



## **Strategic Plan 2001-2004**

**Orange County's United Way  
Success By 6<sup>®</sup> Initiative  
Strategic Plan: 2001-2004**

**Background:**

In 1997, Orange County's United Way (Irvine, California) initiated a comprehensive Community Assessment. This Community Assessment marked an unprecedented collaboration of representatives from nine foundations, four local universities and country government. This collaborative has developed and implemented the first Geographic Information System (GIS) designed solely for identifying and tracking community-wide health and human service needs and resources.

Through the analysis of the data contained in the GIS, Orange County's United Way (OCUW) identified the three most prevalent needs of local children aged 0-6:

- 1. Improve the quality of and access to child care for high-risk children and families in Orange County**
- 2. Improve children's health by increasing access to quality, affordable health care and follow-up immunizations for Orange County children aged 0-2.**
- 3. Build strong families by providing access to parenting skills training to high-risk families, reducing the incidences of reported child abuse in high-risk areas of Orange County.**

Success By 6<sup>®</sup> (SB6) began at OCUW in May 1999 with a \$1 million dollar gift from an anonymous donor to kick-off the initiative. Initial activities were concentrated on planning and solidifying support for SB6. In December 1999, the OCUW Board of Directors approved and allocated \$150,000 in funds to further the efforts of SB6. The Bank of America Foundation awarded SB6 with a \$250,000 implementing grant, which enabled us to begin our early action project, National Association for the Education of Young Children ASP (NAEYC ASP), focusing on quality child care.

The SB6 Steering Committee began the process of updating our Strategic Plan to further define our activities around children's health and child abuse prevention. In addition, based upon the early action project further refinement of the activities around quality child care has also taken place.

Although the SB6 Vision and Mission have not changed, our Strategic Plan has matured significantly in this latest revision. During the past year, SB6 has developed from just a dream to become a prominent force in Orange County. SB6 has been recognized by many significant community groups, both public and private, as an initiative focused on children aged 0-6 with a toolset and drive unmatched by any other in Orange County. SB6 is flourishing and is positioned to focus on the systemic issues facing our young children and their families.

**OUR VISION**

**To measurably improve the lives of at-risk children aged 0-6 in Orange County.**

**OUR MISSION**

**Orange County's United Way will focus all available resources on prevention and early intervention programs for high-risk children aged 0-6, to ensure that they enter first grade ready to learn.**

**OUR STRATEGIC GOALS**

**To strengthen our Success By 6<sup>®</sup> Initiative, maximizing effectiveness and ensuring sustainability.**

**To improve the quality of and access to child care for high-risk families in Orange County.**

**To improve children's health, through access to health insurance and follow-up immunizations.**

**To build stronger families with a focus on preventing child abuse.**

**Strategic Goal 1:**  
**To strengthen our Success By 6<sup>®</sup> Initiative, maximizing effectiveness and ensuring sustainability.**

**Objective 1.1: Reorganize The SB6 Volunteer Structure**

Reorganize the volunteer structure of SB6 to streamline efforts, allowing for maximum use of volunteer time and expertise, without compromising communication and overall coordination of the initiative. Build the overall volunteer base to include further business sector representation. Build the volunteer base with experts in the areas of children's health and family support.

**Objective 1.2: Develop A SB6 Marketing/Community Outreach Plan**

Develop a SB6 Marketing/Community Outreach Plan to introduce the SB6 brand to the Orange County community. Efforts will target parents, funders, donors and the community-at-large.

**Objective 1.3: Actively Participate In Community Activities/Efforts Affecting Children**

SB6 volunteers and staff have made tremendous strides in this area. SB6 Manager, Mary Ellington and SB6 Steering Committee Chair, Paula Myers have established themselves as liaisons in a number of important committees and communities. The members of the SB6 Steering Committee are all influential members of the community involved with children in Orange County.

One of the most important State developments affecting children has been the availability of funds from the California tobacco tax initiative (Prop. 10). These funds are targeted to support programs affecting children aged 0-5. Approximately \$48 million dollars annually are allocated for Orange County, based upon birth rate, it is the second largest allocation in the State. SB6 has partnered very effectively with the Children and Families Commission Orange County, which administers the funds. Prop. 10 funds have put California SB6 programs in a unique position to leverage efforts that are supported by a variety of funders.

Over the next 3-5 years we will continue to build our strength in this area and will have even greater influence on mobilizing public and private resource for children. Becoming effective voices for children is one of our major focuses. We will be partnering with groups that already advocate for children. We are studying the current public policy/advocacy environment in California and members of the steering committee will be participating in visits to key policymakers and receiving advocacy training.

