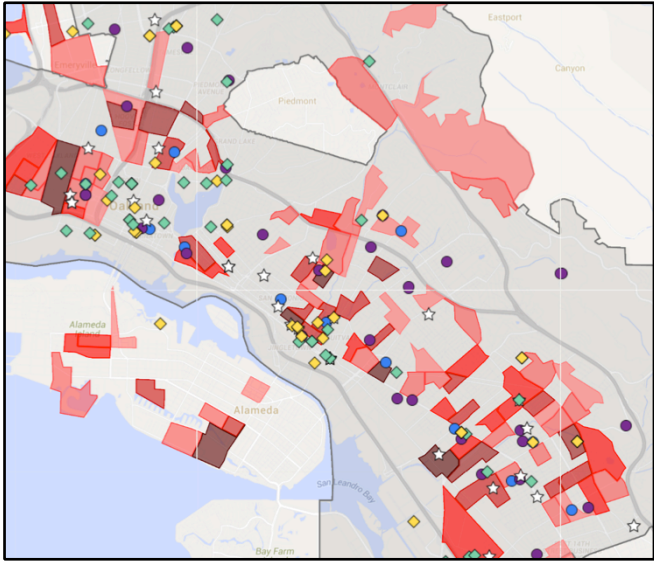# Landscape Analysis and Mapping of Oakland's Programs and Services Supporting Informal Caregivers

Prepared by the Glen Price Group
January 2016

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1.   Introduction

The importance of adult-child interactions in promoting early childhood development has been widely accepted as a key area for devoting resources in early childhood systems planning. Early childhood program and policy leaders know and accept the reality that children are in a wide variety of care arrangements before they enter the formal school system; some higher-resourced and higher-quality than others. Many children ages birth to five are likely to be in some type of a parental or other informal home environment care arrangement for a large percentage of their day. Their caregivers are often isolated from social supports and do not have the tools or resources required to provide rich learning environments. The result, especially when combined with other factors, is that many children arrive to school behind on kindergarten readiness metrics. Specific programs and models are being designed around the country with this problem in mind. Innovative methods for improving outcomes for the nation's youngest and neediest children, with a focus on the interactions they have with their caregivers, are plentiful. The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Starting Smart and Strong initiative (S3I) includes a focus on strengthening informal systems of care and services that support parents and informal caregivers. Oakland began its work on this initiative in 2015; a current focus of the community's work is to identify which of its programs are already effective at improving adult-child interactions, and which programs can be developed, strengthened, or improved by drawing upon lessons from effective models both in and outside of Oakland.

2.   Goals and Scope of this Research

Goals

The goals of this research are twofold. First, to assess the landscape of informal sector programs, services, and gaps of support to inform next steps of the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Task Force for developing a citywide strategy for expanding and strengthening services in the informal sector. Second, to formulate a list of recommendations and information that supports the recommendations, including activities Oakland could engage in and endeavors it could support in the next few years to significantly improve the informal care service landscape and its outcomes.

Scope

This research synthesis focuses on mapping and identifying gaps in support services, educational programming, training, outreach, messaging campaigns, and other types of programs for informal caregivers (parents and family, friend, and neighbor care caregivers) in Oakland related to engaging with young children, ages birth to five, in their care.

3.   Methods

To identify and inventory programs supporting parents and informal caregivers around Oakland, and to qualitatively assess the landscape of services and opportunities for expansion and enhancement, the Glen Price Group (GPG)[1] conducted a mix of primary and secondary research.

GPG interviewed 19 key early childhood stakeholders who manage, fund, or are otherwise involved with such programming in the community. In addition, GPG surveyed a similar group of 17 stakeholders about program quality, micro-geographic needs and "service deserts," the level of cultural responsiveness provided by existing programs, and possible natural gathering places to target more outreach to caregivers in Oakland. GPG also pulled from grantee lists of the major funders of informal services in Oakland (First 5 Alameda and Oakland Fund for Children and Youth) and from the

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[1] www.glenpricegroup.com

Alameda Kids online directory (www.alamedakids.org) to identify programs. Since the purpose of this landscape analysis is to identify high-impact programs that support early childhood education with specific reference to parents and FFN (friend, family, neighbor) caregivers, GPG did not include programs that focused on health (physical or mental) or local activities that lack a more formal program structure.

This research also included a local and national literature review, data review, ongoing community engagement involving four community meetings, and key stakeholder survey and analysis.

4.   Background on "Informal Child Care"

An informal child care provider is an unlicensed, unregistered caregiver who is usually a parent or family member—grandmother, aunt, older sibling—a friend, or a neighbor. In some cultures, informal caregiving is less a child care arrangement, and more a way for the family and community to work together to raise a child. Family, friend, or neighbor (FFN) caregivers often work non-traditional hours, typically caring for children in the caregiver's home. All types of parents use this kind of care to some extent, but for the low-income population, FFN caregivers are often unpaid or underpaid. "Informal child care" is also referred to as FFN care, home-based care, kith and kin care, relative care, legally unlicensed, and license-exempt care. Definitions of "informal child care" often encompass the care provided by primary guardians, such as a mother, father, foster parent, or other caregivers, because the services of support for non-primary and primary caregivers are so similar. Our definition of "informal care," for the purposes of this report and landscape analysis, includes care provided by both primary and non-primary (FFN) caregivers.

4.1.   Who are FFN Caregivers?

Relatives, most often grandmothers, are the most common FFN caregivers. In their Informal Caregivers Research Project, Mathematica found that Oakland informal caregivers tend to be: Latina, female, on average 40 years old; have limited English proficiency and a high school diploma or less; and be both an informal caregiver and a parent. These women are generally family members who regularly care for anywhere from one to eight children at a time. Few of these informal caregivers expressed the desire to become licensed, and fewer than 20% were aware of child care subsidies.[2]

Most FFN caregivers view themselves as members of the extended family or surrogate parents, rather than professional child care providers. Their motivations for caregiving range from helping parents and families, to bonding with children, to earning money. FFN caregivers fill an important role in supporting children's development through activities like reading, singing, spending time outside, teaching values, and fostering basic living skills. They are usually located in close geographic proximity to the children for whom they care, and are often of the same ethnic background and socioeconomic status as the families of those children. Oakland parents and FFN caregivers generally access resources via parenting websites or community-based programs. Substantial interaction between caregivers occurs in schools, libraries, parks, churches, and Head Start and Early Head Start sites. However, some FFN caregivers in Oakland face barriers such as limited English proficiency, residence in low-resource neighborhoods, and lack of Internet access for rich information on available services and supports.

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[2] Thomas, J., Johnson, C.J., Boller, K. and Young, M. (2015). *Informal Caregivers Research Project: Characteristics, Networks, and Needs of Informal Caregivers and Parents in California.* Oakland, CA: Mathematical Policy Research.

4.2.   The Demand for FFN Care in Oakland

FFN care is the most common type of child care for infants and toddlers and for school-age children before and after school. However, because informal care is unlicensed and often unregulated, there is limited research on the characteristics and reach of informal caregivers in California. Nationwide, nearly a quarter of all children who receive federal child care subsidies receive FFN care. Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health estimates that one-third to one-half of children with employed parents use informal child care, and that there are over 3.5 million unlisted home-based caregivers.[3] There are no clear differences by ethnicity in demand for FFN care, though it is more prevalent among low-income families. Patterns of care vary by children's age: infants and toddlers are most likely to be cared for solely by FFN caregivers, while preschoolers are more likely to use multiple care arrangements.

A number of factors inform why many families choose informal care, including:

➢ Existing relationships and trust with the caregiver
➢ Shared language, culture, and values
➢ Flexibility to meet non-traditional work hours
➢ Ability to meet special health or behavioral needs of the child
➢ Low cost of care

The tables below illustrate the number of children age birth to five who qualify for a subsidized child care program through either the General Child Care and Development (CCTR), CalWORKS, Head Start / Early Head Start, or the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) due to income eligibility or other eligibility reasons. The table also illustrates the percent of children in the highest-need, highest-priority ZIP codes where a large percentage of young children are eligible but not served by a subsidized child care program, typically due to lack of available spaces.

Table 1: Oakland Eligibility and Unmet Need for Subsidized Child Care (infants/toddlers aged 0-36 months) [4]

Oakland ZIP code	Number of infants/toddlers ages 0-36 months that qualify for subsidized child care	Number of children ages 0-36 months NOT served by ANY subsidized child care program	Percent of eligible infants/toddlers ages 0-36 months NOT served by any subsidized child care program
94601 (Fruitvale)	789	616	78%
94603 (E. 14th St. Business District)	588	457	78%
94621 (Oakland Coliseum)	612	455	74%
94605 (Eastmont/Castlemont)	459	297	65%

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[3] Susman-Stillman, A. and Banghart, P. (2008) *Demographics of Family, Friend, and Neighbor Child Care in the United States.* New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health.
[4] 2015 Child Care Needs Assessment data, from Alameda County Early Care & Education Planning Council.
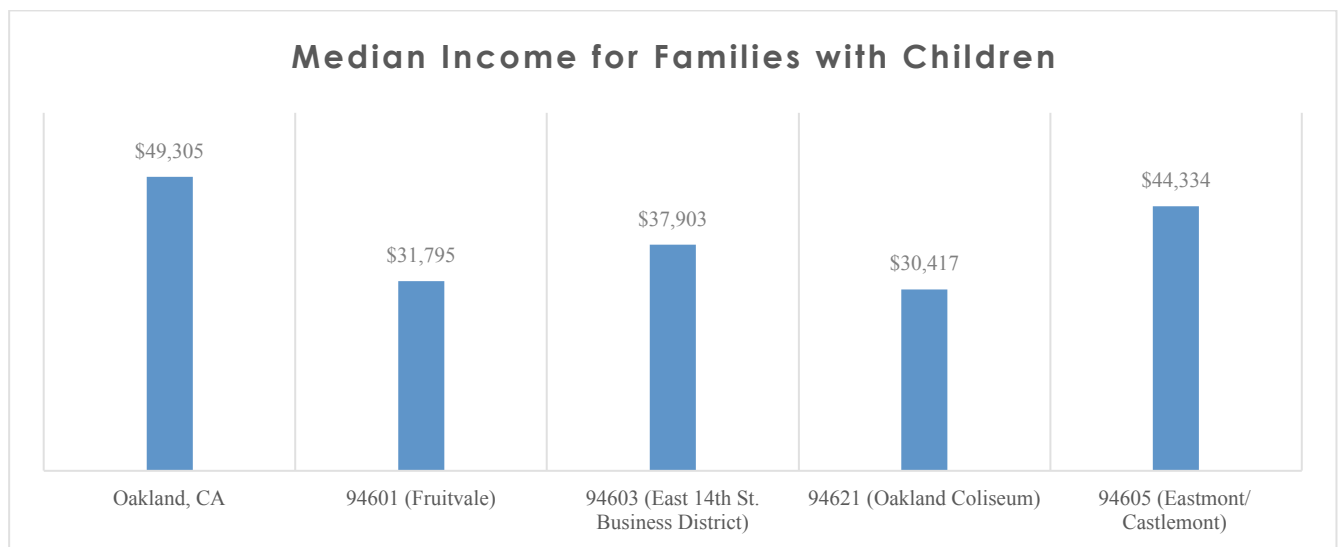
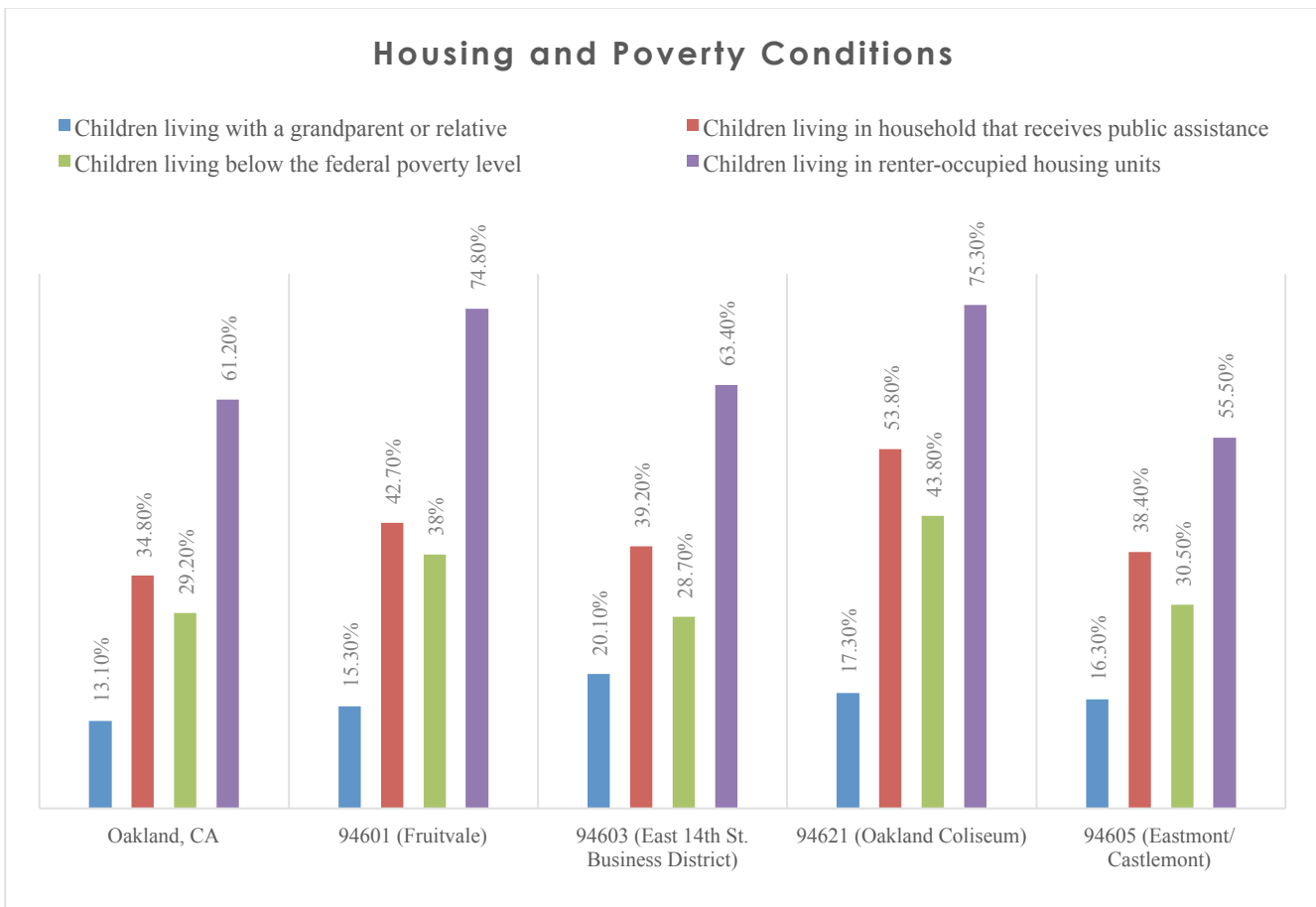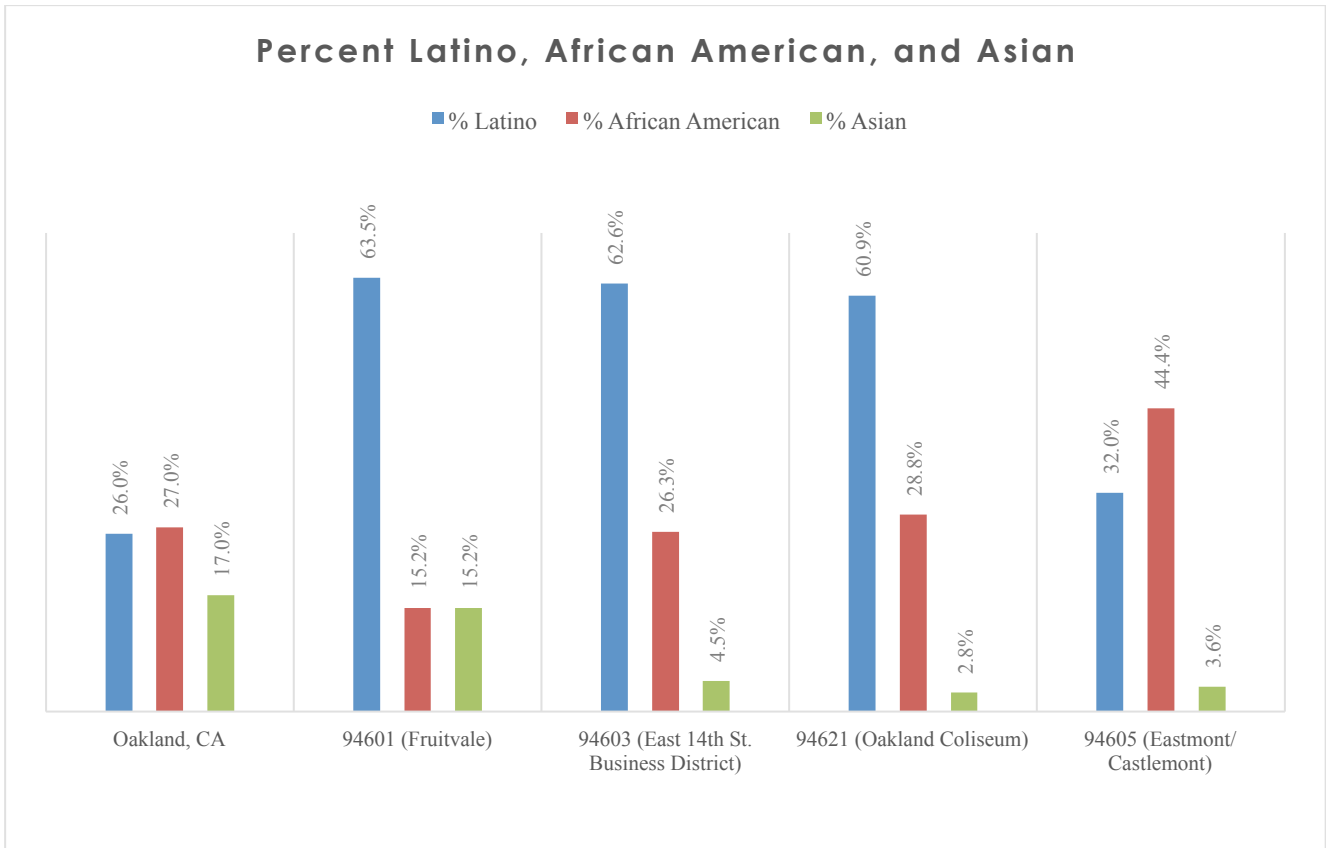*Table 2: Oakland Eligibility and Unmet Need for Subsidized Child Care (children aged 3-5)*

