

First 5 Alameda County Strategic Plan 2022–2027



Acknowledgments

First 5 wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the many people who made this plan possible. This plan was developed in a challenging time two years into the pandemic, when families, communities, organizations, and public systems were stretched beyond limit. Our deepest respect and gratitude to our community for their fortitude, and appreciation to those who were able to take time to think about how to best use First 5's public resources and to envision an early childhood system where children and families can thrive. Special thanks to:

- Parents and caregivers for their wisdom and experiences
- Early childhood providers and community serving organizations for “on the ground” insight
- Community leaders for the clear-eyed systems perspective
- First 5 staff for thoughtful participation, dialogue, and decision-making
- Our consultant Hickman Strategies for their role in our strategic planning process
- First 5 Alameda County Commissioners for their guidance and support



Our work is a continuation of the legacy of Alameda County Supervisor and First 5 Founding Commissioner Wilma Chan.

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A MOMENT OF URGENCY & POSSIBILITY

Ensuring Alameda County's children grow into healthy, productive adults is fundamental to our community's prosperity, health, and well-being.

Decades of research have demonstrated that the period from birth to age five is the most critical window of opportunity to positively impact a child's future. The correlation between early childhood development, community and family conditions, and lifelong health has also been established—and these factors are undeniably intertwined.

The research makes clear that disparate life outcomes of children related to health, education, and employment are the result of historic and ongoing racist, classist policies that extract resources (i.e., poorly paid labor) and harm some communities, families, and children while benefiting others. Despite these forces, there are systemic interventions that can positively change the lives of children and their families. These findings have profound implications for public policy and the role of public systems.

It is evident that President Biden's proposals in support of families with young children and Governor Newsom's investments in early childhood and the safety net are informed by the growing recognition of both the conditions necessary to support family and child well-being and the need for public policy to address the increasing inequality.

Locally, Alameda County voters made significant investments in children and families that are coming closer to fruition. First 5's role in two local ballot measures—as contracted implementation partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and named administrator of The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C, currently in litigation)—are anticipated to grow our agency's annual revenue from \$24 million to approximately \$200 million annually, an eight-fold increase. A major focus of this strategic plan is to ready our infrastructure and capacity to support the effective use of these precious public dollars as First 5 Alameda County adapts to these new local and state historic investments on children and families.

This is the moment to invest in a better future through long-term, systemic solutions for children and families.



WHO WE ARE

First 5 was established in 1998 by California’s Proposition 10.

Our role is to improve life outcomes for Alameda County’s youngest children. We support, inform, and partner with public systems (i.e., health, early care and education, economic, and family supports) and community resources to create an early childhood system of care that is responsive to the needs of caregivers and families with young children.

We are guided by a “whole community, whole family, whole child” policy and programming approach to our work. First 5 uses lessons learned from our investments, research and data, and partnerships to inform policy positions and influence local, state, and national decision-making.

We recognize that the context of lived experience is essential to impactful investment, program design, and policy advocacy, and we support the efforts of families, caregivers, and community-based organizations to that end. We have a multi-year investment in place-based initiatives, and we have funded community engagement work, including summer pre-kindergarten programs, alongside Alameda County’s school districts. We have partnered with community providers and pediatricians to support families’ concerns about their child’s development and access to resources. We provide technical assistance and infrastructure support to the early childhood education field and community-based providers. We invest in father-friendly programming and systems so men

and dads are not excluded from conversations affecting their children.

“First 5 policy efforts focus on systems change, particularly across sectors, with an intention to shift the conditions that hold problems in place, in order to achieve meaningful and lasting social change.”

-First 5 Association 2022-24 Strategic Plan

We routinely assess and evaluate our efforts to identify areas for improvement, capacity building, and where there are gaps in the early childhood system, we strive to fund and scale promising programs and proven interventions. Where possible we integrate and align our activities to improve equitable access to better serve the needs of Alameda County families.

Our “North Star,” the population result that guides our work, is that ***all Children Are Ready for Kindergarten***; our work is to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools support families and children by creating the ***conditions*** that position all for success.

Since 2008, First 5 has benchmarked results for our county’s children by conducting a biannual Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Results have shown very little improvement over time and consistently point to the countervailing impact of systemic inequities - socioeconomics, community conditions, and limited enrollment in early education as barriers to kindergarten readiness.

