





Centro de Niños y Padres

Center for Young Children and their Families

5151 State University Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90032

phone: (323) 343-4420 / fax: (323) 343-6115

www.centrodeninos.org

Our Honored Guest,

On October 25th, on the Cal State L.A. campus, a bit of history will be made as over four decades of graduates and their families will gather for the 40th anniversary celebration of Centro de Niños y Padres – one of first early intervention programs serving young children with disabilities in the United States.

You are cordially invited to join us as we celebrate not only this very unique reunion but the lasting legacy of the Centro de Niños y Padres program.

What makes this event so special, is that it is an opportunity for the community to see how children with developmental delays and special needs have grown and in many cases, thrived through the challenges of developmental delays and disabilities with the help of early childhood intervention programs such as Centro.

Working with children (infants to 3 years of age) and their families, the staff of this program are trailblazers in the world of helping not only to educate young children who have disabilities but also supporting the parents who care for them.

For this 40th anniversary event, Centro de Niños y Padres has done tremendous outreach to alumni and their families in hopes of honoring them and chronicling their personal histories. We will also be honoring Dr. Annette Tessier, who founded the program back in 1974 and has been a visionary leader in special education and the practice of early intervention. In addition, we will have former staff, education professionals and political leaders in attendance to reminisce and reflect on the remarkable achievement of 40 years of service to the surrounding communities.

Despite the economic set-backs of recent years with budget cuts to special education and special needs service providers in California, Centro de Niños has weathered the fiscal challenges, a bit battered, but hopeful that the program will endure for another forty years.

We hope you will attend our event, but if not, we would appreciate your consideration for some press coverage. I am available to discuss this 40th anniversary event or our program at your convenience anytime prior to the event. Feel free to contact me to schedule any interviews you require. Look forward to speaking with you and hope you can attend the event.

Sincerely,

Maria Moberg

Executive Director, Centro de Niños y Padres

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Centro de Niños y Padres – Program History/Backgrounder

We are proud to announce that our program will be celebrating 40 years of helping families create a brighter future for their infants and toddlers who have disabilities or special needs and challenges. Our planned anniversary event is as much a celebration of our history and alumni, as it is of the program itself.

Centro de Niños y Padres (Center for Young Children and their Families) was established in 1974, by Dr. Annette Tessier, CSULA Professor of Early Childhood Special Education.

In the 1970's, there was little in the way of educational programs for children with developmental disabilities, particularly services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, which were almost nonexistent. Dr. Tessier was awarded a federal grant from the US Department of Education to establish a demonstration project in the field of early intervention with the hopes of finding an education path forward for these children. This grant funded project was one of the first in the U.S., along with similar projects at San Diego State, and San Francisco State.

The program was initially housed near the Cal State Los Angeles campus and it offered both in-home services to families, and a center-based program. Many of the children had severe developmental disabilities. The multidisciplinary work done within the program by Dr. Tessier and colleagues gathered from across the medical, clinical and educational spectrum showed promise as educational, behavioral and service strategies were developed. In time, the program was officially named *Centro de Niños y Padres*, and was provided space on campus, in the basement of King Hall, where it remains today.

Centro de Niños serves the multi-ethnic communities surrounding the CSULA campus and is recognized for its Spanish bilingual-bicultural staff. Under the leadership of Dr. Tessier, Centro de Niños y Padres became one of the first early intervention programs to be vendored by the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center (at the time known as El ARCA). Over time the program began to serve as an early childhood special education (ECSE) field work site, which it still does today. An estimated 400 trainees in ECSE have received training at Centro. Today Centro is identified by the California Department of Education as a “model early intervention center-based program.”

In our 40-year history, Centro de Niños y Padres has served over 2,000 families in Los Angeles and the surrounding communities. We've provided necessary instruction, support and intervention to help these families and their children make the most of their educational promise. In most cases, we only have the chance to work with children and their families for a year or two, but to our staff, the memories and lessons learned last a lifetime. They make our staff better individuals, better educators and a better team to serve the next child and family in need of our help.



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Much like the families we serve, our staff, teaching techniques, curriculum and services have grown and changed over the decades, but one thing has not. Our commitment to helping the culturally diverse and multilingual families we serve find the right path to their child's educational, social and emotional development.

Accreditations and Licenses

Our Center has served as a provider (vendor) for the Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center for over 30 years. Currently, our center has been recognized as a model early intervention program by SEEDS, a project of the California Department of Education and Sacramento County Office of Education.