Oakland ZIP code	Number of children ages 3-5 years that qualify for subsidized child care	Number of children ages 3-5 NOT served by ANY subsidized child care program	Percent of eligible children ages3-5 years NOT served by ANY subsidized CC program
94601 (Fruitvale)	1272	431	34%
94603 (E. 14th St. Business District)	930	325	35%
94621 (Oakland Coliseum)	977	310	32%

4.3. Oakland Demographics

Out of approximately 400,000 residents, 12.9% of Oakland families have children under age six. The majority of Oakland residents are non-white, as a total of 70% identify as Latino/a, African American, or Asian. Of Asian Oaklanders, the largest ethnic groups are Chinese, Filipino, and Vietnamese. The languages most frequently spoken by residents include: Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. As of April 2015, unemployment in Oakland was 5.5%, and the minimum wage is $12.25. In recent years, the Bay Area has been the site of a general crisis as housing prices soar, pushing families out of San Francisco and towards the relatively cheaper East Bay. Over the past five years, Oakland's population has grown approximately 2.5%, or by 10,000 people. However, many families report that they are unable to find adequate services in Oakland, and some relocated families are even returning to San Francisco to access services.

The charts below shows a demographic breakdown by high-need ZIP code in comparison to the city, on a number of key factors illustrating barriers and obstacles faced by the residents of these specific neighborhoods. Taken together, this data can give us a detailed picture of the needs faced by children and their caregivers in Oakland.

Median Income for Families with Children

Location	Median Income
Oakland, CA	$49,305
94601 (Fruitvale)	$31,795
94603 (East 14th St. Business District)	$37,903
94621 (Oakland Coliseum)	$30,417
94605 (Eastmont/ Castlemont)	$44,334

Percent Latino, African American, and Asian

■ % Latino ■ % African American ■ % Asian

	Oakland, CA	94601 (Fruitvale)	94603 (East 14th St. Business District)	94621 (Oakland Coliseum)	94605 (Eastmont/ Castlemont)
% Latino	26.0%	63.5%	62.6%	60.9%	32.0%
% African American	27.0%	15.2%	26.3%	28.8%	44.4%
% Asian	17.0%	15.2%	4.5%	2.8%	3.6%

Housing and Poverty Conditions

■ Children living with a grandparent or relative   ■ Children living in household that receives public assistance
■ Children living below the federal poverty level   ■ Children living in renter-occupied housing units

	Oakland, CA	94601 (Fruitvale)	94603 (East 14th St. Business District)	94621 (Oakland Coliseum)	94605 (Eastmont/ Castlemont)
Children living with a grandparent or relative	13.10%	15.30%	20.10%	17.30%	16.30%
Children living in household that receives public assistance	34.80%	42.70%	39.20%	53.80%	38.40%
Children living below the federal poverty level	29.20%	38%	28.70%	43.80%	30.50%
Children living in renter-occupied housing units	61.20%	74.80%	63.40%	75.30%	55.50%

4.4. Key Caregiver Needs

Low-income parents and informal caregivers alike face a number of obstacles in their daily lives that present challenges to providing the optimal nurturing and stimulating learning environments for children in their care. Housing affordability is increasingly a concern in the rapidly changing Bay Area; lack of transportation results in isolation and inability to connect to resources; and health care benefits are difficult to obtain and costly when subsidized options are not available. Aside from these day-to-day needs, parents and informal care providers face a number of challenges that specifically inhibit their ability to provide a safe, nurturing, and rich learning environment for the children they care for. The Oakland early childhood education (ECE) community is aware of the importance of supporting these caregivers due to the growing reality that many children are in informal care arrangements and many parents prefer to keep their children in this type of care. Oakland, like other communities, has the opportunity to improve the quality of its informal care sector through public and private support for services that best address the obstacles and concerns facing these caregivers. Table 3 outlines some of the key types of caregiver needs matched with program and service types designed to address and support those needs.

Table 3: Caregiver Needs and Types of Services Designed to Address Them[5]

Caregiver Concerns	Types of Services to Address Concerns	Goal of Services
Unsafe conditions in the home	Caregiver trainings, public awareness campaigns, home visits	Unlicensed caregivers will implement higher health and safety standards
Lack of knowledge about early childhood development and engaging with 0-5 year olds	Caregiver trainings, Play and learn, Peer-to-peer groups, public awareness campaigns	Unlicensed caregivers will receive relevant, culturally competent professional development and support services
Non-traditional care schedules (due to parent's work hours)	Community hubs, Services at non-traditional hours	Community hubs will have the connections/capacity to assist parents and informal providers at any time
Long-term effects of parental and caregiver income levels	Community hubs, Two-generation approaches, Leadership programs	Connecting caregivers to education and job training will have long-term positive impacts on the caregiver, the child, and the community
Limited knowledge of how to support children with disabilities	Caregiver trainings, Play and learn, Counseling	Caregivers will have a toolkit for encouraging developmentally appropriate activities and communicating with children
Cultural and language barriers to accessing services	A broad variety of support services including Peer-to-peer groups, Community hubs, Caregiver trainings	Caregiver support organizations will tailor programs to the specific needs of their caregiver population(s)
Isolation	Parent cafes, Peer-to-peer groups	Group meetings will enable parents and FFN caregivers to share resources and best practices, create a trusted network, crowd source questions and problems they are facing

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[5] *Moving Forward Together: How Programs can Support Informal Caregivers and Parents*. 2015. Oakland, CA: Mathematica Policy Research.

The types of services identified in the chart above provide crucial opportunities for addressing caregiver concerns. Applying this as a framework, Section 5 of this report presents GPG's findings on the successes and challenges of programs in Oakland.

4.5. Policy, Funder, and Program Context

4.5.1 Policy Context

In 2015, Early Edge California developed a policy landscape analysis to support the work of the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Task Force Committee on Informal Care, providing context and identifying potential connections to policy opportunities. Early Edge identified relevant federal components of the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) reauthorization changes as well as the updated Head Start Performance Standards related to parent engagement, informal care, quality, increased access for infants and toddlers, professional development, and workforce development.[6]

The key CCDBG changes impacting parent engagement efforts in California involve the improvement of consumer information and education, requiring that states collect and distribute information to parents, providers, and the public on the availability of child care services and other programs, provider quality, and research and best practices concerning child development. The consumer information changes also include the establishment of a national hotline for accessing information about and reporting concerns about child care providers in their area. Head Start Performance Standards changes require that programs offer all parents opportunities to participate in research-based parenting curriculum, and provide individualized services to families based on their strengths and needs.

Among the CCDBG changes is a measure that will impact FFN providers who serve subsidy-recipient children (also called "license-exempt" providers) by changing state licensing and inspection requirements. California (and other states) will be required to explain why the licensing exemption for these FFN providers does not endanger the health, safety, or development of children in their care. By November 2016, state policies and procedures must require annual inspections of license-exempt providers to ensure compliance with health and safety standards.

4.5.2 Funder and Partner Context

Funding for programs serving parents and FFN caregivers in Oakland comes from a variety of both public and private financing. Public agencies invested in improving informal care include First 5 Alameda County (F5AC) and the Oakland Fund for Children and Youth (OFCY). They often operate in partnership with community partners, funders, and others such as the Oakland Public Library and Children's Hospital Oakland to serve parents and FFN caregivers.

F5AC coordinates, oversees, and funds a variety of programs supporting children, families, and early childhood caregivers (both informal and formal), with strategic focuses including family support and home visiting, early childhood education, school readiness, neighborhood-based strategies, and training programs. F5AC receives direct funding from the state and participates in initiatives such as the new First 5 California program, First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize so All Children Thrive). First 5 IMPACT includes a component to incorporate license-exempt caregivers of subsidy-eligible children into quality improvement efforts, and is relevant to the Oakland Starting Smart and Strong Initiative (S3I) Task Force's work to support FFN caregivers.

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[6] Early Edge California. 2015. OUSD Policy Landscape Draft Updated

OFCY invests in a variety of programs focused on engaging parents in promoting the healthy development of their children. For example, it funds programs that build parenting skills and knowledge and those that offer community supports for families in locations that are accessible, safe, and desired by families. OFCY funds parent engagement, parent leadership, home visiting, and peer-to-peer networking opportunities for parents to connect with other families in their communities. It also funds family resource centers (FRCs) and related programming in high-priority neighborhoods, and strengthens the capacity of parents to meet their children's social-emotional and developmental needs through mental health consultations and services.

Key private philanthropic foundations providing funding for improvements to informal care services in Oakland include the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (funding the Starting Smart and Strong initiative in Oakland as well as other efforts), the Kenneth Rainin Foundation (with a particular focus on Talk Read Sing strategies), and the San Francisco Foundation (funding Best Babies Zone, described in further detail in Section 5).

Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) is also a major partner in this work, and is increasingly concerned about supporting parents before their children enter kindergarten, to enable children to thrive once they enter the formal education system. Some of OUSD's Full Service Community Schools have FRCs and Parent Rooms on site, many of which are supported by partnerships with high-impact community based organizations such as the East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC). The OUSD FRCs and Parent Rooms currently focus primarily on connecting families to health services, but they have the capacity to offer more general supports and information and to focus on families of younger children. This idea will be revisited in a subsequent section.

4.5.3   Program Context: Applying Lessons from the Field to Address Challenges in Oakland

As we explore the landscape of services currently available in Oakland to support parents and FFN providers, we can compare Oakland services against a backdrop of national examples that have worked well in this field. Drawing from lessons learned around California and the nation on effective methods for supporting and enhancing parental and FFN care, some methods and models worth considering are described below. Additional details are provided in Section 5.