**Objective 1.4: Develop And Implement Sustainability Plan**

SB6, with support and guidance from the entire Orange County's United Way (OCUW) organization, has made tremendous progress in ensuring ongoing financial resources. OCUW and SB6 has raised \$2,197,000 in funds for children aged 0-6. Over \$300,000 has been distributed by SB6, with an additional \$600,000 expected to be allocated by February 2001. A formal sustainability plan is in development (Supplement 1) that will focus on Leadership, Alexis de Tocqueville Society (ADT), Mega and Million Dollar donors; corporate gifts; grants; and Prop. 10 funds. OCUW continues to provide leadership and steward sustainability efforts of SB6.

**Objective 1.5: Focus On Outcomes**

OCUW is moving to “program outcomes measurement”; SB6 is making this transition with OCUW. SB6 Manager, has become fluent in outcomes providing training assistance to OCUW staff and agencies. SB6 stakeholders attended a full-day training on outcomes and outcomes-focused strategic planning. The SB6 Steering Committee has approved outcomes-focused strategic goals. A logic model and outcomes measurement plan has been created for the child care strategy. Draft logic models are currently in development for the remaining strategies. The SB6 Steering Committee will seek assistance with evaluation to assure the success and validity of our efforts.

**Strategic Goal 2:  
To improve the quality of and access to child care for  
high-risk families in Orange County.**

**Objective 2.1: Institute NAEYC As The County Standard For Child Care.**

The NAEYC ASP is our hugely successful Early Action Initiative, funded in Spring 2000 by an implementing grant from the Bank of America Foundation. It has been the vehicle to provide SB6 with credibility and visibility in the child care community.

This project has sought to improve the quality of child care by instituting NAEYC Accreditation in child care centers primarily serving working poor families. Activities include child care center program evaluation and improvement; staff retention and training efforts; and access to service for working poor families. Quality improvements include: curriculum; classroom supplies/equipment; classroom arrangement; playground; parent involvement; staff education/training; and staff salary/benefits.

Based upon these efforts, the SB6 Steering Committee has developed the "ABC Model" for the NAEYC ASP and used this model to focus on center-based child care programs in five targeted areas for our accreditation, staff retention and accessibility activities. This model provides for a holistic approach in supporting NAEYC Accredited child care in Orange County.

"A" Centers: Centers that are currently NAEYC Accredited. Current A-Group center participants are being identified. "A" group centers are eligible to apply for SB6 mini-grants so that they are more accessible to working poor families. As part of this process we have compiled a current database of NAEYC Accredited centers in the county.

"B" Centers: Participants in the SB6 NAEYC ASP. Current B-Group centers are targeted for final accreditation visits by February 2001. These centers will be eligible for "Accessibility Incentive Grants" upon receipt of NAEYC Accreditation. Additional centers will be added to this group should they demonstrate a high level of commitment and capacity to achieving accreditation.

"C" Centers: Participants in the SB6 NAEYC ASP- Capacity-Building. C-Group centers have demonstrated high level of commitment to achieving accreditation, however, are in need of additional assistance in preparation for the self-study process. Current C group centers receive specialized assistance to ensure their success in the self-study process and each center works on an individual timeline. Other centers, within the five targeted areas of Orange County serving working poor families, will be identified and recruited for participation in the project.

The impact of our efforts in these child care centers is real. The children in these centers are benefiting from better quality care, lower teacher/child ratios, better trained staff, higher staff morale, more parent involvement, better equipment and facilities. Specific activities and accomplishments for the NAEYC ASP are outlined in Supplement 2, Implementation Grant Mid-year Report.

Continued funding for this project is essential to maintaining our visibility and demonstrating our commitment to quality, affordable child care.

## **Objective 2.2: Increase Child Care Center Staff Retention And Training**

Identified through research, community consensus and practical experience with the NAEYC ASP, the most significant barrier to ongoing quality child care is the lack of staff retention and training. Through the NAEYC ASP we have already made significant short-term changes in our nine targeted child care centers. We have provided funds to increase salaries; provided funds for membership in our local professional organization (Orange County Association for the Education of Young Children–OCAEYC); provided funds for outside trainings; hosted trainings on-site at OCUW for participating staff; and conducted one-on-one “shadowing” and coaching with staff in several centers. Just the fact that a group (SB6) is trying to help improve professionalism and working conditions for child care workers has boosted morale among staff and thus improved care.

In addition to the NAEYC ASP, SB6 will place more emphasis on systemic changes in child care that specifically address staff retention and training. The systems targeted for change are staff compensation, training/continuing education and public perception affecting child care workers in our county. “Research shows that child care quality improves when child care teachers have a good education and stay in their jobs” (NC Cares). Over the past year it has become clear that changes in staff retention and skills are essential to improving and maintaining the quality of center-based child care.

