

**San Diego County Childhood Obesity Initiative
Early Childhood Workgroup
March 27, 2018**

Attendees: Dan Fesperman, Heather Ransons, Holly Arnold, Ilisa Goldman, Jennifer Attias, Keturah Swenson, Maryann Ahmed, Maura Molish, Nina Ghatan, Shana Wright, Stella Weaver

Recorder: Lyndsey Tapia

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION ITEMS
1. Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dan opened the meetings and led introductions. 	
2. Healthy Outdoor Play and Learning Environments Ilisa Goldman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ilisa has been involved in both public and private practice since 2002 and has been a County of San Diego Temporary Expert Professional since 2005. Her work specializes in children's outdoor play and learning environments, ecological design, community engagement and facility, and community building. There is a high importance of nature needed in childhood development. In the State of the Nation 2002, children have less time for instructed, creative play in the outdoors than ever in history. Childhood Obesity has increased from 4% in the 1960's to about 20% today. And 13.9% of those children are 2-5 year olds. Many physical and emotional ailments can be linked to a decline in exposure to the outdoors and the natural environment, including attention disorders, stress, anxiety, depression and childhood obesity. There are many benefits of natural play for children as they grow and learn. Kids tend to become happier, healthier, and smarter when they spend time in nature on a regular basis. Nature play increases self-esteem, improves psychological health, and reduces stress. Children also learn self-discipline and are more cooperative in both school and home. Nature play improves physical conditioning, reduces obesity and children develop lifelong habits of fitness and recreation. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health. Nature play stimulates creativity, imagination and problem solving. And students learn to care for nature, and get a sense of the world around them. In the United States alone, 42% of children under age 5, with employed mothers spent at least 35 hours a week in child care in 2002. Another 19.9% spent between 15 and 34 hours per week in child care. Unfortunately, the average child care facility has very little vegetation, the outdoor play area is not shaded, and the space is not stimulating, sterile and is rarely used for learning purposes. Some of the most common reasons for these childcare facilities to not have these types of environments are because of fear of liability issues, maintenance concerns, budget issues, and the educators often don't have support from their supervisors. However, there are many areas of opportunities to incorporate nature into children's lives. At home, parks and playgrounds, non-formal education settings, community open spaces, and schools. Through these designs there has to be an understanding of the clients by creating age appropriate settings whether it be for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age, or adolescence. One of the completed projects that Ilisa had worked on was at the Hilltop Child Development Center in Chula Vista. The Habitat gARTen is Phase 2 of the Hilltop Child Development Center Outdoor Play and Learning Environment. The Habitat gARTen is a 6,000 square foot unused dirt area on the site. It was created to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ilisa send grant sponsorships list. Lyndsey send Ilisa's presentation to the workgroup. To view Ilisa's presentation, supporting handouts, and the grant sponsorship list, click here.

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	<p>restore the presence of the natural world into the everyday play and learning experiences of children who attend preschool in a large, urban environment. Adjacent to a busy street, this site was not ideal for free play by the preschool and often flooded during rain events. This project sought to transform this problem area into an interactive outdoor classroom for the child development center, the elementary school, and the surrounding community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other projects included Barrio Logan Child Development Center and Parks Child Development Center in National City. • Ilisa made a few resource recommendations such as POEMS: Preschool Outdoor Environment Measurement Scale developed by Natural Learning Initiative which is essentially a checklist for creating higher quality children’s outdoor play and learning environments. It also can be used as a reference tool for designers and funding agencies as well as a guideline for new construction and policy initiatives. This it typically used as a research instrument to study the implications of outdoor environmental quality children’s development and learning. 	
<p>3. Small Group Discussion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workgroup had time to break off into two small groups and discuss information that they learned from Ilisa’s presentation, provide potential connections and feedback. • Some potential workgroup project ideas that were brought up during small group convening include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The workgroup to adopt a child care center each quarter or even annually and help connect the providers with grant opportunities and other resources to get their projects funded. • Host a train-the-trainer workshop by Ilisa that goes beneath the surface of her presentation and provides a more in-depth training. • During a workgroup meeting, take a field trip to either Hilltop Child Development Center or Parks Child Development Center. • Ilisa’s Contact information: Ilisa.Goldman@sdcounty.ca.gov 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketty talk to center director and see if there are specific guidelines and forms prior to field trip.
<p>4. CONNECTING THE DOTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were potential connections made that will be followed up with in the next meeting. 	

**Next Meeting: April 24, 2018
Location: YMCA CRS**