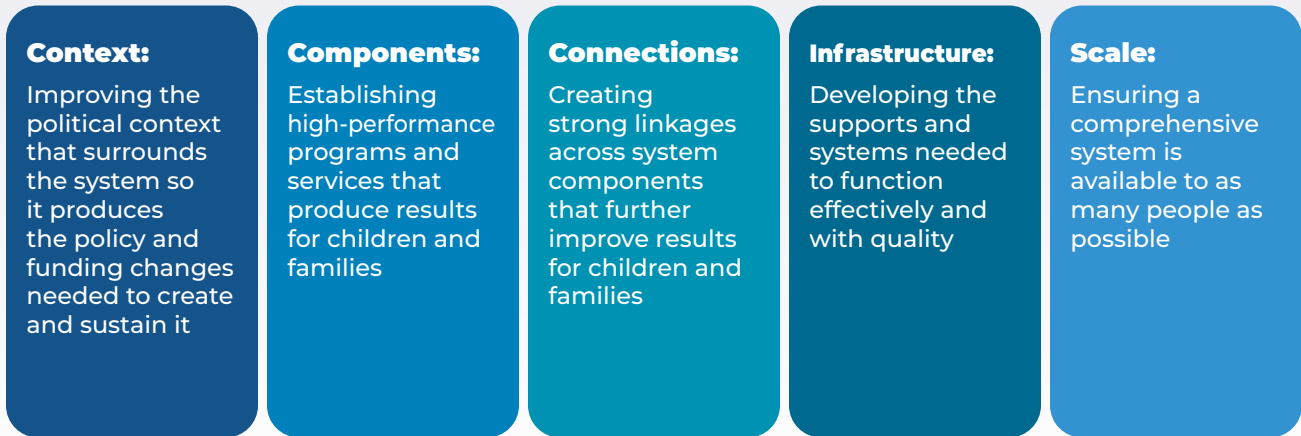
Since 1998, First 5 Alameda County has:

- Raised \$42.5 million from philanthropic and other funding sources.
- Earned \$20 million from federal fiscal leveraging.
- Awarded \$262 million to community partners and agencies.

The findings and recommendations in the [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) (KRA) indicate a drop in readiness since the pandemic from 44% to 33% according to parents, and reinforce a systems-based approach to early childhood that centers on equity and basic needs. First 5’s programming, investments, and policy agenda are multipronged and span Place, People, and Policy to improve conditions in the areas we support— Neighborhoods, Health & Well-Being, Learning & Care, and Family.

Defining Systems Building

Systems initiatives are organized efforts to improve a system and its impacts. They can be publicly or privately funded or a combination of the two. Systems initiatives in the early childhood field may have different labels, such as systems building, systems change, or systems reform. Yet systems initiatives are best understood by their focus or by the areas of the system they are trying to improve. Specifically, an early childhood systems initiative might focus on one or more of the following five areas:



From the [Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide \(hhs.gov\)](https://hhs.gov)

EVOLVING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF CARE

Within the Early Childhood System, our role is to:

FUND organizations and initiatives that are mission- and vision-aligned, and part of a community-based, family-informed early childhood system

PARTNER with parents, caregivers, communities, early childhood providers, organizations, and public agencies in service to an accessible, effective, and responsive early childhood system

ADMINISTER programs for young children and families that offer services, navigation, and care coordination; support and connections to resources; and training and capacity building for providers

ADVOCATE to scale and sustain effective programs and for public policies grounded in equity and justice

