



Our collective vision of success is that all children, families and early educators flourish in Oakland.

Why Support for Early Childhood Matters

Young children's brains and bodies develop rapidly in the first 5 years. When we provide high-quality early learning and health opportunities during this critical window, we create better chances for health and happiness throughout a child's life.

But many families face barriers to these opportunities. Systems have failed to prepare 66% of OUSD kindergarteners for future school success. Children of color and from low-income backgrounds face the greatest barriers.

For the future of our city, we need to do better – and working together, we can.

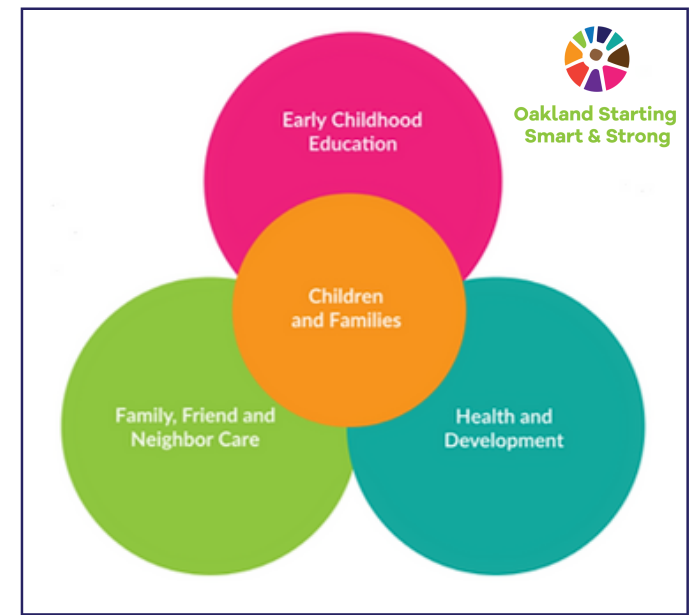
Who We Are

Oakland Starting Smart and Strong is a broad, active and diverse collaboration with core leadership of parent advocacy groups, early care and education providers, city and county systems leaders, and representatives of elected officials, community based organizations, philanthropy, and Oakland Unified School District (OUSD).

Greater, more lasting progress is possible when we coordinate our efforts across sectors.

Our Approach: The Three Pillars

Oakland Starting Smart and Strong works across sectors to create universal access to high-quality early learning experiences that promote healthy development. Our work is organized around 5 strategic priority areas and three pillars - *Early Childhood Education; Health and Development; and Family, Friends, and Neighbor Care*. These pillars directly support the City of Oakland's children and families, who are at the center of all that we do. Our collective efforts prioritize listening to and learning from our families, advocating on behalf and in partnership with our families, and working to create a city where all children and families thrive.



Early Childhood Education

We focus on improving the quality of early childhood education provided in formal settings such as preschool, infant care, and licensed family child care; working in partnership with early childhood educators to provide them with the tools and training they need to foster quality connections and engaging learning activities that address the needs of each child. We also lift up their voices in our advocacy efforts.

Health and Development

Healthy children are better prepared for school and for life. Oakland Starting Smart and Strong works to ensure that young children are screened for developmental, social, and cognitive needs and that necessary services are provided to address those needs.

Family, Friend and Neighbor Care

Families and informal caregivers are a critical sector of our early learning ecosystem. We collaborate with informal caregivers and provide them with tools and resources they need to nurture educational joy and work to amplify their role in the early education system.

Our Approach: Priority Areas

In partnership with our pillars, our work is organized around 5 strategic priority areas: *Racial Justice*; *Community and Family Leadership*; *Systems Change*; *Data, Policy & Advocacy*; and *Collective Impact*.



Priority 1: Racial Justice

We are committed to building an antiracist, trauma informed system that provides quality environments and opportunities for all children and families in Oakland, regardless of their zip code. This includes our professional learning communities: *Promising Practices: Nurturing educational joy for young boys of color* and *Resilient Oakland Communities and Kids (ROCK)*.

Priority 2: Community and Family Leadership

Real change can only occur with meaningful participation of communities and families. Building on our existing efforts to lift up community and parent voices, we are expanding opportunities for leadership, engagement, and dialogue to ensure parents and communities are the driving force behind the policy and programmatic changes we seek in Oakland. Our *Early Learning Symposium* and *Family Child Care Policy Program* create and expand leadership and advocacy opportunities for early childhood providers.

Priority 3: Systems Change

OSSS serves as a leading voice in the City of Oakland to strengthen the systems that touch the lives of children and families. We are working towards a city where our public investments and systems fully support Oakland children and families most impacted by racial and economic inequity. Working in partnership with OUSD, we have successfully scaled developmental screenings at all OUSD Child Development Centers. We are convening a Health and Development workgroup to identify community and collaborative priorities.

Priority 4: Data, Policy & Advocacy

We are committed to continuing our data, policy, and advocacy efforts. We deepen our commitment to centering community voices and leadership in data collection and analysis and working to ensure that our data, policy and advocacy efforts drive meaningful change in Oakland. As a part of these efforts, the Early Development Instrument uses community data to support early learning and gives us a way to explore, from a neighborhood level, what's most important for the children right in that place.

Priority 5: Collective Impact

Since 2014, OSSS has been a driving force in supporting the early learning system, providers and caregivers, and the children and families served by the system. We have become a leader, working to make the early childhood systems effective and equitable. We are committed to sustaining and scaling this collective impact effort and its backbone support.

OSSS Lead Planning Team & Committees



Oakland Starting Smart & Strong

The Lead Planning Team (LPT) and our committees include members from organizations listed below. For more information on how to get involved, contact info@oaklandsmartandstrong.org



Alameda County Public Health Department

ALL IN Alameda County

BANANAS

Brilliant Baby, Oakland Promise

Center for Healthy Schools & Communities, Alameda County Health Care Services

City of Oakland: Head Start

City of Oakland: Children's Initiative

David and Lucille Packard Foundation

First 5 Alameda County

Hirsch & Associates /The Hellman Foundation

The Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Lightbox Collaborative

Lotus Bloom Family Resource Center

Oakland Literacy Coalition

Oakland Thrives

Oakland Unified School District: Early Learning Department

Parent Voices Oakland

Tandem, Partners in Early Learning