> ➢ *Caregiver training and curriculum to enhance the care offered by FFN providers*. Trainings that target license-exempt or FFN providers focus on child development, literacy, nutrition, and positive discipline. In California, local Resource and Referral agencies implemented the Growing, Learning, Caring curriculum and relevant trainings, and achieved great success in reaching thousands of license-exempt caregivers across the state until the funding for these trainings was cut in 2010. Arizona Kith & Kin is another example of a program excelling at training FFN providers; it offers group training with transportation and on-site child care included. It is described in further detail in Section 5.
> ➢ *Home visiting models to reach parents and other caregivers.* Home visiting models are extremely effective at reaching caregivers with important information about positive caregiving practices and child development. Parents as Teachers (PAT) is one effective home visiting model which integrates personal home visits, group connections with peers, child screenings, and connection to a resource network. This package of services results in an increase in parent knowledge of early childhood development and effective parenting practices, the early detection of developmental delays and health issues, the prevention of child abuse and neglect, and increased school readiness and success. Other evidence-based home

visiting models can be researched further on the Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) website.[7]

➢ ***Culturally sensitive models for reaching FFN caregivers.*** Parents and FFN caregivers alike often face cultural and language barriers to accessing services that meet their needs. Designing programs with their cultural and language backgrounds in mind can result in improved outcomes for them and the children in their care. Tutu and Me Traveling Preschool in Hawaii is an example of a tailored program which targets grandparents, serves them in culturally relevant ways, and identifies their own improved mental and emotional well-being as an intermediate outcome to improved child care quality. The program is replicable and the YMCA in San Jose operates a similar program, Nana Y Yo.

➢ ***Two-generation approaches to serve both the child and the parent or caregiver.*** Two generation models create supports and opportunities for both the parent or caregiver and the child. The Center for Working Families, Inc. in Atlanta follows a national model promoted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation to provide coordinated services to help families get jobs, strengthen their finances, and move up the economic ladder. The Atlanta program also offers caregiver training as well as play and learn groups. It provides an early childhood program in partnership with a local elementary school, resources and education to parents, a strong parent network, and a family coach to work with each family participating in the program.

➢ ***Targeted outreach to informal caregivers by trusted community leaders.*** Kaleidoscope Play & Learn program in Seattle hires culturally-competent, trusted facilitators from the community, uses effective messaging to attract informal caregivers, and succeeds in reaching informal caregivers (25% of participants).

➢ ***Networks and quality standards.*** San Francisco Family Support Network (SFFSN) is a collaboration of community-based organizations, public agencies, and private foundations that work collectively to promote high-quality programming and best practices in Family Resource Centers, among other activities. Many of the members operate individual family resource models in San Francisco, while the overarching Network promotes best practices, offers standards and evaluation suggestions, provides a certification program, connects programs with each other, and advocates for policies that support San Francisco families. SFFSN has developed Family Support Standards and offers certification training to programs in order to increase the quality of programs offered to all families in San Francisco.

➢ ***Train-the-trainer/coach models.*** A highly cost-effective, scalable model for reaching many individuals across many neighborhoods, especially when resources are limited, is the train-the-trainer model. For example, Talk With Me Baby in Georgia designed a curriculum to train a wide array of professionals who interface with parents of young children, such as nurses, WIC nutritionists, and preschool educators. The curriculum trains these professionals to coach parents on how to talk with their babies, by demonstrating dynamic language transactions, and to create a language-rich environment in the home. Because 99% of expectant/new families are seen by a nurse, more than 80% of low-income families are seen by a WIC nutritionist, and at least one-third of children aged birth to three attend early childhood education programs in Georgia, this approach has a wide reach at a relatively low cost.

5.   Oakland Programs Supporting Caregivers of Young Children

Oakland has a variety of programs and services to support primary and FFN caregivers of young children. In order to structure the review and assessment of the current landscape that follows, programs and services were categorized into six types:

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[7] http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/

1. Community Hubs and Family Resource Centers (FRCs)
2. Play and Learn
3. Peer-to-Peer Groups
4. Parent and Caregiver Leadership and Empowerment
5. Caregiver Training and Education
6. Home Visiting

The subsections that follow correspond to these categories, and include lists of existing programs, a basic qualitative assessment of how well Oakland provides services to caregivers, and suggestions for how each service category could be improved (overarching recommendations are included in Section 8). In addition, descriptions of example/successful programs outside of Oakland are woven throughout this section, where relevant, to provide lessons or ideas to inform similar work in Oakland.

➢ **An interactive (filterable) map of identified programs is available at https://goo.gl/IbZ7eV.**

5.1. Community Hubs and Family Resource Centers

Community hubs and family resource centers (FRCs) are effective models of service delivery because they provide multiple services for families, caregivers, and children in a single location and they often offer "wrap-around" services. They might offer on-site child care while parents or caregivers attend a training or workshop on child development or home safety. They might offer "mommy and me" (or "caregiver and me") playgroups. They might also connect families to other non-child care related services, such as social benefit programs and job training. Finally, community hubs are increasingly taking their services out into the community rather than only offering them in one central "mega-center." This is effective as many parents and FFN caregivers either prefer to engage in activities closer to home or are unaware that the services exist until the services appear in their neighborhood.

Oakland early education stakeholders reported that many of the FRCs that exist in Oakland to serve parents and caregivers of birth to five year olds are already very effective at providing high-quality information, programs, and services to the community.[8] Through FRCs, Oakland parents and other caregivers build strong relationships, gain parenting skills, and develop the leadership capacity to advocate for their families and communities. For example, Room to Bloom in East Oakland / Castlemont and Lotus Bloom serve parents and caregivers in multiple high-need locations around Oakland. Another example, East Bay Agency for Children (EBAC) runs the Hawthorne Family Resource Center at the Achieve Academy (formerly OUSD's Hawthorne Elementary), offering family workshops, a food bank, ESL classes, service referrals, an early childhood program that supports both children and parents to prepare children for kindergarten readiness, an afterschool program, mental health services, and a medical clinic run by La Clinica de La Raza. Finally, one of the R&Rs, Bananas Inc., is beginning to take its services out into the community and is offering its "finding child care" and "behavior management" workshops at Room to Bloom, the Castlemont FRC. While Oakland already has a successful network of high-quality FRCs, a number of obstacles and opportunities still remain for FRCs to better meet the needs of informal caregivers throughout the city, including the following.

➢ **Shortage of services**. There is a limited number of FRCs in Oakland, and families who have moved from San Francisco in recent years report that they prefer to return to their former

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[8] GPG Survey of Informal Caregiver Committee, 2015.

> centers in San Francisco for services because of the difficulty locating similar services in Oakland.

➢ **Lack of quality standards and definitions**. Unlike communities such as San Francisco, where there is an established network and clear operating standards for high quality services, Oakland's Family Resource Center network is more amorphous and lacking in coordination, with individual programs often operating by different standards. *(This item is a current area of focus by the Oakland S3I informal caregiver strategy, spearheaded by Lotus Bloom.)*

➢ **Direct targeting to FFN caregivers.** Many community hubs and Family Resource Centers market and design their programs for parent caregivers, even though many of their services would equally benefit FFN caregivers (and children in FFN care). For example, the Oakland Public Library (OPL) hosts story times, baby play sessions, and structured arts and crafts to give young children engaging, developmentally appropriate activities and to build literacy. OPL also distributes informational resources, in a variety of languages, with strategies for parents to encourage literacy in their children. All of these services could be expanded to serve more FFN caregivers by using specific messaging to target their engagement.

➢ **Fewer mega-center, more neighborhood-based programming**. Rather than focusing *all* programming in central community hub locations, it is important to reach parents and caregivers close to their homes. Programs like Lotus Bloom do this extremely effectively; rather than focusing services at one central site, they provide services at various community locations for a broader reach. Also, the R&Rs have tremendous resources and assets to leverage; taking their programs, resources, and facilitators out into the community would enable the R&Rs to scale their impact quickly and in a cost-effective way.

➢ **Funding and scaling**. Support for the FRC strategy has fluctuated over time, resulting in an unsustainable funding pattern. FRCs that perform high-quality work need additional funding to expand programs to high-need neighborhoods that currently lack these services. Increased funding would allow successful models to scale up and reach more of Oakland's neediest young children and their families. Bringing the FRC model to existing physical sites such as Parks and Recreation locations would be a cost-effective way to scale the approach and reach many more caregivers.

Oakland is already addressing some of these challenges and opportunities; as mentioned above, Lotus Bloom is working to establish a coordinated network of FRCs especially to identify a set of quality standards, best practices, and common definitions for the Oakland community of FRC service providers. This citywide network will facilitate opportunities for coordination, shared learning, and collaboration between programs. Continuing to take more services out into the community, shifting from a "mega-center" to an "outpost" model, will help Oakland reach a greater number of parents and FFN caregivers. An additional idea Oakland may want to pursue is to use FRCs as a systematic, coordinate approach to link all ECE and family support services across Oakland, including but not limited to: early assessments and follow up, peer groups, workshops/training, literacy programs, health and safety programs, and promoting standards on protective factors (see the example from First 5 Santa Clara on the following page).

In Oakland, the following organizations serve as community hubs and family resource centers:

- Alameda County Public Health Department, Maternal, Paternal, Child, and Adolescent Health
- Asian Health Services
- Bananas, Inc.
- Best Babies Zone
- Brighter Beginnings
- Child Care Links
- Community Child Care Council (4Cs)
- East Bay Agency for Children
- Family Resource Network

- La Clinica de la Raza
- Lincoln Child Center
- Lotus Bloom
- Oakland Public Library
- OUSD FRCs (see separate list below)
- Our Family Coalition

- Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement
- Regional Center of the East Bay
- Room to Bloom
- Safe Passages
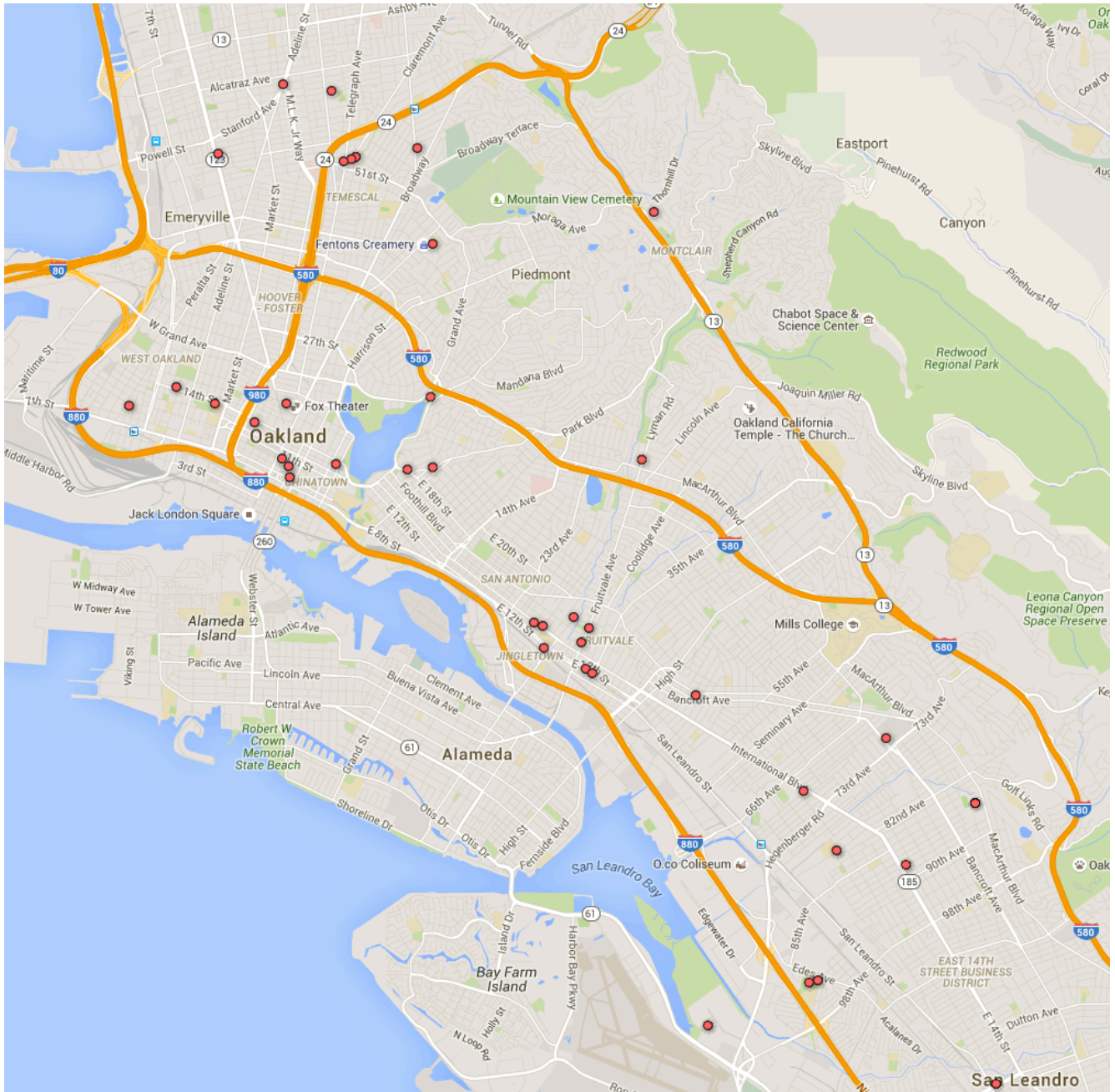
Lesson From the Field:
First 5 Santa Clara's Integrated FRCs Linking All ECE Services

In Oakland's backyard, First 5 Santa Clara uses FRCs and community hubs as the way to break down silos and link various services across the county, including early assessments, centers, QRIS, home visiting, literacy, safety, standards on protective factors, and more. By creating a coordinated web of supports, or an "ecology" of systems, First 5 Santa Clara layers in effective programming to already existing FRCs and community hubs. As an initial step, First 5 devoted time and financial resources to building the hubs as a central coordinating infrastructure, and to the proper training of community workers to lead the work. By employing people from the neighborhoods, who serve as 'ambassadors,' spreading awareness about the available services and programs, the hubs and FRCs reach more parents and FFN caregivers. Once in the system, caregivers and children are connected to a whole range of services and supports, and are quickly referred to the type and level of services they need. This integrated system has managed to reach FFN caregivers as well as parents; many FFN caregivers participate in the playgroups, the nutrition classes, the "mommy and me" classes, and other activities.

Special Focus on OUSD: FRCs, Parent Rooms, and School Readiness Hubs

In addition to the programs described in this section already, OUSD Community Schools also offer FRCs, mostly focused on connecting families to health services, and in some locations with expanded services to help parents understand their children's academic progress. Some of the Community Schools without FRCs still offer lower capacity "Parent Rooms," where the services are not quite as robust as they are at the FRCs but parents still have opportunities to connect with each other and gather information at a designated place in the school. OUSD FRCs function best and serve in the greatest capacity when: they are connected to community based organizations who coordinate and manage the programs and services, specific funding is allocated to the FRC, formal staff positions are created to oversee the work, and regular service and program planning occurs. However, the staffing and coordination structure of the FRCs vary widely, and thus the robustness of their program and resource offerings. Some OUSD FRCs are effectively run by local CBOs, others are overseen by the school principal, others by parent volunteers.

