

# Community Engagement and Representation

**The Power of Parents**

Because insight into the real experiences of diverse communities in the county is crucial to relevant and impactful decision-making, **three Parent Councils and a Parent Council Advisory Committee** have been formed. Our parents, all with living experience with preterm birth, are integral to PTBi activities through their membership in the Steering Committee, each of the work groups (including positions as work group chairs), and planning committees for events such as World Prematurity Day and Community Forums. Parent Council members receive support for their involvement through stipends, social support and relationship building, policy analysis and advocacy training, and personal development opportunities.

**Parent Council for Dads**

In January 2018, PTBi convened a group of fathers to discuss the formation of a Parent Council for Dads. During this meeting, the dads brainstormed ideas and decided it was a great idea to have monthly meetings and officially create the PTBi's first Council for Dads! The dads decided to meet on the last Monday of each month at the Lighthouse for Children with Allen Hodgkin as their facilitator, who also co-chairs PTBi's Parent Council Advisory Committee.

**Parent Councils for Moms**

Starting in early 2017, two Mom's Councils were formed, one for English-speaking moms, and one for Spanish-speaking moms. These mothers, all with living experience of preterm birth, serve as valuable partners in every aspect of Fresno County PTBi.

**African American Youth Leadership Academy (AAYLA) and Keeping it Real (KIR)**

The Parent Council Advisory Committee consisting of 13 African American leaders who serve throughout the initiative and meet quarterly to provide critical insight into the unique needs and perspectives of African American families. To improve birth outcomes the committee is addressing health education; and inequity and discrimination with an emphasis on whole family integration, early education, and family resiliency. After thoughtful consideration of community organizations in Fresno County, the committee developed recommendations that lead to the creation of Keeping it Real (KIR) and African American Youth Leadership Academy (AAYLA).

Keeping it Real	African American Youth Leadership Academy
Keeping It Real Program is for African American fathers and young men in Fresno County. The Keeping It Real Program is a 12-week program for African American fathers that will utilize the national Noble Young Man curriculum. This curriculum promotes, cultural understanding, leadership, development and raising children with pride. It is based on the philosophy that male youth need other men, their family, and community to prepare for true manhood. Each session is 1.5 hours. Dinner, stipends, and raffles are provided.	The African American Youth Leadership Academy (AAYLA) is for African American Mothers and young women. It covers topics on leadership skills, development, social justice issues, racism, reproductive and mental health, and civic engagement. Its goal is to provide leadership development opportunities for women. Each session is 2 hours. Dinner, gifts, and raffles are provided.

**"Living Experience"**

We recognize that the impact of preterm birth is ongoing and lifelong for the baby, mother, family, and community. We reference parents with preterm babies involved in our initiative as having "living experience."



**170+**  
Community Partners



**70+**  
Community Organizations

**Community Engagement**

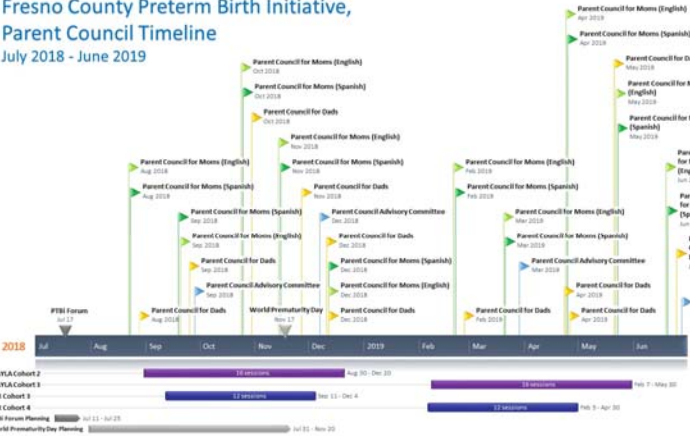
**World Prematurity Day**

In honor of World Prematurity Day, observed every November 17th, Fresno County PTBi hosts an annual community event to increase awareness about preterm birth rates and the impact of prematurity on the community, and to honor and celebrate the journeys of families who live with the impact of preterm birth every day.

**Community Forums**

Fresno County PTBi hosts two community forums annually, with the purpose of communicating its strategies, initiatives, successes, challenges, and showing transparency and accountability to the community. Community forums are held at times and locations that are easily accessible and engage our community in finding and implementing effective solutions. Community forums feature information to increase awareness about preterm birth rates and disparities in Fresno County, including testimonials from Parent Council members who live with the impact of preterm birth.

## Fresno County Preterm Birth Initiative, Parent Council Timeline July 2018 - June 2019



**Parent's with Living Experience are Integrated into PTBi**

Committee or Workgroup	Number of Parents
Parent Councils	24
Steering Committee	4
Health and Education before Pregnancy	6
Care and Support for Pregnant Women	6
Coordination of Care	2
Shared Measures	1
World Prematurity Day & Community Forum Planning Committee	8

