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Transforming Early Childhood Education in East San José: César Chávez Early Learning Center Celebrates Grand Opening with 400+ Families and Community Leaders

The [César Chávez Early Learning Center](#) officially opened as a first-of-its-kind campus in California designed to provide families with young children with a safe and nurturing learning environment and wraparound supports.

San Jose, CA (June 24, 2023) — Last Friday, July 21, 400 families gathered with community leaders, teachers, and state and federal elected officials to celebrate the grand opening of the [César Chávez Early Learning Center](#) (CCELC) campus in East San José. The day-long celebration began with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and press conference, followed by a campus tour and family fair featuring delicious food, family activities, raffle prizes, and informational booths where families with young children could learn more about the resources and supports provided at the CCELC and throughout the community.

[Photos from the CCELC grand opening celebration are available here.](#)

Representing a longstanding partnership between the [Alum Rock Union Elementary School District \(ARUSD\)](#), [Kidango](#), and [SOMOS Mayfair](#), the CCELC serves as an all-in-one campus offering a continuum of support for families with children ages birth to 5 years. “We are extremely honored to be collaborating with Kidango and SOMOS Mayfair to meet the needs of our community and help provide a brighter future to San José’s youngest learners,” said Dr. Hilaria Bauer, Superintendent of Alum Rock Union Elementary Schools. “The grand opening of the César Chávez Early Learning Center marks a major milestone in the East San José community, ensuring more families have access to early childhood programs that set the foundation for a lifetime of learning and success.”

Transitional kindergarten and kindergarten programs will be provided by ARUSD, and infant, toddler, pre-school care alongside Early Head Start are being offered by [Kidango](#), the largest early childhood organization in the San Francisco Bay Area. The center also offers care for children with developmental delays and disabilities and speech disability support.

Serving Alum Rock families for 20 years, Kidango centers its programs around creating holistic, inclusive, and loving spaces of learning and care. Recognizing that East San José reflects one of the most underserved communities for kindergarten readiness in California, Kidango and ARUSD are committed to providing free or significantly cost-reduced full-day infant, toddler, and preschool care, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten programs for all children aged birth to five enrolled at the CCELC.

Scott Moore, CEO of Kidango, emphasized the organization's mission: "Families in Alum Rock, like throughout the Bay Area, too often struggle to afford living here. By providing our families with young children with free and affordable childcare, preschool and afterschool programs, we empower families to stay in Alum Rock, equip their children for success in school, and build their lives here. Our hope is for the César Chávez Early Learning Center to serve as a transformative model not only for California but for the entire nation."

The CCELC provides so much more than just educational support to students and families. At the campus' on-site Family Resource Center, run by local nonprofit [SOMOS Mayfair](#), children and their families have access to a wide array of resources ranging from holistic growth to well-being to support the whole child and the whole family. "Families and children at the César Chávez Early Learning Center are supported as a collective unit when it comes to success at school and in life. Meeting children and families where they are, our goal is for the campus to offer a dual-language and empowering experience for all children, starting from birth, fulfilling a long-standing desire in the Mayfair community," said SOMOS Co-Executive Director Victor Vasquez.

With investment in whole child and whole families success, the CCELC campus serves as a unique early learning model for providers across California. California Senator Dave Cortese of District 15 explained, "The César Chávez Early Learning Center campus represents a brighter future for the East San José community and shines a light on the importance of investing more in the lifelong success of California's youngest learners. With early learning models like this, together, we can create a system of early learning and care that leads all children and families to succeed regardless of race, income, identity or ability."

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About Kidango

[Kidango](#) is the largest early childhood organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, serving over 3,000 children from the families who need us the most, including those who are low-income,

immigrants, Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian/Pacific Islander, and who have children with developmental delays and disabilities. Nationally recognized for our impact, Kidango is transforming the early care and education system in three key ways: offering excellent preschool and child care, providing holistic family services, and advocating for family-focused public policies and best practices together with our staff and families. Together, these steps will create a future where all children have what they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

About Alum Rock Union Elementary School District

The [Alum Rock Union Elementary School District](#) is a family-oriented district community committed to its children and schools. Our Early Learning system ensures all children have access to high-quality early education experiences. We believe that early education quality experiences play an important role in preparing children for school success and lead to higher levels of educational attainment, career advancement, and future earnings.

SOMOS Mayfair

[SOMOS Mayfair](#) builds community power in East San José through leadership development and by organizing around resident-led solutions. Our mission is to support children, organize families, and connect neighbors to uplift the dreams, power, and leadership of the community and address systemic inequities. We operate 3 Family Resource Centers across East San José where we distribute critical resources, offer bilingual family workshops, and develop strategies that reimagine housing, labor and justice in our community.