Until recently, almost all OUDS FRCs and Parent Rooms solely targeted parents of middle- and high-school students. This presents an opportunity for Oakland to enhance birth to five related outreach and materials at these family resource sites. Rather than continue to operate in silos, OUSD Community Schools could more closely partner with the OUSD ECE Department to begin to bring more birth to five parent engagement programming to these sites. OUSD's Community Schools offering Parent Rooms and FRCs are located at the schools listed in the chart below. Those with other agency names referenced in parenthesis are coordinated by those named organizations.

OUSD Family Resource Centers*	OUSD Parent Rooms
MLK, Jr. (BACR)	Acorn/Woodland
Lincoln	Allendale
Garfield (EBAYC)	Greenleaf
East Oakland Pride	International Community School
New Highland and RISE (shared) (Lincoln Child Center)	La Escuelita
TCN (EBAC)	Lafayette

OUSD Family Resource Centers*	OUSD Parent Rooms
West Oakland Middle School	Laurel
Westlake (Eagle Village)	Life (AIA)
Madison Park (Upper)	Montera
Bret Harte (Ind. Consultant)	Oakland Tech
CCPA	REACH
Fremont	ROOTS
McClymonds (AIA)	Rudsdale/Sojourner Truth
Elmhurst/Alliance	Sankofa
Allendale	UFSA
Castlemont (Youth Together)	UPA
Brookfield	

*List updated as of 9/11/2015. Contact the Central Family Resource Center of the Community Schools & Student Services Department to retrieve updated data/lists.

In partnership with the OUSD Central Family Resource Center, First 5 Alameda County is working to establish School Readiness Hubs at four OUSD sites: MLK, Jr.; Garfield; New Highland / RISE; and Castlemont. The strategy includes conducting a specific needs assessment in these target neighborhoods, a focus on strengthening relationships between ECE and K-12 teachers, the build-out of neighborhood collaboratives of school readiness supports for parents and FFN caregivers, and the development of more school readiness services, supports, and parent leadership and engagement opportunities.

While OUSD is already making progress in maximizing its effective use of the FRCs and Parent Rooms at Community School sites, additional opportunities include the following.

1) **Expansion of birth to five services.** Especially at OUSD sites with TKs and Child Development Centers (CDCs) onsite or nearby, OUSD FRCs have an opportunity to target more birth to five resources to parents who already visit and use the FRC services for other purposes.

2) **Partnering with CBOs and local nonprofits/agencies.** The staffing and coordination of OUSD FRCs are highly variable, and those with outside coordination from local CBOs tend to execute programming and services more effectively, reaching more parents with more services. OUSD FRCs and Parent Rooms not yet partnered with local community-based organizations have an opportunity to connect for help and support with running the programs and/or bringing high-quality programming into the site. Additionally, OUSD FRCs partnering with local agencies like their nearest OPL branch are able to bring in additional birth to five programming for parents at no or a low cost to the district.

Map of formal infrastructure including OUSD school sites, OUSD FRCs, Head Start and Early Head Start sites, and OUSD Childhood Development Centers[9]
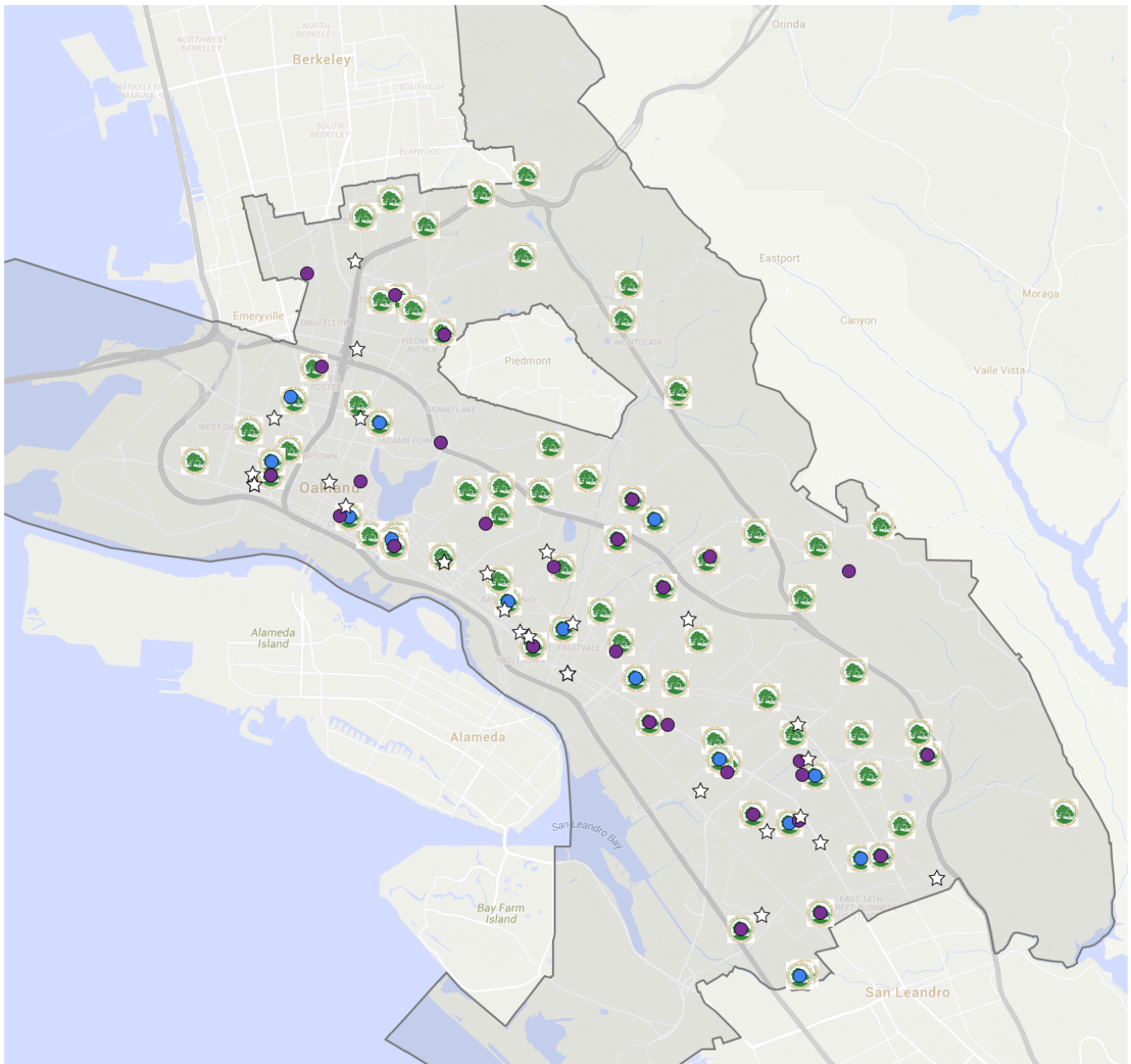
KEY:

Purple = OUSD Childhood Development Centers
Green = OUSD school sites
Blue = OUSD Family Resource Centers
Stars = Head Start and Early Head Start sites

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[9] See https://goo.gl/JQxL8k for an interactive version of this map.

5.2.   Playgroups / Play and Learn

Playgroups (also known as Play and Learn) encourage children to learn through playing; the group facilitators demonstrate developmentally appropriate activities that parents and other caregivers can engage in with the children in their care. Playgroups help children develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence to engage in new experiences and environments. An excellent national example of this is the YMCA's Early Learning Readiness Program, funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which uses a play-based program to provide caregivers - both parents and FFNs - with a set of experiences and the knowledge necessary to ensure that children arrive to kindergarten ready to learn. The closest local participating YMCA is the East Valley Family YMCA, which partners with the San Jose Public Library to host this regular play program.

Oakland early education stakeholders reported numerous strengths of existing playgroups in Oakland, particularly those that serve immigrant groups. Oakland's playgroups that serve Asian and Latino families help combat the depression and isolation faced by many immigrant caregivers. Lotus Bloom is an excellent example of an organization offering high-quality playgroups and proactively reaching families and caregivers in locations convenient to them. A recent increased focus in Oakland on playgroups, from both funders and service agencies, has yielded innovative new ideas that are now being piloted. For example, BANANAS, Inc. is in the process of opening PlayLab, a space where young children can play with the support of an experienced play leader, who leads activities that caregivers can replicate at home. While attention and resources may be directed this way already, there are several ways that Oakland can make further improvements to playgroup efforts.

➢ **Address unmet need**. There is great potential to scale playgroups to serve more parents and FFN providers, for example by offering more playgroups at R&Rs and other community locations where caregivers regularly go. Certain neighborhoods still lack access to playgroups.
➢ **Train-the-trainer.** Leaders of existing highly effective playgroups in Oakland could be funded to visit and train other CBOs, nonprofits, and agencies to run their own playgroups in their own communities.
➢ **Match diversity of facilitators to participants**. There is a need for more translation in playgroups, bilingual facilitators, and culturally competent facilitators that serve families of diverse backgrounds. ECE stakeholders reported that there is a particular need for more culturally responsive services for African American families, as many services already exist for Latino and Asian families throughout Oakland.
➢ **Learning and evaluation.** Evaluation of programs could lead to cross-learning between providers. Understanding what Oakland does well compared to other effective playgroup / play and learn models would help highlight what Oakland could do better.

These improvements could be facilitated through greater funding to increase the number and quality of playgroups, by creating a learning community between providers (in progress with Lotus Bloom leading the effort), and testing programs to make sure that they are beneficial to caregivers.

In Oakland, the following organizations offer playgroups and play and learn programs:

- Alameda County Public Health Department
- Asian Community Mental Health Services
- Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement
- Behavioral Intervention Association
- Berkeley Unified School District
- Best Babies Zone
- Brighter Beginnings
- California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program
- Center for Early Intervention on Deafness
- Children's Hospital Oakland
- City of Oakland, Office of Parks and Rec

- East Bay Agency for Children
- Gma Village
- Habitot Children's Museum
- Lighthouse Community Charter School
- Lincoln Child Center
- Literacy Lab
- Lotus Bloom
- Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- Oakland Children's Fairyland
- Oakland Public Library
- Oakland Unified School District
- Our Family Coalition
- Regional Center of the East Bay
- Room to Bloom
- Safe Passages
- Seneca Family of Agencies
- Tandem Partners in Early Learning
- The Unity Council
- Through the Looking Glass
- YMCA of the East Bay
- 4C's Community Child Care of Alameda County
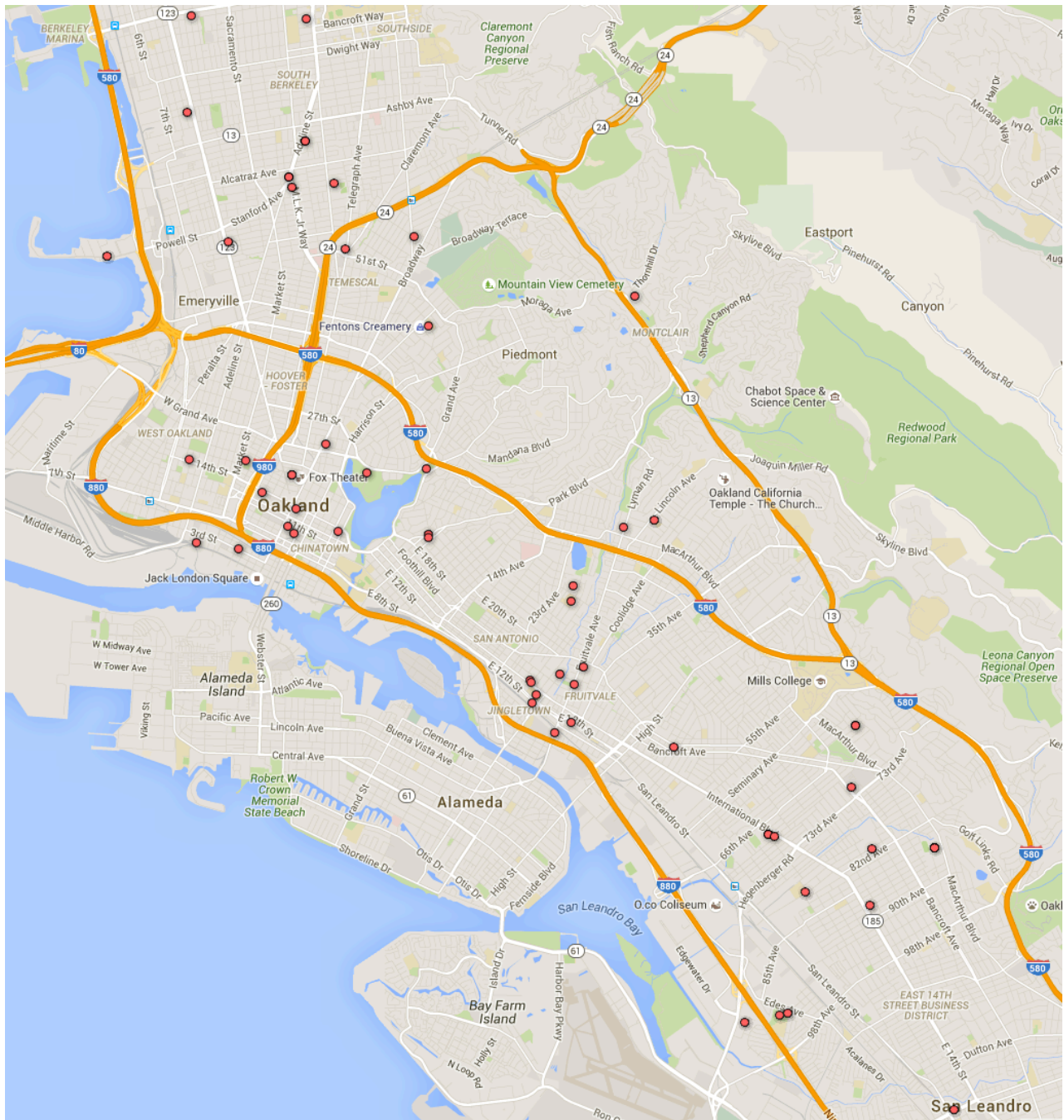
Learning From the Field

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn in Seattle, WA provides free weekly Play and Learn groups that are led by community-trusted facilitators, who often tap into their own networks to engage participants, and are embedded in frequently visited neighborhood locations such as libraries, schools, and community centers. Play and Learn facilitation is offered in the primary language of the caregivers where possible. Facilitators engage children in activities that support developmentally appropriate learning and skill building, while parents and FFN caregivers learn about child development and connect with other parents and caregivers in their community. Kaleidoscope has a siblings program that targets older, teenage siblings who care for younger ones, gives them basic training in child development (that can count towards school credit), improves the child care they provide, and puts them on an early childhood track, potentially growing the pipeline of quality caregivers in the ECE system. Finally, Kaleidoscope contracts an independent evaluator to annually assess its program; results demonstrate positive impacts on caregiver knowledge around child development, child learning, and school readiness indicators. The evaluation also identified positive program impacts on caregiver-child interactions; caregivers spend more time talking to and doing activities with children, reading or looking at books, and helping children in their care talk about and understand their feelings.

