

Un Mundo de Amigos Preschool/EDUCATE

“Comprehensive Pre K for Individual Long Term Success”

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Un Mundo de Amigos Preschool in Central Long Beach, California is an innovative model project of EDUCATE, a 501c3. Un Mundo de Amigos (UMDA) provides a comprehensive program for the development and success of pre K students primarily from families of the working poor. With 4 years of exemplary successes and over 500 graduates, UMDA provides free of charge the highest quality in Pre K programming and teachers qualifications. In addition, UMDA has developed successful parent partnership programs to provide long term developmental support for students and families.

BACKGROUND: Services for the Working Poor in Central Long Beach

Central Long Beach is an enclave of the working poor who lack access to critical services or opportunities in order to break the cycle of poverty. The adjusted gross household income in Central Long Beach for 4 persons (2004) was \$21,875, over \$22,500 less than the Self-Sufficiency Standard for Los Angeles County for a family with one adult and one preschooler. Roughly 30% of Long Beach households have incomes too low to pay for basic needs. We estimate that 19.5% of the families are living below the poverty level compared to 9.2% across America. These numbers far exceed the average in Los Angeles County yet the children growing up in Central Long Beach will be competing for the same quality of life, college enrollment, and jobs. Many of these are considered the 'Working Poor', families who maintain regular employment but remain in relative poverty due to low levels of pay and dependent expenses. Economically, 78.5% of those attending public schools in Central Long Beach are considered disadvantaged.

Central Long Beach is further characterized by ethnic diversity with approximately 80% of the population made up of Latinos, African Americans, and Asians. Their lower socio economic status is reflected in their higher proportion of attendance in public schools. Latinos disproportionately make up the student body of public schools Grades 2-5: Latinos (72.5% in public school out of 52.0% general pop), African Americans (15.9%/16.5%), Asians, (8.4%/12.4%), Whites (1.8%/14.9%) and other (1.4%/4.2%) (2006).¹

In the key area of pre K education, Central Long Beach stands out as particularly lacking. In 2006, 5804 children required preschool while there was only capacity for 1037 within licensed facilities (e.g. Head Start). In fact, Central Long Beach ranks lowest in Los Angeles County for preschool spaces per capita. Of those requiring preschool, 38% have working parents. Many of the working poor do not qualify for these state and federally funded services since their income 'graduates' them out of the low income requirements.

This reality traps families in a vicious cycle. A lack of quality early education predisposes an individual to lower achievements throughout their life. We can predict in third grade who is likely to drop out of high school. Without proper guidance during early years, children 'assume' their roles as under performing learners. We know:

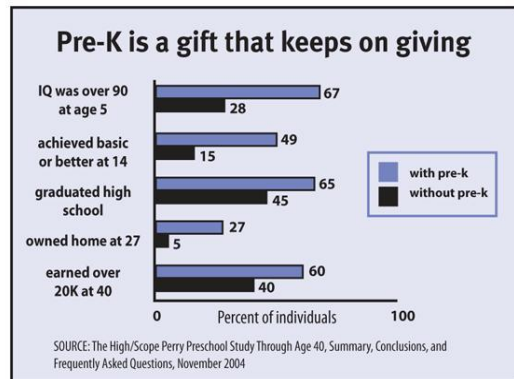
- Below-basic readers are 3 times more likely to not finish high school
- 32% of children spending half of their life in poverty do not graduate high school compared to 6% of those who have never been poor.
- 32% of poor black and Hispanic students are not reading proficiently in third grade

¹ Long Beach Community Database, 2000.

NEED: Central Long Beach needs services that create lifetime opportunities to break the cycle of poverty for the working poor. Quality pre-K programs and parent involvement are the keys to improving an individual's long term success.

REQUEST: UMDA and EDUCATE respectfully request funding for operational support to continue to provide quality pre-K and parent involvement programs.

Un Mundo de Amigos (UMDA) preschool – a successful model project of EDUCATE (a 501c3) - is a proven solution. With 4 years of exemplary successes and over 500 graduates, UMDA provides the highest quality in Pre K programming and teacher qualifications to disadvantaged families. In addition, UMDA has innovated successful parent partnership programs to provide comprehensive developmental support for students. We also remain an actively collaborative community organization working with other service programs in Central Long Beach.



"We are the best pre K for the families in Central Long Beach: with our proven impact on our students and their long term potential and our critical community service of engaging the parents from disadvantaged families as advocates for improved public services. Over the long run, we save the local government costs for kids that would otherwise fail in the public school system." – Laurie Petersen, CEO, UMDA and EDUCATE.

