

CORNELIUS

Together For Children Comprehensive Community Plan 2008-2014



The Cornelius community has shown significant growth in the past decade, growing by almost 80% in the 1990s, from 5,345 to 9,626 in 2000. The population had grown another 12% by 2006 to 10,785. This compares with a county-wide growth rate of 43% in the 1990's and 15% since 2000.

Cornelius continues to serve as a hub for the agricultural economic base of the area, which can be seen in the community profile.

There has been a significant shift in the ethnic and racial make up of Cornelius, since 1990, when 87% of the population was white. By 2000 just over 62% of the population was white. The Latino population in Cornelius, as in much of the county, showed tremendous growth in the decade of the 1990s, growing from just over 15% of the population to almost 38% of the population in 2000.



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School data provides additional insights about the changing diversity of the community, with Forest Grove School District (which serves most Cornelius children) showing significant growth in the enrollment of minority students in the period from the 2000-01 school year to the 2006-07 school year. In 2000-01, minority students comprised 34% of student enrollments (compared to 25.7% county-wide), and by 2006-07 minority students made up more than 46% of school enrollments in the district (compared to 36.5% county-wide). In the Forest Grove School District, 50% of elementary students are minority, with the largest minority group being Latino students who now comprise 42% of all students in the district, including 46% of elementary students. Two schools (both elementary) of the district's eleven schools are located in Cornelius, and both have minority enrollments in excess of 70% (Cornelius and Echo Shaw Elementary).

More than 32% of the population is under the age of 18, a higher percentage than for the county as a whole (26.8%). The vast majority of children live in 2 parent households, almost 84% compared to a county wide average of 78% of children in 2000.

Poverty

While the per capita income for Cornelius rose, from \$10,993 in 1990 to \$15,290 in 2000; it remained well below that for the

county as a whole where per capita income had risen by more than 50% to 24,969 by 2000. This coupled with poverty rates for residents, suggests that there is an increasing income divide.



Poverty indicators for Cornelius residents have gotten worse since 1990 reflecting the downturn in the economy. Poverty rates for Cornelius have almost doubled since 1990, and are substantially higher

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than for the county as a whole. The following chart also illustrates that children are disproportionately affected by poverty.

Poverty by Age	1990 Cornelius	2000 Cornelius	2000 County
Children under 5	9.0%	19.2%	10.2%
Children under 18	11.3%	19.6%	8.8%
All residents	9.9%	16.1%	7.4%

Children who live in single parent households are even more likely to live in poverty; with almost 35% of single parent household with children being in poverty in 2000. Among Latino children living in single parent households, the poverty rate climbs to almost 45%.

Free and reduced lunch rates provide additional insights into poverty. In the 2000-2001 school year, 37.5% of students in the Forest Grove School District were eligible for assistance, and by the 2006-07 school year, the percentage had grown to 50.9% of children being eligible for the program. Several schools are located in Cornelius, and they have among the highest participation rates for the district, with Cornelius Elementary having almost 78% of students in the program, and Echo Shaw with about 72% participating.

Education

Reflecting the agrarian background of the area, Cornelius residents have somewhat lower educational attainment levels than other parts of the county.

In the 2000 census almost a third of Cornelius residents over age 25 reported they had not graduated from high school, compared with 11% of residents county-wide. Among white residents the number of high school graduates increased to 87%, compared to almost 95% county-wide; while among Latino resi-

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dents only 28% had completed high school in Cornelius, compared to 50% county-wide.

Educational attainment levels are correlated with poverty levels. Cornelius residents are significantly less likely to have a college degree or a graduate degree than other county residents. Just under 9% of Cornelius residents had a Bachelor's degree in 2000, compared to almost 35% of residents county-wide. Among white residents in Cornelius, 11% had a Bachelor's degree in 2000 compared to 36% of whites county-wide. Among Latinos in Cornelius, 2.4% had a Bachelor's compared to 11% county-wide.

