

Parent Institute 2026

Building brighter futures, one dream at a time.

Dreams to Legacies



Wednesday, February 18, 2026

8:30 am - 2:15 pm

Mt. SAC - The Summit (Building 410)



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Agenda

8:30 am - 9:30 am

Check In & Continental Breakfast

9:00 am - 9:15 am

Opening

Dr. Julie Marquez, Mt. SAC EOPS/CARE,
NextUp/REACH & CalWORKs Director

College Welcome

Dr. Martha Garcia,
President of Mt. San Antonio College

Land & Labor Acknowledgment

Dr. Primavera Reza-Nakonechny,
Mt. SAC First Peoples Native Center Director

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

Carolyn Lake-Bain,
Mt. SAC EOPS/CARE Counselor

9:15 am - 9:45 am

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jennifer LaBounty,
Vice President for Student Services at Saddleback College

9:45 am - 9:55 am

Overview of the Day

Carolyn Lake-Bain,
Mt. SAC EOPS/CARE Counselor

10:00 am - 10:50 am

Workshop Session A

11:00 am - 11:50 am

Workshop Session B

11:50 am - 12:50 pm

Lunch & Resource Fair

1:00 pm - 1:50 pm

Workshop Session C

1:55 pm - 2:15 pm

Closing & Opportunity Drawing

Dr. Cristina Barrios,
Long Beach City College EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs/FYSI Director

Schedule at a Glance

| Room Number | Session A: 10:00 am - 10:50 am |
|--------------------|--|
| 3060-A | From Overwhelm to Empowerment: Managing Parenting and College Life |
| 3060-B | Expanding Access and Inclusion for Student Parents: A Collaborative Model Across EOPS, CalWORKs, and the Child Development Center |
| 3030-A | Your Child, Your Choice: Choosing A Pre-K Program |
| 3030-B | Research is Me Search: Building A Student Research Profile from Your Parent Identity |
| 1020A/B | Breaking Generational Barriers: Turning Educational Dreams into Family Legacies |
| 1020-C | Radiate Self-Love: A Journey Into Self-Care |
| MCC | Who's the Boss? Who's the Baby? Oh My! Understanding Birth Order |

| <p align="center">Session B: 11:00 am - 11:50 am</p> | <p align="center">Session C: 1:00 pm - 1:50 pm</p> |
|---|---|
| <p align="center">From Dreams to Degrees: Your Educational Journey Starts Now - Balancing Parenthood, Work, and Academic Excellence</p> | <p align="center">Navigating Housing as a Student Parent: Resources, Options, and Next Steps</p> |
| <p align="center">Dreaming to Becoming: Dads Parenting with Purpose</p> | <p align="center">Ending the Silence</p> |
| <p align="center">From I Can't to Finding Your I CAN!: Transferring and Beyond as a Parenting Scholar</p> | <p align="center">Family Law Services -The Buhai Center</p> |
| <p align="center">A Student and a Parent?!: Strategies for College Success at a 4 Year Institution</p> | <p align="center">From I Can't to Finding Your I CAN!: Transferring and Beyond as a Parenting Scholar</p> |
| <p align="center">Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: I Am My Child's First Teacher</p> | <p align="center">Against All Odds: Thriving as a Student While Raising a Family</p> |
| <p align="center">Perspectives on the Diversity of Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue</p> | <p align="center">Speak Up & Succeed: Advocacy Skills for Student Parents</p> |
| <p align="center">N/A</p> | <p align="center">N/A</p> |

The Summit Map

1100 N. Grand Ave. Walnut, CA 91789

Areas of Importance:

Check-In: The Summit 3rd Floor near Elevator

Check-In for Mt. SAC Attendees: Table A

Check-In for General Attendees: Table B

Check-In for Resource Fair: Table C

Check-In for Presenters & Guests: Table D

Main Room C: Opening/Welcome/Keynote Speaker

Resource Fair: Reception Area & Balcony

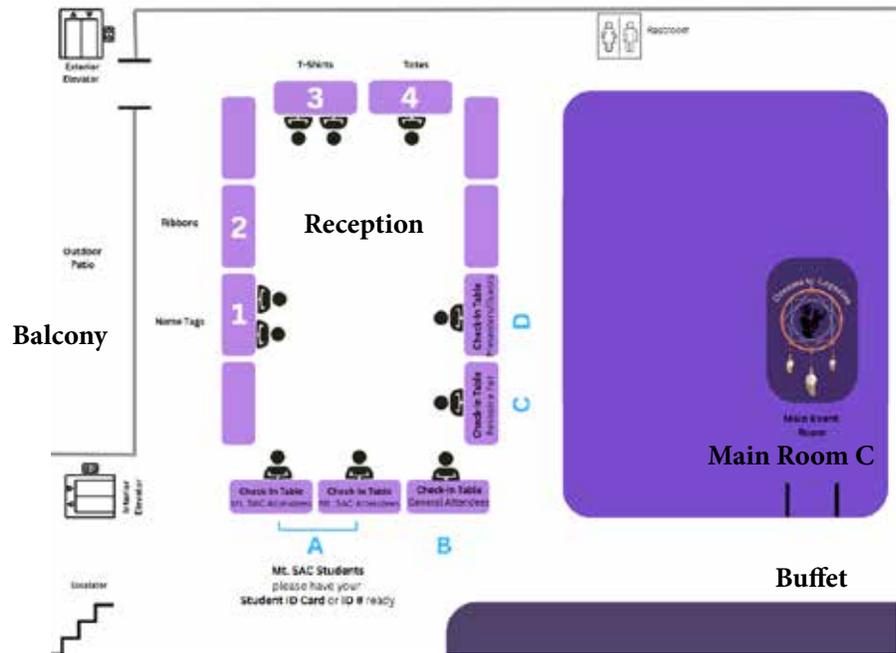
Buffet: Continental Breakfast & Lunch

Multi-Cultural Center (MCC Room): Second Floor

Workshops 1020A/B & 1020-C: First Floor

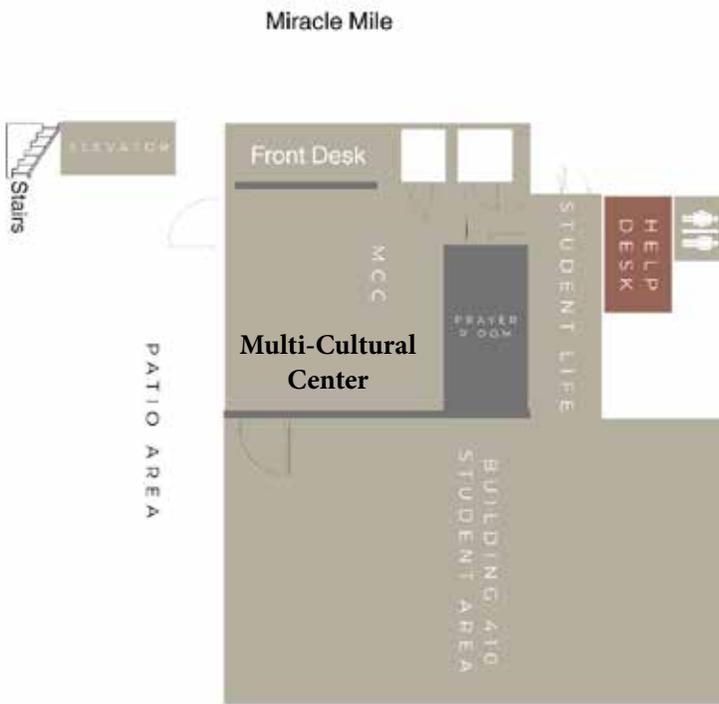
Building 410

3rd Floor



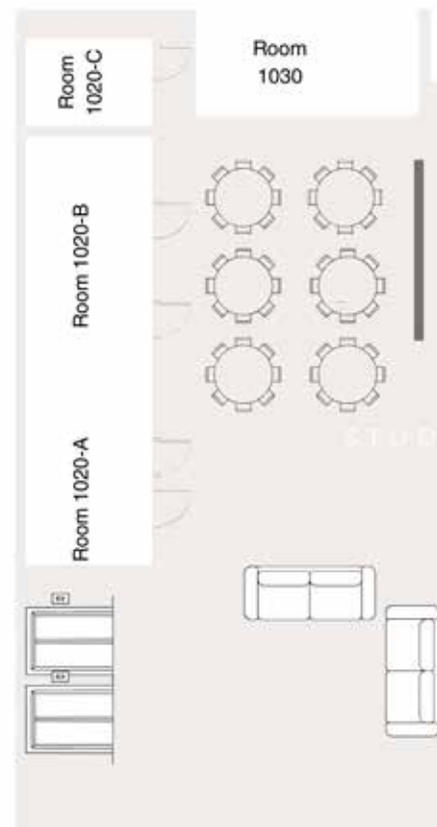
Building 410

2nd Floor



Building 410

1st Floor



Keynote Speaker

Dr. Jennifer LaBounty

Vice President for Student Services
at Saddleback College

Dr. Jennifer LaBounty has over twenty-three years of experience in higher education, working predominately for the California Community College system. She began her career in higher education at Orange Coast College where she served for nearly thirteen years in a variety of roles, such as a student assistant, classified professional, Psychology Instructor, and adjunct counselor. She accepted the position of Director of EOPS/CARE/CalWORKs and Foster Youth for Fullerton College in 2014 before being promoted to the Dean of Counseling and Student Development in 2018. Dr. LaBounty has been proudly serving as the Chief Student Services Officer (CSSO) and Title IX Officer for Saddleback College since 2023. As a former community college student, Jennifer's life was transformed from a single mother on welfare to an established professional in academia. It is with this lived experience that her passion for community colleges developed and an unwavering commitment to higher education and its power to positively transform lives. Jennifer values the California Community College vision, mission, and goals, and she has made a lifelong pledge to positively transform student lives through her various roles at the community college.

As mentioned, Dr. LaBounty began her higher education journey as an adult learner, entering a community college at 32 years old, as a single mother on welfare with four young children (ages 10, 9, 7, and 6) and an estranged husband who was battling drug addiction. She sought an education to provide financial stability for herself and her children and what she gained was much greater: hope, self-esteem, confidence, competence, passion, purpose, and more. She will share her beginnings at a Community College retelling her academic, career, and personal journey with you in hopes of reaching parenting students who can relate to and be inspired to keep moving boldly in the direction of their dreams.



Closing Speaker

Christina M. Barrios

Director of EOPS/CARE, CalWORKs, FYSS, & Dream Services,
Long Beach City College

Christina M. Barrios is the Director of EOPS/CARE, CalWORKs, FYSS, and Dream Services. She is the Vice-Chair of the LA County Community College CalWORKs Consortium, Student Voices Co-Chair for the CA CalWORKs Association, and supports many student parent initiatives at LBCC. A proud product of the community college system, she navigated higher education as a single teen mother to her now 15 year-old son Danny and attributes her success to support programs such as EOPS, CARE, and CalWORKs in which she was apart of.

