



# April Hero Profile 2020



“We Are the Care” is a county-wide advocacy initiative comprised of families, professionals in the early childhood care and education field, civic leaders, TK-12 teachers, higher education leaders, employers, business owners, community members, government employees and elected officials who are partnering together to address our local child care crisis.

### APRIL'S HERO

Shana Paulson

### HOW SHANA SHOWS HER CARE

Being a fierce advocate for child care providers and the families who need them!

### ONE OF SHANA'S HOPES

That our community might forge innovative and thoughtful partnerships to address the local child care challenge.

## Shana Paulson is a champion for children— connecting families to much-sought-after early education programs and supporting the dedicated professionals in the field.

For over two decades, Shana has worked at CAPSLO's (Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo) Child Care Resource Connection. As a mom who had to seek and rely on child care herself, Shana recognizes the resilience and resourcefulness of families striving to access and afford quality early learning opportunities for their children. Shana also bears daily witness to the passion, perseverance and creativity of ECE (Early Childhood Education) professionals, whose services allow parents to work, contribute to the economy, and be confident that their little ones are building lifelong cognitive, motor, behavioral and social skills.

In Shana's eyes, the care of our youngest population is everyone's priority. "We are all affected by the loss of intellectual capital when skilled individuals are unable to remain in our local workforce because they can't find or afford child care, and businesses are hindered by employee absenteeism resulting from unreliable care," says Shana.

According to Shana's co-worker and SLO County Child Care Planning Council Manager Raechelle Bowlay,

there's no more fervent believer than Shana— that by encouraging, educating and elevating caregivers, we ensure a strong future for society as a whole. ECE programs are in growing need of community-wide support, as they struggle to adequately attract, compensate and retain qualified staff. Shana is leading the charge behind the scenes to help bolster our local child care system.

Raechelle calls out Shana as powerful proof that dedicated child care advocacy can actually lead to real change. Thanks in large part to Shana's work, more people are recognizing the value of ECE. Knowing that Shana has dedicated her career to sharing its critical impact— is inspiration for all of us to join the cause.

**Thank you, Shana.  
You are a true Hands-On Hero.**

*Look for more on all of our "We Are the Care" Heroes on COE-TV Channels 2 and 19!*



"We Are the Care" was born from "Where's the Care?", a Town Hall hosted in May 2019 by First 5 San Luis Obispo County with the support of local stakeholders. It led to the creation of three task forces dedicated to addressing challenges and identifying opportunities to improve and expand our local child care system. "Hands-on Heroes" is a recognition program, coordinated with partner agencies, that honors individuals making a difference in the lives of young children and families. The year 2020 highlights Heroes in Child Care. To learn more about "We Are the Care" and "Hands-on Heroes", please visit [first5slo.org](http://first5slo.org).