Test scores at the third and eighth grade are used as measures to determine general school performance of children and their schools. In Forest Grove School District (which serves most Cornelius children), third graders are on a par with their peers state-wide, with the vast majority meeting or exceeding state standards in both reading and math. Consistent with state data, performance among eighth graders falls off; with Forest Grove eighth graders performing below their peers state-wide, although they have shown faster gains than statewide.



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Third Grade	Forest Grove Reading	State Reading	Forest Grove Math	State Math
% meeting / exceeding standard 2001-02	91%	85%	79%	77%
% meeting / exceeding standard in 2005-06	89%	90%	89%	88%
Eighth Grade				
% meeting / exceeding standard 2001-02	53%	64%	38%	56%
% meeting / exceeding standard 2005-06	56%	68%	50%	68%

Among children and youth, data suggests that while Latino youth are not doing as well educationally as their white peers, the gap is lessening. State test scores for third graders and eighth graders in the Forest Grove School District for the 2002-03 and 2005-06 school years illustrate:

	English Latino	English White	Math Latino	Math White
% meeting / exceeding 02-03 standard	32.4%	67.1%	35%	58.2%
% meeting/ exceeding 05-06 standard	46%	73.8%	57.3%	79%
% Increase	42%	10%	63.7%	35.7%

Similarly, the school drop-out rate for students in Forest Grove has been declining in recent years, although it remains above the rate for the county as a whole. The drop out rate for Latino students also continues to be above that for students as a whole, although it has shown significant improvement.

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	2000-01 Drop Out Rate	2005-06 Drop Out Rate	Percent Improvement
Forest Grove Schools	5.8%	2.4%	142%
County	4.5%	3.4%	32%
Latino – Forest Grove	6.2%	3.3%	188%
Anglo – Forest Grove	5.7%	1.9%	300%

Census data suggests that the drop-out rate may be higher. In 2000, among 16 to 19 year olds in Cornelius, 26.4% were not enrolled in school and had not graduated. Among White youth, in 2000, 9.8% were not enrolled and had not graduated, and among Latino youth, 49.1% of the youth were not enrolled and had not graduated from high school.

Community Needs and Issues

The Commission on Children and Families has spent the last year talking with hundreds of people in communities across the county to explore the issues facing children and families. In Cornelius, these conversations revealed significant concerns relating to the health and well-being of our children, youth and families. The following issues emerged in conversations with school personnel and community leaders in Cornelius:

- Affordable housing and homelessness. Homeless are often invisible and under the radar, but the population and need is growing.
- Lack of foster homes
- Access to health care
- Lack of funding / resources: lack adequate funding for schools, service reductions in Department of Human Services, library reductions, etc.

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- Limited community involvement
 - Lack resources and services for children and families. There are wait lists, limited programming, lack resources in native languages
 - Lack of activities, things for young people to do. Need more after school programs, especially for middle school aged youth. They have to go to Forest Grove or Hillsboro for activities.
 - Organize the non-profit community groups, so they know each other, all the resource, and can better coordinate and cross-refer families as appropriate.
 - Need to be able to do more cross cultural work to connect diverse populations in our community – Asians, Latinos and Anglos
 - Harder for youth to find their place in the community, they sometimes have limited connections to people and their community because of the time they spend on the internet, phone, TV, playing video games, etc.
- Meth is an issue

Existing Services and Supports

Conversations with the community revealed a number of strengths in the Cornelius area, both in terms of the characteristics of residents and the community as well as in terms of community supports.

- Family resource center is a valuable resources
- Increased connections and collaboration with the faith community
- Increased partnering and collaboration between and among community agencies, schools, and government agencies
- Increased after school programming, community learning center grant has increased activities at the elementary level in particular
- Increased outreach and support to targeted communities, including Latino children and families. Increased access to ser-

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vices

- Early childhood services – all day kindergarten, OCDC and Community Action and partnering with the school district
- Good parks with good equipment
- Library is a good community resource. There is increasing use of the computers on site which helps it serve as a community access point.
- Booster Club – helps support a lot of key initiatives in the community

The community recently got a \$100,000 grant from State Farm to help support the three I Have A Dream classes in the Forest Grove School District.