Christina holds a M.Ed. in Educational Counseling from USC and a B.A in Sociology from CSUF. She obtained her AA-T in Sociology from Cypress College and earned her Ed.D from CSUF.



Land Acknowledgment

Mt. San Antonio College acknowledges and recognizes that the land in which we occupy is the unceded ancestral territory of the Gabrielino-Shoshone, Gabrielino-Tongva, and Gabrielino-Kizh nations, the Indigenous peoples of this region since time immemorial. Mt. San Antonio College is located near the Gabrielino village of Pemookangna, known today as the city of Walnut.

We recognize the Gabrielino people have suffered an immense loss of their people, culture, lands, water, and other natural resources due to the theft, murder, kidnapping, and enslavement. These injustices started with colonization, and most Indigenous people consider colonization a current and ongoing process.

Despite the atrocities and injustices committed against the original caretakers of this land, the Gabrielino remain to be a thriving community and continue to practice their traditions, heritage, sovereignty, self-determination, and spiritual relationship to their land. The nations that make up the Gabrielino community continue to work to protect their sacred ways and homelands for future generations. Their descendants are a testament to the resilience and strength of the indigenous peoples that call this land their ancestral home.

The Gabrielino view this land as a source of healing, nourishment, and protection. As students, faculty, staff, and alumni of Mt. San Antonio College, we honor the Gabrielino people by acknowledging their legacy and current lived experiences.

We recognize this land acknowledgment as an opportunity for Mt. SAC to advocate for Indigenous students through support of the First Peoples Native Center and continued learning and shared knowledge for Native American and Indigenous peoples.

Life & Labor Acknowledgment

As all of our liberations are tied together, and so is our history, we also acknowledge that this country was built up from the free, enslaved labor of Black people, and we honor the legacy of the African diaspora. We pay respects to Black life, knowledge and skills stolen due to violence and White supremacy.

We also share grief, hold space, and stand in solidarity with our Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (AAPIDA) and LGBTQ+ communities. We condemn not only repeated acts of violence endured by vulnerable members of intersecting communities and the pervasive discrimination and stereotyping that attacked one's humanity.

We shall not forget the oppression faced by Black, Indigenous, and People of Colors (BIPOC) and individuals who face multifaceted threats to their existence based on gender identity, sexual orientation, or religious affiliations. With this Land, Labor, and Community acknowledgment, we also recognize a duty to give honor through our work and continue to stand up for racial and social justice every day. Please join us in a moment of silence and a collective breath.

Workshop Session Overview

Workshop Session A: 10:00 - 10:50 am

- Room 3060-A:** From Overwhelm to Empowerment: Managing Parenting and College Life
- Room 3060-B:** Expanding Access and Inclusion for Student Parents: A Collaborative Model Across EOPS, CalWORKs, and the Child Development Center
- Room 3030-A:** Your Child, Your Choice: Choosing A Pre-K Program
- Room 3030-B:** Research is Me Search: Building A Student Research Profile from Your Parent Identity
- Room 1020A/B:** Breaking Generational Barriers: Turning Educational Dreams into Family Legacies
- Room 1020-C:** Radiate Self-Love: A Journey Into Self-Care
- Room MCC:** Who's the Boss? Who's the Baby? Oh My! Understanding Birth Order

Workshop Session B: 11:00 - 11:50 am

- Room 3060-A:** From Dreams to Degrees: Your Educational Journey Starts Now - Balancing Parenthood, Work, and Academic Excellence
- Room 3060-B:** Dreaming to Becoming: Dads Parenting with Purpose
- Room 3030-A:** From I Can't to Finding Your I CAN!: Transferring and Beyond as a Parenting Scholar
- Room 3030-B:** A Student and a Parent?!: Strategies for College Success at a 4 Year Institution
- Room 1020A/B:** Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: I Am My Child's First Teacher
- Room 1020-C:** Perspectives on the Diversity of Parenting Styles: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Workshop Session C: 1:00 - 1:50 pm

- Room 3060-A:** Navigating Housing as a Student Parent: Resources, Options, and Next Steps
- Room 3060-B:** Ending the Silence
- Room 3030-A:** Family Law Services - The Buhai Center
- Room 3030-B:** From I Can't to Finding Your I CAN!: Transferring and Beyond as a Parenting Scholar
- Room 1020A/B:** Against All Odds: Thriving as a Student While Raising a Family
- Room 1020-C:** Speak Up & Succeed: Advocacy Skills for Student Parents

Workshops

From Overwhelm to Empowerment: Managing Parenting and College Life

Workshop #1 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 3060-A

Presenters: María Baaz Medina & Kassandra Lawrence

Being a student and a parent is rewarding but can feel overwhelming. This interactive workshop provides practical strategies to help student parents balance coursework, family responsibilities, and self-care while building confidence and resilience. Participants will explore ways to manage guilt, create intentional self-care practices, and access Mt. SAC and community resources to support their success.