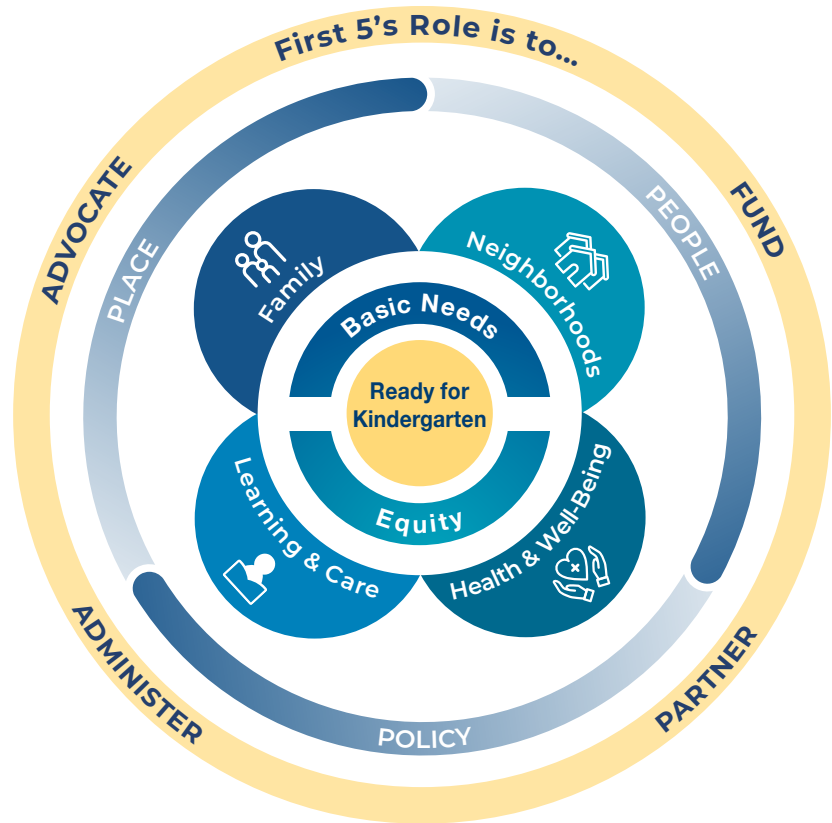


Figure 1. An early childhood system of care cultivates community and family conditions for children's kindergarten readiness.

After taking inventory of our impact, local system opportunities, and the needs of families and children in the 2017–2022 strategic plan, First 5:

- Integrated signature programs into larger systems when applicable and sunset programs when appropriate
- Launched substantial investments in community-directed, place-based efforts
- Increased the agency's focus and capacity in policy advocacy, research, and data for action
- Identified public system partners to scale proven strategies, including Quality Early Care and Education (ECE), Pediatric Care Coordination, Fatherhood, and ECE CalWORKs Apprenticeship

Alameda County’s context and our analysis of the public policy levers by which conditions for families can be improved has informed our embrace of equity as the center of our work. Coupled with a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco revenues, First 5 has adopted a **systems change approach** strategy—acting as a funder and a policy advocate—to address the underlying structural issues, the root causes, that face communities, families, and children.



Since the adoption of the 2022-2027 strategic plan in June 2022, we have continued to leverage our expertise, infrastructure, and investments in Place, People, and Policy, allowing us to scale the past 25 years of our work to build and evolve the early childhood system. Given this, the drivers of our accomplishments and agency growth in this strategic plan update are:

1. SYSTEM READYING, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CAPACITY

- **Continued to build and scale the local early childhood system with new revenue.** Our fiscal outlook is strong given new funds, coupled with a clean audit and a balanced budget. While First 5 Alameda County will be experiencing significant growth in the coming year, all other First 5 agencies around the State have declining revenues and are facing layoffs and program cuts. Our colleagues throughout California, and beyond, are looking to us as a model for leveraging funding, policy advocacy, and equity-centered systems building as they manage challenging local circumstances.
- **Locally, First 5 was selected as the Early Education Implementation Partner for the Oakland’s Children Initiative (Measure AA), adding \$23 million to our annual budget.**

At the local, state, and federal level in FY22-23, we received:

\$2.5M	\$1.4M	\$2.5M	\$375K	\$1.4M
from the Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA)*	annual allocation from Alameda Alliance for Health (AAH)	annual allocation for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA)	annual allocation of multi-year grants from philanthropy	from Child, Family & Community Services (CFCS)

- **Restructured the agency and conducted hiring to ensure we have staffing and infrastructure to administer new incoming public funding,** including roles focused on compliance, health, advocacy and government affairs, performance management, planning and project management, financial budgeting and forecasting, and communications. The hiring and structural changes will continue into 2023 and beyond, as we have entered a three- to five-year building phase. We seek to retain and recruit a workforce that reflects the diversity and cultural fabric of Alameda County, support staff development and professional growth, ensure regulatory compliance, and effectively implement existing and new initiatives.

* Out of the \$2.5 million, \$1 million is a one time allocation for FY22-24 and an annual allocation of \$718K.