Source: ORS Impact "Year End Kaleidoscope Play & Learn Participant Results." December 2014. https://www.childcare.org/ckfinder/userfiles/files/2014_Kaleidoscope_Play_%26_Learn_Washington_State_Evaluation_Report.pdf

5.3. Peer-to-Peer Groups

Peer-to-peer groups combat isolation and allow for the sharing of information and ideas from parent to parent and from caregiver to caregiver. Participants engage in structured conversation that promotes positive relationships and accesses the collective wisdom of the group.

Parents highly value their experiences at peer-to-peer meeting groups in Oakland. FFN providers also find peer-to-peer networks as an effective means of getting support and having an outlet to talk with and learn from others in similar situations.[10] ECE stakeholders identified key Oakland organizations that are most successful at connecting and engaging caregivers, including: Parent Voices, Oakland Parents Together, Room to Bloom, Best Babies Zone, Gma Village, and Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN). These programs are not especially costly to run, but have a large positive impact on the population they serve. In order to further strengthen these programs in Oakland, there is a need for the following.

➢ **Scaling.** There is an unmet need for additional peer-to-peer groups; these programs could be expanded around Oakland. Many of these programs lack adequate funding to pay for staff training and to run group sessions, even though it is a low-cost program to run.

➢ **Shift focus to FFN providers.** Historically, peer-to-peer programs in Oakland have not focused on engaging FFN providers. It is important to consider the needs of informal caregivers and design programs specifically for them.

➢ **Train and empower trusted community leaders to host meet-ups.** A very low-cost, high impact way of increasing the number of peer-to-peer opportunities in Oakland is to fund community residents with mini-grants to run playdates and other social gatherings out of their homes or community centers.

➢ **Information sharing**. There is an opportunity for Oakland's various peer-to-peer programs to connect and share learnings about what they are doing and what is working well.

To expand peer-to-peer group services to meet the demand, Oakland could build on existing community leaders' capacities. Training individuals who are trusted by their community and leveraging those connections provides an opportunity to intimately connect and build capacity with Oakland communities. Existing resources can also be leveraged by building upon bonds fostered in natural gathering places like barbershops, churches, parks, and Laundromats. These opportunities can be linked to FRCs and neighborhood initiatives.

In Oakland, the following organizations offer peer-to-peer group programs:

- A Better Way
- Alameda County Public Health Department
- Alta Bates Summit Medical Center
- Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN)
- Best Babies Zone
- California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program
- East Bay Agency for Children
- Family Independence Initiative
- Family Resource Network
- Gma Village
- La Clinica de la Raza
- Lincoln Child Center
- Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- Oakland Parents Together
- Our Family Coalition
- Parent Voices
- Room to Bloom

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[10] Interview with program leaders of Gma Village, 11/2015.
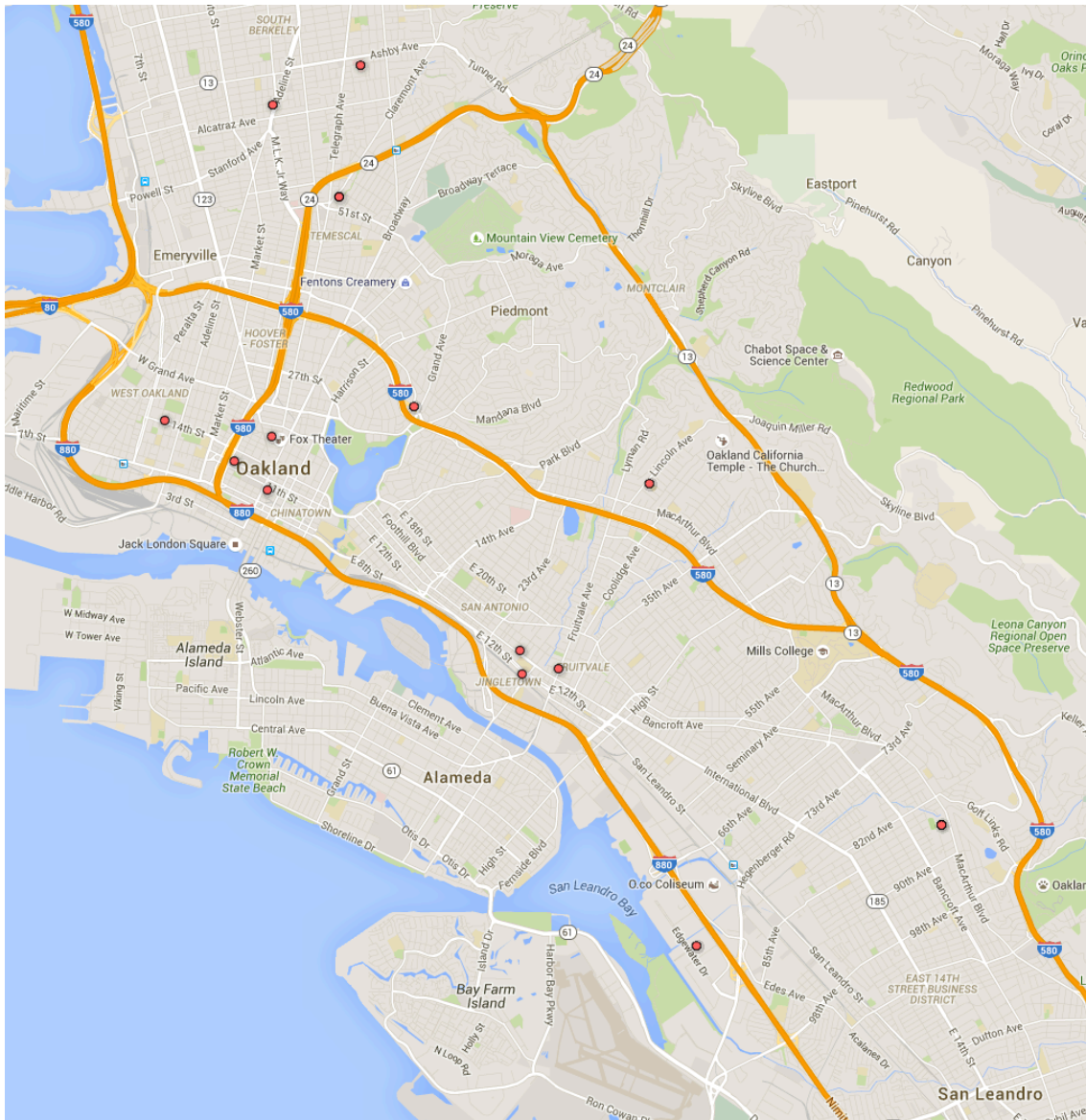
Learning From the Field: Magnolia Place Community Initiative

In Los Angeles, the **Magnolia Place Community Initiative** hosts caregiver workgroups that promote family health and well-being, economic stability, and efficiency of care. Magnolia Place works to increase social connectedness, community mobilization, and access to services among its participants. The organization applies the Strengthening Families Protective Framework factors to its service strategy: parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of need, knowledge of parenting and child development, and social emotional competence of children. Magnolia Place runs an innovative community collaboration that ambitiously strives to improve outcomes for all 23,000 children living in the area.

5.4.   Parent and Caregiver Leadership and Empowerment

Challenges often faced by low-income informal caregivers and parents are the feelings of disempowerment and lack of influential community voice. Caregiver leadership and "ambassador" programs have the ability to combat these feelings of limited voice and empowerment by promoting parents' and caregivers' understanding of their important roles in the development of, and long-term impact on, children's educational outcomes. They also provide opportunities for parents and caregivers to serve as leaders within their local school systems and communities, uplifting them as change agents and role models for others in their community.

There are several parent leadership and empowerment programs in Oakland, including Oakland Parents Together, Parent Voices Oakland, Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN), and Fathers Corps. These parent-led programs empower the voices of parents while combatting the isolation of parenting and caregiving, enabling parents of young children to come together to share resources, learn about their child's development, and build a community. Some of the programs also promote parent empowerment by engaging parent leaders in OUSD district related issues that impact their children's educational outcomes. Fathers Corps, a unique collaboration between F5AC, ACPHD, and Alameda County Social Services, specifically targets male parents to help them become meaningfully engaged with their children and families. Parent-led programs like those listed above have the potential to reach FFN caregivers, though currently focus mostly on parents.

Opportunities to further strengthen parent leadership programs in Oakland exist through the following.

➢ **Scale or replicate leadership programs.** In communities where these programs exist, such as Oakland Parents Together and Parent Voices, they are popular and in high demand. Increasing the number of, or scaling existing parent leadership programs, including a diverse menu of parenting curricula and support services throughout various communities in Oakland, would likely be met with a similarly strong demand. Integrating a train-the-trainer approach would enable the programs to scale rapidly.
➢ **Increase intentional focus on FFN providers.** Parent leadership programs in Oakland do not focus on attracting or serving FFN providers, many of whom would benefit from an increased sense of empowerment in their role and having a larger voice in their community.
➢ **Build greater connections to formal institutions.** Programs should coordinate and strengthen connections with formal institutions like Oakland Unified School District to ensure parent input is considered.

Parent empowerment programs are a successful way to engage parents, connect them to a network, and promote their voice, and could have similar positive impacts on FFN providers. However, many FFN caregivers may not have the financial resources or time to devote to leadership and empowerment activities. GPG recommends soliciting feedback from a FFN focus group on whether this model would be of interest or relevant to them.

Oakland already has some programs in place to promote parent leadership such as:

➢ Alameda County Fathers Corps
➢ Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN)
➢ Family Independence Initiative
➢ Family Resource Network
➢ Mujeres Unidas y Activas

➢ Oakland Parents Together
➢ Parent Voices
➢ Room to Bloom

> ## Program Spotlight: Abriendo Puertas
>
> Abriendo Puertas / Opening Doors uses an innovative evidence-based comprehensive training program developed *by and for* Latino parents with young children. Headquartered in Los Angeles, Abriendo Puertas has trained 55,000 parents in 256 cities over the past eight years. The "popular education" approach and parent-directed program includes ten sessions to teach parents about local schools and resources, their role in child development, and long-term impacts on children's educational outcomes. Abriendo Puertas uses a train-the-trainer model, which has allowed them to quickly scale their reach, creating sustainable programs beyond single trainings with equipped service providers who are able to improve outreach and recruitment. This program is being successfully administered in San Francisco by Mission Neighborhood Centers, Inc.
>
> Abriendo Puertas program is culturally responsive, especially to Latino families. In that regard, it could serve Oakland well, as 25% of Oakland's residents are Latino. It is worth exploring whether this program could be tailored to non-Spanish speaking parents and caregivers as well. Finally, it is worth exploring whether this program could be effectively tailored to serve FFN caregivers.

5.5. Caregiver Training and Education Programs

Caregiver training and education programs benefit parents and FFN caregivers and the children in their care by improving both the quality of parent-child or caregiver-child interactions and the quality of care environments, such as higher health and safety standards. Training programs for FFN providers often provide information on early childhood development, the elements of quality care, and methods of challenging and stimulating young children's proper development. Some programs also offer caregivers an opportunity to obtain licensing. While training programs typically focus on FFN caregivers, parent educational programs and workshops also fall into this category of services.

According to GPG's survey of early childhood education program directors and other ECE stakeholders in Oakland, the organizations in Oakland that provide caregiver training and education programs do it well. Several organizations actively work to reach parents as well as FFN providers who are not connected to large service agencies. A limited number of FFN caregivers attend robust training programs that lead to licensure. However, there are several areas in which organizations have the potential to improve:

> - **Attracting resources and building capacity**. Oakland does not currently have the funding capacity to take caregiver support and training to scale. By obtaining and directing more resources to effective programs, especially by expanding reach in high-need neighborhoods, Oakland could focus on bringing its effective programs to scale.
> - **Targeting parent education programs to more FFN caregivers.** Many programs in Oakland do not design education programs and workshops specifically for or market them to FFN caregivers, even those that would be of interest and relevance to them. These programs can be better designed with the key needs of FFN caregivers in mind, and, outreach ccould be improved so that FFN caregivers are more aware that the programs exist.
> - **Evaluation.** Caregiver training and parent education programs are not consistently evaluated, so there are no clear linkages between these programs and quality of care. An evaluation process would help to identify the programs that do training and education most effectively, to inform funding allocations.

