



WE ARE GROWING!

Two CSSP networks are expanding.



We are expanding our two sister early childhood networks — EC-LINC and Parent Leader Network — and are looking for up to six communities to be part of both networks.

We are seeking strong, multi-sector system-building initiatives working toward equitable outcomes for children, ages birth to eight. Applicants should have a demonstrated commitment to:

- Challenging racism
- Embracing parent leadership
- Data-driven, system-level change



CSSP defines a community early childhood system-building initiative as a *comprehensive, integrated, multi-sector approach focused on improving outcomes for young children and families at a city, county, and/or regional level*. By “multi-sector” we mean initiatives that include partners from at least two of three core sectors: early care and education, health care, and family support. In order to effect change at the population level, these initiatives include both universal supports and others that are targeted to children and families representing historically disenfranchised or marginalized communities.



The [Early Childhood Learning and Innovation Network for Communities \(EC-LINC\)](#) is a vibrant learning and innovation network of local communities,

dedicated to bringing together a mix of practitioners, services, supports, policies, and practices that focus on developing local systems of support for young children and their families, ages birth to eight, with some activities and initiatives beginning prenatally. EC-LINC contributes to a growing movement of early childhood champions — families, service providers, policy leaders, advocates, etc. — by working with communities to develop innovations and disseminate knowledge, tools and other resources to inform and shape the broader



The [Parent Leader Network \(PLN\)](#) is a diverse, parent-led space for parents in EC-LINC communities to collaborate with and support each other, represent the parent perspective, and advocate for parent voice and leadership in early childhood systems. The PLN seeks to strengthen parents’ leadership and expertise in priority action areas such as equity, early childhood systems, and parent engagement. Using Community Organizing and Family Issues (COFI), a nationally recognized parent-led organizing model, the PLN helps build a base of strong leaders capable of driving policy and systems change from the ground up.

The Benefits of Joining

The PLN and EC-LINC have a shared agenda to create parent-driven change in early childhood systems, guided by a collaboratively developed blueprint for change, the [Manifesto for Race Equity and Parent Leadership in Early Childhood](#). Both networks provide joint peer learning opportunities for parents, program staff, and early childhood system leaders, designed to result in improved opportunities and outcomes for children in their own communities. Some of the benefits include:

For organizations:

- Peer learning with organizations from across the country who are at the forefront of groundbreaking early childhood system building and innovation.
- Regular opportunities for organizational leadership, program staff, and parents to share learning, resources, and strategies to help build strong and more equitable early childhood systems for their communities.
- Opportunities to engage in special interest groups and activities, including a monthly family engagement community of practice to learn from peers from across the nation.
- Access to the best research and innovation on birth to eight strategies leading to the development of tools and innovation to shape learning across the network and to inform best practices nationally.

For parents:

- Opportunities to build their leadership and learn from peers nationally, while developing and implementing parent organizing strategies in their communities.
- Monthly parent-led meetings focused on building relationships and resilience to support parenting and leadership development.
- Opportunities to become a certified COFI trainer (Community Organizing and Family Issues) and support to implement the model in their communities, for the purpose of teaching others the process of bringing about change.
- Many opportunities to lead, network, collaborate, and amplify parent voice, including a PLN steering committee, an annual parent-led summit, a speaker's bureau, learning communities, and more.

“Participating in EC-LINC has had a significant impact on our community by providing us with a deeper understanding of early childhood system building and the central role equity and parent voice play in effective systems change.”

EARLY CHILDHOOD ALLIANCE
Onondaga County, NY

“Being able to be a part of a national parent group, we learn from one another and bring that home to our communities. We also get opportunities to grow as individuals, build relationships, and have fun with other parents – we thrive off of each other's ideas and energy.”

BRANDON LAVIN
Father of 5 in Palm Beach County and member of the PLN Steering Committee

Where We Are Looking

EC-LINC and the PLN are looking for multi-sector, local early childhood system building initiatives at the city, county, and/or regional level. We are prioritizing initiatives representing diverse and underserved populations of young children and their families in parts of the US we are not currently reaching. (EC-LINC communities are currently located in communities in California, New York, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Connecticut, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Oregon, and Vermont.) We are most interested in communities located in the southwest, midwest, and southern regions of the US.

If you are interested in applying to be part of EC-LINC and the PLN, please complete this short [survey](#) to help us learn more about your local work. Please respond by April 15th.

Contact

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About CSSP

CSSP is a national, non-profit policy organization that connects community action, public system reform, and policy change to create a fair and just society in which all children and families thrive. We work to achieve a racially, economically, and socially just society in which all children and families thrive. To do this, we translate ideas into action, promote public policies grounded in equity, support strong and inclusive communities, and advocate with and for all children and families marginalized by public policies and institutional practices.

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