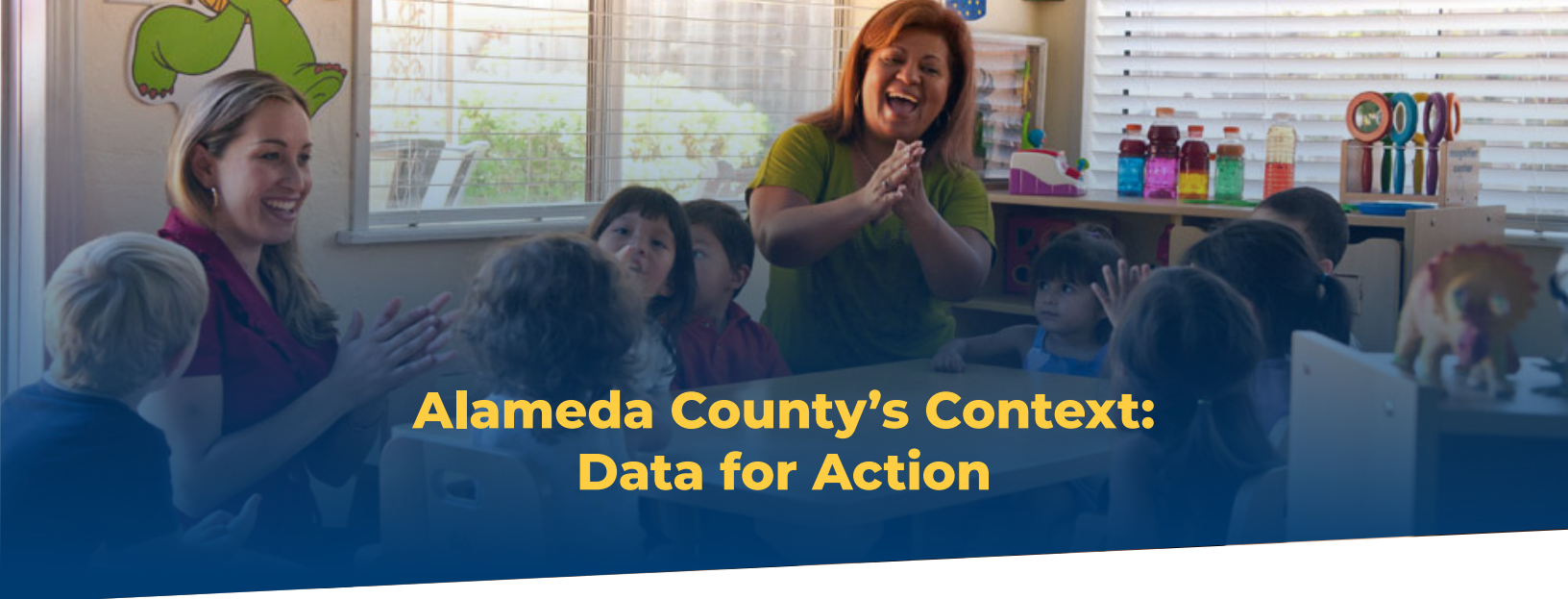
2. OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY

- **Completed a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment using a participatory, community-centered research-to-action approach that resulted in data from more than 3,000 Alameda County community members.** The 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) findings and recommendations show how our county may improve kindergarten readiness in the overlapping environments that influence children’s readiness—communities, families, and schools. First 5 uses the KRA findings to inform our programs, investments, and policy advocacy. (See Appendix A, page 44)
- **Continued centering equity in our programming, investments, and advocacy and—intentionally engaged in dialogue regarding organizational culture.** First 5 has used equity to inform our work since our founding in 1998. Over the years, we have intentionally built upon and strengthened this commitment, including in our 2017-22 and 2022-27 strategic plans. As part of our evolution, in 2022-23 we engaged in a participatory agencywide learning and development process to update our equity statement to encompass our current work, intentions for continuous learning and improvement, and commitment to accountability. (See pages 19-20).
- **Ensured that our governing body represents our commitment to community-directed investments by appointing a representative of a parent- and community-based building group as a First 5 Commissioner.**

3. EVOLVING TO MORE COMMUNITY-CENTERED PROGRAMMING

Launched key programmatic and community investments, including:

- **A new division of Pediatric Care Coordination encompassing our existing family serving programs out of pediatric health settings,** including Help Me Grow’s developmental screening, outreach, referral, and navigation and the DULCE’s model health, resource, and legal supports
- **A strategic parent partnership program focused on supporting Black mothers and birthing people** and on investing in community-based strategies to disrupt inequities and disparities in birth outcomes
- **A strategic planning process with our Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) grantees** in partnership with a local, BIPOC, woman-owned firm
- **The 2023 Fatherhood Summit** coordinated by our Fatherhood Initiative and supported by a philanthropic investment of \$240,000



Alameda County's Context: Data for Action

Alameda County's context and our analysis of the public policy levers by which conditions for families can be improved have informed our embrace of equity as the center of our work.

