



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2020



ABOUT E CENTER

E Center is a private nonprofit agency with more than four decades of proven effectiveness in serving the most at-need children and families in northern California. E Center's mission is to "Build Healthy Communities through education, employment, and environmental awareness."

E Center programs include Women's Infant and Children (WIC) in Lake County; and Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, and Migrant Early Head Start programs. The Head Start programs are located in Northern California in eight (8) counties: Yuba, Sutter, Butte, Glenn, Tehama, Lake, Colusa, and Yolo, serving over 1,800 children (ages: 0-5) and 1,500 families annually.

E Center is well known for its strategic and collaborative regional and state-level partnerships to make a significant social impact in serving and creating healthy communities.

This annual report provides an insight to E Center's role in supporting families and children during the pandemic, including: food insecurity, mental health services and improving digital skills.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Sharron Zoller, Chairperson
- Jennifer LaBadie, Vice-Chairperson (Financial Representative)
- Stacie Gandy, Secretary/Treasurer (Child Development Representative)
- Melissa Loeb, Director
- Jason Salis, Director
- Manmeet Toor, Director (Legal Representative)
- Nina Bates, HS/EHS Policy Council Representative

LETTER FROM OUR CEO

We are living through an unprecedented time, but what gives me hope is our equally unprecedented commitment and continued focus to respond to the needs of our most vulnerable community members.

Within days of the World Health Organization's official declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, our staff developed and implemented a plan that ensured safe working environments for our staff, safe high-quality learning environments for our children, utilizing technology to support interactions with children, caretakers and program participants.

The needs and the incredible potential of our county's residents have never been greater, every day we see the impact of our investments.

The lasting change we want to see will take time. With commitments from our federal and state funding sources, community partners, individual donors we can do this impactful work. Our commitment to building healthy communities will be the legacy that continues changing futures for generations to come.

To all our donors, nonprofit partners, advisors and others who have let us share in their generosity, and on behalf of our dedicated and talented Board and staff, I offer my sincere gratitude.

Thank you for inspiring us and for joining us in building healthy communities through education, employment and environmental awareness.

With great gratitude and appreciation,

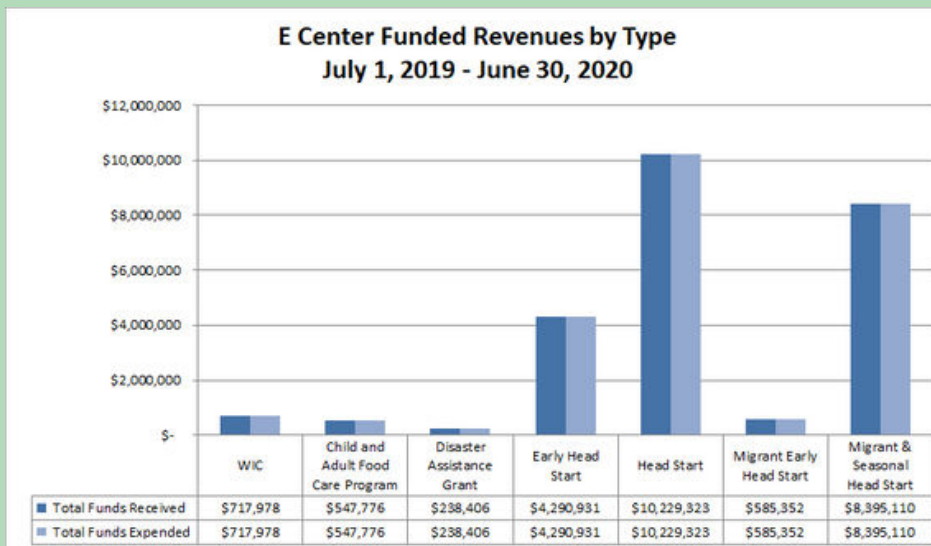
RAJ SAMRA

CEO



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Currently E Center administers federally funded programs to include Woman’s Infant and Children (WIC); Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, Migrant Early Head Start Programs in Northern California. We also administer a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and in fiscal Year 2020 we were awarded Office Of Head Start Disaster Assistance Grant to compliment services to our communities.