**Research:** Local research of child care staff compensation is lacking. A comprehensive salary survey and economic impact study of child care will be conducted with center-based child care to provide the necessary data to formulate and implement a community-wide strategy.

**Public Policy:** A strategy will be developed to influence public policy, encouraging early childhood education workers be viewed and valued as professionals, not babysitters, and thus, receive a worthy wage. The goal of the analysis is to provide a mechanism by which the Orange County child care sector can be placed in an “economic development” framework, thus making it easier to mobilize local and nontraditional stakeholders and capture resources that function as incentive for economic development of local child care.

**Resource Center:** Specific barriers to access of training opportunities have been identified. As a result, seven collaborative partners have teamed together to assess the training needs of early care providers and offer innovative training and technical assistance through a variety of methods, including a mobile training unit. Funds are actively being sought for this project.

**CARES Incentives:** In partnership with our local Prop. 10 Commission, we are instituting a CARES model compensating staff for continuing their education and for staying in their current jobs.

## **Objective 2.3: Provide Resources To Stabilize Center Management**

In order to attract and retain staff early child care centers must have a stable, effective management. OCUW through their Community Services Cabinet and Agency Liaison program, is able to assist agencies that need technical assistance. Providing this assistance so that centers are well run and stable financially is essential to staff retention.

Improving the management skills of agency executive directors (ED) and child care center directors (CCD) is also an area in which we have been active. We have conducted training on managing change, have coached ED's/CCD's on dealing with difficult staff, have influenced hiring practices and have helped ED's to work effectively with their Boards of Directors.

**Objective 2.4: Provide Accessibility Incentives To Allow At Risk Families To Access High Quality Care**

As part of the implementing funds received from the Bank of America Foundation in Spring 2000 we will ask centers to submit mini-grants outlining the best way for their centers to use funds to assist working poor families in accessing quality care for their children. Through our OCUW Target Community Investment strategy \$250,000 has already been granted to agencies in our "B" and "C" Groups for access to services for working poor families.

**Strategic Goal 3:  
To improve children's health by increasing access to  
quality, affordable health care and follow-up immunizations**

**Objective 3.1: Increase Access to Health Care**

OCUW and SB6 have partnered with Prop. 10 for the "Insure The Children Project". This project actively works to secure health coverage (Healthy Families and Medi-Cal for Children Outreach Program) for low-income children. An OCUW/SB6 Advisory Council will be established to oversee this fund, and set the criteria for low-income persons receiving sponsorship. This initiative targets uninsured working families, many of whom have no employer sponsored health coverage offered to them, or who cannot afford insurance premiums for available programs. \$50,000 has been granted from Prop. 10 for this demonstration project.

**Objective 3.2: Increase Rate Of Follow-Up Immunizations.**

This is an area of great frustration. Orange County does not have a centralized immunization registry, although one is currently under development. Much of our targeted population does not have a medical home. Currently, it is very difficult to document immunization rates and determine which children under 2 are fully immunized.

Orange County Immunization Coalition is aware of the systems barriers to complete immunizations, but until we have a registry, cannot track effectiveness of attempts to change these barriers. SB6 is working with the Coalition to ensure that programs funded by OCUW will be compatible with the registry as soon as it is available.

OCUW and SB6 have allocated \$199,000 to increase the rates of immunization of targeted children. These funds will be distributed to programs that use creative, effective systems of delivery to immunize children living in areas that we intuitively know have low immunization rates. Funds will go to programs that increase access by using the proven home visit model using "promotores" (home health visitors) in the local Hispanic community and by using mobile clinics.

**Strategic Goal 4:  
To build strong families by providing access to parenting skills training  
to high-risk families, reducing the incidences of reported child abuse  
in high-risk areas of Orange County.**

**Objective 4.1:           Establish A Measure And Standard Of Quality For Parenting Programs**

“How Are We Doing” is a nationally recognized program that develops a standard of quality among multi-modal family support/parenting programs, based upon core principles of quality. This three-year program follows the SB6 philosophy of program development and implementation of quality first, expansion and accessibility second. Unfortunately, we have yet to establish the funding to pilot this innovative project. We are confident that once we begin this program we will be able to attract funds to establish and maintain its activities.

**Objective 4.2:           Support Existing Family Support And Parent Education Programs**

OCUW and SB6 have allocated \$204,000 to family support programs for each of the next three years. These funds are going to two collaboratives that support high-risk families, with 1,500 at risk children benefiting from in-home and center-based family counseling, parenting programs and referrals. In addition, 1,400 high-risk teen parents and their children will benefit from an in-home parenting curriculum, donation of household goods and services, long-term mentoring, referrals, and professional outreach.