Conversations with school and community leaders in Cornelius, revealed limited services for children, youth and families in Cornelius, although resident can access additional services in the nearby communities of Forest Grove and Hillsboro. Services available in and targeted to residents of the Cornelius area include:

Health

- ***Direct Care*** - Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center operates several clinics in Washington County serving lower income and uninsured residents, including a clinic in Cornelius and one in Hillsboro. The Cornelius clinic provides vision and dental care services as well as operating a pharmacy. During the migrant season, the clinic provides outreach services to migrant camps, including camps in the Cornelius area. The Essential Health Clinic provides acute care for uninsured patients two evenings per week at the Hillsboro Public Health clinic.
- ***Community Health Nursing*** – Washington County Health Nurses provide home visits and specialized services to new parents who have children with special medical needs. Community health nurses help families access other health and social services
- ***Health and Developmental Screening*** – Community health nurses provide regular health and developmental screen-

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ing for children with special health needs. Children who participate in Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten services also receive health and developmental screening and their families are assisted in accessing any needed services. New Parent Network/Healthy Start home visitors provide regular screening for at-risk first time parents and their babies as part of intensive home visitation services. Schools partner with the Lions Club, Pacific University and other health care organizations to provide screening and referral for follow up services for vision, hearing and other health concerns.

- **Nutrition** – The Women Infants and Children nutrition program provides vouchers for dairy, cereal, fruit juices (and fruits/vegetables as Farmer’s Markets) for lower income pregnant women, and young children. Nutrition education is also provided through regular classes held in health clinic settings in a number of locations around the county.

Outpatient Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Services – for children and families are available through a network of county-funded treatment providers. Services can be provided in home based settings to facilitate access to services. For children and youth experiencing serious mental health or substance abuse concerns, community treatment providers will work to assist families to access intensive community based treatment and or residential treatment services.

Parenting and Family Support

A number of parenting and family support services are available and are provided in the Cornelius area:

Forest Grove Family Resource Center is a central resource for families who need emergency assistance, who need help identifying and finding health and social services such as mental health, parenting, child care and other critical services. The Family Resource Center also provides a bridge between individuals and organizations seeking to provide assistance and families in

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need.

Parenting Classes are available through the Forest Grove Family Resource Centers, and classes are regularly scheduled in English and Spanish. Classes can be offered at a Cornelius location.

Family Coaching is a home-based skill building service for families with a child displaying high risk and/or challenging behaviors.

The New Parent Network/Healthy Start program provides home visitation service to at-risk first time parents, providing individualized parenting education and support to assist parents in supporting their child's development and meeting their family's basic needs.

Babies First provides community health nurse home visitation services for families who have an infant with special health needs.

Promotoras (LifeWorks NW) visit families in their homes, at schools and health clinics to provide support, education, parenting classes, and resource information for Latino families with children and adolescents.

Family Support and Connections – Community outreach specialists provide families involved in Department of Human Services programs (i.e. cash assistance) who are at-risk of involvement in the child welfare system with individualized support, case management and assistance accessing community resources.

Centro Cultural – Community center located in Cornelius offering services and supports to the Latino community, including: employment and day jobs, ESL and other basic education classes, emergency assistance, and assistance accessing community resources.

There are also a range of services available to support families from throughout the county, although there is not service capacity in Cornelius. These services include:

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Self-Sufficiency Services – The Oregon Department of Human Services provides a range of services and programs for low income families, including cash assistance, food stamps, child care assistance, and Oregon Health Plan. Offices are located in Tigard, Beaverton and Hillsboro. Application materials are available at the Forest Grove Family Resource Center to facilitate families accessing services.

Child Welfare – The Child Welfare Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services provides Child Protective Services to investigate allegations of abuse and neglect and assure safety of children, permanency planning for long term placement of children in foster care or adoptive homes, family reunification services to support children returning home, and system of care supports to provide specialized and individualized services for individualized wrap-around services to children in the Child Welfare System.