OUR MISSION

To provide a world class preschool education to children and families living in underserved areas from diverse backgrounds to improve family functioning and provide the foundation for life long academic success.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that the primary focus of Un Mundo de Amigos (UMDA) Preschool should be the healthy and happy development of the complete child - social, emotional, physical, cognitive and creative. Our child-centered philosophy allows children to learn through play by exploring in a caring, trusting, and noncompetitive environment at their own developmental pace. We instill in each child a joy of learning, resilience, self-esteem, respect for others, and a commitment to the community.

Our school is founded on the principle that the best education will result from a partnership between parents, teachers, and children.

We provide our services free of charge for 95% of our students.

High-quality pre-k has these effects because it builds all the important skills: cognitive, social and emotional. From letter and number recognition, to vocabulary development, to problem solving, to interactions with teachers and peers, pre-k familiarizes children with the world of school.

- Transforming Public Education: Pathway to a Pre-K-12 Future, Pew Center on the States, 2011.

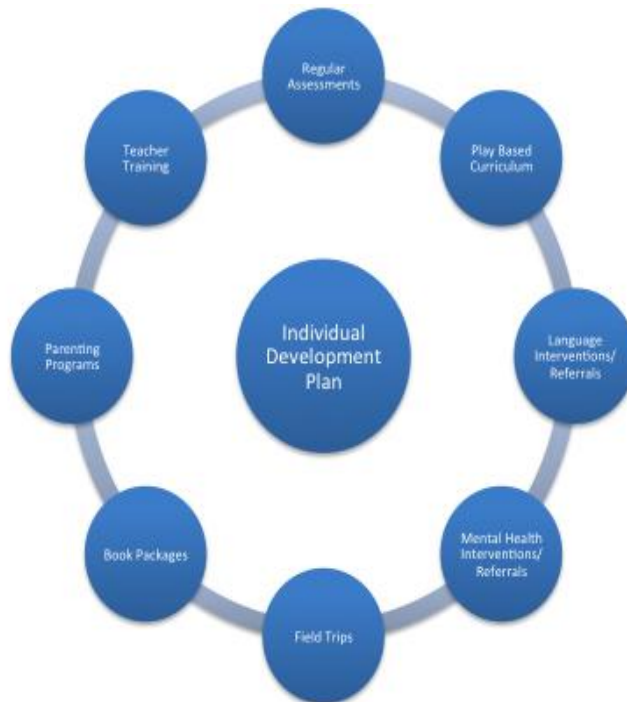
OUR PROGRAMS: Comprehensive Approach to Pre K Education

UMDA provides comprehensive quality pre-school education programs to prepare students for kindergarten. This approach incorporates 8 program areas and is individually designed to a) develop the skills of our students, b) instill in our students what will be expected of them in Kindergarten and c) develop a family base that will support the student's life long interest in learning.

- We offer a free 3 1/2 hour Kindergarten Readiness program to four year olds.
- We welcome 3 year olds for a small fee.
- We have a Full Day and Half Day program.
- We do not have any Income or Residency Requirements.
- Parents do not need to be working or in school to qualify for zero tuition.

1. Our Programs:

- a) UMDA conducts “Ages and Stages” observational assessments of students 3 times a year for to determine individual developmental progress.
- b) At the heart of our programs is daily pre K education. Our curriculum is play based and experiential in order to expose children to activities that promote interest and learning.
- c) Pro Active Language Interventions: by November of each year, UMDA identifies students who do not use expressive language at an appropriate level and refer them to public school language interventions.
- d) Pro Active Mental Health Referrals: UMDA provides individual assessments that identify students struggling with emotional and/or mental issues. These students are referred to one of our three external resources or to our in house volunteer child development psychologist. (Such referrals are necessary in particular for early intervention with autism.)
- e) Field Trips: Each academic year our students visit a library and take 2 field trips (e.g. farm, natural History Museum)
- f) Take home Book Packages are provided to promote parent involvement and participation in their child's education
- g) Parent Involvement Program: (see below)
- h) Teacher Training: In addition to the ongoing support to teachers, described below, UMDA requires and pays for mandatory training of 15 hours a year in child development.



Our indicators of success for the education and social programs are the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) which is done with parents present and focuses on five key areas and the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP) was developed by the California Department of Education to improve quality focusing on nine domains. There are desired results (4 for children and 2 for families) ranging from competency, learning and development to health safety and goal setting.