The above improvements could be made by focusing on the barriers to FFN participation in programs and specifically engaging in the following efforts:

1. Tailoring information to the specific population being targeted;
2. Providing services near caregivers' homes;
3. Expanding services that are offered in the most underserved neighborhoods;
4. Utilizing existing hubs to connect parents and providers;
5. Securing direct city funding for trainings located in caregivers' neighborhoods; and
6. Offering incentives to increase FFN caregivers' attendance at trainings and workshops. *(Incentives can be positive, such as a financial stipend or training certificate offered by a higher education partner program, or negative, such as the loss of QRIS or other special subsidies unless the provider receives training.)*

In Oakland, the following organizations offer caregiver training and education programs, either to parents, FFN providers, or both:

- A Better Way
- Alameda County Fathers Corps
- Alameda County Public Health Department
- Alameda Nurse-Family Partnership
- Alta Bates Summit Medical Center
- Ann Martin Center

- Asian Community Mental Health Services
- Asian Health Services
- Bananas, Inc.
- Bay Area Hispano Institute for Advancement
- Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network (PLAN)
- Best Babies Zone
- Brighter Beginnings
- California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE) Program
- Center for Early Intervention on Deafness
- Centerforce
- Children's Hospital Oakland
- City of Oakland, Office of Parks and Recreation
- East Bay Agency for Children
- Family Paths, Inc.
- Gma Village
- Habitot Children's Museum
- La Clinica de la Raza

- Lighthouse Community Charter School
- Lincoln Child Center, Families Together Project
- Literacy Lab
- Lotus Bloom
- Mujeres Unidas y Activas
- Oakland Parents Together
- Oakland Public Library
- Oakland Unified School District Summer Pre-K
- Our Family Coalition
- Prescott-Joseph Center for Community Enhancement
- Regional Center of the East Bay
- Safe Passages
- Tandem: Partners in Early Learning
- The Unity Council
- Through the Looking Glass
- 4C's Community Child Care Council of Alameda County
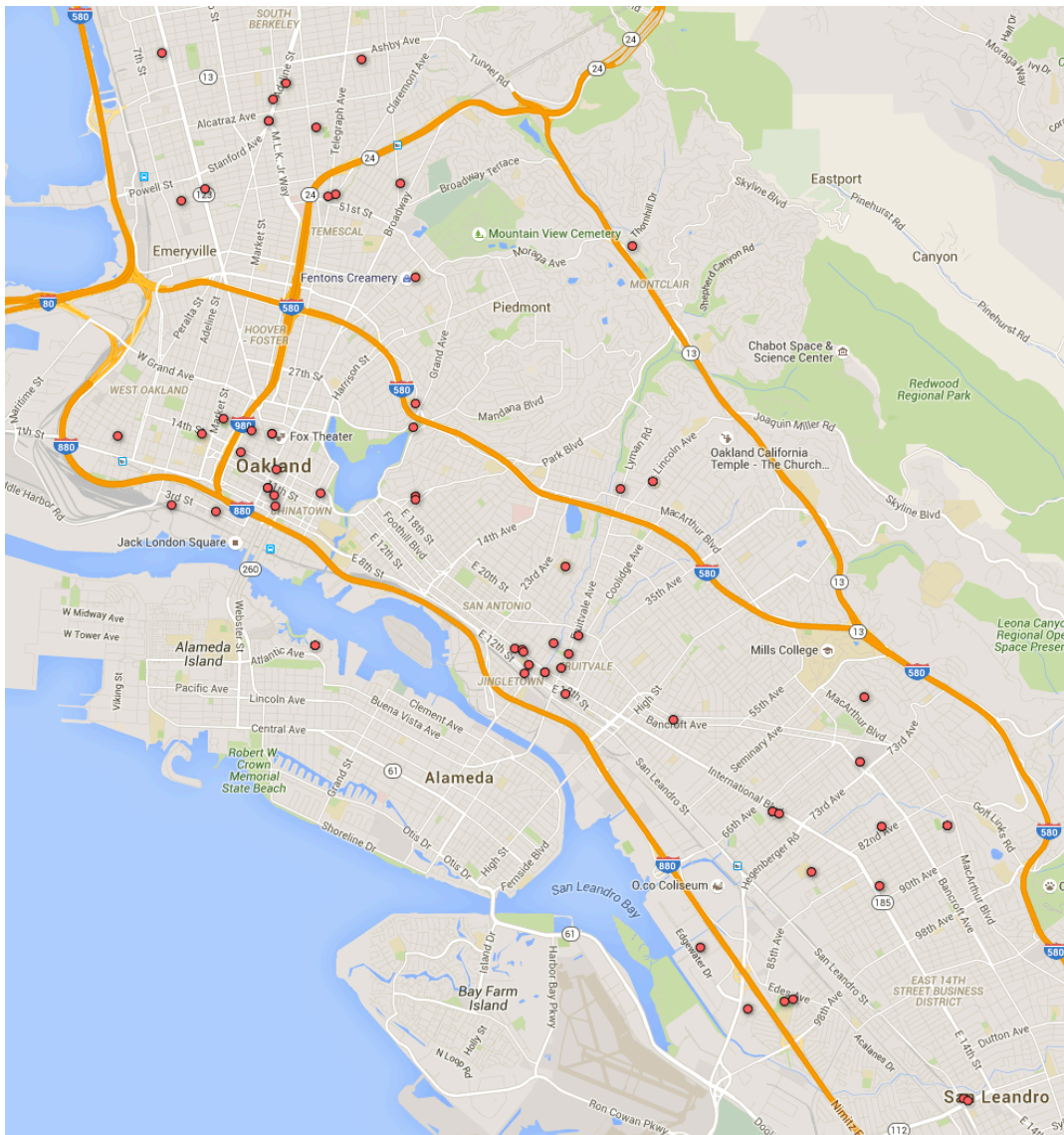
Lessons From the Field

A high-quality example of a caregiver training program for FFN providers outside of Oakland is the **Arizona Kith and Kin Project**. The program delivers 14 weeks of group sessions offering training supports to grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbors, and other friends. The caregivers meet once a week for at least two hours on topics such as guidance and discipline, daily schedule planning, nutrition, child and home safety, CPR, parent-caregiver relationships and business practices, language and literacy, and brain development. **Arizona Kith and Kin Project** also offers incentives such as free car seats, safety supplies, educational books and toys, and certificates of complication. Additionally, they offer transportation and on-site child care during trainings.

Another example of a high-quality caregiver training program, and one from California, is First 5 Monterey's "FFN Caregiver TA" program launched in 2010. The program involves a number of key strategies creating a strong program that helps FFN caregivers understand children's developmental needs and how they can impact children's learning: 1) Consistent playgroups where the caregivers meet monthly to support continuity and relationship building; 2) Registration and eligibility verification process; 3) Start-of-year orientation; 4) Information to parents about children's participation; 5) Intentional curriculum and approach; 6) Time for caregiver reflection and the integration of ideas into practice; 7) Staff debriefs and reflection in order to individualize program for participants; and 8) Closing ceremony at the end of the year. The program has seen positive outcomes in terms of an increased availability of educational opportunities for FFN providers, increased availability of materials, increased use of high-quality child development information, and increased networking among FFN providers.

Source: Harder+Company. January 2014. *First 5 Monterey County Early Learning Opportunities: Vision II: Access to High Quality Early Care and Education. Year 4 Evaluation: Findings from the Family Friend and Neighbor Caregiver Technical Assistance Program.*

5.6. Home Visiting[11]

Home visitation is an evidence-based approach that offers ongoing home visits to low-income parents and guardians (and occasionally informal caregivers) from registered nurses, community service coordinators, and other professionals. Home visiting takes a "two generation" approach and helps to ensure that all families have access to the support and services they need; typically they target low-income pregnant women, new parents, and other low-income parents of birth to five year olds, especially when the children have identified needs or possible developmental risks. Home visitors provide information and resources, and build trusting relationships with parents and caregivers, instilling confidence and empowering them to improve their caregiving skills. Home visiting programs, such as the nationally renowned Nurse Family Partnership model and the Parents As Teachers (PAT) model, lead to long-term family improvements in health, education, and economic self-sufficiency. Studies of these programs' participants demonstrate improved prenatal health, fewer childhood injuries, improved school readiness, and increased maternal employment.

Home visiting programs have been a major area of focus in Oakland for more than 20 years. Over the past five years, an initiative has been undertaken to design, integrate, and coordinate a system of 12 different home visiting programs through one strong partnership between the Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) and F5AC. F5AC established its Home Visiting and Family Support Strategy to prioritize this work and to help create a more comprehensive, integrated home visiting and family support system of care for high-risk families and families with babies who have health and developmental concerns. The system supports ACPHD's operational work of administering the programs, while also incorporating common quality standards, pooling community resources to achieve greater outcomes, and enabling coordination with other community partners in order to conduct targeted outreach to determine family's needs and connect them to appropriate services. ACPHD and F5AC define kindergarten readiness as a key goal of its coordinated home visiting system, with specific indicators being that each child receives early developmental screening, and that parents receive increased support for child learning and development.

An example of one of Oakland's well-known home visiting programs is the federally funded Healthy Start initiative, an in-home case management program targeting low-income African American pregnant women and new parents. The program specifically targets the high-need areas of East and West Oakland. F5AC triages families at local hospitals and then refers them to ACPHD depending on which program(s) might be best suited for the family. Within the formal early childhood infrastructure in Oakland, Head Start and Early Head Start also run effective home visiting programs that use a family-based approach to increase parent education and empowerment. Finally, a new and innovative home visiting approach underway in Oakland is the new *Brilliant Baby* initiative; the effort will utilize existing home visiting networks to identify high-need families for participation in a long-term financial literacy and asset building program, focused on their "brilliant baby" and the opportunity for their child to excel in school and eventually attend college. Most home visiting programs in Oakland are evidence-based and operate on a set of high standards. However, the home visiting services in Oakland face some **current challenges**.

➢ **Cost**. Home visiting programs are expensive to run; this highly regarded service is limited to only the families with the greatest needs[12]. Thus, it is not the most cost-effective option for reaching parents and FFN caregivers with caregiving and child development information.

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[11] Because by nature home visiting programs involve going out into the community to family's homes, they do not appear clearly on GPG's landscape maps as other programs do. Thus, maps are not included in this section.
[12] In FY 2015-15, 2100 families were served by all Alameda home visiting programs.

➢ **Declining funding**. Recent and upcoming funding shifts could affect the future of some of the most effective home visiting programs in Oakland. State funding from First 5 California is declining, which presents a new financing challenge for Oakland; the City is creative in procuring supplemental funding sources to fill the gaps, but needs a community champion or collaborative strategy to commit to tackling this issue.

➢ **Health focus vs. comprehensive developmental focus**. Home visiting programs traditionally have a greater focus on medical, health, and sometimes social-emotional needs of children and parents. While ACPHD's and F5AC's recent integrated approach does incorporate school readiness goals as common standards and has begun to equip home visitors with Talk Read Sing materials to bring to families, this effort is not yet ubiquitous across all Oakland programs, and greater attention could be devoted to pairing these home visiting efforts with early education resources, information, and supports for families. Oakland could obtain ideas for augmenting its existing programs by consulting the national home visiting program clearinghouse, HOMVEE – a collection of evidence-based home visiting models: http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/Models.aspx

➢ **Coordination with other types of services.** ACPHD and F5AC now have the basic infrastructure to support an integrated system of home visitation, and there is an opportunity to layer in additional levels of services relevant and important to targeted families, such as playgroups, peer-to-peer networks, and Family Resource Center services. Similar to First 5 Santa Clara's approach, Oakland (Alameda) could coordinate multiple program types within one referral system.

In Oakland, the following agencies and organizations offer home visiting programs[13]:

- A Better Way
- Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD)
  o Alameda County Healthy Start Initiative (ACHSI, formerly IPOP)
  o Healthy Families America (HFA, formerly Your Family Counts)
  o Black Infant Health
  o Blue Skies Mental Wellness
  o MADRE
  o Special Start
  o Fatherhood Initiative
  o Nurse Family Partnership
- Asian Community Mental Health Services
- Behavioral Intervention Association
- Berkeley Unified School District
- Best Babies Zone

- Brighter Beginnings
- Children's Hospital Oakland (Special Start)
- First 5 Alameda
  o Special Start at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland
  o Pregnant and Parenting Teen Programs
- Jewish Family & Children's Services of the East Bay
- Lincoln Child Center
- Lotus Bloom
- Oakland Unified School District
- Regional Center of the East Bay
- Safe Passages
- The Unity Council
- Through the Looking Glass
- Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center

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[13] Head Start and Early Head Start also offer home visiting to families but are not included in this list as they are considered part of the "formal" ECE infrastructure

National Program Spotlight: Parents As Teachers

The Parents As Teachers model is one of many evidence-based home visiting models designed to ensure that children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn. It applies four dynamic components: personal visits, group/peer connections, child screenings, and a resource network. Home visits focus on parent-child interaction, development-centered parenting, and family well-being. Their curriculum helps home visitors to identify family strengths and parent capabilities and skills, and to build protective factors within the family. The visits promote parental resilience, parenting and child development knowledge, and improved social and emotional competence of children.

Through four independent randomized control trials and seven peer-reviewed outcome studies, the Parents As Teachers model has demonstrated its effectiveness in four key areas: 1) increasing parent knowledge of early childhood development and improving parenting practices; 2) providing early detection of developmental delays and health problems; 3) preventing child abuse and neglect; and 4) increasing children's school readiness. This model is one of many effective models focused on caregiver practices that could be tailored to meet Oakland's additional needs for augmenting its home visiting programs to reach parents and/or FFN caregivers with information that will improve caregiver-child interactions.

Source: http://www.parentsasteachers.org/images/stories/906_EBHVM.pdf

6.   Outreach and Communications to Informal Providers

6.1.   Natural Gathering Places

Service providers know that certain outreach methods are more successful in engaging parents and caregivers than others. One effective method is to target information or services to specific audiences in the typical places they frequent during their day-to-day lives. These "natural gathering places" include laundromats, churches, grocery stores, clinics, hospitals, schools, and libraries.

By targeting laundromats, hospitals, and faith-based centers, Oakland is currently leveraging existing community gathering places and bringing resources to the low-income caregivers who need them.

Laundromats. Too Small To Fail, an early childhood campaign described in more detail in section 6.2, recently launched a pilot that promotes learning activities in laundromats in Oakland. In collaboration with the Coin Laundry Association, Too Small to Fail launched "Wash Time is Talk Time: Early Literacy Promotion in Laundromats" in the fall of 2015, and is providing disadvantaged communities with a "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" toolkit to use in laundromats with families and children. The toolkit contains resources designed to close the word gap between low-income and affluent children, and will be promoted on "free laundry days" by F5AC.

Hospitals. Additionally, through the same Talking is Teaching effort, Children's Hospital Oakland and Kaiser Permanente Oakland pediatricians and other hospital staff are now equipped to deliver tips and tools to parents during well baby check up visits. Reading circles encourage and model reading to children on a regular basis, and a closed captioned video of the importance of boosting early brain development is shown at inpatient wards and waiting rooms.

Faith-Based Centers. The Rainin Foundation is beginning a new grant initiative to support parents and caregivers through early literacy workshops at faith-based centers, such as churches, in Oakland. They are partnering with Talk Read Sing to host Talking is Teaching "parties" for families in the congregation and the surrounding community, and with Literacy Lab in order to offer early literacy workshops; provide a take-home book program for families; offer read aloud activities for families and children; and offer bookcase libraries for the Sunday school services that are high-quality, multicultural. and age-appropriate (birth to five).