For additional information, please feel free to contact Maria Moberg, Executive Director, by phone at 323-343-4420, or by email, media@centrodeninos.org.



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Centro de Niños y Padres – Executive Bios and Photos

Centro de Niños y Padres is pleased to provide the biographies and photos of its key executives and important figures within the organization for use in editorial placement with prior written permission. To obtain permission, please direct all requests to Maria Andrade Moberg, Executive Director of Centro de Niños y Padres, by phone at 323-343-4420, or by email, media@centrodeninos.org.



Dr. Annette Tessier, Founder

Dr. Annette Tessier, with a background in physical therapy and elementary education, completed her doctoral degree program in Educational Psychology at UCLA back in the 1960's. While at UCLA she served as the director of the Cerebral Palsy Early Intervention Clinic.

Along her multi-disciplinary journey as a tenured professor at CSULA's Dept. of Special Education she built partnerships and programs with hospitals, universities, clinical specialists, therapists, pediatric specialists and social workers to help both educate university students in special education and serve to help bridge disciplines in helping young children who were at risk.

Working along with Dr. Patricia Simmons (Special Education Professor in the area of Deaf and Hard of Hearing), Dr. Tessier was awarded a federal grant to establish a demonstration project in the area of early intervention with infants and toddler age children with disabilities, or at risk for disabilities. This demonstration project evolved into what is known today as Centro de Niños y Padres.

In 1995 Dr. Tessier retired from the university as a Professor Emerita. She continued for several years to provide leadership and inspiration for Centro de Niños as Executive Director, and is a current board member.



Maria Andrade Moberg, Executive Director

Maria Andrade Moberg earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from USC and a Master of the Arts Degree in Early Childhood Special Education from CSULA. Since 2002, she has served as the Executive Director of Centro de Niños y Padres, an early intervention program located on the campus of California State University, Los Angeles.

She has been a specialized consultant with the SEEDS Project of the California Department of Education. She participated as a trainer for the Connections Project of Sonoma State University's California Institute of Human services. She is a member of the Eastern Los Angeles Regional

Center's Vendor Advisory Council and Political Education Committee and has taught in the Department of Special Education and Counseling at California State University, Los Angeles. She is also a parent of an adult son who received early intervention services at Centro de Niños y Padres in the early 1990s.



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Executive Biographies (continued)



Leonor Arida, Supervising Lead Teacher

Leonor Arida has been a part of the Centro de Niños family since 1996. She first came to the program as parent of two alumni's, Jason class of 1997 and Joseph class of 2003.

Leonor and her boys had such a positive experience, that she was hired on as an assistant at Centro. While working as an assistant, Leonor continued her education and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Child Development in 2000, becoming a lead teacher in our program. She received her Master of Arts Degree and Credential in Early Childhood Special Education in 2009. Leonor is currently the Supervising Lead

Teacher at Cento de Niños y Padres.



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Centro de Niños y Padres – Quick Fact Sheet

Q: When was Centro de Niños y Padres established?

A: Established in 1974, by Dr. Annette Tessier, Centro de Niños y Padres (Center for Young Children and their Families) was founded as part of a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, office of Special Education Programs. In time, it was also established as a professional training and development site for students enrolled in graduate education credential and Masters Degree programs in Early childhood Special Education.

Q: How does Centro de Niños y Padres serve the local communities?

A: Is a bilingual/bicultural (Spanish) early intervention program serving infants and toddlers (age birth to three) who have disabilities or are at risk for disabilities and their families. It also serves as a primary fieldwork/student teaching site for credential and M.A. students in the field of Early Childhood Special Education. The program is housed in the California State University Los Angeles, Division of Special Education and Counseling.

Q: What is an Early Intervention Program?

A: Early intervention in this context refers to the provision of a wide array of services (e.g. educational, therapeutic, social emotional) to support the development of infants from birth to age three, who are at risk (e.g. very low birthweight premies) or who have disabilities (e.g. cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, cognitive delay, sensory disabilities such as hearing loss or blindness).

Q: Is Centro de Niños y Padres part of the California State University, Los Angeles?

A: Centro was started through federal funding obtained by CSULA faculty in special education. It has been housed since it's beginning on the campus of CSULA. Centro serves as a primary fieldwork site for credential and MA students in Early Childhood Special Education. It has also served as an observation site for students in Nursing and Child Development.

Q: Does the program have an educational accreditation?

