

## Overview

Resilience Orange County was founded in 2016 as a merger of Santa Ana Boys and Men of Color and RAIZ (Resistencia Autonomia Igualdad y lideraZgo) who believed they could build a stronger community together rather than apart.

## Mission

“The mission of Resilience Orange County is to promote resilient youth leaders that engage in the critical work of building youth-oriented institutions in Orange County. We are a youth oriented institution that works towards social-systemic transformation while promoting healing, trauma-informed and culturally relevant practices that are inclusive of all members of the community.” –ROC website



## Constituency

- Latinos/Latinas/Latinx
- Ages 13-25
- LGBTQ
- Immigrants
- Undocumented
- Formerly Incarcerated

## Local Conditions & Critical Issues Impacting 0-5 Childhood Health in Santa Ana

### Unaffordable Housing

Including rising rents, resulting in forced displacement and multiple families sharing a home.

### High Rates of Domestic Violence and Early Childhood Exposure to Stress and Trauma

### Lack of Child/Youth Development Programs and Other Support Services

Including after-school, violence prevention/intervention, childcare, early childhood education, and mental health services.

*“Santa Ana does not prioritize childcare... What we see in our community is that a family of 3 cannot afford childcare for all 3 children. We see a lot 2-3 years olds being alone in the home with 7-12 year olds.”*

–Abraham Medina, Founding Director

### Environmental Hazards

Including elevated blood lead levels for children/youth due to high lead levels in the soil.

### Limited Green Spaces

73% of children ages 1-17 in Central Santa Ana live near a park or playground, compared to 92% in Orange County and 84% for the state.<sup>1</sup>

### Limited Access to Early Childhood Education Programs

Which also impacts school readiness for children 0-5.

*“One of the things we’re challenging our community and our school systems to focus on [is] getting youth on track 0-5. Can they read? Can they do math? The schools want to produce 21st century global citizens... [but] you can’t just focus on academics, because what needs to be given equal importance is social/emotional intelligence.”*

### Access to Healthcare, Particularly for the Undocumented Community

### Punitive School Discipline Policies

Including forced deportation (e.g. the school-to-prison-to-deportation pipeline).

*“[Santa Ana] is the second most densely populated [city] and second youngest [in the nation]. There are very few spaces where it’s children-friendly in terms of 0-5... and [child] physical health is actually impacted especially if there are environmental pollutants that can limit where children can actually safely be at.”*

– Abraham Medina, Founding Director



## Community Defined “Best Practices” to Improve Childhood Health

**Transformative Youth Leadership Using A Relational, Empowering, Culturally Relevant and Trauma Informed Approach**—providing services for youth to address their social/emotional health, along with learning organizing skills and taking the lead in policy/systems change campaigns. The priority is also on building relationships with youth/parents through conversation workshops on new and even difficult topics, teambuilding exercises, sharing of meals, etc.

*“We really wanted to focus on framework where both those models could co-exist [service provision and organizing/policy campaigns] in order to really build transformative youth leadership...that has been a strength...Yes they know how to take notes, how to facilitate a meeting. But they also know what social and emotional health is, and what trauma informed practices are...and [take] more responsibility if they choose to, eventually even leading projects...the relationship part, we focus on not always being like, ‘you got to be at this meeting, at that meeting. But let’s go eat together’...so that the youth don’t get overwhelmed, don’t get thrown into an organizing culture that then burns them out.”*

**Develop A Youth Leadership Pipeline in Middle Childhood and Young Teens**—focusing on younger students so that the “conversation” and transformational changes can have a longer-term positive impact/influence in the schools and with younger siblings.

**Strategic Merging or Alliance Building to Strengthen Collective Power**—building cross-sector coalitions and partnerships (LGBTQ, faith community, youth centers/programs, health groups, etc.) to strengthen their collective power and approach to working with the school district.

