

Tulare County  
Office of Education

Tim A. Hire, County Superintendent of Schools

news  
galleryweek

August 21, 2024

High school students and parents invited to attend  
annual Tulare County College Night September 10



Representatives from 70 universities and colleges will be on hand at the annual Tulare County College Night to answer questions about entrance requirements, available degrees, and tuition expenses at their institutions. College Night will be held Tuesday, September 10, at the Visalia Convention Center.

The event, which will open to students and their families at 5:30 p.m., is designed to provide information on preparing for and applying to colleges.

More information and helpful resource materials are available at [tcoe.org/collegenight](https://tcoe.org/collegenight).

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## Annual Kids of Character nominations now open



TCOE's CHARACTER COUNTS! Program is now accepting nominations for its Kids of Character Awards.

Every year, thousands of students are nominated for the awards – students like Mateo Perez Rodriguez.

Last year, Perez Rodriguez was nominated by Angelica Bermudez. In her nomination, Bermudez wrote, "Mateo comes to school every single day with the happiest attitude and positive aura. He greets not just teachers, but most staff members, with a big smile. He is outgoing, expressive, and enjoys giving hugs and smiles. When a classmate is in need, Mateo is quick to find an adult. On the first day of school, he made his teacher a paper flower bouquet and said he made it out of paper so they would last forever. He is very empathetic and always tries to make others feel better when he sees they might be upset. He is honest, treats all staff and students with respect, and loves to give. He is hardworking, loves to learn, and always does his absolute best."

Nominations for this year's awards will be accepted through September 27 for Tulare County school students who are exhibiting great character. Teachers, parents, and family members are encouraged to nominate Kids of Character as part of the 29th Annual CHARACTER COUNTS! Week Celebration (October 21-26). Nomination forms can be found at [tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter](http://tcoe.org/KidsOfCharacter).

The **Six Pillars of Character** that students can be nominated for are:

**TRUSTWORTHINESS** - Being honest, telling the truth, and keeping promises

**RESPECT** - Treating others the way you would like to be treated

**RESPONSIBILITY** - Doing what you are supposed to do

**FAIRNESS** - Playing by the rules

**CARING** - Being helpful, kind, and generous

**CITIZENSHIP** - Doing your share in your family and community

Last year during CHARACTER COUNTS! Week, over 4,400 students from 153 schools in Tulare County were recognized – a spectacular demonstration of the community's continued support of the CHARACTER COUNTS! program. What started as a celebration of students modeling the Six Pillars of Character in 1996 has turned into a national character recognition model which has honored tens of thousands of Tulare County students over the past 29 years.

For more information about the CHARACTER COUNTS! program, contact Kelley Petty at [kelleyp@tcoe.org](mailto:kelleyp@tcoe.org).

To see a list of last year's nominees, visit <https://tcoe.org/CharacterCounts/CCWeek/CCWeek2023>.

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## Early Childhood Education's PLAY Program supports young parents in need

In this age of increasingly isolated personal interactions, Early Childhood Education's PLAY Program is a welcomed and compassionate home service for new parents that need support.

Since 2019, Early Childhood Education (ECE) has partnered with Tulare County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) to serve CalWorks families that are expecting a child or have children ages birth to three. The families served have experienced some form of domestic violence, mental health, or substance abuse crises.



Utilizing the federal Early Head Start (EHS) Home Visiting Model, PLAY provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to enhance the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of children and families. The in-home services also include parent education, financial education, and trauma-informed case management to support families.

“There aren’t enough words to explain how much the PLAY Program has helped my entire family,” said Mayra Sanchez, a PLAY Program parent. “PLAY wasn’t just a program for my infant, but also support for the whole family. Teacher Nohemi Perez was always here with an optimistic attitude and encouraging words of advice when I had my two babies under the age of two. I’ll never forget the time when there was a baby formula shortage and how Nohemi helped me find some. My now two-year-old son is very talkative and sociable thanks to teacher Nohemi.”

PLAY Program families enjoy weekly home visits, group socials/playgroups, nutrition education, developmental screening and assessments, and childcare resources. Monica Perez, PLAY eligibility specialist, reports that staff members coordinate services with multiple Tulare County agencies to provide comprehensive support to families in the program. Upon completion of PLAY, parents are connected to ECE home base programs, center base programs, or the Connections for Quality Care Program to continue the educational support their child needs to be successful in school.

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