A: In the State of California, early intervention programs are not accredited, but are typically vendored to provide services by the California Regional Center System. Individuals who provide early intervention services should be accredited or licensed by their appropriate professional organization. Lead Teachers at Centro de Niños hold credentials in the field of Early Childhood Special Education.



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Q: What's the difference between Centro de Niños and other Early Intervention Programs?

A: Centro requires lead teachers to have experience and a credential or degree in early childhood special education.

Centro is a family participation program in both center-based and in-home interventions, focusing on the whole child across all developmental domains. Family members learn to embed teaching and learning opportunities throughout daily routines, helping them realize they can be their children's best teachers. Our Spanish bilingual and multicultural program serves as a model of early intervention for the State.

Centro also helps prepare children and families for entry into formal schooling at age 3, and empowers parents to both collaborate and advocate, within the educational system, on their children's behalf.

Centro serves as a primary fieldwork and training site for the ECSE credential and M.A program at CSULA and, an observation site for USC medical students in their community medicine course rotation.

Q: You prepare and cook meals for the children?

A: We instruct families on nutrition and the nutritional needs of their children on the premises. Our staff prepares and cooks every lunch-time meal for the children. We help and instruct family members as they participate during mealtime to support their children's self help skills.

Q: How many children does the program serve, year to year?

A: We currently serve approximately 45-65 children per year. We don't have an exact number of children since the inception of the program in 1974, but we've served nearly 2,000 special needs and at-risk infants and their families.

Q: What qualifies these children for an early intervention program like Centro's?

A: Currently there are two major categories of eligibility:

"Established Risk" (usually, but not always identified at birth), e.g. chromosomal (e.g. Down syndrome) and genetic congenital disorders, severe sensory disorders (hearing and vision), severe congenital infection, exposure to toxic substances, e.g. FAS and drug exposure, and, in some cases social-emotional issues, e.g. severe attachment disorder.

"Developmental Delay" is the second category. Typically this eligibility requires either a 33% delay in at least two developmental areas, or 50% delay in one (Developmental areas: cognitive, physical, communication, social-emotional, adaptive).

Q: How is Centro de Niños funded?

A: It is funded with both state and federal tax dollars, which are administered through the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS).



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Q: Why does the program only service children until 3 years of age?

A: Once children reach the age of three, their educational needs are provided for by their local school district. Parents work with educators to develop an educational plan for each individual child entering the public school system. Services required but not provided for by the school district are funded by their local Regional Center.

Q: What are Regional Centers?

A: **Regional centers** are nonprofit private corporations that contract with the Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. They have offices throughout California to provide a local resource to help find and access the many services available to individuals and their families.

Q: What kind of challenges has Centro de Niños faced?

Q: Due to diminishing referrals and client funding from the Regional Center over the last five years, we've felt the cuts pretty dramatically. For a time, we had to close down one of our three classrooms that has been in operation for over 20 years. Several years ago, support for transportation for children and families to the center was discontinued, making it difficult if not impossible for families to access our services. Currently, our staff has had furlough days in effect for close to two years now. It has proven to be a real challenge to find financial support for our program that can offset the new state budget realities.

Q: Why has Centro de Niños received less Regional Center support over the last few years.

A: We understand that Regional Centers have suffered a tremendous blow economically over the last few years with heavy cuts to their budgets. Those in turn have impacted every special needs provider in the area. Some more than others, but overall the damage that state-level budget cuts have had, particularly in the lower-income areas where services are already at a scarcity, has been crippling. To get needed services to those kids who are already underserved, coupled with the challenge of the multi-cultural, multi-lingual nature of our local communities is our mission.

We hope that this document helped you gain a better understanding of Centro de Niños y Padres. If you need further assistance, please feel free to contact Maria Andrade Moberg, Executive Director, by phone at 323-343-4420, or by email, media@centrodeninos.org.



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Photo Montage



Optional Caption: Forty years of serving the diversity of special needs children throughout Los Angeles.



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Optional Caption: Instructor works with children on social play in Centro's playground.



Optional Caption: Dr. Annette Tessier bestows certificate to young child and parent at graduation ceremony.



Optional Caption: Play and social interaction between children, parents and teachers is vital to helping children prepare for schooling.



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Optional Caption: Aiding children and providing a safe and secure educational space for families is what Centro is all about.



Optional Caption: Play and social interaction between children, parents and teachers is vital to helping children prepare for schooling.



Optional Caption: For 40 years, Centro has provided educational services to meet the needs of children's developmental delays or special needs.



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40th Anniversary Event Logo



Centro Standard 4-color Logo



Centro Standard 1-color Logo