

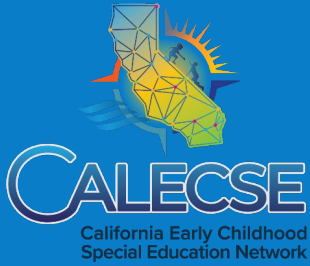


California Early Childhood
Special Education Network



**Funded by the California Department of Education (CDE),
Special Education Division**

Child Find: Relationship Building with Community-Based Early Learning Programs
March 13, 2026



CALECSE



California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Funded by the CDE

Implementation Leadership

Co-Executive Director, Dr. Scott Turner, East San Gabriel Valley SELPA

Co-Executive Director, Melanie Hertig, Irvine USD

Program Specialist (Exemplars), Carrie Rodrigues

Program Specialist (Northern California), Sara Castille

Program Specialist (Southern California), Laura Clarke



CaIECSE

California Early Childhood Special Education Network
Funded by the CDE



<https://www.calecse.org>

CaIECSE is a technical assistance project funded under the California Department of Education (CDE) that supports Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)s, County Offices of Special Education (COEs), and other Agency Partners in the areas of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part C to B Transitions, Preschool Assessment Practices, and Preschool Child Find by providing technical assistance, professional learning, and demonstration of tangible practices *that have been proven successful*.

The CaIECSE Network leverages collaboration amongst agencies, disseminates resources, highlights existing exemplar practices, and provides direct technical assistance to improve the capacity, knowledge, collaboration, and implementation of evidence-based practices across agencies throughout California.

The CaIECSE Network is committed to improving outcomes for children and their families by eliminating and addressing barriers to successful transition for California's youngest children with disabilities.

**Interested in joining a local
Community of Practice (CoP) for practitioners who
support children ages zero to five ?**

Find our full schedule of
regional CoPs at:
<https://www.calecse.org/news-resources/communities-of-practice>