Expanding Access and Inclusion for Student Parents: A Collaborative Model Across EOPS, CalWORKs, and the Child Development Center

Workshop #2 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 3060-B

Presenters: Deborah Lopez, Cyndi Palomino-Bendezu, & Cindy O'Neill

Student parents are an integral part of the community's college community, yet many experience barriers to accessing services, understanding eligibility, and feeling included in campus life. Expanding access and fostering inclusion for student parents requires clear communication, coordinated services, and intentional efforts to create welcoming and family-centered spaces. This workshop brings together the directors of CARE, CalWORKs, and the Child Development Center to directly engage student parents in a conversation about available support, how these programs work together, and how to access services more easily. In addition, student participants will have an opportunity to listen and learn from student parent leaders who advocate for themselves and their peers, sharing their experiences navigating campus systems, building community, and influencing change. Through facilitated discussion and open dialogue, student parents will gain practical knowledge, peer insights, and connection to a supportive campus network that centers their voices and lived experiences.

Your Child, Your Choice: Choosing A Pre-K Program

Workshop #3 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 3030-A

Presenters: Octavio Cuevas-Hernández

This presentation provides parents with clear, easy-to-understand information about pre-kindergarten options, parental choice, and available support services. It explains how families can select the best program for their child and access financial, enrollment, and educational assistance to support a smooth transition into pre-K.

Research is Me Search: Building A Student Research Profile from Your Parent Identity

Workshop #4 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 3030-B

Presenters: Eva Rios-Alvarado

Parents and caregivers are powerful. We take care of ourselves and others while navigating challenging and alienating systems, even in education. What if I told you your parents' identity could be harnessed to devise your future goals as a college student? It can. I invite you to join me in a workshop session, inspired by a former Mt. SAC parent student in my Library 1A course, to reflect and craft your student research profile. That is, what you might study more in the future, based on your powerful unique identities. Everyone will leave with a unique zine to begin to consider how your identities contribute to your research and college goals.

Breaking Generational Barriers: Turning Educational Dreams into Family Legacies

Workshop #5 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 1020A/B (1st floor)

Presenters: Rocio Sanchez, Graciela Padilla, Carlos Lopez

This facilitated panel-style workshop features three professional staff members from the Rising Scholars Program who are scholar-parents and are currently completing or have completed bachelor's and master's degrees, alongside one Rising Scholars intern. Panelists will share their educational pathways and reflect on navigating higher education while parenting. The session highlights how scholar-parents break generational barriers, model educational perseverance for their families, and transform personal educational goals into lasting family legacies. Participants will engage in guided discussion and Q&A focused on resilience, self-advocacy, and navigating college systems as student parents.

Radiate Self-Love: A Journey into Self-Care

Workshop #6 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: 1020-C (1st floor)

Presenters: Shalini Chatarpaul & Melissa Andrewin

This workshop is designed specifically for parenting students, because your peace, your energy, and your well-being matter. Self-Care isn't a luxury - it's a necessity. It's how we refill our cup so we can show up fully, both for ourselves and for the people we love.

Who's the Boss? Who's the Baby? Oh My! Understanding Birth Order

Workshop #7 - Session A (10:00 - 10:50 am)

Room Number: Multi-Cultural Center (2nd floor)

Presenter: Ana Silvia Turcios

This workshop explores how a child's position in the family—firstborn, middle, youngest, or only child—can influence personality, behavior, and relationships. Using a blend of research, real-life examples, and interactive activities, this workshop helps parents understand the unique strengths and challenges associated with each birth order role. This session is designed to be fun, informative, and eye-opening—supporting parents in building stronger connections with their children and creating a more understanding and balanced family dynamic.

From Dreams to Degrees: Your Educational Journey Starts Now - Balancing Parenthood, Work, and Academic Excellence

Workshop #8 - Session B (11:00 - 11:50 am)

Room Number: 3060-A

Presenters: Lita Abella

“From Dreams to Degrees” is an interactive workshop for student parents pursuing education while raising a family. Led by Lita Abella—a public speaker, board-certified coach, and Mt. SAC professor who began her educational journey at Mt. SAC 8 months pregnant while working full time as an LAPD sergeant—this session explores her personal, professional, and educational journey, highlighting both challenges and triumphs. The workshop introduces the ABELLA Framework, adapted for student parents, and offers practical strategies and tools designed for the realities of the modern-day student parent.

Dreaming to Becoming: Dads Parenting with Purpose

Workshop #9 - Session B (11:00 - 11:50 am)

Room Number: 3060-B

Presenters: Antonio Watson & Tony Rivas

The goal of this workshop is to provide a safe space for fathers to interact and bond via a speaker-listener community where their voices and experiences are recognized as places for actualizing their dreams.

Speak Up & Succeed: Advocacy Skills for Student Parents

Workshop #10 - Session C (1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 1020-C (1st floor)

Presenters: Beatriz Chavez

Student parents carry a heavy mental load while navigating college systems that can feel confusing or unwelcoming. This interactive workshop uses brief, optional plática-style reflection and turns lived experience into practical advocacy tools, including fill-in-the-blank scripts for communicating with professors and key support offices on college campuses. Participants will leave with an Advocacy Toolkit and a simple 7-day action plan to take their next steps with confidence.

A Student and a Parent?!: Strategies for College Success at a 4 Year Institution

Workshop #14 - Session B (11:00 - 11:50 am)

Room Number: 3030-B

Presenter: Nancy Dayne

This workshop will discuss strategies for college success, as a student and parent. The workshop will discuss: Time-management, academic success, and supportive environments.