First 5 Alameda's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment home survey data showed that Oakland parents of birth to five year olds most frequently visit churches/faith-based centers, parks, laundromats, libraries, grocery stores, child care centers, schools, and community hubs. The same data shows that Oakland parents' most-used social service is Women, Infants and Children (WIC). GPG surveyed early education stakeholders about how to prioritize natural gathering places and which might be most effective at reaching parents *as well as* FFN caregivers.[14] By order of priority, their aggregated response is listed here:

1. Churches and other faith-based organizations
2. Community hubs
3. Parks
4. OUSD school sites
5. Laundromats
6. Libraries
7. Grocery stores
8. Child care sites

Making better use of these natural gathering places frequented by informal caregivers offers a real opportunity to connect FFNs and parents with trainings, child development information, and other services. Maps provided on p. 32 identify the locations of some of these natural gathering places in some of the highest priority neighborhoods. In addition to using maps like these to locate natural gathering places for targeting resources, Oakland can also address some other areas for improvement to this strategy.

➢ **Operating in silos**. Many of the agencies and organizations managing natural gathering places operate in silos, for example, Parks and Recreation is disconnected from Oakland Public Library, which is disconnected from community-based organizations. There is an opportunity for better coordination between these disparate systems.
➢ **Targeting younger children**. Libraries and playgrounds are not yet as welcoming as they could be for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, or their caregivers. Providing intentional programming for the birth to five age group would help attract caregivers of Oakland's youngest children.
➢ **Caregiver time**. Many parents and caregivers visit natural gathering places for a primary reason and are not specifically looking for child development resources there. Service providers must try to make the most of caregivers' limited time when presenting services or connections,

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[14] GPG did not include social service offices/locations as a survey option, but after further conversations with ECE stakeholders about the real opportunity to reach many caregivers at those locations, does recommend including them in the category of "natural gathering places."

keeping in mind that child development or parenting resources may not be a priority for caregivers at that moment in time.

To make the most of natural gathering places for community members, it is important to provide outreach at the places they visit most frequently, including the WIC office, and other social services waiting rooms, according to where FFN providers identify as the best locations for them. The organizations that do this work should convene to develop a clear strategy for providing services, focusing on culture and needs of target groups. The map below shows the locations of faith-based centers, laundromats, parks, and grocery stores in Oakland.[15]

KEY:

Purple = Faith-based organizations
Red = Laundromats
Green = Parks
Yellow = Grocery stores
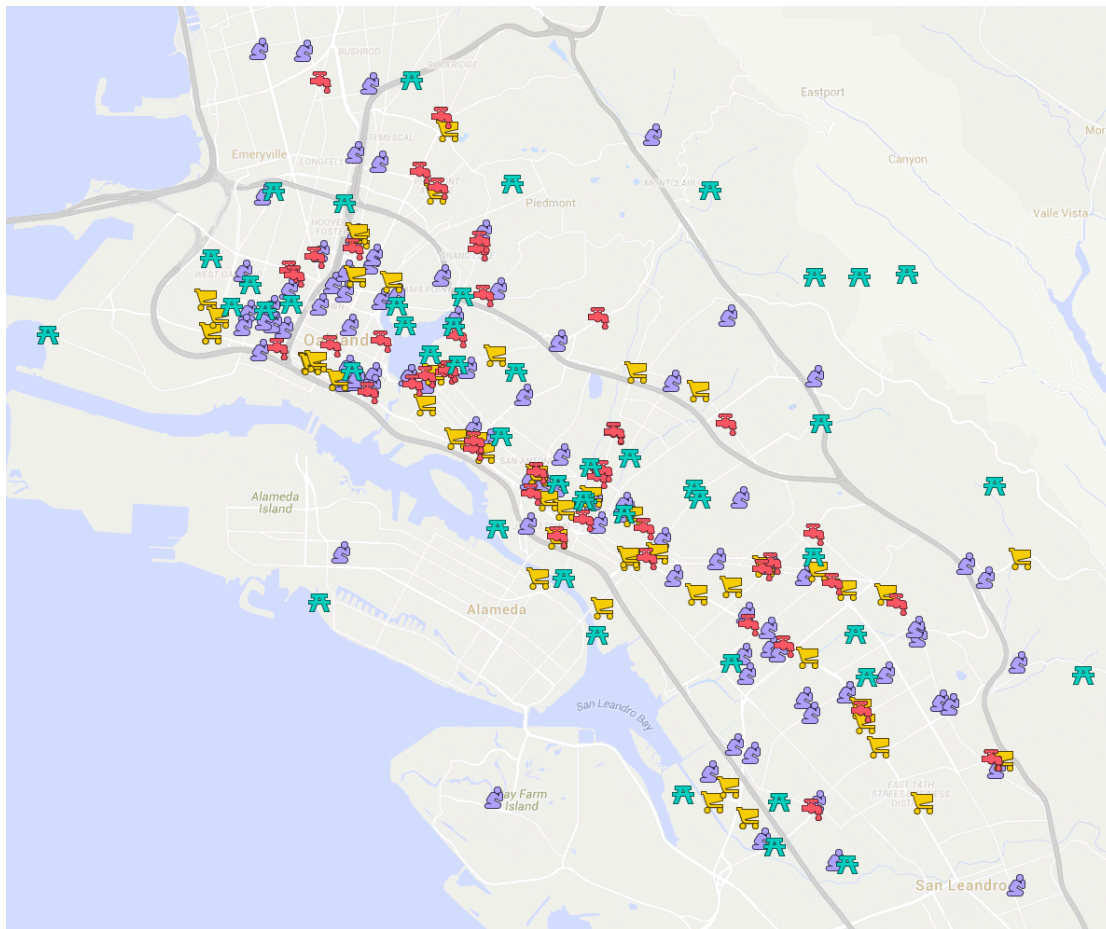
6.2.   Public Awareness Campaigns

Public awareness campaigns use billboards, television commercials, and social media to reach a designated audience about a specific issue. Researchers identify specific messaging that will most effectively persuade key audiences. For example, Text4Baby is a nationwide initiative that sends text

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[15] See https://goo.gl/nqtNj4 for an interactive version of this map.

messages to caregivers twice per month with tips and YouTube videos about maternal and child health. Since its launch in 2010, Text4Baby has had more than 1 million unique subscribers, 85,000 of whom are California parents.[16] Another example, 'Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing' features billboard and bus-shelter ads in communities nationwide, including Oakland and the broader Bay Area, to remind parents that simple everyday activities are opportunities to help their children develop.

In addition to the services captured on our landscape maps, Oakland is also engaging in public awareness efforts to promote improved parent-child and caregiver-child interactions through Too Small to Fail and "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" campaigns. **Too Small to Fail**, discussed in the previous section, is a larger national effort of the Clinton Foundation and the Opportunity Institute to help communities, parents, and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well being of birth to five year olds. The campaign uses social media, traditional media, and technology-driven tools and innovative approaches to track progress and measure campaign impact. In Oakland, Too Small To Fail has partnered with F5AC, Rainin Foundation, local laundromats, faith-based centers, hospitals, and other community partners to spread its campaign message and reach as many families as possible with its messaging. **"Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing"** is a focused campaign effort organized by Too Small To Fail, and includes television commercials, radio spots, posters on billboards and bus shelters, and a clothing line for babies and toddlers. Each piece contributes to effective messaging for caregivers to highlight the importance of reading and interacting for a baby's development. Unlike brick and mortar caregiver training programs, this type of effort cannot be fully captured on a map.

In partnership with Oakland's community partners, these campaign efforts are reaching thousands of families in a broad way, ranging from subliminal (e.g. radio, bus ads) to direct (e.g. laundromats, faith-based centers). Other local efforts (and national efforts that have been locally adapted) to provide outreach and information to Oakland parents and FFN caregivers include:

➢ Best Babies Zone
➢ Earlyoakland.org
➢ Great Oakland Public Schools
➢ Help Me Grow
➢ Reach Out and Read
➢ Swing Into Preschool (former project of Oakland Unified School District)
➢ Text4Baby

Campaigns can be an efficient way to raise public awareness, but they are not enough to create large-scale behavioral change without additional resources. ECE stakeholders identified areas in which early childhood public awareness campaigns can be strengthened in Oakland.

➢ **Provide skill-building and tangible resources alongside messaging.** Many low-income, low-literacy parents and caregivers in Oakland do not necessarily need to be convinced of the importance of reading or telling stories to children. What they really lack are workshops that provide free books and model how to read as a low-literacy parent. Those who are positively impacted or "convinced" through these campaigns may not know of or have access to workshops and physical resources that would help improve their interactions with their children.

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[16] *Breakdown of Total Users Since Launch*, Text4Baby. https://partners.text4baby.org/images/2014/state-specificbreakdown44.jpg

➢ **Explicitly target fathers.** Male parents and caregivers, including non-custodial fathers, are important in the lives of their children. Explicitly targeting fathers and adult males can help inform and strengthen positive perceptions of the role of fathers and male caregivers.

➢ **Connect with faith communities** *(now underway through Rainin Foundation.* Faith communities play an important role in many parents' and caregivers' lives. Public awareness campaigns can be strengthened by engaging faith leaders to message caregiving lessons and support.

Among ECE community stakeholders, there is a perception that public awareness campaigns may not fundamentally change or improve the quality of caregiver-child interactions, especially because many parents and FFN caregivers still lack the tangible resources to use at home with children in their care. To address this concern, Oakland can augment these campaigns, for example by providing giveaways of vital resources that caregivers lack, such as book donations, educational toys, or safety supplies. These donations should be provided in person to accommodate caregivers who lack Internet access. Public events and public assistance portals, such as WIC offices, are good venues for supplementing traditional media campaigns by distributing resources.

6.3. Frequent and Targeted Outreach

One of the biggest hurdles in providing services for, and information to, informal caregivers – especially license-exempt and FFN caregivers who are not "connected" to any system – is finding and recruiting them to attend and participate in programs. Oakland and has a real opportunity to improve its outreach to engage more informal caregivers.

Outreach efforts taken by programs such as Best Babies Zone and Gma Village in Oakland have realized recent success at recruiting parents and FFN caregivers to participate in their programs. **Best Babies Zone** provided a mini-grant to a "superstar" resident in the Castlemont community to run frequent play dates and social gatherings for parents. This is a low-cost, low-overhead, scalable model that has achieved real success in engaging community members in services and programming, similar to Kaleidoscope's effort in Seattle where they identified and hired natural community leaders from areas of high-need where many young children were in informal care settings, and trained these community leaders in engaging their peer networks and promoting the playgroup program through casual meetings and conversations. These trusted community members were extremely successful in recruiting their peers to participate in the playgroup programs. In Oakland, **Gma Village** has already realized great outreach success by collaborating with community partners – especially Oakland Parents Together and the Oakland Public Library (West Oakland branch) – to engage parents and grandmothers in their services. To develop the actual program, they engaged 86 informal providers, parents, children and experts in a participatory process. By participating in the program design, parents and informal providers felt more engaged and excited about the program, resulting in their increased engagement.

To further improve outreach efforts in Oakland, especially to engage more FFN caregivers, ECE stakeholders recommend focusing on the three areas below.

➢ **Use location-based recruitment.** Highly frequented locations that informal caregivers are likely to be connected with include recreation centers, doctors offices and clinics, child care resource and referral agencies, and social service portals like CalFresh, WIC, and Alternative Payment (AP) voucher redemption sites.

➢ **Recruit community messengers.** An outreach strategy should include key leaders in the target community, including long-time neighbors, faith community members, family members,

recreation center staff, primary care physicians, and respected long-time residents of public housing.

➢ **Develop refined and targeted messages.** Strengthen messages by examining them through culturally and linguistically responsive lenses. For example, use language that specifically refers to FFN caregivers (as many do not think of themselves as "caregivers" and respond poorly to the wrong phrasing), coupled with the mention of participation incentives such a mini-stipend or gift card, or books and toys for use with the children in their care.

7.   Other Funding Considerations

7.1.   High-Need Neighborhoods

"Service deserts" exist in Oakland where programs and services supporting parents and FFN caregivers are fewer in number than in other neighborhoods, even when the demand for these services still may be great (for example, areas with large populations of low-income birth to five children). For example, there are very few programs in West Oakland, which has a high need for family support services. West Oakland is home to one library, one Child Development Center, and several elementary schools and Head Start sites, all of which have the potential to target FFN caregivers. The West Oakland branch of the public library hosts family story time every Saturday—those could be expanded to multiple events per week, or could be offered during the week when many parents are working, to provide caregivers with free, developmentally appropriate activities for their children.

Using census data overlaid with the new Oakland program mapping, GPG has identified the following high-need neighborhoods (in terms of the potential to benefit from more parent/FFN services) of Oakland. A map illustrates these neighborhoods on p. 36 with circles drawn around the high-need service desert areas. Listed below are a few key programs that already have central offices or operating locations in those high-need neighborhoods.[17] These neighborhoods currently offer just a few key programs:

➢ **Oakland Coliseum --** Child Care Links, Safe Passages, Bay Area Parent Leadership Network (PLAN)
➢ **East Oakland --** Asian Community Mental Health Services, Lotus Bloom
➢ **Eastmont / Castlemont --** Best Babies Zone, Room To Bloom
➢ **West Oakland --** Family Paths, Prescott-Joseph Center, Safe Passages, Gma Village