**Communities
of Practice**

California Early Childhood
Special Education Network

Today's Presenter

Cristina Blevins

Child Find Exemplar Lead

First 5 Orange County

cristina.blevins@first5.oc.gov

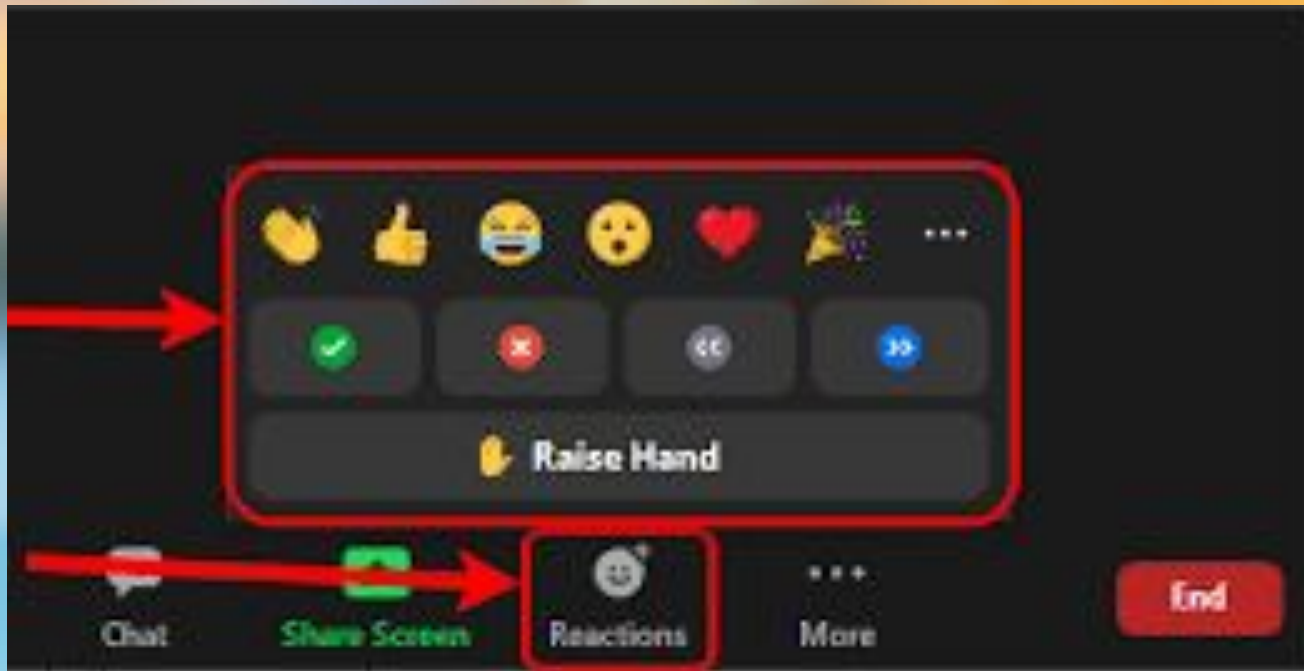


What We Will Be Covering Today



- The reasons why outreach to community-based programs is essential for inclusive early identification
- Approaches that build trust, shared understanding, and ongoing collaboration
- Practical tools and messaging that resonate with providers serving diverse families

Who is in the room?



- Who works in a district?
- Who works with community-based providers?
- Who is new to outreach?
- Who already does regular partner visits?
- Who is from a rural community?

The Reasons Why Outreach to Community-Based Programs is Essential

The Role of Community-Based Programs is Essential

- Trusted relationships & cultural alignment
- Multiple “entry points” where families already go (faith-based organizations, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children [WIC], libraries, Early Childhood Education [ECE], parent groups)
- Outreach reduces missed opportunities and closes equity gaps



Source: California Master Plan for Early Learning and Care:

<https://cdn-west-prod-chhs-01.dsh.ca.gov/chhs/uploads/2020/12/01104743/Master-Plan-for-Early-Learning-and-Care-Making-California-For-All-Kids-FINAL.pdf>

Barriers

- Language access
- Immigration fears
- Transportation
- Scheduling
- System literacy
- Stigma

Outreach Solutions

- Familiar settings
- Peer navigators
- Consistent presence
- Warm handoffs
- Message alignment

- Fear of giving wrong info
- Not understanding referral processes
- Worried about damaging relationships with families
- Limited time
- Past negative district interactions

Outreach Solutions

- *Familiar settings*
- *Peer navigators*
- *Consistent presence*
- *Warm handoffs*
- *Message alignment*

Approaches that Build Trust, Shared Understanding, and Collaboration

Principles of Trust Building



- Respect for cultural values and family priorities:
 - Cultural humility, transparency, reciprocity, reliability, and shared wins
- Transparency and consistency
 - Show up consistently, follow through, and share data back

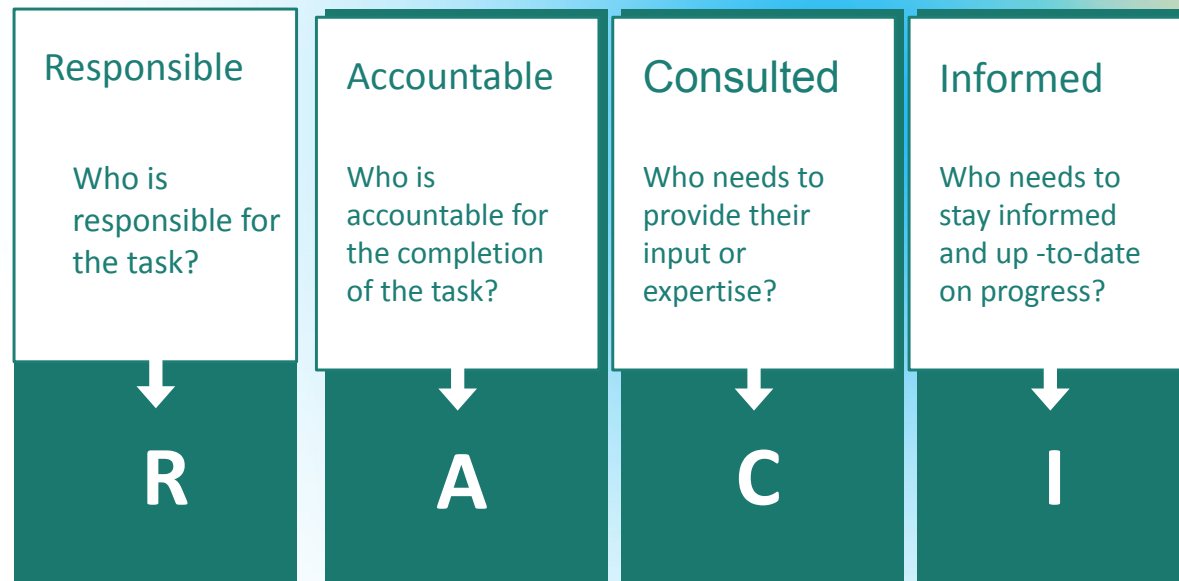
What Providers Appreciate Most

- Predictability
- Immediate resources
- Scripts
- Clear next steps
- Fast responses
- Respect for their expertise