Homeless Shelters – There are four shelter programs serving homeless families in the county, one shelter serving women and children leaving domestic violence situations, and one shelter serving runaway and homeless youth.

Court Appointed Special Advocates – Community volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported to provide advocacy, monitoring and support for children in the Child Welfare system.

Youth Development

There are limited school and community-based services to support youth success in school and provide them with constructive activities during non-school hours. Those that are available in Cornelius are highlighted below, followed by some county-wide supports which can be utilized by Cornelius residents.

- ***After School Activities*** – There are a number of activities

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offered after school hours sponsored by the Forest Grove school district, including sports, academic enrichment and some activity clubs which meet seasonally (sports) or on a regular basis.

Through a state Community Learning Center grant, four elementary schools in the district are able to offer after school activities for students as well as parent and family engagement activities. Services are offered at the highest need schools, including two in Cornelius: Cornelius and Echo Shaw Elementary. The I Have A Dream Foundation has sponsored four classes of students in the Forest Grove School District, including students at Cornelius and Echo Shaw Elementary. Through this initiative sponsored students are provided with academic and social enrichment, mentoring through out elementary and secondary school, and with financial assistance through college.

- **Family Resource Center** – The Family Resource Center sponsors short duration camps and activities during school breaks, primarily for students at the elementary level.
- **Public Library** – Offers the Summer Reading program which includes regular special activities during the summer months to encourage children to read, and provides incentives at the end of the summer. During the school year, libraries offer reference assistance and access to the internet to aid students in completing school assignments.
- **Community Service** – The annual Youth Summit provides an opportunity for middle and high school student teams to submit a proposal for funds to implement a school or community based project to improve conditions in their community.
- **Counseling, Skill Building and Prevention Education Groups** – Through school counselors and Youth Contact, a community mental health and alcohol treatment provider, individualized and group based counseling are offered. Additionally, skill building groups, education and awareness groups are offered in specific areas: substance abuse, violence prevention, problem solving, etc. The Health Department has health educators who can provide education programs in school and community settings for youth and adults on a range of topics from health topics

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to gambling to substance use.

- ***Alternative Education /Options*** – All school districts offer alternative education options programs for students for whom a traditional education program is not meeting their needs.
- ***Employment and Training*** – Several organizations provide specialized employment and training services for youth. Community supports range from the State Employment Division which offers basic pre-employment training and job search assistance regardless of income to federally funded employment and training services including educational supports, pre-employment supports, employer based training placements, job referrals and follow-up support and assistance accessing post secondary education and training opportunities for lower income youth. Housing Development Corporation of Northwest Oregon provides employment and training services to out-of-school and in-school youth from the Cornelius and Forest Grove communities.

Homeless Education Services – Under the auspices of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, every school district has a designated staff person who works with building staff to identify homeless students (unaccompanied older students or students living with their homeless family), and works with staff to minimize disruption to students' education, works to develop plans to maintain students in their home school, and helps them (and their families) to access needed community resources.

County-wide services which are available to youth from Cornelius, generally relying on families to provide transportation if needed, include:

- ***Mentoring*** – Programs such as Big Brothers, Big Sisters can provide adult mentors to at-risk youth who would benefit.
- ***Juvenile Department*** – The Juvenile Department offers a range of services for youth referred to prevent further penetration into the juvenile justice system, provide sanctions and resti-

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tution, and provide youth with opportunities to develop skills and capacities to succeed in their family, school and community.

Runaway and Homeless Youth Services – A short term, home based shelter program has been available for runaway youth and/or youth with a mental health crisis since the late 1970s. In May, 2007 Boys and Girls Aid opened the Safe Place Shelter, offering short term facility based shelter and transitional housing to runaway and homeless youth. Additionally there is a small transitional housing program using scatter site apartments and case management for homeless youth. The 24 hour mental health crisis line provides crisis counseling for runaways and their families, as well as access to shelter services. The Home Plate program is a community collaboration which provides an evening meal, access to showers, a movie and social recreational activity, and referral to community resources for homeless youth once a week.