We screen children using the ASQ and the DRDP within the 1st month of enrollment and again in the last month of the school year. The ASQ screens to identify strengths and challenges in areas of development including physical, social-emotional, language and math. The participation of parents during the ASQ screening educates them about appropriate developmental milestones and incorporates their knowledge of their children.

With the ASQ and DRDP we are able to see improvement in 100% of the children. However, of equal importance, is the ability to identify children with delayed learning and/or special needs allowing for early intervention and referral, and support to enhance their development.

On an average we have identified and referred 8% of our children for additional testing of which 80% of the referred children required and received services for language and/or literacy problems.

We have also been able to identify children who are not ready for Kindergarten. Rather than sending children on knowing we are setting them up for failure we have been able to provide them with an additional year of pre-kindergarten. Approximately 5% of our children have been or are in the social service system which often negatively affects social/emotional skills. These skills can be enhanced through a 2nd year of pre-kindergarten.

2. Partnership with parents: parenting and literacy classes.

UMDA works closely with parents as partners in the education of their children through complementary and simultaneous parenting and literacy classes. Parental involvement improves student achievement, reduces absenteeism, improves behavior and restores confidence among parents in their children's schools.³ Parents control today's ABC's - attendance, behavior and course preparation. The earlier this occurs, the more powerful the impact. In addition, in an increasingly violent environment, parents must be equipped to role model non-violent conflict resolution skills. Within Central Long Beach, parenting courses specific to children age 3 – Kindergarten do not exist.

Overall, our parents are primarily the working poor. Of these, 25% of our students live in single parent households and 5% live in non parent households (grandparent, aunt, etc.). Approximately 10% of our parents receive some form of social service. In terms

³ National Education Association

of education, 45% of our parents have less than middle school, elementary or no formal education, 25% have less than high school education, 18% have attained their GED, 9% have a two year or trade degree, and only 3% of our parents have a college degree.

UMDA requires the following of our students' parents:

- a) Parents must complete 15 hrs of volunteer service in the classroom.
- b) Parents attend a minimum of 5 parenting classes during the school year
- c) Parents must attend 1 scheduled assessment and 3 parent teacher conferences during the year

Parenting Class

- Ten topics offered (each given 2 x a month = 20 Classes/1,000 participants)
- Open to all members of the community – sign-ups on a first come first served basis
- Free childcare is provided to all attendees
- Each presenter is an expert in his/her field and individually chosen for their qualifications
- Each class is 2 hours
- Evening classes to accommodate all parents
- Free Handouts at every class

Participants gain:

- The understanding as the most important teacher and role in the child's success.
- Knowledge to elevate expectations and create opportunities for their children.
- Knowledge around age specific development.
- Parent involvement skills.
- Conflict resolution skills.
- Techniques to define goals and navigate complex systems (e.g. schools, PTA.)
- Advocacy skills to use in their school and communities .

Our indicators of success include:

- 80% of class openings are full.
- Results from our pre and post tests.
- Results from participant evaluation forms.

Adult literacy

Adult literacy programs empower parents. Literacy programs within our community are underfunded by the government and not adequately provided by private agencies. The average waiting list for adult literacy programs is over 2 months. We have also found that adults approach programs where they have an ongoing relationship. UMDA currently serves as a referral service for adults seeking literacy programs. In addition, we are seeking in house resources that could assist our parents including computers with on or off line English as a Second Language programs.

3. Collaboration with the community.

We work extensively with other community organizations to expand our reach and deepen our impact. We partner with the following organizations.

- a) Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP): Mission: to provide high-quality preschool for all four-year-old children in Los Angeles County. “We believe all children deserve the best start in life, and a quality preschool education provides all children with the springboard to success”. LAUP is primarily funded by First 5 L.A.⁴ **Funding was initially received from LAUP through a public-private partnership to build Un Mundo de Amigos Preschool.** UMDA continues to receive annual support.

- b) Executive Committee of the Long Beach Early Child Development Education Committee. The committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Health and Human Services. **UMDA is a member of the Executive Committee.** Mission: To ensure that all children in Long Beach grow up healthy, safe and educated by: a) Increasing the quality of and accessibility to affordable early childhood education (ECE) services; b) Expanding resources to meet the needs of families; and c) Increasing public support of the positive economic, social and education impacts of ECE through advocacy and education.