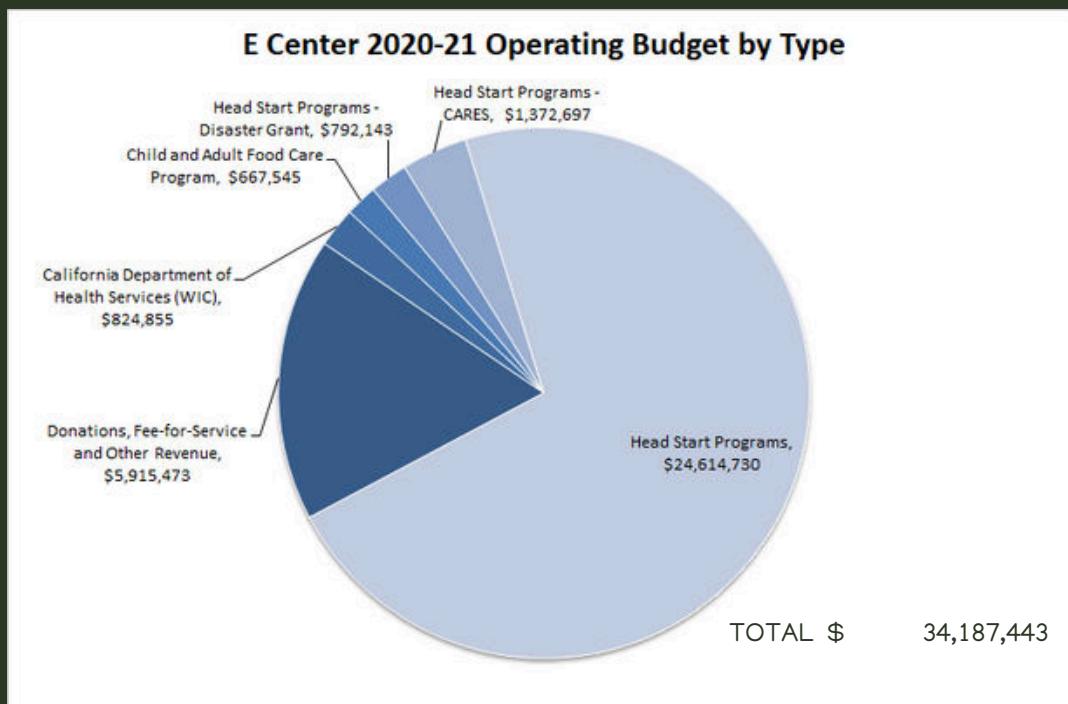


The Disaster Relief program is a federally funded program addressing the needs of Head Start families and staff who were affected by the 2017 California Wildfires and 2018 Camp Fire. This program provides support for emergency preparations for sites, mental health and social services for children, families, and staff, and food insecurities of children and families.

C.A.R.E.S. Funding was provided on March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, 2020 [P.L. 116-136]. This legislation includes funding for programs under the Head Start Act to support preventative, preparedness, and response activities related to the coronavirus. This included providing supplemental summer programs and one-time activities in response to COVID-19.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW - CONTINUE

In accordance with Government Auditing, WIPFLI, an independent auditor, issued a report dated October 22, 2020, on their consideration of E Center's internal control over financial reporting and its test of our compliance with appropriate laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements and other matters. It is the opinion of WIPFLI, that E Center complied, in all material respects, with the compliance requirements described in the U.S. Office of Management and Budget Compliance Supplement that could have direct and material effect on its major federal program for the year ended June 30, 2020.



No food was purchased with CARES or under the Disaster Assistance grant. Both findings were underspent last year. The CARES funding will have a Carryover request to continue using funds in current year. The Disaster Assistance grant had a budget revision that allowed for additional spending in that grant.

LAKE COUNTY WIC HIGHLIGHTS

RESILIENCE

2020 a challenging year on an unprecedented scale, and HERE WE ARE!

Resilient and ready to go...that's our motto!

Your local Women Infant and Children's (WIC) Program is here to support YOU. Our mission is to educate, Support, and empower families in building a healthy future.



A few of our highlights we want to share:

- Our Farmers Market utilization was the third highest in the state, at 96.6 percent usage.
- During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, USDA committed to provide families much needed resources. Some measure that supported this included, waivers for in person appointments, this allowed us to continue to support program participants remotely.
- The State WIC office has been able to auto issue benefits to certified participants, thus continuing our commitment to ensure families have what they need.
- Our staff continued to work remotely and by practicing safe social distancing and PPE measures. Staff were able to utilize technology to continue provide nutrition education, recertify participants, ensure eligibility per food package requirements, issue or replace breast pumps, maintain breastfeeding education and provide phone and when possible in person lactation consults.

