

UPK Needs Assessment Case Study: Ochoa's Child Care

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

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



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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 preschool providers in Orange County, specifically how they meet the needs that families have when choosing a childcare provider.



Methodology

- 1-hour interview with the Site Director
- 1-hour focus group with 2 staff members who work at the site
- 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

- They regularly use the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) assessments for every child at their center and communicate the results clearly to each child's caregiver/family.
- They provide tailored activities based on preferences or developmental needs.
- They maintain detailed observation notes and conduct frequent follow-ups with families.
- Staff adapt daily routines (e.g., sensory activities, alternative communication methods) based on student profiles and preferences.



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

- They build trust through daily communication, transparency, and personal engagement.
- They use regular check-ins at drop-off and pick-up for casual yet impactful communication and face-to-face opportunities.
- They view families as partners and show care by remembering parents' birthdays, recent family events, or other stressors that may be affecting their lives at the time. These efforts may be small, but they go a long way in building a trusting relationship with families.



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

- All students learn side by side regardless of ability or developmental status, which prevents isolating any one student from the rest of the class and creates an environment where all feel welcome.
- Staff at Ochoa's Child Care emphasize peer modeling and empathy-building skills for students.
- Staff tailor instruction (e.g., preferred materials like kinetic sand) to meet all students where they are at developmentally and even where they prefer to be.



Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers and Restrictions to Supporting Students

- They help families navigate medical systems and provide detailed follow-up to ensure continued use of all available resources.
- They provide technical language to empower families at pediatric and other medical appointments.
- They closely track families' referrals and appointments to bridge the gap between care providers and keep families on track with their appointments.

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