## Current Wellness & Safety Efforts

**Anti-Youth Deportation, School Climate, and Restorative Justice**—Working with parents, youth, 17 schools (elementary, middle, and high schools), and Orange County Department of Education to transform school climate by adopting positive discipline/restorative practices especially for youth with social/emotional issues including trauma. Goal is to stop arrests of youth and subsequent forced deportations by ICE.

*“This partnership is trying to problem solve through changing [school] culture...changing administrative regulations, policies and procedures. It’s really been a collective learning process...less and less youth are ending up in the juvenile justice system...the school district wants to prioritize building a restorative culture and school climate that promotes tolerance and respect and dignity for all students. [But] if we [only] focus on high school students (11th and 12th grade), they’re out in 2 years so what they learn doesn’t get passed on to other students. But if we focus attention to the junior and the elementary schools, they stay within the school systems... our strategy is to nurture [classroom and school] cultures that promote positive school climate. We started to see what are some things that [are] impacting their [younger student’s] social and emotional health.”*

## Key Indicators of Childhood Health in Santa Ana

# 26.2%

of Latino 5<sup>th</sup> graders in Orange County were classified as “at risk of **obesity** related conditions due to body composition”.<sup>2</sup>

# 34%

of students in Orange County reported feelings of **depression**.<sup>4</sup>



77.8% of children (2-17) in Orange County eat **fast food** 1+ times per week.<sup>2</sup>



Despite an overall decline in uninsured rates for 0-5 year olds in Orange County as a whole,<sup>2</sup> only 67.5% of Santa Ana children have **health insurance**, compared to 93% countywide.<sup>3</sup>

# 3.9

per 1,000 live births result in **infant mortality**.<sup>2</sup> This is highest among Latino infants in Orange County, compared to other racial/ethnic groups.

## ROC Accomplishments in Wellness & Safety

- **Supported Personal Healing, Develop Leadership, and Meaningful Civic Engagement for Youth**—Successful implementation of a 10 to 16-week culturally-focused transformative program for young men (Joven Noble) and women (Xinachtli). Youth are supported to strengthen their leadership and coping skills to build resilience and begin transforming their individual trauma, as well as community trauma, through meaningful involvement in social change efforts.

*“We’ve been successful in developing a youth leadership pipeline that we hope becomes sustainable. [After evaluating] the program we saw [pre and post] changes in school connectivity...the way they solve problems, their attitudes for certain concepts...it’s very important to us because the children we’re working with are in junior high/high school. They have siblings, and those siblings are 0-5...these are the peers that children 0-5 are exposed to. And they really started adopting some of the value systems...I think that’s the way we’ve been able to connect service providing work with policy and systems change. And we are changing the communities. But really starting at a personal level - starting with the students.”*

- **Restorative Justice**—Reduction of punitive discipline in the schools and adoption of restorative practices from elementary through high schools.



**Website:** <http://resilienceoc.org>

**Address:** 950 W 17th St Suite F  
Santa Ana, CA 92706

**Telephone:** (657) 210-0157

**Email:** [info@resilienceoc.org](mailto:info@resilienceoc.org)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ResilienceOC/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/resilienceoc>

**Instagram:** <https://www.instagram.com/resilienceoc/>

**LMU | LA**  
Psychology Applied  
Research Center

Loyola Marymount University



1. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. (2011). Building Healthy Communities: Central Santa Ana Health Profile [http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/bhc/Documents/BHC\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_Santa\\_Ana.pdf](http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/chis/bhc/Documents/BHC_Fact_Sheet_Santa_Ana.pdf)
2. Orange County Children’s Partnership. (2016). Conditions of Children in Orange County. <http://occhildrenandfamilies.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/COC2015.pdf>
3. Children’s Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) Children’s. (n.d.) Community Health Needs Assessment. <https://www.choc.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/CHNA-5-16-14.pdf>
4. Depression-Related Feelings (Student Reported), by Race/Ethnicity. Lucille Packard Foundation for Children’s Health. <http://www.kidsdata.org/>