As we slowly begin to transition back and these tumultuous times become a distant memory, we look forward to implementing those measures that ensured the greatest success for participants and staff as part of our regular operations.

I want to extend a HUGE thank you to our WIC community, staff and partner agencies, our resilience is built on the shared commitment of ensuring a healthier tomorrow for our youngest community members.

Much appreciation and continued resilience,

Helaine Moore

Disaster Assistance Grant

E Center was awarded funding to provide services for families impacted by the Camp Fire.

Expanded services to children

The magnitude of the Camp Fire was immediate and continues to impact our rural communities. Families were displaced from their homes in Paradise and placed in temporary housing in Butte, Sutter, and Yuba County. E Center moved quickly to assess the need and design learning environments that supported comprehensive services for children and families. We successfully renovated a location in Yuba City to increase services from 34 to 136 preschoolers served, ages 3-5; and implement an Early Head Start classroom serving 8 toddlers at this location in an extended day option.

Funds were utilized to acquire an additional facility in Oroville allowing for increased services in that impacted community. E Center applied for funds to increase transportation services to families that found transportation to be a barrier to receiving services for their child(ren).

Meeting family needs

E Center utilized funding to secure a facility in Sutter County for the successful operation of a local food pantry for Head Start enrolled families. This program has been instrumental in meeting nutritional needs for families and is being duplicated in Butte County. Lastly, funds have been utilized to support families in preparing for future emergencies and in supporting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of staff, parents, and children that have experienced trauma related to disasters in the area.

Partnering with the community to meet the needs of Head Start Families

E Center collaborated with the Yuba Sutter Food Bank. Food boxes were picked up and delivered weekly to over 200 Head Start families. The relationship with the food bank and the services to families has continued to grow and it is our intention to expand into Butte Co. within the next year.



Child and Adult Food Care Program

E CENTER FEEDING CHILDREN

This past program year E Center served 185,106 meals to children enrolled. Meal times at E Center is a time for everyone to share about their day, ideas, and interests, helping children grow independence and self-confidence.

2019-2020

Head Start served 41,870 breakfasts, 53,636 lunches and 34,726 snacks. Early Head served 6,366 breakfasts, 7,751 lunches and 6,568 snacks.

185,106

Migrant and Seasonal Head Start Served, 13,146 breakfast, 13,507 lunches, 12,555 snacks. Migrant Early Head Start served 794 breakfast, 788 lunches and 765 snacks.

MEALS SERVED

DURING EACH MEAL, CONVERSATIONS TOOK PLACE TO PROMOTE LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT. TEACHERS ENCOURAGED CHILDREN TO TRY NEW FOODS. CHILDREN LEARNED HOW TO SERVE THEMSELVES PORTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR THEIR AGE. WHILE EATING, CHILDREN IMPROVED THEIR MOTOR SKILLS AND COORDINATION. CHILDREN ALSO LEARNED HOW TO SHARE AND USE GOOD MANNERS.

In the Spring/ Summer of 2020 we reached our goal of opening up a second centralized kitchen that provides healthy and fresh meals to 389 children throughout the Yuba/Sutter area. This is in addition to the 472 meals that are provided by our centralized kitchen in Butte Co. Homemade meals that include fresh fruits and vegetables as part of a variety of dishes from different cultures ensure that all children are able to experience the benefits of healthy meals. Mealtimes are done family style and are used as a continued opportunity to learn and discover, be it through math, science, vocabulary, self-help skills or the rich conversations that take place when you are sitting around a table together.



HEAD START PROGRAMS DIRECTOR'S LETTER

Dear Early Childhood Community,

The events of this past year have been intense and have tested the strength of our staff, families and communities. The uncertainty and fear have been palatable. I want to take a moment and reach out to the early childhood community, and our very own E Center staff and say THANK YOU! 2020 took the world by storm and changed our daily lives. As essential workers we faced this challenge being mindful of the impact on our families, our staff, and most vulnerable members of our communities.

Our local partners reached out and our staff responded. Whether it was to plan for the delivery of food to families in need, or potentially opening sites for essential healthcare workers and agricultural workers, or ensuring ongoing communication about the pandemic – we did it together!

