

ECAC

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION COMMITTEE

UPDATES:

JAN 2025–FEB 2026

VISION

All children in Santa Paula have access to high-quality early care and education that meets their families' needs.

Santa Paula faces a major gap in early learning access:

- 2,194 children under age 5
- Only 881 licensed early learning spaces
- 66% of parents report difficulty accessing care
- Providers cite staffing turnover and training as the top barriers to providing quality ECE



The Isabella Project brings together 120+ community partners to address these challenges through a shared **roadmap**.

FOUR PILLARS OF ACTION



- **Expanding Access & Affordability**
- **Investing in Workforce Development & Retention**
- **Enhancing Infrastructure**
- **Engaging Families & the Community**

These pillars guide strategies to improve early childhood systems in Santa Paula.



KEY PROGRESS

Workforce Supports

- Guaranteed income pilot for family child care providers
- Additional stipends and technical assistance helping providers expand infant and toddler care

Growing the ECE Workforce

- 10 home-based providers receiving \$10,000 expansion stipends
- New Spanish-language business training program for providers
- Development of a Higher Education Guide mapping ECE career pathways (AA → BA → MA)

Building Infrastructure

Santa Paula ECE Hub at Briggs School

- Site secured
- Architect selected
- \$2 million private donor funding secured
- Phase 1 planning funded
- Anchor partners:
 - First 5 Ventura County
 - Child Development Resources

Strengthening Family Engagement

Community-based programs expanding:

- First Sundays at the Agriculture Museum
- Playdate in the Garden events
- Parent workshops on:
 - child development
 - math and literacy
 - CPR and emergency preparedness

DATA & PLANNING TOOLS



- ECE accessibility GIS map to identify childcare gaps
- Professional development needs survey for providers
- Updated Santa Paula services matrix of local programs

These tools help ensure future investments target real community needs.

KEY PRIORITIES MOVING FORWARD

- Continue funding and planning the ECE Hub
- Expand financial supports for providers
- Align professional development across partners
- Strengthen family engagement and outreach
- Identify support for remaining roadmap strategies



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Child development
- Family economic stability
- School readiness
- Long-term community prosperity