

# SAN LUIS OBISPO CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

a child abuse intervention program for families

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<http://slocdc.org>

## San Luis Obispo Child Development Center

Women for Community Grant Recipient, 2007/08

Progress Report

October 2007 – May 2008



### Mission:

The San Luis Obispo Child Development Center's mission is dedicated to breaking the cycle of child abuse in our community by providing a network of prevention, intervention and treatment services to protect children and to heal, support and strengthen families.



## Message from the President

Our Center has made wonderful progress this year thanks in part to the support from **Women for Community Hit & Giggle** golf tournament funding. Our professional staff has provided family counseling, group & individual play therapy for children, coupled with parent education and advocacy to expand parents' capabilities to foster the best possible development of their children and themselves.

The Women for Community's support assisted us in providing essential therapeutic behavioral interventions and support services for children and families with limited resources. Therapeutic teaching staff provide long-term intensive intervention and education goals, which result in healthy children and families who are able to be productive and self-sufficient participants in the community with abusive behaviors absent from their lives. Our program models a healthy family environment providing the safety and trust needed to protect and nurture the children to heal and strengthen the entire family.

The commitment your group has demonstrated on behalf of the San Luis Obispo Child Development Center has made a tremendous difference in the lives of the children and families we serve. It is through benevolent gifts like yours that enhance our commitment to the community.

Sincerely,

Shelly Higginbotham, President Board of Directors

## History

The San Luis Obispo Child Development Center is a nonprofit community program providing therapeutic interventions to strengthen families for the prevention and treatment of child abuse. We believe that children are best protected and nurtured when families are strong. We have provided child abuse prevention and intervention together with child development and childcare services since 1971. We have directly served over 7,440 children and families in San Luis Obispo County.

We have earned special commendations as an exemplary early prevention and intervention program from the California State Department of Education for our unique "wrap around" child development/mental health and family services, and for outstanding community support and involvement in the program.

The Executive Director, staff, volunteers, and the Board of Directors share a commitment to a common goal – to improve the lives of children and families we serve.

## Programs Provided

In addition to therapeutic and behavioral interventions with children, we also provide a full day therapeutic child development childcare program for children ages 2-10 years, divided among three classrooms (toddler, preschool and school age.) Our child nutrition program provides 80% of each child's daily nutritional needs.

We coordinate services with EOC, County Mental Health, County Department of Social Services, shelter programs, schools, County Health Department, school nurses/counselors, local domestic violence programs, County Drug/Alcohol services, and special education services such as those through the County Office of Education and Tri-Counties Regional Center.



**FAMILY THERAPY:** The Center’s program is unique because of the family centered approach taken to intervene and prevent abuse, neglect, and violence. Family therapy has reinforced that parents/families are vital contributors to their children's growth and development. We have provided three group therapy sessions on the topic of “Solo Parenting.” Food and childcare were provided. Families received gift-cards as an incentive for attending.

**FAMILY EMPOWERMENT & EDUCATION:** Center staff has worked on creating opportunities for families to feel empowered to act on their own behalf and form healthy bonds with other families. We have provided evening meetings & speakers to foster parent-to-parent support while locating and accessing community services. To date we have provided eight Family Empowerment & Education classes serving 50 families and childcare for their children, with meals, gift-card incentives, and staff support. Topics were selected on the basis of parent recommendations covering child developmental stages from ages 2-10 years. Topics included:

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| <i>“Sensory Play with your Child”</i> | <i>“Homework”</i>                              |
| <i>“Managing Behavioral Issues”</i>   | <i>“Big Brothers Big Sisters Presentation”</i> |
| <i>“Nutrition Class”</i>              | <i>“Self-esteem and Parenting”</i>             |
| <i>“Temperament and Tantrums”</i>     | <i>“The Holidays”</i>                          |

In addition, we were able to provide resources to enhance our Parent Advisory Committee. The purpose of the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) is to provide a venue for parents and families to have a structured voice in Center programs and activities in support of the Center’s mission to end the cycle of child abuse. The PAC members are comprised of parents and/or families of the Center. The Center provided evening childcare, meals, and staff support that has assured unfettered participation by parents to experience leadership roles and bring parental perspective and voice to the mission of the Center.

**FIELD TRIP OPPORTUNITIES:** We are delighted to report that the Center is at full enrollment, serving 75 children! Center staff have coordinated several field trips for children to receive recreational, cultural and educational opportunities that foster safe and healthy interactions within the community. Goals of the field trips are to enhance social skills and character development, as well as promote positive choices that discourage the children from engaging in high-risk behaviors. The Center believes that effective intervention strategies, which include community involvement, are an essential component in helping children be successful in life and to break the cycle of abuse. Activities have included: Cal Poly Arts “Beauty and the Beast,” Avila Barn, Downtown SLO, Cal Poly Organic Farm, and Blues Baseball game. In addition to our field trips, several service groups have been onsite to provide outreach opportunities for the children, including San Luis Obispo Fire Station # 3.