Welcome to E Center. That's who we are, our mission is to build healthy communities through education, employment and environmental awareness– and 2020 tested us all. I am proud to share that we met the challenge head on and built relationships that will last. Relationships that will enhance and strengthen our impact on the lives of children and families, relationships that will create pathways for learning for adults, relationships that will provide food, training, health and medical services. Our Head Start Programs are strong because of YOU our PARTNERS. We cannot do the work without YOU!

I welcome and encourage you to visit one of our classrooms for a day full of learning and fun. And, check us out on Facebook, “like” us to receive updates about activities we are involved in and the celebrations of the good things that happen in a Head Start classroom.

With gratitude,

JODIE KELLER

Head Start Programs Director

HEAD START PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

WELCOME to Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal and Migrant Early Head Start.

A few highlights about our programs:

E Center receives funding from the Office of Head Start to operate four (4) Head Start grants including: Migrant Seasonal Head Start, Migrant Early Head Start, Head Start, and Early Head Start. Service are provided n 8 northern California counties for children ages 0-5. Pregnant women are served in the Early Head Start program in Yuba, Sutter, and Butte Counties. Our operation season varies based on community need and funding availability.

Our services are provided primarily in center base settings; we do provide services both in the home as well as in Family Childcare settings depending on funding availability. During the pandemic, virtual services were provided in addition to traditional services.

For many of our locations, we provide bus transportation to support access to services.

You'll read throughout this report the data information related to services provided such as school readiness, family engagement, children's health, and adult and child interactions. E Center works in conjunction with the local school districts to support kindergarten transition activities.

E Center prides itself on its learning environments both indoors, outdoors, and on our buses. We firmly believe that children learn through play and through rich learning environments utilizing Frog Street Curriculum and Partners for Healthy Babies. Our environments provide opportunities for engaged, fun, inquisitive learning for the children, stretching their imaginations and expanding their math, science, language skills and social and emotional growth.

Children are supervised at all times by qualified teaching staff throughout their time in our classrooms. If interested, request a tour of a site or classroom. We also have plenty of opportunity for community volunteer activities.

Regards,

Staff

HEAD START PROGRAM INDICATORS

	HEAD START	EARLY HEAD START	MSHS/MEHS
TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN SERVED	785	433	271
TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES SERVED	719	295	205
AVERAGE MONTHLY ENROLLMENT	82%	82%	93%
PERCENTAGE OF ELIGIBLE CHILDREN SERVED IN COMMUNITY-BASED ON 2018 COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE	14%	4.50%	6.10%
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN THAT RECEIVED MEDICAL EXAMS (EXCLUDING CHILDREN ENROLLED LESS THAN 45 DAYS)	94%	89%	92%/83%
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN THAT RECEIVED DENTAL EXAMS (EXCLUDING CHILDREN ENROLLED LESS THAN 45 DAYS)	77%	N/A	78%

HEAD START AND EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS STATISTICS ARE BASED ON SERVICES BETWEEN AUGUST 2019 AND JULY 2020 AND MIGRANT AND SEASONAL HEAD START/MIGRANT EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS ARE BASED ON SERVICES BETWEEN MAY 2020 AND APRIL 2021.

PREPARING KIDS FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE!

Frog Street Curriculum implemented ages 0-5

This year marked the final stages of the implementation of the Frog Street Curriculum. As part of our strategic planning, it was determined that our families and children would be best served by using a comprehensive curriculum that supports Infants through Pre-K. Frog Street begins with infants and is developed as a 0-5 continuum allowing for the continued individual growth of children throughout their time in our program which prepares them for school.

Frog Street Curriculum has both Conscious Discipline and components of the Pyramid Model embedded throughout, allowing teachers to establish environments that promote self-regulation and a healthy social and emotional climate for children to play, interact and learn. In addition, the curriculum focuses on the 5 key educational domains, while also implementing S.T.E.A.M activities for both the classroom and at home.



COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Digital Divide

The Covid-9 pandemic has reinforced our reliance on broadband.

The pandemic has further exposed the digital divide along lines of race, class and geography within the state of California and E Center's service area. Within families we serve, the digital divide during the pandemic was clearly highlighted the lack of access to high speed internet in low-income communities, communities of color and rural communities. We saw challenges including: 1) availability where underlying infrastructure (not enough bandwidth to support new needs) issues exist, 2) affordability to reliable speeds, 3) Lack of devices and 4) digital skills: a number of our families lacked the skills to fully function in an all distant learning format.