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors: I Am My Child's First Teacher

Workshop #12 - Session B (11:00 - 11:50 am)

Room Number: 1020A/B (1st floor)

Presenters: Crystal Divas-Guerrero & Mayra Rivas

This interactive workshop introduces the Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors curriculum, focusing on the foundational theme "I Am My Child's First Teacher." Participants will explore evidence-based tools that empower parents to support their children's growth, learning, and long-term success. The session also highlights opportunities to continue learning through our free 11-week parenting program, designed to strengthen parent leadership, advocacy, and community connection.

Perspectives on the Diversity of Parenting: Styles: A Cross-Cultural Dialogue

Workshop #13 - Session B (11:00 - 11:50 am)

Room Number: 1020-C (1st floor)

Presenter: Marlene Fernández

Research-based Parenting Styles are taught broadly within communities in higher education, and strength-based support groups. Such skill sets vary cross-culturally. We will explore our perspectives, values, and parent practices to better serve children, families, and communities. Diversity approaches; meaningful dialogue; practical tools to define, refine and apply will be addressed.

Navigating Housing as a Student Parent: Resources, Options, and Next Steps

Workshop #18 - Session C (1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 3060-A

Presenter: Kimberly Yerena

Student parents often face unique challenges when searching for stable and affordable housing while balancing academic, work, and family responsibilities. This workshop is designed to support student parents by exploring housing resources available in their local communities, including access points, community organizations, and housing navigation services. Participants will learn about the key differences between public housing and affordable housing, receive guidance on applications and wait lists, and gain practical strategies to navigate housing systems more effectively for themselves and their families.

Ending the Silence

Workshop #15 - Session C (1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 3060-B

Presenter: Kyoni Cummings

Presentation walks participants through understanding what mental illness is, what signs/symptoms look like, understanding why early intervention is essential, reaching out to your child & school staff and resources.

Family Law Services - The Buhai Center

Workshop #16 - Session C (1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 3030-A

Presenter: Vilma Cummings

This workshop will discuss services offered by the Buhai Center. The Buhai Center is a nonprofit legal aid service provider serving individuals throughout Los Angeles County with Family Law matters. The workshop will also review varying resources, and present attendees with different ways to look for resources, information, or referrals in Los Angeles County.

From I can't to finding your I CAN!: Transferring and Beyond as a Parenting Scholar

Workshop #11 - Sessions B & C (11:00 - 11:50 am & 1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 3030-A (3rd floor) & 1020-C (1st floor)

Presenters: Perla Partida & Josh Loudon

“I can’t” was the mind frame I had early on in my academic journey as a Parenting Scholar at Mt. SAC but then slowly but surely the I CAN was discovered. Transferring to a 4-year institution is for you! Join us as we share some valuable tools and resources through a Transfer 101 session where we will uncover some transfer basics, resources for Parenting Scholars, share our transfer journeys as parents, and why YOU are needed in spaces of higher education.

Against All Odds: Thriving as a Student While Raising a Family

Workshop #17 - Session C (1:00 - 1:50 pm)

Room Number: 1020A/B (1st floor)

Presenter: Dr. Claudia Cotto-Verdon

A true story of overcoming obstacles and celebrating a victory will be shared especially for parenting students balancing multiple responsibilities. Common challenges and solutions will be addressed.

Workshop Facilitators



María Baaz Medina (She/Her)

Counselor, Mt. San Antonio College

As a counselor at Mt. San Antonio College and Long Beach City College, Maria is passionate about supporting diverse student populations. Utilizing her own experiences as a former undocumented community college student and parent of two, Maria supports underrepresented student populations, including first-generation, undocumented, student parents, and EOPS students to promote their success.

Kassandra Lawrence (She/Her)

Counselor, Mt. San Antonio College

Kassandra Lawrence is a community college counselor with experience supporting diverse student populations, including student-parents balancing academics, family, and work. As both an educator and a parent, she is passionate about creating inclusive, realistic supports that honor the multiple roles student parents navigate.



Deborah Lopez (She/Her)

Director, Foster Care Programs & CalWORKs, Rio Hondo College

Deborah Lopez is a student-centered leader in higher education who works to remove barriers for student parents and current/former foster youth. As a first-generation college graduate and advocate, she is passionate about equity, access, and creating systems that support student success.





Cyndi Palomino-Bendezú (She/Her)

Director, EOPS/CARE

Cyndi Bendezú Palomino, is a first-generation formerly undocumented community college student. She has been an advocate for student parents for close to 15 years. Currently she is the director of EOPS/CARE at Río Hondo College.



Cindy O'Neill (She/Her)

**Director, Child Development Center,
Rio Hondo College**

Cindy O'Neill has worked in the early childhood field since 2005. As Director of the Child Development Center, she is committed to expanding access to quality childcare and creating inclusive, family-centered support that helps student parents succeed academically and personally

Octavio Cuevas-Hernández (They/Them)

Child Care Quality Specialist (UPK Liaison)

Octavio Cuevas-Hernández is a devoted community partner in the East San Gabriel Valley, with a distinct emphasis on the Pomona Valley. They serve as a Child Care Quality Specialist (UPK Liaison) for Pomona USD Child Development, demonstrating a strong commitment to this region. Octavio is deeply passionate about working laterally with children across the P–3 learning continuum, which serves as a bridge between early childhood education (ECE) and K–12 systems. Their current work focuses on enhancing the educational continuum that children experience from birth through third grade, regardless of race, class, culture, or zip code.