- c) Weed and Seed: Mission: to prevent, control and reduce violent crime, drug abuse and gang activity in Central Long Beach. It is a community-based, comprehensive, multi-agency approach to law enforcement, crime prevention, and neighborhood restoration. The City of Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services is spearheading the project through funding provided by the U.S. Department of Justice. **In collaboration with UMDA, Weed and Seed uses our facility for trainings.**

- d) Leadership Committee for Best Start Long Beach. Where we grow up matters. It can determine if we have access to healthy food, safe places to play and quality medical and child care – and ultimately determine whether a child will survive or truly thrive as they grow into an adult. Through Best Start, parents and community leaders work together to build foundations for infants and young children, making our communities stronger. **UMDA is a member of the Leadership Committee.**

- e) Parents as Leaders (PALS) – Long Beach Steering Committee. The Parent Leader provides workshops, consultations, and resources to help parents learn a skill set that provides that extra capacity to perform the best they can at the work that matters the most. By cultivating a leadership advantage, parents can increase their positive influence and inspire self-confidence,

⁴ First 5 LA is a unique child advocacy organization created by California voters to invest tobacco tax revenue in programs for improving the lives of children in Los Angeles County, from prenatal - age 5.

passion, meaning and resiliency in themselves and their children. ***UMDA is a member of the Long Beach Steering Committee.***

f) Reading is Fundamental, Bring Me A Book Foundation and Raising a Reader.

All three programs are committed to improving literacy through reading. From offering free books and backpacks to presenting children with diplomas at the end of the year they work to enhance the preschool experience as well as engage parents in their child's education. ***UMDA partners with all three organizations.***

4. Quality Teachers

UMDA stands out in our community for the high level of quality, experience, and commitment. We meet the highest requirements (5 star) of the Quality Standards Matrix, developed by the Child Development Training Consortium of the California Department of Education, with our Lead Teachers having a minimum of a BA in Child Development and our Assistant Teachers having a minimum of a Teacher Permit or Master Permit. We ensure the highest level of teacher to student ratio of 1:8.

Our teachers have been recognized for their commitment, use of the latest in child development methodologies and curriculum, innovation, and passion. We are able to attract and retain these teachers through a strong combination of: excellent benefits (e.g. health care), excellent time off (holidays, 2 weeks a year) and competitive pay. We have had very little turnover.

STRUCTURE

EDUCATE is a registered 501c3 with a focus on early childhood development, good parenting, and literacy. Our vision is to expand these services to the underserved communities in Long Beach.

Between 2008-2012 we successfully established the UMDA model project that is replicable. Through this model, EDUCATE contracts the services of UMDA and pays for the rent of the facilities.

KEY STAFF

Laurie Petersen is a long-time community and business leader. She has over 20 years as a senior management executive with prestigious social and health service organizations where she managed significant programs and interfaced with high profile clients. Since 2008, she has served as the Administrator for Un Mundo de Amigos Preschool, a 5 star rated (LAUP), state licensed preschool providing free preschool to over 120 children per year in Long Beach. Since 2008, she has also been the Executive Director of EDUCATE, a 501c3 committed to with a focus on and expansion of early childhood development, good parenting, and literacy opportunities for underserved communities in Long Beach. Between 2003 and 2008, Laurie was actively involved in

community, non profit organizations both as a board member and as an administrator. Prior to 2003, Laurie was the Associate Vice President of Sports and Community Affairs for the City of Hope National Medical Center, a world renowned cancer research and treatment center. Laurie's early career saw her serve in a number of senior management roles with the Centinela Hospital Medical Center, a non-for-profit health care facility. Laurie has an MBA from Pepperdine University and a BS from Antioch College.

Lesbia De La Fuente joined Un Mundo de Amigos Preschool during its development stage. Under her guidance the program has grown and become an example of how a child's life and outcome can be changed through a quality preschool experience. Lesbia maintains a team approach among the staff which contributes greatly to the continuity of a quality learning experience for every child and family. Lesbia is very involved in Central Long Beach. She serves on multiple boards and in a leadership capacity dedicated to increasing resources and quality for families and children in the community. She has been a preschool teacher, counselor, coordinator, program manager and instructor at the university level. With a BA in Human Development and an MA in Organizational Management her background, experience and skills are outstanding. In her spare time she takes care of her two dogs, and loves to travel to exotic places with her husband.

UCLA – Instructor (Child Family and the Community, Child Development 1, Language and Literacy, Curriculum) Loyola Marymount University – Instructor (Language and Literacy, Curriculum)

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