In 2021 while a record percentage of Californian household are connected to the Internet, 15% of California households (nearly 2 million) are digitally-disadvantaged: 9.6% are unconnected (about 1.25 million households); and 5.6% are underconnected (about 730,000 households). Affordability is the main reason that keeps these households from connecting to the Internet with digital literacy and the lack of an appropriate computing device also being relevant factors” (Source: 2021 Statewide Broadband Adoption Survey)

The US Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation reports:

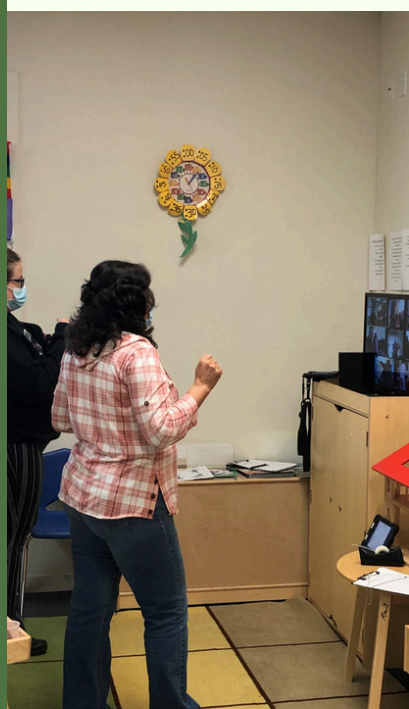
- In 2019, more than 1 in 6 poor persons had no internet access.
- Access to the internet varied by race and ethnicity, with Asians and Whites more likely to have access than Blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians/Alaska Natives.
- Persons living in nonmetropolitan areas have less access to the Internet than those in metropolitan areas.
- Internet access is less common among older poor persons.
- Access to the internet among poor persons varies across states.

Highlights



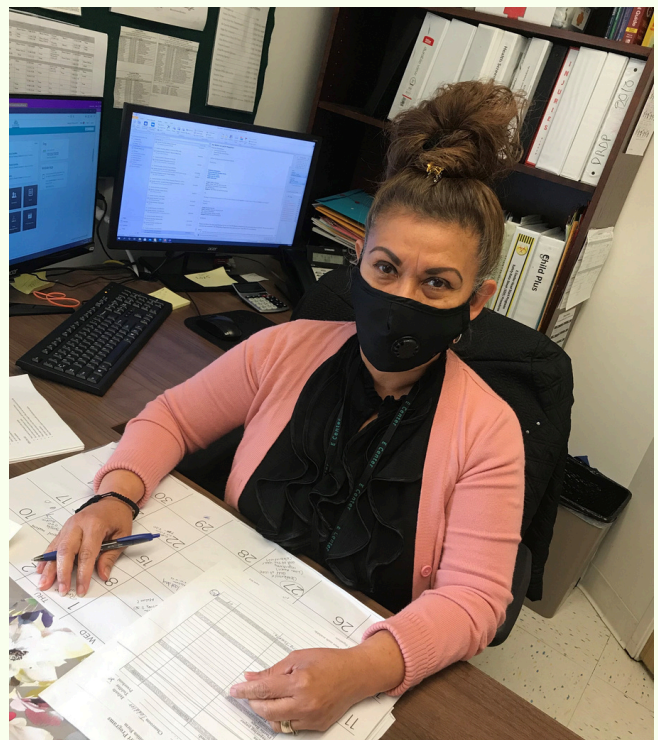
DISTANCE LEARNING IS STILL LEARNING

Two versions of Distance Learning Classrooms were integrated into our model to ensure that children that were unable to attend in person, still had the opportunity to participate and interact with their friends and teachers. E Center purchased the equipment needed to create four “Zoom Rooms” for our virtual classrooms. 80 children were enrolled in this option and 8 classrooms communities of 10 were established. The Distance Learning Teachers were trained on how to implement the curriculum, complete observations and set individual goals virtually. The children participated 4 days a week and received their materials each Friday.



WORKING AND LEARNING FROM HOME!