Their initiatives aim to close achievement gaps and elevate educational quality for all children. In particular, they are dedicated to increase parental choice within early care and education ecosystem.



Eva Ríos-Alvarado (She/Her)

Mt. SAC Student Equity & Outreach Librarian

Eva Ríos-Alvarado is a proud mama and has worked as a California community college librarian since 2014. Currently, she works as a librarian at Mt. SAC Library. She is engaged in research and practices which come from long traditions of liberation and resistance. As a practitioner of Capoeira Angola, the Afro-Brazilian spiritual, healing art, since the early 2000s, Eva continues to learn how to weave community and legacies of resistance as integral places and spaces into her education work and beyond. She has a B.A. in Geography, a M.S.(LIS) in Library Information Science, and a M.A. in Latin American Studies. Read her latest co-edited book, “Building Our Own: Critiques, Narratives, and Practices by Community College Library Workers of Color” with Litwin Books.





Rocio Sanchez (She/Her)

Student Support Services, Mt. SAC Rising Scholars

Rocio Sanchez is a single mother of two and a scholar-parent in the sandwich generation, balancing parenting, care-giving, and graduate studies. She is an East Los Angeles College graduate currently pursuing her master's degree at California State University, Los Angeles.



Graciela Padilla (She/Her)

Student Support Services, Mt. SAC Rising Scholars

Graciela Padilla is a mother of two and a Mt. San Antonio College alumna currently pursuing her master's degree at California State University, Long Beach. Her educational journey reflects a strong commitment to perseverance, leadership, and modeling academic success for her family.

Carlos Lopez (He/Him)

Outreach Coordinator, Mt. SAC Rising Scholars

Carlos Lopez is a father of three and a proud Mt. San Antonio College alumnus currently completing his bachelor's degree at California State University, Fullerton. As a scholar-parent, he is preparing for the next step in his academic journey by exploring graduate studies while balancing family, work, and education.



Shalini Chatarpaul (She/Her)

Mt. SAC CalWORKs Administrative Specialist I

Shalini Chatarpaul's journey into holistic self-care began with a simple but powerful realization — that true peace and fulfillment come from within. Like many, she once poured endlessly into others while leaving little space to nurture herself. Through her own path of healing, self-reflection, and growth, she discovered the transformative power of emotional awareness, healthy boundaries, and intentional self-care.

Today, Shalini shares that journey with others as a holistic self-care facilitator, guiding individuals to reconnect with their inner calm, manage stress with compassion, and build lives rooted in balance and authenticity.

Her workshops are designed not just to inspire — but to awaken. Through heartfelt stories, reflective practices, and actionable tools, Shalini invites participants to create sustainable self-care habits that honor their mind, body, and spirit. Her mission is to remind others that self-care is not indulgent; it's a sacred act of self-respect and empowerment.





Melissa Andrewin (She/Her)

Mt. SAC Coordinator, Construction Project

My name is Melissa Andrewin. I am approaching my 13th year as a Mt. SAC employee with the Facilities Planning and Management Department as a Coordinator of Construction Projects. Outside of my role in construction project management, I am a strong advocate of mental health and self-care. I see myself as a “student of life”, as I feel the world is an infinite classroom offering us all the tools and resources, we need to live a life of vitality and good health. I believe in being the change I want to see in this world by approaching people and conversations from a place of empathy, understanding, and connectivity. My own challenges in life led me on a road of self-discovery and reconciliation that has inspired me to share, teach, and encourage others along their life journeys.



Ana Silvia Turcios (She/Her)

CalWORKs Counselor

Ana Silvia Turcios has been a counselor for almost 15 years. Her work has been with CalWORKs at three community colleges (Mt. SAC, Citrus, and Long Beach). She has been the lead Counseling Professor for Counseling 54-Student Success for Single Parents for over 5 years. She is a strong advocate for her students and aims to empower them.

Lita Abella (She/Her)

Mt. SAC Professor Lita Abella, JD, BCC, ACC

Lita Abella, JD, BCC, ACC is a nationally recognized speaker, executive coach, and author of *The ABELLA Model: Leading High-Stress Professionals with Trauma-Informed Practices*. She brings rare lived and professional experience navigating high-pressure systems—including her background in the legal industry, law enforcement, and health and wellness, combined with expertise in resilience, burnout prevention, and trauma-informed practices. As a business law professor and Mt. SAC alumna, Lita translates complex challenges into actionable strategies that help students thrive.



Antonio Watson (He/Him)

Mt. SAC EOPS/MOCAN student

Antonio Watson is a dedicated full-time student at Mt. San Antonio College, on track to graduate in Spring 2026 with a degree as a Drone Camera Operator. A devoted father to his 10-year-old daughter, Antonio, brings a wealth of rich and varied professional experience to his studies. Antonio seamlessly blends his passion for technology with service, operating as a Videographer / Drone Operator for the Mt. SAC Football Team and a member of the Men of Color Action Network (MOCAN). His leadership was further honed at the A.S. Fall Leadership Conference 2025 at Lake Arrowhead, California.





Tony Rivas (He/Him)

Mt. SAC EOPS/CARE Counselor

Tony is a first-generation community college graduate who has worked to support community college students over the past 30 years. At Mt. San Antonio College, he has served as an EOPS/CARE Counselor for the past 20 years and has continued to help students reach their educational goals. He believes that all students shall be afforded educational opportunities at and beyond the community college.



