



Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) Leadership Meeting Agenda Wednesday, October 15, 2025, 9:00-11:00 am

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Facilitated by: Meghan Reilly, Community Organizer, Childhood Advisory Council of Santa Cruz County, and Kathy Lathrop, Consultant

Inclusive Early Education Expansion Program (IEEEP) Leadership Meeting Summary

Date: Wednesday, October 15, 2025

Time: 9:00 am - 11:00 am

In attendance: Jackie Buzel, Meghan Reilly, Melanie Sluggett, Alison Steinberg, Amethyst Daugherty, Connie Morales, David Brody, Vicki Boriack, Irene Freiberg, Kathy Lathrop, Linda Orosco, Lisa Hindman Holbert, Lisa Sandoval, Lorena Gonzalez, Melisande Norton, Mireya Reyna, Sandee Manuel, Sonia Diego Martinez

I. Welcome and Connection

The meeting was called to order at 9:03 am by **Meghan Reilly**, the new community organizer. For a connection activity, participants chose a Halloween dog image that represented their current mood.

II. Mental Health Consultant Update

Mireya Reyna provided an update on her mental health consulting work, noting she is reconnecting with programs and has developed a "menu for support consultations". She emphasized the need for a universal behavior support system across all programs, as the current steps for support are tailored to each program and are all different.

The group discussed various existing systems and the need for consistency:

- **Melisande Norton** offered to share the referral system and steps that Cabrillo has in place.
- **Connie Morales** explained that Migrant Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) also follows the Teaching Pyramid and environmental observations as first steps and can share their system.
- **Lisa Hindman Holbert** mentioned that her program uses the Teaching Pyramid steps loosely and noted that the referral system can be tricky.

- **Irene Freiberg**, having just finished a SEEDS class, stressed that many basic environmental support concepts were new to teachers and they need to be reviewed.
- **Melanie Sluggett** agreed, stating that many people assume they know the Teaching Pyramid but don't, and teaching the basics is essential.

Mireya Reyna's contact information: mireya_reyna@nurturing-hearts-therapy.com and (831) 291-7463.

III. Overview/History of IEEEP and Budget Updates

The group provided feedback on the IEEEP meetings, expressing a strong desire for more representation from Special Education (SPED). It was acknowledged that involving SPED representatives has been a challenge due to their busy schedules. Suggestions included having them attend for shorter periods or give small presentations to share their expertise while respecting their time. **Lisa Hindman Holbert** suggested contacting **Lisa Gerber** and **Dana Cox**. **Melanie Sluggett** recommended **Catherine Rodecker**, the LOSD Special Ed Student Services Director.

The need for more training was a significant theme.

- **Lorena Gonzalez** requested training for herself and her staff.
- **Irene Freiberg** noted that in the SEEDS class, many teachers expressed feeling untrained to handle the high number of children with special needs in their classrooms.
- **Melanie Sluggett** stressed that para-educators need to be trained as well.

Kathy Lathrop gave a history of the meetings and provided budget updates, highlighting that IEEEP round 2 has approximately \$600,000 available for the 2024-2025 year to pay for salaries, benefits, training materials, professional development, and consultants. She questioned if there was a way to braid funding to expand support beyond the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) sites.

Additional challenges were discussed:

- **Lisa Hindman Holbert** pointed out the high rate of very young children in diapers who require specialized care.
- **Melisande Norton** added that often the entire family is in crisis, not just the child, leading to referrals for both parents and children.
- **Amethyst Daugherty** mentioned that many needs cannot be handled in-house and it is important to know which community resources to connect with.
- **Connie Morales** spoke about how teacher shortages affect children's behavior.

IV. Professional Development (PD) Focus

Meghan Reilly presented a proposal from **Taryn Roselli** for Teaching Pyramid activities for the year, with a total cost of \$15,000, which includes half-day sessions, leadership meetings, and coach training. The group discussed the proposal and provided feedback:

- **Lisa Hindman Holbert** suggested adding modules on family support and engagement.
- **Alison Steinberg** and **Kathy Lathrop** agreed that new staff need foundational Teaching Pyramid training.
- **Kathy Lathrop** suggested group coaching or "Teaming" might be a more economical option, especially with staffing shortages, and will research this on the Pyramid website.

- **Sandee Manuel** requested “visits” for general education students to help them understand classmates who have g-tubes or are non-verbal.

The group also discussed hiring another Mental Health Consultant. The consensus was that there is a need for one. **Lisa Hindman Holbert** specified the need for support with inclusive practices and "push-in" services rather than pulling children out of the classroom. She also mentioned the concept of a child's "rightful presence" in the classroom regardless of disability. **Melisande Norton** agreed, stating her program at Cabrillo could use support 2-3 hours a week, far more than the 2-3 hours a month they currently have with **Mireya Reyna**.

V. Program Updates, Successes, and Challenges

Various members shared updates and resources:

- **Vicki Boriack** raised the topic of Teaching Pyramid training for family childcare providers in the FCCHN network.
- **Kathy Lathrop** mentioned the "Family Care At Its Best" program, which teaches these principles to family childcare providers.
- **Lisa Hindman Holbert** recommended CARA's Kit and other resources for adapting activities. She also shared that she has a Teaching Pyramid pacing guide to help structure implementation and will share it with **Meghan Reilly**.
- **Irene Freiberg** shared a perspective on circle time, emphasizing its purpose as a time for building community and connection, not just for direct instruction.
- **Amethyst Daugherty** and **Alison Steinberg** both shared positive experiences using the Kimochi curriculum, which uses stuffed animals to teach social-emotional skills.
- **Linda Orosco** suggested restarting the leadership teams to create new resources.

VI. Announcements

- **David Brody** announced that First 5 has added inclusive ECE settings and practices to its strategic plan as community indicators for the next five years.
- **Lisa Sandoval** noted that CSPP sites recently filled out a disability survey and it would be beneficial to get access to that data.
- **Amethyst Daugherty** asked who she could connect with to have ESN SDC students visit the Del Mar state preschools. **Lisa Hindman Holbert** gave **Amethyst Daugherty** her email address so they could work together on this question.

VII. Next Steps & Action Items

- **Meghan Reilly** will follow up with **Melanie Sluggett** about **Amethyst Daugherty's** question regarding enrolling ESN SDC students.
- **Meghan Reilly** will contact **Lisa Gerber** and **Dana Cox** to invite them to an IEEEP meeting.
- **Meghan Reilly** will meet with **Kathy Lathrop**, **Jackie Buzel**, and **Taryn Roselli** to refine the Teaching Pyramid proposal based on the group's feedback.
- **Meghan Reilly** will reconsider the approach for hiring a second mental health consultant.
- **Melisande Norton** will share Cabrillo's system for mental health referrals with **Mireya Reyna** and the group.
- **Connie Morales** will share MSHS's procedure for supporting children with the group.
- **Lisa Hindman Holbert** will share the Teaching Pyramid pacing guide with **Meghan Reilly**.

- **Kathy Lathrop** will explore group coaching options on the Pyramid Nation website and bring the information to the next meeting.
- **Vicki Boriack** and **Meghan Reilly** will discuss how to blend funding streams to support all programs at the next Quality Counts leadership meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

The next meeting is scheduled for December 17, 2025.