



Green Child Care for All

Alameda County Sustainability

Climate Corps Bay Area

Greening Preschools Program

Background: The Alameda County Early Care & Education Planning Council created the Greening Preschools Program to address:

- Impact of waste stream (approximately 70% of child care waste stream is recyclable or compostable)
- Lack of knowledge about applicable waste laws, Reduce Reuse Recycle Rot (4Rs) best practices, and lack of time and resources to make necessary changes
- Importance of early childhood in developing environmentally conscious behavior which has ripple effects for the children and their families

These needs are addressed by conducting outreach to providers, providing technical assistance for 4Rs best practices and providing developmentally appropriate 4Rs curriculum.

New Challenges: The Greening Preschools Program is a successful model – but in order to really expand and deepen the program, I had to address issues of access to sustainable practices:

- Child care centers are often located on sites that are already recycling and/or composting, but are completely left out of the process
- Many resources exist on topics within the broader subject of “green child care” – from toxin exposure to food systems– but are not reaching center directors and teachers

New Solutions:

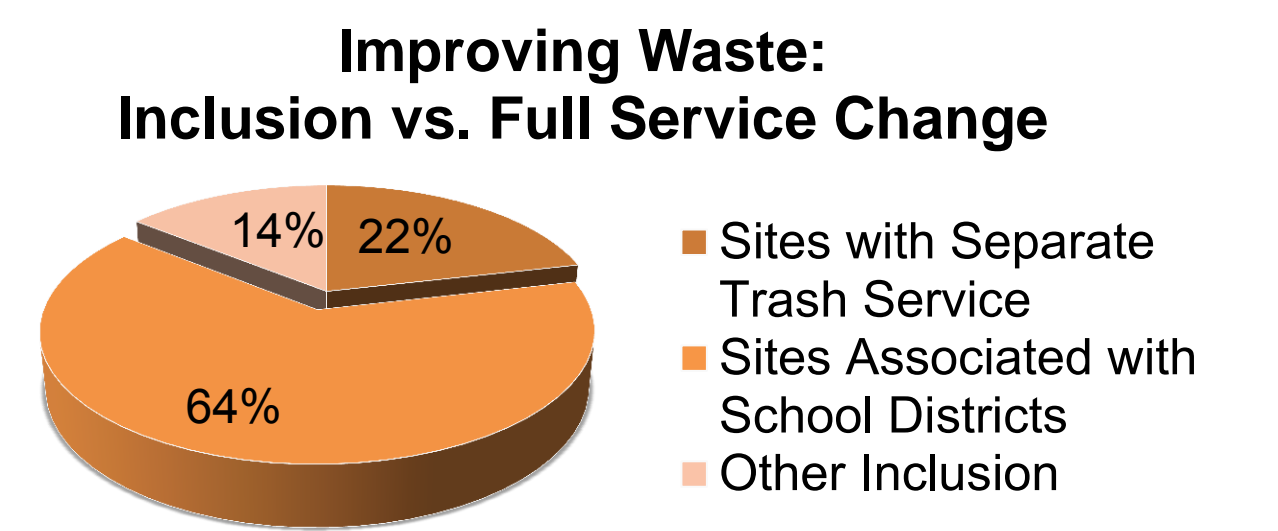
- Connect centers to the recycling and/or compost services available onsite and equip them with the necessary materials and training to engage with the 4Rs in the classroom
- Use outreach to actively connect providers to other existing green child care resources thereby sending a message that green child care is for everyone, not just those who have their own waste bills



Achievements & Results

The goal for this year’s program was to implement recycling in 15 new centers and divert 100 tons of waste from the landfill. With help from a deal with Kidango, a child care chain with 31 centers in Alameda County, I was able to far surpass my goal by engaging 42 centers.

By the Numbers
104 Tons Waste Diverted
280 Metric Tons CO2 e Mitigated
11 Centers Implemented + 31 Roll-outs Pending
460 Children Educated on 4Rs
80 Teachers Received In-Depth 4Rs Technical Assistance
200+ Providers Increased Awareness of Green Child Care



This graph shows that only 22% of centers required a full service change by their waste hauler. The other 78% had recycling services on site, but needed to be included in what was happening outside the classroom.

Moving Forward

Next Steps:

- Institutionalize Greening Preschools Program in a self-sustaining way
- Continue 4Rs outreach, education and training, but also expand to more effectively include broader issues of green child care

Lessons Learned:

Child care is an afterthought - from being left out of recycling to being left out of urban planning decisions or cut out of budgets. Early Education, in so many ways, is the great equalizer and deserves to be treated as such. Let's set society's youngest up for success by giving them healthy spaces to play and learn. Let's think about the world they are inheriting and equip them with the right tools to be the next stewards of the earth.



Kim graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.S. in Society and Environment and a City and Regional Planning minor. She plans to continue utilizing outreach skills to engage local communities around waste and sustainability..

Kimberly Hazard



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