

The Building Blocks Collaborative:

A Collective Approach to Achieving Health Equity

Each year in Alameda County, 7000 children start life in poverty.

The Building Blocks Collaborative (BBC), convened by the Alameda County Public Health Department, is a partnership of organizations committed to changing the way their organizations work – individually and collectively – to create equitable community conditions that will support well-being starting from the earliest stages of life. Undergirding our work is a theoretical framework called the Life Course Perspective.



Based on health and developmental research, The Life Course Perspective (LCP) recognizes that factors over a lifetime, even before birth, impact long-term health – even life expectancy. It tells us that health is more than access to health care, and develops over time as a result of multiple factors – either positive or negative – in physical and economic environment, community, educational opportunity and healthcare. The LCP helps us understand why persistent health inequities exist in Alameda County and calls for a paradigm shift: we must work together to ensure the community conditions for health exist.

Building Blocks Collaborative Statement of Purpose

In response to inequities in health, wealth, and education that limit the ability of Alameda County children to all realize their potential, together we will ensure a sustainable multi-sector commitment to improved overall well-being for communities and the people who live in them, from the earliest stage and throughout all stages of life.

Building Blocks Collaborative Vision: Bill of Rights

All children in Alameda County have a right to be born healthy, and to:

1. *be believed in*
2. *live, play and grow in a clean, safe place*
3. *receive a quality education*
4. *be loved by a caring adult*
5. *eat healthy food*
6. *explore nature*
7. *enjoy economic opportunity and financial security*
8. *access health care that promotes well-being*
9. *be free from discrimination and violence*
10. *be included & valued by a supportive community*

Nearly 50 Building Blocks Collaborative partners contribute staff time, resources, and expertise from their diverse sectors. Partners exemplify the momentum and collaboration necessary for the paradigm shift we need to achieve health equity. The Building Blocks Collaborative is guided by a steering committee comprised of partners from Attitudinal Healing Connection, Brighter Beginnings, East Bay Regional Parks District, Mandela Marketplace, Urban Strategies Council and The Alameda County Community Asset Network, and Alameda County Public Health Department.

Alameda County Public Health Department's support of the Building Blocks Collaborative is one component of its 15-year Life Course Initiative to build department and community capacity to implement the LCP in Alameda County. In tandem with the BBC, an ACPHD workgroup - the Life Course System Design Committee (LSDC) – is working to translate LCP into practice and reorganize public health systems and services to meet the needs of families across the lifespan.

BBC Progress, As of June 2011:

- 2009: Building Blocks Symposium launched the Building Blocks Collaborative; developed shared understanding of Life Course Perspective; identified West Oakland and Ashland-Cherryland as focus communities.
- 2010: Received planning grant award from Kresge Foundation; developed statement of purpose and shared vision - the BBC Bill of Rights; convened Steering Committee; 'Roadshow' committee developed orientation and video; received Kresge award for Food to Families project, hosted retreat to identify BBC strategy areas.
- 2011: Implementing Kresge-funded Food to Families

Building Blocks Collaborative Strategy Areas

To improve health over a lifetime, BBC partners will **leverage our partnerships, resources, and networks** in these areas:

- Healthy Food
- Healthy Economy
- Healthy Youth & Families