

# UPK Needs Assessment Case Study: Catalyst Kids

Funded by: Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Mixed Delivery Planning Grant

Authored by: OCDE's Research, Evaluation and Data Inquiry in Collaboration with Early Learning Services



Stefan Bean, Ed.D.  
County Superintendent of Schools



California's Great Start



## Background

As part of the UPK Mixed Delivery Grant funding, counties were required to conduct a needs assessment to gain a landscape understanding of early childhood education within Orange County, including the needs, priorities, and areas of concern for both families and providers. In addition to gaining a better understanding, the needs assessment conducted this past year also aimed to document the practices of high-quality child care and preschool providers. This case study documents the practices of statewide preschool providers with locations in Orange County, specifically how they build relationships with families and streamline connecting families to resources. This summary is aligned to the needs identified by parents. To read more about Catalyst Kids' strategies, please read the full case study.



## Methodology

- 1-hour interview with the Social Services Resource Manager
- 1-hour focus group with an Enrollment Specialist and Site Supervisor
- Inductive qualitative coding methodology of interview/focus group transcriptions
- Member checks on final written case study to ensure accuracy



## Understanding and Supporting Students' Individualized Needs

- Features a referral tracking system that connects families to customized services.
- Communicates directly with families to identify needs during informal conversations and shares information internally as needed.
- Created a library of resources for disability and developmental supports.

*"I feel because we have that, you know, constant communication and that connection, and, you know, the bonding that we have to connect with the parents and the children."*

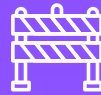


## Ensuring Academic and Social/Behavioral Growth for All Students at the Center

- Addresses family stressors (e.g., food, housing) which can affect learning.
- Proactively reaching out to partners and attending community events to learn about resources to support students and families.

*"I think just patience, everything's gonna end up working out. It's just more of taking it step by step. Use your resources, use the people, connections that you've built[...] And kind of just working collaboratively with your team."*

The entire case study can be found [here](#).

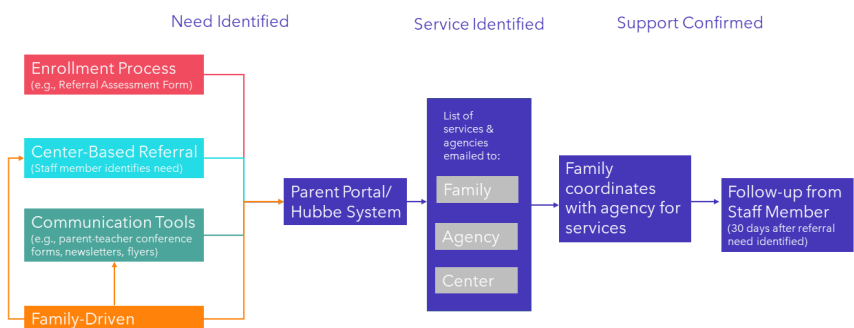


## Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers and Restrictions to Supporting Students

*"The fact that it's all in one location and accessible to everyone makes it a lot easier."*

- Developed a "one-stop-shop" referral system.
- Staff enter referrals on behalf of families when needed.
- Staff maintain an updated statewide resource library.
- Staff work collaboratively to share information internally.

### One-Stop Shop Process



## Building Trust With Families to Help Them Navigate the System and Provide Access to Support and Resources

*"We all need help at some point, so it's just building the relationships with them and showing your human side."*

- Offers multiple entry points for support (QR codes, center staff, enrollment forms).
- Conducts follow-ups within 30 days of referral.
- Recognizes stigma and works to proactively build rapport.