Strategies for Shared Understanding

- Co-create goals and expectations
- Define roles; write simple Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU)
- Create feedback loops; align language and expectations
- Clarify how screening → referral → evaluation → services work across organizations



Create A Toolkit



- Outreach scripts
- Warm handoff templates
- Screening materials
- Milestone checklists
- Referral pathways

Collaboration in Practice

- Offer joint training, case conferencing, shared calendar, cross-referral scripts, data-sharing (privacy-aware).
- Use “one-page referral” warm handoffs via secure channels.



Activity One: Partner Mapping

Stakeholder Mapping

List of Community Touchpoints:

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Early Learning & Care

Health

Social Services

Parent Groups

- Instructions:
 - Individually list top 10 community touchpoints your families use.
 - Group by category (ECE, health, social services, parent supports).
 - Identify three “priority partners” for a 90-day outreach plan

Practical Tools & Messaging

Messaging That Resonates

C	CONNECT	• affirm • build rapport
A	ASK	• open-ended questions • family priorities
R	REFLECT	• normalize • summarize • offer options • choice
E	EMPOWER	• next steps • supports

- Use strength-based language
- Emphasize family empowerment and choice
 - Use family-centered, choice-emphasizing, culturally respectful messaging.
- Avoid jargon
- Explain “why now” and “what happens next.”

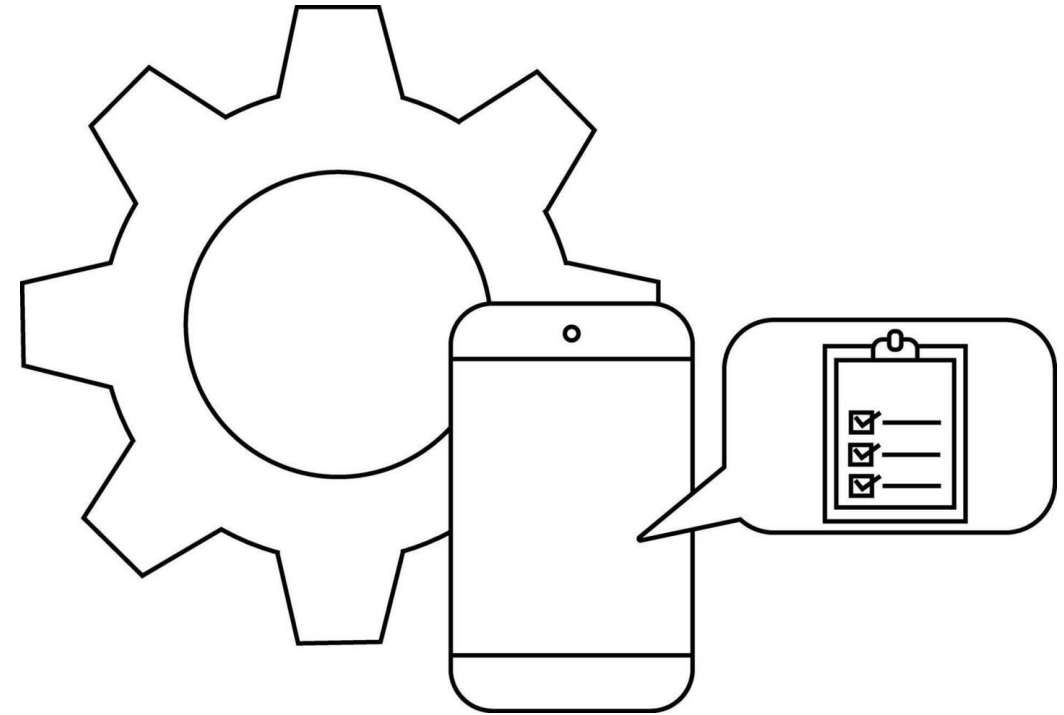


Write a one to two word sentence message you could use when approaching a new partner

Think: strengths-based, warm, and simple

Tools You Can Share With Providers

- Multilingual milestone checklists
- Screening guidance
- Warm handoff script
- Referral tracker
- Interpretation best practices
- Follow-up text templates
- Quick Wins: Recommend that they put materials in parent waiting areas; schedule standing outreach days; assign a partnership lead.



