

Overview

The Community Coalition is a grassroots community based organization that was established in 1989 to create a more prosperous, safer and healthier South L.A.

Mission

To help transform the social and economic conditions in South LA that foster addiction, crime, violence and poverty by building a community institution that involves thousands in creating, influencing and changing public policy.



Constituency

- African American & Latino Residents
- Relative Caregivers & Their Children (0-18)
- Youth in High School

Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in South Los Angeles

Unhealthy Environments

Including poor access to affordable and healthy foods, lack of safe spaces to play, and limited access to public transportation.

“South LA is already a food desert, so there isn’t good access to quality fresh food, vegetables, great produce or anything like that. There’s not many grocery stores, there’s more markets and liquor stores in the near areas. For a number of families who have limited access to transportation or rely on public transportation...the environment...does not support good health. And I would imagine that people in their environment have their practices that are customized to those environments.”

—Joseph Duvall, Deputy Director of Policy

Prenatal Drug Exposure

Creates a critical need for comprehensive, accurate health, mental health, and behavioral assessments for children 0-5.

Disproportionate Representation in the Child Welfare System

Including obstacles to placement with relatives.

Relative Caregivers’ Capacity

Caregivers are usually older, low income, single, and in poor health (e.g., diabetes, hypertension, obesity)

“One of the challenges that we run into with the caregivers is that a lot of times the caregivers are older, they’re single, they’re lower income, and their health is not great...obesity, diabetes, hypertension, a number of other [chronic health] issues. Some of the things that they do in terms of their eating habits and their physical activity habits gets passed down to their children, so you’ll see, unless they are very vigilant about it, higher rates of children who aren’t active, especially among the girls.”

Poor Access to Childcare/Preschool for 0-5

Children (ages 0-5) whose primary caretakers reside in SPA 6 have the highest rates of difficulty finding childcare (37%).¹

Key Indicators of Childhood Health in South Los Angeles



53% of children and teens consume two or more **soda or sweetened drinks** a day, 61% of children consume fast food at least once per week.²

77%

of women residing in SPA 6 **don’t access prenatal care during the first trimester of pregnancy.** This is lowest level in the entire county.²

29%

of children in grades 5, 7 and 9 in SPA 6 are **obese.**²



Only around one-third of children ages 6-17 years obtain the recommended 1-hour/day of **exercise** each week.²

Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

- **Youth leadership and advocacy training** focuses on disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline through participation in South Central Youth Empowered thru Action (SCYEA).
- **Created an alliance of South L.A. social service agencies** (known as the Prevention Network) that provides drug treatment, transitional housing, mental health, and youth and other services in the community to strengthen the social safety net.
- **Freedom Schools** summer education enrichment program (3rd grade to high school) provides culturally relevant literary programs to socioeconomically disadvantaged students, building strong and empowered youth.
- **Equity is Justice Campaign** utilized the “Student Need Index,” a data-driven tool that identifies which schools suffer from the worst neighborhood learning environments, to make sure that LAUSD schools with the highest need get funded first.



Community Defined “Best Practices” to Improve Childhood Health

- **Leadership development and civic engagement** for the community to have a “direct voice” with local decision making systems
- **Build social capital** by supporting social networks and the exchange of resources, which compliments Black and Brown communal culture and resilience

“One of the other things that we do on a regular basis here is that we create support groups, social networks for people to fellowship and to just socialize, and share information and resources about things that are working for them or not working for them. So I think those kinds of basic things are, without impacting the built environment, those are basic things that can be done.”

Allies Working on Children’s Health

- South Los Angeles Child Welfare Initiative - www.socialventurepartners.org/los-angeles/profiles/south-la-child-welfare-initiative/
- UMMA Community Clinic - www.ummaclinic.org/
- Community Health Councils – www.chc-inc.org/
- St. John’s Well Child & Family Center - www.wellchild.org/

COCO Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Kinship in Action program** connected residents, including Relative Caregivers (RCG) and their children to quality health resources—i.e., local clinics to maintain their basic primary healthcare needs—and created a resource center and program that included support groups, respite activities, and sharing of information (e.g., parenting, advocacy, food/nutrition, etc.)

“The support groups are fun & engaging, the [RCGs] aren’t just sitting around, there is healthy food available and it gives them [the] opportunity to be active.”

- **Food Access Program** helped change the culture and community expectations around liquor stores versus healthy food accessibility in the neighborhood

“[We worked in partnership with a problem] local liquor store... The liquor store owner finally started to make concessions, but also let us know that he didn’t want his liquor store to just be a problem, and was open to the idea of having a farmers’ market outside. So we had a farmer’s market outside, and eventually the owner decided that he was willing to actually have fruits and vegetables in his liquor store, and he eventually did that for a period of time.”



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