Beatriz Chavez (She/Her)

M.A. Student, Chicana/o & Latina/o Studies (CSULA) / Student Services Support, Mt. SAC EOPS/CARE & CalWORKs

Beatriz Adriana Chavez is the oldest in her family, a first-generation Mexican immigrant, and proud EOPS alum who understands what it takes to navigate college while carrying family responsibilities. She is a Cal Poly Pomona alum in Gender, Ethnicity, and Multicultural Studies (GEMS) and a current graduate student in Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies (CLS) at Cal State LA. She is passionate about turning lived experience into practical tools, so student parents feel seen, supported, and empowered to speak up and succeed.

Nancy Dayne (She/Her)

Professor & Director of the FCS Family Resource Center, CSU Long Beach

Dr. Nancy Dayne is a professor in Child and Family Studies and Director of the FCS Family Resource Center, at CSU Long Beach. Her professional trajectory includes pre-school/toddler teacher, assistant director, and center director. Her research interests include college student-parent support services, pre-service and in-service teacher development, parent education, and parent involvement.



Crystal Divas-Guerrero (She/Her)

Program Supervisor, SPIRITT Family Centers

Cristal Divas-Guerrero, is the Program Supervisor for the Prevention and Aftercare Program at SPIRITT Family Services. She provides guidance to case navigators, ensuring high-quality, culturally responsive services that support the well-being of children, youth, and families and empower teams to deliver consistent, high-quality care while fostering collaboration with community partners and stakeholders.





Mayra Rivas (She/Her)

Resource Specialist, SPIRITT Family Services

Myra Rivas is the Resource Specialist at SPIRITT Family Services. She supports the community by providing guidance, support, and advocacy to help families access the assistance they need to thrive



Marlene Fernández (She/Her)

Adjunct Professor, Mt. SAC

Marlene Fernández is a dynamic educator, speaker, and community leader with over 20 years of experience inspiring audiences across the nation and abroad. As Co-Founder of The Center LA and Adjunct Faculty at Mount San Antonio College and Claremont Lincoln College, she is passionate about empowering individuals to unlock their leadership potential and create authentic transformation. Fluent in Spanish and deeply committed to advocacy and self-wellness, Marlene brings practical tools and powerful insights that leave a lasting impact.

Kimberly Yerena (She/Her)

Project Expert III, Mt. SAC Housing Navigation Lead

Kyoni Cummings is currently the Education Coordinator for NAMI Pomona Valley and is passionate about mental health advocacy, education and the eradication of stigma. Having a sibling that is living with a mental health condition has only deepened her passion for being a voice for individuals living with mental health conditions and their families. Normalizing conversations about mental health and wellness and eradicating stigma around asking for and receiving help is her goal, and she is honored whenever she gets the opportunity to champion such an important cause.



Kyoni Cummings (She/Her)

Education Coordinator, NAMI Pomona Valley

Kyoni Cummings is currently the Education Coordinator for NAMI Pomona Valley and is passionate about mental health advocacy, education and the eradication of stigma. Having a sibling that is living with a mental health condition has only deepened her passion for being a voice for individuals living with mental health conditions and their families. Normalizing conversations about mental health and wellness and eradicating stigma around asking for and receiving help is her goal, and she is honored whenever she gets the opportunity to champion such an important cause.





Vilma Ronzon (She/Her)

Outreach Coordinator, Buhai Center

Vilma Ronzon is the Outreach Coordinator for the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law. They have been working with diverse populations for over 5 years in varying fields including outreach, program management, and education. Their background in History and Education has fostered a passion for sharing information and resources. In addition to being a resource for their community, Vilma enjoys connecting with people over food, music, and art.



Perla Partida (She/Her)

