

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE

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"Education must not simply teach work - it must teach life."

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Cruz County officially proclaims February as ECE Awareness month Children with quality early childhood experiences and education can have a long-term effect of reducing child abuse, crime rates and unemployment

Nogales, AZ – Wednesday, January 26, 2022 – The goal of ECE Awareness month is to raise awareness in both the City of Nogales and the County of Santa Cruz on the **support systems available to families with children 0-5 and the message that kindergarten readiness starts at birth.** Additionally, the ECE Awareness committee aims to increase knowledge of the important of Early Childhood outside of the immediate Early Childhood community to all residents of the community including, business, industry, and those who might not otherwise have the information.

Scientific research has shown that a child's experiences in their early years affect how their brain develops. Research has also proven that **children with quality early childhood experiences and education can have a long-term effect of reducing child abuse, crime rates and unemployment.** Positive early childhood experiences have also been related to positive health outcomes. Additionally, kindergarten readiness is widely recognized as a marker for later school success.

The ECE Awareness Committee plans the following events during the month of February which highlight early childhood:

- **City of Nogales (February 2nd) and Santa Cruz County (February 1st)** officially proclaim February as ECE Awareness month
- **Informational public announcements** are made on social media, billboards, in news and radio including live and recorded interviews of educators and leaders in the community.
- Community members who have made an impact on early childhood are recognized in an **awards luncheon** hosted by the Office of the Superintendent of Schools
- **Professional development** is offered to educators to further their knowledge of early childhood topics and skills
- **Family Event on February 26th** to include live entertainment, food, games, art and books to families in Santa Cruz County and highlight downtown Nogales.
- **Resource fair** to support early childhood providers and community members interested in becoming an early childhood educator or provider.

- Sponsoring **Spa Day for Home Visitors** to celebrate their contribution working in early childhood meeting with parents to boost parental resiliency and connecting them with resources.
- Presentation to the Chamber of Commerce on the importance of **Early Childhood and how it effects the Santa Cruz County business community.**
- Participation in the **Early Childhood Education Day at the State Capitol**

Alfredo Velasquez, the Santa Cruz County School Superintendent leads an early childhood education awareness committee who plan the events for this awareness campaign. Committee members include:

- Alicia Delgado- Child Resources and Referrals
- Anna Rosas- Child Parent Centers/Nogales Neighborhood Head Start
- Cassandra Camacho- Child and Family Resources
- Chris Young- Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office
- Danitza Lopez- Nogales Public Library
- Denisse Ortega- Nogales Public Library
- Edgardo Munoz – We Love Nogales
- Evan Kory- Santa Cruz County School Superintendent's Office
- Francisco Padilla- First Things First
- Jennifer Argyros- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension/Family Resource Center
- Karla de la Cruz- University of Arizona Cooperative Extension/Childcare Health Consultant
- Yara Castro- Mariposa Community Health Center

<https://www.santacruzcountyaz.gov/835/2021-2022-Early-Childhood-Awareness-Month>