School Readiness

There are several primary services available in Cornelius for families with young children. A brief review of services in the community is provided below.

- ***Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten*** – Oregon Child Development Coalition provides Head Start/Oregon Pre-Kindergarten services in western Washington County including Migrant Head Start and specialized child care services for migrant farm worker families. OCDC operates a child development center in Cornelius which houses many of the Head Start/Pre-K classrooms. Transportation services are provided to assure that low income children and their families can participate in services.
- ***Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, Even Start*** – OCDC also operates the HIPPY program providing a home-based parent education program to at risk families with preschoolers, that targets Latino families in west County. The Even Start program is a family literacy program providing adult literacy and education services, parent education,

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child development and parent-child interaction activities for at risk Latino families in western Washington County. It is also operated by OCDC.

- ***Community Library*** – Public libraries throughout the county offer a number of early literacy services, including story hours where young children’s books are read aloud to model reading to young children and to provide exposure to books appropriate for different ages of children. ‘Theme bags’ can also be checked-out through inter-library loan that contain books, videos/DVDs, games and resource information on a variety of topics.
- ***Child Care Resource and Referral*** – CCRR, operated by Community Action, provides individualized phone support for parents seeking child care, offering information and education in how to select care, indicators of quality, opportunities for assistance in paying cost of care, as well as referrals and information about specific child care providers in family, group home or center based settings. CCRR also provides support and training for child care providers, and works to identify providers and to build capacity in the community for under-served populations. CCRR offers workshops for child care providers on promoting early literacy through reading and other activities, and has a structured early literacy curriculum that is offered to child care providers in their home or center based setting.
- ***Child Care Division, Oregon Employment Department*** – registers and licenses child care providers in the state of Oregon assuring that minimum standards for care are met.
- ***Oregon Department of Human Services*** – administers funds to help lower income families pay for the cost of care (Employment Related Day Care)
- ***New Parent Network/Healthy Start*** – provides home visitation services including parenting and child development education and support for at-risk first time parents.
- ***Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education*** – the Northwest Regional Education Service District provides services for young children with disabilities for children

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from birth to school age. Services for children birth to age three (Early Intervention) are generally provided through home visits and parent training to support children's optimal development, while services for preschool aged children (4 and 5 year olds) are provided in program sponsored classrooms, community placements and through parent groups.

- **Health Services** – Community health nurses provide home visits to families with a young child who has special health needs. The WIC program provides nutritional supplements and nutrition education for lower income families with young children. Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center provides primary health care to migrant and seasonal farm workers and other low income residents in three clinic locations in the county, as well as outreach services to migrant camps during the summer months. Limited dental and vision care are also available through Virginia Garcia's Cornelius clinic.

- **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation** – is available to provide individual consultation and assistance accessing community based mental health services for children and their families around emergent behavioral and mental health concerns as well as consultation for child care providers and other early childhood professionals to provide information and training in supporting positive social emotional development and early intervention for children displaying early signs of mental health challenges.

- **Outpatient Mental Health Services** – for children and families are available through a network of county-funded treatment providers. Services can be provided in home based settings to facilitate access to services.

Strategy Analysis

While there has been growth in services available to families in Cornelius in recent years, most notably the completion of the OCDC Jose Pedro Child Development Center, and many agencies are developing capacity to provide home based services, there

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continues to be limited services available to meet the diverse needs of the growing Cornelius community. There is limited awareness of services which do exist, and while many services may be able to be provided in schools or at home, families must often travel to other jurisdictions to complete eligibility processes (WIC, DHS, etc.) which can make access challenging due to limited transportation options. In addition, on a county-wide basis, service capacity has not grown quickly enough to keep pace with overall population growth which further hampers the ability of service systems to respond to the needs of underserved communities.