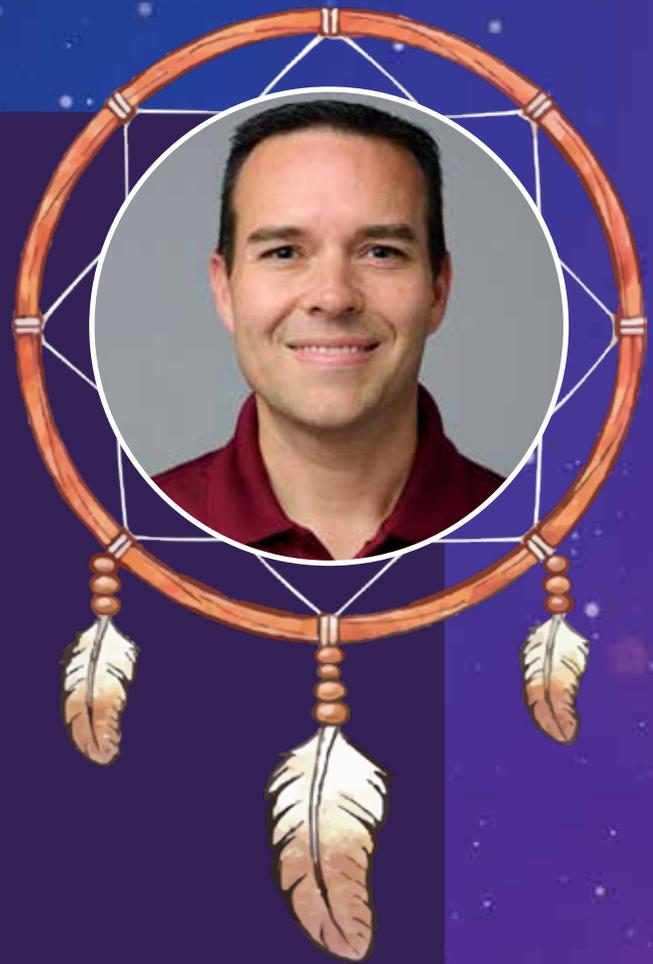
M.Ed, Mt. SAC Transfer Specialist

Raised in the city of Baldwin Park by immigrant parents, Perla is a proud *mujer*, a mother to 2 beautiful daughters, ages 12 and 1, Chicana, a 1st generation college student, non-traditional, low-income, and a proud parenting scholar. She started her higher education journey eight years after graduating from high school with a 3-month-old baby and working full-time. During her time at Mt. SAC, she was part of the ACES TRiO program, CalWORKs, EOPS/CARE, and the Honors Program. Perla successfully transferred to UCLA and earned a bachelor's degree in Chicana studies with a minor in Education and then earned her master's degree in educational counseling at USC. Currently, Perla is a Transfer Specialist at the Mt. SAC Transfer Center who remains championing efforts for Parenting Scholars and is in her last semester of her first year of her doctoral program at Cal Poly Pomona.

Josh Loudon (He/Him)

Ed.D., Mt. SAC Transfer Center Director

Dr. Josh Loudon is Mt. SAC's Transfer and Completion Center Director. He is an award-winning academic advising professional and Mt. SAC alum who graduated with a double major in Anthropology and Linguistics and a Master's in Anthropology from California State University, Fullerton. Josh teaches Anthropology as an adjunct faculty at Mt. SAC and recently completed his Doctor of Education in Community College Leadership at Cal State Fullerton. Outside of work and school, you will find Josh hanging out with his four kids or running long distances to prepare for his next marathon.



Dr. Claudia Cotto-Verdon (She/Her)

Adjunct Professor - Mt. San Antonio College

Dr. Claudia Cotto-Verdon is a mental health professional and adjunct faculty member with over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit sector and a decade in higher education. She is passionate about supporting others, values family time, and self-care outside of work.



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Anisa Alonso, Kriystal Bilderbach, Dr. Sara Gamez, Jeze Lopez, Dr. Julie Marquez, Bianca Valle Ward, Sandra Aquino, Annel Tagarao, Kaitlyn Yrineo, Brisieda Maciel, Heather Meltesen, Cristina Freeborn, Urias Garcia, Ana Silvia Turcios, and Perla Partida

**The Parent Institute Committee would also like to thank
all of those who have participated in the resource fair.**

Community Partner's Resource Fair Table Guide

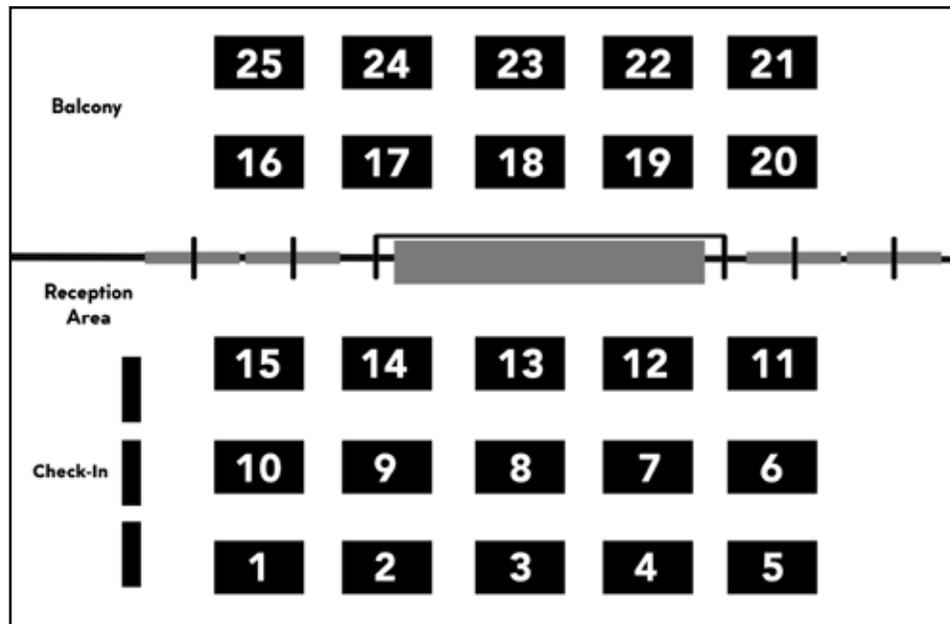


Table Number and Name of Organization

Inside

1. East Valley Community Health Center
2. Project Sister Family Services
3. Harriet Buhai Center for Family Law
4. SPIRITT Family Services
5. Head Start / Early Head Start (PUSD)
6. LA County Library - Walnut Branch
7. Pomona Valley Hospital Family Education & Resource Center
8. Walking with Moms In Need
9. CSULB Family Resource Center
10. UCLA Parents with Dependents Program
11. CA TruConnect
12. CA TruConnect
13. UCR Underground Scholars Program
14. WIC
15. West End SELPA

Balcony

16. Mt. SAC Library
17. Mt. SAC Basic Needs Resources & CalFresh Outreach
18. Mt. SAC Child Development Center
19. Mt. SAC Student Health Services
20. Mt. SAC Transfer Center
21. Mt. SAC Behavioral & Wellness Team
22. Mt. SAC ASAC
23. Mt. SAC Career Center

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to take the survey.**

