



# CHILD PARENT INSTITUTE

*Building brighter futures for our children and families*



## Our start:

Child Parent Institute (CPI), formerly California Parenting Institute, is a parent education and children's mental health agency, serving families throughout Sonoma County since 1978 and supported by both public and private funding.

CPI was originally formed following the passage of Proposition 13, which limited tax funding for schools. As a result, parenting classes held at the adult schools were no longer available. As this also predated public access to the Internet, there was no easy way for new parents to get the information they needed.

A local pediatrician, along with a small group of women, started CPI to meet this need, and we have been growing ever since – always with our eye on providing services that strengthen families.



**Impact100 Sonoma has awarded two Community Grants to**

**Child Parent Institute: \$15,000 to support parent education classes for high-risk families (2012) and \$15,000 for gang prevention parent support services (2013).**

## What we do:

CPI's mission is to end child abuse and strengthen the health of children, parents, and families. The continuum of care includes children's counseling, family resource assistance, parent education and support services, facilitated supervised visitation, and a non-public school (New Directions) providing adolescent special education/mental health services. In the past two years (2012-2014), CPI served 113 families with home visits and offered 39 class sessions in Sonoma Valley. This adds up to 295 parents served, which in turn improved the lives of almost 1000 children. Today, CPI offers programming that includes support for victims of child abuse and trauma, early childhood mental health, autistic children, co-parenting, and supervised visitation.

## A single story:

CPI's focus is on strengthening families and the communities in which they live. A Sonoma elementary school referred a Latino family to CPI because the seven-year-old was showing signs of aggressive behavior in the classroom. The father often worked two jobs, mostly in the fields and as a day laborer, and saw his role as very traditional. He was the breadwinner, while the mother was to be at home and take responsibility for the house and the children.

Our parent educator set up a later evening appointment so he could work with both parents. He learned that the father would come home after a long day and yell for the children to turn down the television or computer because he was tired. Our educator asked the father about his goals for the family. Did he want to have a better relationship with the boys as they grew older? Did he imagine that they would want to model their behavior after his? He suggested that the father make one small change: When he arrived home, he would first go to the boys and ask how their day was.

Suddenly, the family dynamic shifted. The boys were more considerate of their father; and he, in turn, would sit and watch movies with them. Both parents learned behavior management strategies and how to be more consistent. This helped the seven-year-old to feel safer and to behave better at school. Reflecting on what they had gained from CPI, the dad said, "I feel like our family won the lottery because we had these parenting services."

## Our future:

Our hope is to continue to serve vulnerable families wherever they live in Sonoma County and to offer both parenting and mental health services that can improve the child-parent bond and work as a preventive measure to future problems.