There was no doubt that the children and families missed us and that we missed them while we were in a Statewide lockdown due to COVID, but the distance did not stop the connecting, learning and growing. We were fortunate to be able to keep staff in a paid status during the lockdown, which enabled us to continue to provide remote services. Parents stepped up in a big way and became the teachers at home while the staff provided the materials and the lessons. Ready Rosie, our parent curriculum, was also able to be used virtually to allow for the continued individualization for children. E Center collaborated with community partners to secure the dollars and technology needed to continue to communicate and learn virtually through video calls, phone calls, texts and porch drop offs.



TRANSITIONING BACK TO THE “NEW NORMAL

It was determined early on that in order to support the economy and our families we needed to provide on-site services for the essential workers in our program. That being said the safety of our staff, families and children was our top priority. E Center began collaborating with the health departments, our local First Five and other community partners located in each of the 8 counties where we provide services, to determine the proper guidance, PPE materials and environments needed to be in place prior to starting services. It was determined that with limited slots the priority would be given to working families and children transitioning to kinder in the Fall of 2020.

Thanks to a close collaboration with the health department and our safety protocols, our sites were able to open, and we were able to start our Migrant Program just a couple of weeks behind schedule, and our kids transitioning to kindergarten were able to continue learning on-site.



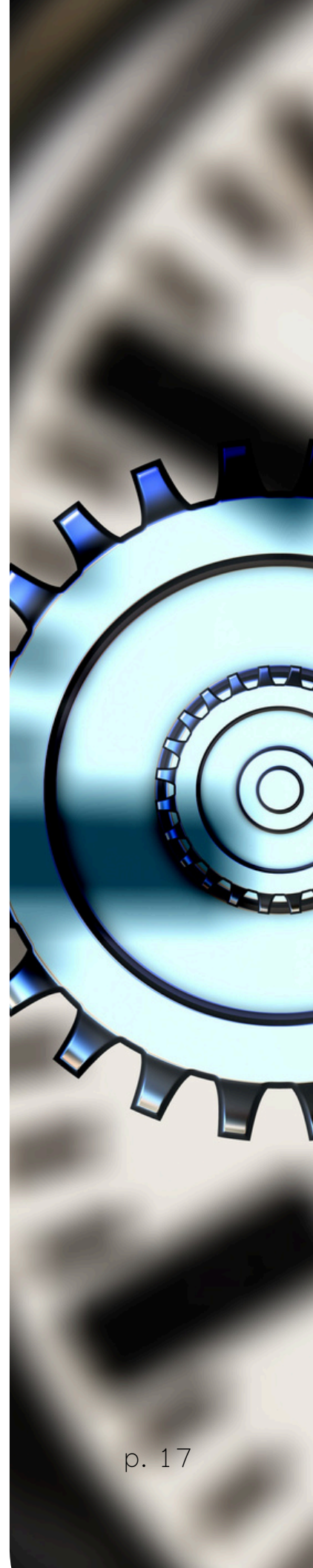
MENTAL HEALTH

E Center Head Start has always recognized Mental Health as a priority for our staff, families and children. We are intentionally working to integrate Mental Health throughout our agency through observations, referrals, counseling, collaboration with local agencies and professional development. E Center is contracted with 3 Mental Health Professionals that prior to and throughout COVID were able to complete classroom observations, receive and make referrals and meet with families and staff to provide counseling and other resources as needed.

In addition, E Center has been able to participate on committees, obtain and maintain agreements with agencies that will directly support our families such as, homeless consortiums, Salvation Army, Local Hospitals, Child Housing Action Team, Bi-County Early Access Support Collaborative (BEAS), Displaced Youth Multi-Disciplinary Team, and Transitional Housing.

Multiple learning and professional development opportunities were offered to staff and parents. The Mental Health Consultants provided trainings on mindfulness, ACE's and Positive Parenting in times of Trauma. In addition, trainings were provided on Secondary Trauma for Education Professionals, creating a Practice and Mindset for Well Being, Self-Care Activities and Moving into Wellness.

Recognizing the recent events of natural disasters, such as fires and floods, as well as COVID were both overwhelming and unexpected we have connected with our community to focus on Disaster Preparedness. This past year we handed out backpacks, provided trainings at Parent Center Committees and provided printed materials around preparing for disasters



International Women's Day

On March 8th, 2020, E Center celebrated International Women's Day and kicked off the Joanne Aiello Scholarship Fund. Over 150 friends joined us for the event that feature a fantastic panel of trailblazers and an inspirational keynote speaker.





1506 Starr Drive
Yuba City, CA 95993
www.ecenter.org