Gaps and Barriers to Service

Transportation. There is a need to expand bus and transportation services to more rural parts of the county. Peak hour runs to major arterials could vastly improve access to services for Cornelius residents who don't live near the main thoroughfare (Highway 8): early morning for commuters; after school for students; early evening for commuters. Expansion of volunteer based transportation assistance for the elderly and the disabled, to include school age children/youth to help get them to medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment appointments to reduce barriers to access to care. Activity buses from the schools to transport students who participate in after school activities.

After School Activities. There is a need to expand availability of activities for school aged youth (particularly middle school aged youth) during non-school hours, including activities during school breaks and the summer months.

Health Care. There is a need to facilitate access to health care for low income and uninsured children. Expansion of screening and school based health services to enhance access to early treatment.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment. Expansion of school based supports for mental health, to assist in identification of children, youth with behavioral health concerns and

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assist them and their families to access services. Increase home-based treatment options to facilitate access and reduce transportation barriers for families in rural communities.

Community Awareness. There is limited awareness of needs of children, youth and families and the barriers that are faced in access to services. There is limited awareness of resources and services that are available and how to access them, and how individuals and community organizations could help with access and service expansion.

Need to increase parenting and family support services, to offer classes and individualized support to families in Cornelius, and build local capacity to support parents/families.

Need to provide access to career exploration and employment options for Cornelius area youth. Entrepreneurship opportunities as well as traditional employment opportunities which may be available in nearby communities.

Lack of a stable tax base an issue, which limits availability of law enforcement and other community infrastructure such as parks and recreation services.

Potential Solutions

There are several initiatives underway in the county which will help to address some of the concerns identified in Cornelius:

Forest Grove School District is working with a broad based community collaboration working to develop a county-wide system of School Based Health Centers over the next five to ten years. The feasibility of establishing a center in Forest Grove during the 2008-09 school year is being explored, and the model under consideration would provide access for students from Cornelius.

The NW Regional Education Service District is facilitating a collaborative effort to develop and implement systems to improve access to school and community mental health treatment supports for students. The collaboration involves all school districts, the County Mental Health Organization, the Juvenile Depart-

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ment, community behavioral health treatment providers and the Commission on Children and Families. To date, results of the initiative have included development of district and county-wide, cross-district crisis response protocols, training of district staff and mental health treatment staff in evidence-based practices to enhance identification, treatment and support of students with behavioral health concerns, and development of a guide for school staff to the county mental health system and services.

In order to help facilitate access to needed health care, a county-wide initiative to enroll all eligible children in the Oregon Health Plan is being under-taken. In the Cornelius area, there were 1,405 children under the age of 18 enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan in 2006, and 1,399 from the Forest Grove area. Income eligibility for the Oregon Health Plan is comparable to that for the free and reduced lunch program, which served almost 3,067 school age children in the Forest Grove School District in 2005-06 (including almost 600 elementary students in Cornelius). This data suggests that there are in the Cornelius area who may be eligible for OHP coverage who are not currently covered.

Conversations with school and community leaders in Cornelius, also revealed a number of strategies that could be under-taken in the community to address concerns identified. Strategies discussed included:

- Coordination of programs that exist now, so they are aware of each other and can cross-refer children and families. Educate the public about services and resources in the community
- Keep working to develop a community center (could be an existing school), with activities that provides a place for young people and their families to go.
- Look for grants in the community to help build a community center, and implement activities.
- Need to offer a range of activities, including things like arts

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and crafts, not just sports, since not all youth like sports. Have neighborhood activities for those without money/transportation

- Seek a variety of ways to fund activities to keep them affordable.
- A school based health center could help address health care access issues.
- Address affordable housing – increase HUD housing, subsidies for first time home owners, emergency and long term housing. Work with realtors and contractors.
- Families need sustainable income – family wage jobs
- Continue to build and expand partnerships between agencies and schools.
- Free family counseling services, designed to get in early – prevention

Help Spanish speaking child care providers get certified.