

Public Comments received by 2:30 p.m. on April 13, 2021

Comment 1:

1. Thank you for your ongoing care and consideration of the children you serve in your district. Early Childhood OC, a collaborative of 34 cross-sector agencies, is here to support Orange County in building resilient families, ensuring quality early learning opportunities, and providing a seamless system of care for the health and development of our youngest citizens using an 'upstream model'. We know that by prioritizing the first eight years of life, when 95% of brain development has occurred, we will attain economic, academic, and social benefits for generations to come.

2. Based on the Early Development Index data from 2019 53% of children in Orange County ARE ready for kindergarten. That means that 47% are NOT ready. Unfortunately, the Pandemic has robbed many children of critical early learning experiences and the opportunity to practice and develop social skills. We can expect that children entering TK or K this coming fall may lack the foundational social and emotional skills necessary for **learning** and a **smooth transition** into the TK-12 school system.

3. Given the Collective Trauma we are all experiencing, please consider directing a **portion of your funding for summer school and fall programming for TK-2<sup>nd</sup> grade in the following domains:**

- **Social and emotional skills:** the foundation to all other learning. Focusing on building positive and responsive relationships between teachers and students, teachers and parents, and student to student will help to ensure a more successful school year.
- **Emotional literacy:** the ability to identify, label and begin to self-regulate emotions in oneself and identify them in others. Supporting students' emotional literacy will help to build resilience, develop foundational relationships, and support a sense of belonging which leads to academic achievement.
- **Play:** Structured and unstructured play, according to a study in 2017 by the American Academy of Pediatrics, is the one opportunity to promote the social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills that build executive function and a pro-social brain, and help mitigate toxic stress.
- **Physical Activity** – According to the CDC, regular physical activity reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression, improves memory, attention, and concentration; helps children stay on-task, reduces disruptive behavior, and improves social and emotional development.

4. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Chief of Children's Services