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[17] Lists do not include OUSD, OPL, or OPR, as they have sites across all neighborhoods.
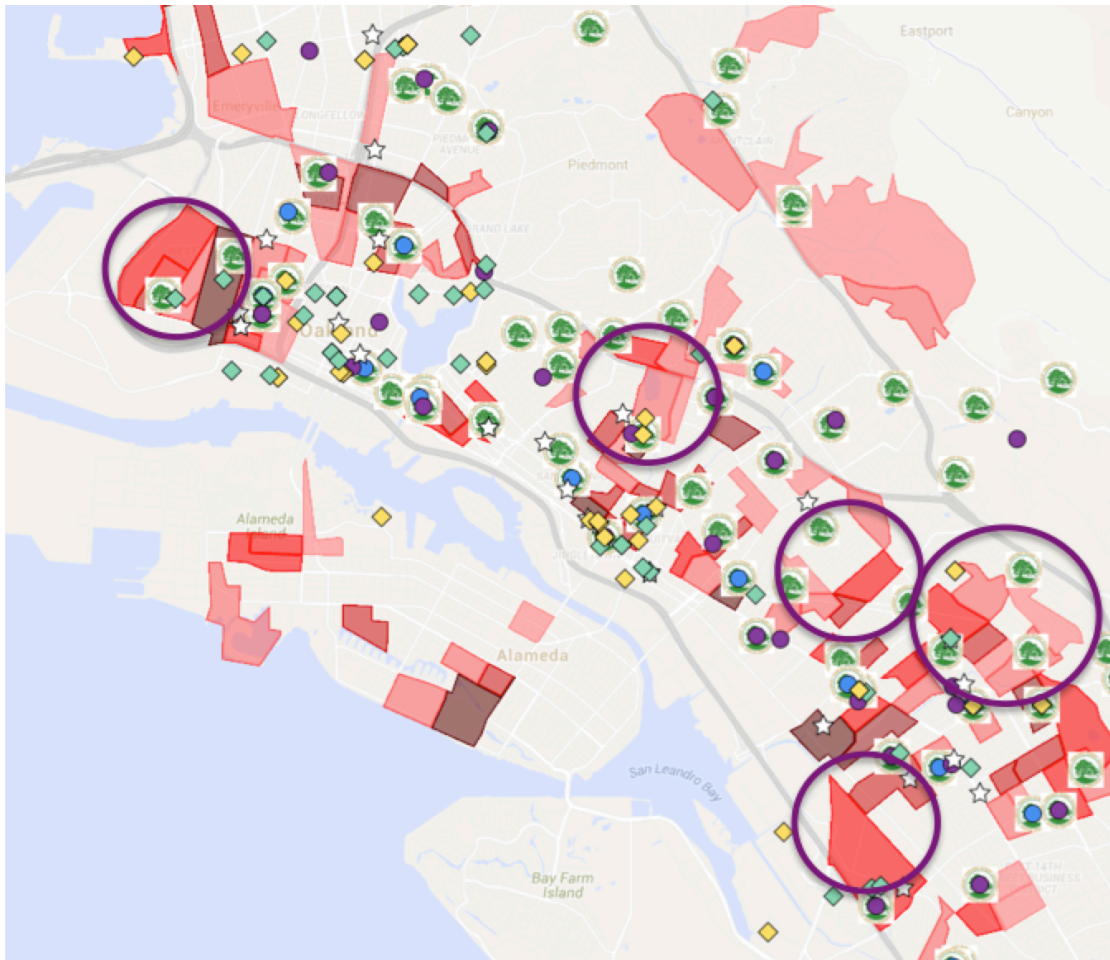
Oakland could begin to target more funding and programming to specific low-resource neighborhoods like East Oakland in order to improve its services for low-income families and FFN caregivers. For lessons and ideas, it could look to an already successful effort in the Castlemont neighborhood: the *Best Babies Zone* initiative funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Best Babies Zone is a multi-sector approach, addressing economics, education, health, and community, to mobilize the 12x7 block Castlemont community and to help its residents, including many parents and young children, thrive. A key success factor for reaching parents of young children with early childhood and development information was hiring residents directly from the community to run play dates, social gatherings, and special topic meetings like lactation cafes, for other parents in the community. The initiative also brought in Room to Bloom, an early childhood focused Family Resource Center at Castlemont High School. The Castlemont neighborhood was previously an "ECE desert" according to surveyed Oakland ECE stakeholders, but that desert is now beginning to shrink. With some funding, the right mix of partners, and strong community leaders, this model could be replicated in other high-need "ECE service deserts" of Oakland.

Other neighborhood-focused strategies to recruit, engage, and share resources with families and caregivers include neighborhood "baby showers" or "baby's first birthday" parties for all families with new babies, "Boot Camps" for new fathers, and bringing materials and traveling playgroups to existing community events such as block parties. Families and caregivers can be reached at the types of gatherings that they will already be attending.

7.2. Ensure Culturally-Responsive Services

Oakland is a diverse city with a population comprised of many different cultures and ethnicities. An important aspect of providing effective, well received services to parents and FFN caregivers is designing those services to address their unique cultural, linguistic, demographic, and socioeconomic needs. In Oakland, almost 99% of children classified as "English Learners" within the OUSD system come from families who speak Spanish, Cantonese, Arabic, or Vietnamese. The table below lists the languages most frequently spoken by English Learners in OUSD:

English Learners in Public Schools, by Top 10 Languages Spoken[18]		
Oakland Unified School District	Number	Percentage
Spanish	11,769	82.7%
Cantonese	1,111	7.8%
Arabic	648	4.6%
Vietnamese	505	3.5%
Tagalog	97	< 1%
Mandarin	74	< 1%
Korean	16	< 1%
Russian	9	< 1%
Punjabi	5	< 1%
Hmong	1	< 1%
All Other Non-English Languages	1,308	9.2%
TOTAL	**14,235**	

Oakland programs already serve Spanish-speaking families well, but Oakland programs serving Chinese-, Vietnamese-, Arabic-, and Tagalog-speaking families are harder to come by. GPG identified programs in Oakland that target at least some of their services specifically to FFN caregivers, and that offer these services to caregivers whose primary language is one other than English. Below is a breakdown of those programs by high-need language.

- ➢ **44** programs in Oakland specifically target FFN caregivers
- ➢ **36** of these programs are offered in Spanish
- ➢ **5** of these programs are offered in Chinese
- ➢ **Only 2** of these programs are offered in Vietnamese
- ➢ **Only 1** of these programs is offered in Tagalog
- ➢ **NONE** of these programs are offered in Arabic

Oakland is one of the most ethnically diverse major cities in the country, with a majority non-white population representing dozens of ethnicities and native tribes.[19] To appropriately support its families, Oakland programs have long had an emphasis on cross-cultural responsiveness that enables many, not just the few, to navigate services. Services are often led by staff and supported by agencies that reflect their target demographic. Many programs in Oakland are offered in both English and Spanish, from toddler parties at Children's Fairyland, to parent-child playgroups hosted by Oakland Parks and

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[18] http://www.kidsdata.org/

[19] 2013 American Community Survey, American FactFinder.
http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

Recreation, to materials and programming at Talk Read Sing-infused locations. Some services in Asian languages are available at culturally specific organizations like Asian Community Mental Health Services and Asian Health Services.

Even with its successes in this area, Oakland still has great potential for improving services to families of culturally- and linguistically-diverse backgrounds. Surveyed ECE stakeholders perceive that the lack of language-appropriate services for Oakland caregivers is directly tied to a lack of funding for translation services and bilingual staff. Multilingual materials are expensive and they require a devoted funding stream. Some of the strategies for improvement to ensure culturally responsive services in Oakland, in addition to providing services in more of the most prevalent non-English languages spoken in Oakland, include the following.

> **Target the African-American community.** Many of the informal community-based programs serve Asian and Latino families, and have an underrepresentation of African American families. Some Oakland organizations that successfully engage African American caregivers provide few services due to limited capacity.
> **Coordinate and share resources.** It is expensive to translate materials and to hire multilingual staff to meet all of the language needs in each community. By coordinating and sharing resources, including staff time (bilingual facilitators can serve multiple programs and neighborhoods), organizations have a better chance of being culturally responsive to Oakland caregivers' needs.
> **Consider the whole picture.** In addition to linguistic and culturally responsive services, many Oakland families have needs tied to intergenerational poverty and mental health/substance abuse. Programs should take a strengths-based, holistic approach to serving families.

In order to grow programs to better serve the community, ECE stakeholders recommend that organizations use a strengths-based approach. For example, collaborating to share resources across programs will help mitigate a lack of human capital, and promoting training and education programs for people of color that prepare them to enter this field of work will increase the supply of culturally-responsive trainers and program leaders.

7.3. Technology in Early Learning

Technology offers cost-effective, innovative, and scalable methods that are increasingly being used to reach specific populations with targeted information about early childhood topics. Mobile phones, for example, are a powerful way to reach parents of young children with key information to promote language and brain development, especially as devices have become more affordable and accessible for lower-income individuals. National initiatives such as the free text-to-parents programs operated by Talk Read Sing, Text4baby, and Sesame Street, capitalize on this technology trend and try to reach parents with helpful, relevant information by delivering research-based tips, parenting videos, and other resources every other week on the importance of talking, reading, and singing to young children. Studies have demonstrated that Text4Baby is effective at delivering health and safety information to recipients; about two-thirds of parents using the service report that the text messages helped them remember a doctor's appointment or immunization, and two-thirds followed up with their doctors about a topic they learned about through the texts.[20] The Center for Education Policy Analysis also found

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[20] from EdCentral: Texting Parents to Get Kids Ready 4K! http://www.edcentral.org/ready-4k/

that text messaging has positive impacts on engaging parents in supporting their preschoolers' early literacy skills.[21]

In Oakland, F5AC partnered with Text4Baby and now Oakland families can receive a text messages with local information. For example, "Text4Baby Oakland" features local resources to connect families to services at BANANAS, the local food bank, and other programs. It also sends families tips to promote early language development including fun videos from Sesame Street characters and simple ways to promote brain and language development through everyday routines, such as meal time and bath time.

While this was not an area covered by the GPG survey of ECE stakeholders, Oakland could support the continued success of this local Text4Baby program by distributing fliers and information to service providers that parents and FFN caregivers frequent in order to increase their awareness of the free resource and to encourage them to sign up. Technology can be used in other ways to serve these populations, as well. Parents and FFN caregivers use phones, email, texting, social media, etc. to connect with one another. By leveraging these common communication tools, Oakland programs can share information quickly and broadly about the availability of services, thereby amplifying outreach messages that already exist in other formats and mediums.

8. Summary of GPG's Key Recommendations for Strengthening Services to Support Informal Care in Oakland

Through analysis of the landscape scan and survey and conversations with Oakland early childhood experts focused on the informal care sector, GPG identified specific recommendations for Oakland to strengthen its services for parents and FFN caregivers. These recommendations are summarized and presented below, grouped into the following categories: 1) Programs, 2) Outreach and Awareness, and 3) Other Funding Considerations.

8.1. Programs

1. **Coordinate across agencies and make use of partnerships.** Spread out programming across all of the supportive infrastructure in Oakland. The more coordination, the better Oakland will be able to reduce, and eventually remove, gaps of service. Effective coordination across agencies such as OPL, OUSD, OPR, F5AC, and OFCY could bring high-quality programming to WIC offices, neighborhood parks, homeless shelters, schools, and libraries; the places where parents and FFN caregivers already go. OUSD FRCs are beginning to think about an early childhood approach, but greater coordination between the district's Community Schools and Early Childhood Department, as well as outside agencies such as F5AC and local CBOs, would facilitate this process. The most effective OUSD FRCs are run by outside agencies; spreading this model across other OUSD FRCs and Parent Rooms could enhance those sites' services as well.

2. **Focus more programs on FFN caregivers, and tailor programs to their needs.** In general, Oakland can devote greater attention to tailoring programming to FFN caregivers who have specific needs that are sometimes different from parents. Caregiver training and workshops, peer-to-peer groups, and playgroups are all types of services that FFNs strongly desire, but most programs in Oakland are designed around serving parents.

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[21] One Step at a Time: The Effects of an Early Literacy Text Messaging Program for Parents of Preschoolers. October 2014. Center for Education Policy Analysis at Stanford University.
http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/York%20%26%20Loeb%20(October%202014).pdf

3. **Adopt a set of standards of quality for FRCs and playgroups.** Common definitions and a common framework for guiding best practices and high-quality programming would help improve the overall quality of FRC and playgroup offerings in Oakland. To develop these standards, Oakland can draw upon: lessons learned from San Francisco's Family Support Network, the Strengthening Families Protective Framework, and convening existing Oakland programs to discuss best practices and what is working well in Oakland communities.

4. **Supplement home visiting programs with more early childhood development, early literacy, parenting, and caregiving resources by equipping visitors with these materials.** Some home visiting programs in Oakland are already doing this, but there is an opportunity to do this at scale. It is a low-cost, easy-to-implement method of bringing more early childhood development resources to parents and caregivers in their homes.

8.2. Outreach and Awareness

5. **Hire residents from high-need communities to be messengers for, and facilitators of, high impact programming for parents and caregivers.** The best marketing for the types of services covered by this report comes from the parents and FFN caregivers who use the services and recommend them to their peers. Hiring people from the neighborhoods who are likely to use the services themselves and to share information with their networks is the best way to engage the greatest number of families possible. As an example of success with this approach, Best Babies Zone hired a playgroup facilitator directly from the community, who is fully integrated with the neighborhood, has a strong peer network, and influence over other community residents; this resulted in local engagement of parents that far surpassed Oakland's expectations.

6. **Address "service deserts" by taking community hubs' services OUT into the community.** Parents and FFN caregivers want to receive services in places where they already regularly go. By making adjustments to the standard model of a community mega-center and instead creating more community outposts, FRCs and community hubs will reach more caregivers with their services. Fund the organizations that already deliver effective programming to take their programming out into the community, including at natural gathering places such as laundromats, faith-based centers, and grocery stores.

7. **Craft and refine messages to attract more FFN caregivers to services.** Many programs in Oakland offer services for FFN caregivers, but use language specific to "parents" and "families" that subtly, yet effectively, discourages FFN caregivers from accessing services. Language that does not specifically reference the role that FFN caregivers play can make the service seem exclusionary. "Parent" workshops, "parent" cafes, and "mommy and me" playgroups – these are all types of services that FFN caregivers might access if the marketing were more encouraging of their participation.

8. **Include ECE messaging in community events, parties, and festivals.** Oakland has frequent community building activities such as block parties, cultural events, music and food events. There's an opportunity to leverage these events and outlets to spread messaging that includes helpful content (such as Talk Read Sing strategies) and/or local service and program information (such as an upcoming playgroup or workshop announcement).

8.3. Other Funding Considerations

9. **Invest in strong programs and leaders to expand their programming to Oakland's "service deserts."** Oakland already has many strong programs and leaders; by investing in those leaders and supporting the people who are already trusted by their networks and the community, Oakland can create a multiplier effect of information and engagement in activity

by pushing their work out into the "service desert" neighborhoods that currently lack sufficient programming.[22]

10. **Encourage the development of more culturally responsive services across Oakland.** While some services are available in Asian languages, most of them are concentrated around Oakland's Chinatown neighborhood and are more directed towards parents than FFN caregivers. Special attention should be paid to the language needs of FFN. In general, more parent and FFN caregiver services could be offered in Spanish, Arabic, and Cantonese, the languages most commonly spoken by OUSD's ELL students. Additionally, more services could be tailored to be culturally responsive to serve more African American families and children.

11. **Better collect and utilize data to evaluate program effectiveness, quality, and impact.** ECE stakeholders expressed a desire for more hard data on program effectiveness across Oakland. Surveys and interviews like the ones included in this research are useful for understanding the broad strokes of the program landscape and how well the demand for services is being met. Supplementing this work with quantitative measurement of program impact could help Oakland better understand the level of program quality and the extent of program impact of the programs described and mapped through this analysis.

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[22] See Page 36 - Map of Service Deserts