30-60-90 Day Plan

30 days				60 days				90 days				Beyond			
W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4	W1	W2	W3	W4
Create interest group list, collect resources, and create toolkit															
				Create outreach team, reach out to interest groups, and build relationships											
								Organize co-training opportunities and conference meetings							
								Evaluate, adjust, and scale data							
												Continue communication			

Measuring Success

Continuous Learning

- Collect Data and Track:
 - Screenings completed in community settings
 - Referral conversion, time-to-evaluation
 - Partner satisfaction
 - Family feedback
- Share back results with partners



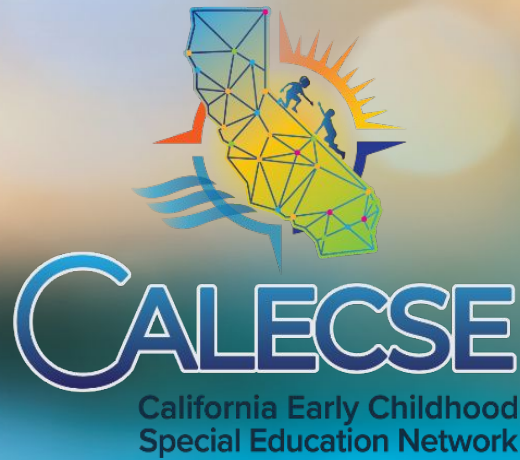
Questions?



Commitment and Next Steps

- 
- ☐ Write one action you'll take this month.

Share Your Feedback for a Chance to Win CalECSE 2026 Symposium Registration



Please help us improve our practice and complete the zoom survey following this session.



After doing so, you will be entered into a raffle to win a free registration to **CalECSE's 4th Annual Symposium** to be held in Northern California October 20–21, 2026. Valued at over \$500.

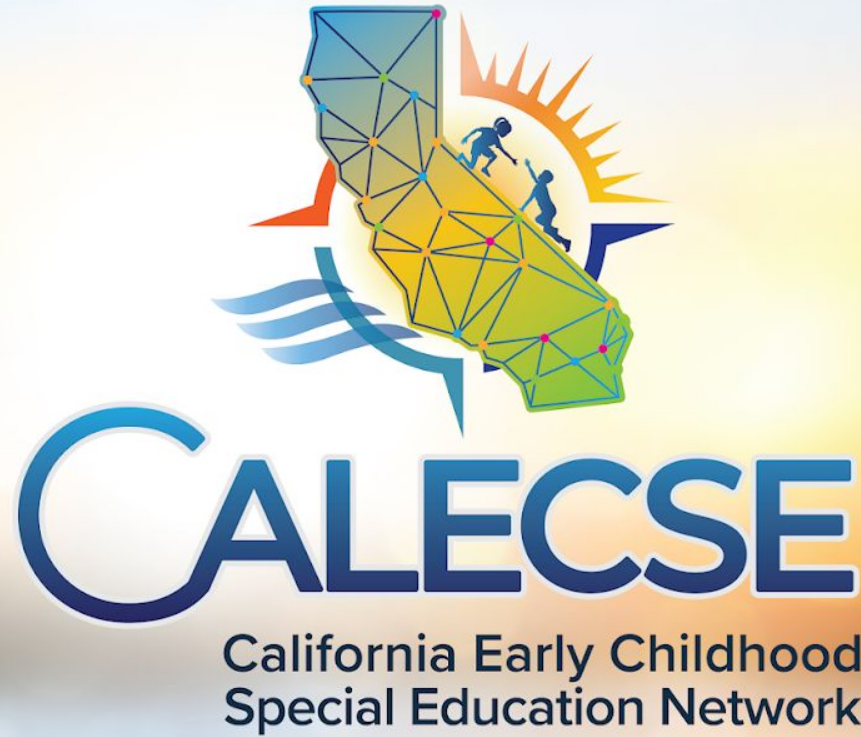
**Interested in joining a local
Community of Practice (CoP) for practitioners who
support children ages zero to five ?**

Find our full schedule of
regional CoPs at:
<https://www.calecse.org/news-resources/communities-of-practice>



**Communities
of Practice**

California Early Childhood
Special Education Network



Find our full line-up of no-cost trainings at:

<https://www.calecse.org/news-resources/calecse-training-calendar>

Follow us for updates on training opportunities:



[@CaIECSE](#)



[@Cal_ECSE](#)



[@CaIECSE](#)



[@CaIECSE](#)



[@Cal_ECSE](#)