Coupled with a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco revenues, First 5 has adopted a **systems change approach** strategy—acting as a funder and a policy advocate—to address the underlying structural issues, the root causes, that face communities, families, and children.

Alameda County Family Demographics

Approximately
71,000
households with children
under age 6 (2019)⁴

Over
108,000
children under age 6 (2021)²

Approximately
6.4%
of total population under
age 6 (2021)^{2,3}

More than
16,000
births (2021)¹

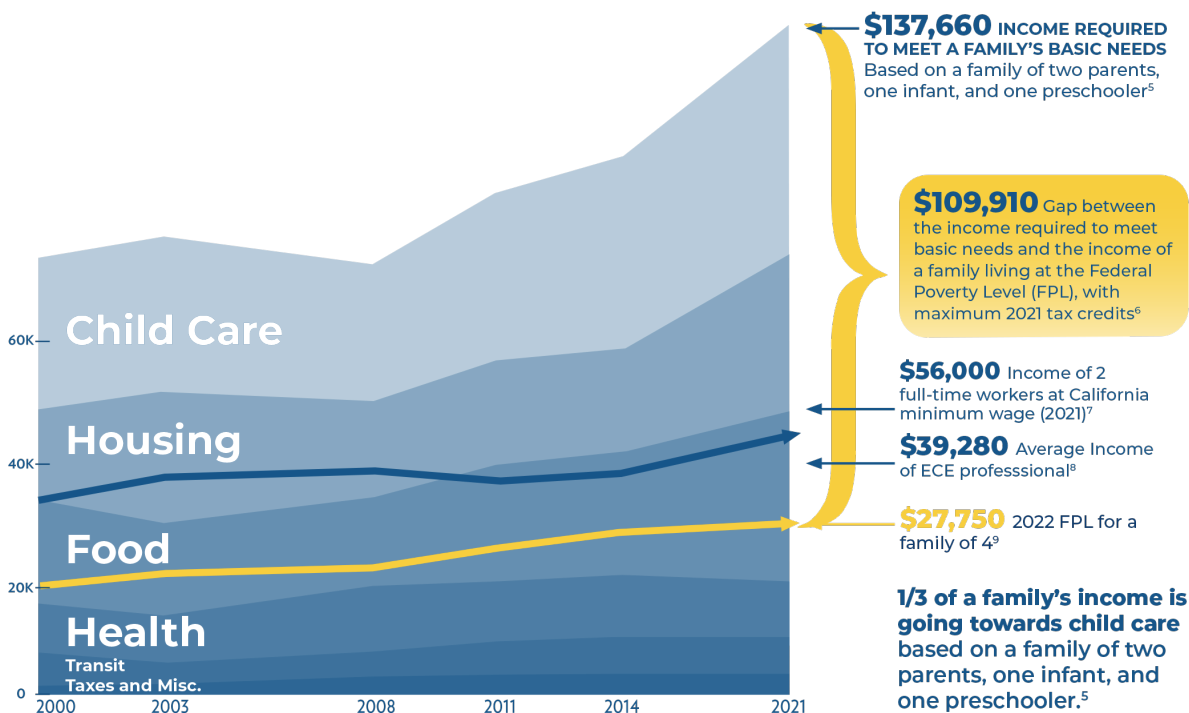
76% of
births to mothers
of color (2019)^{5,1}

7th most
diverse county in the
United States (2020)^{5,1}

1/2 Nearly half of children live
in households that speak
a language other than
English at home. (2019)⁷

1/2 Half of children under age
6 live with at least one
parent who was born
outside of the US. (2019)⁶

Financial Realities of Families in Alameda County



Children 0-6 Enrolled in Public Benefits in Alameda County (2021)¹⁵

+ **Medi-Cal 32,008**
(28% of total children 0-6)

🍏 **CalFresh 12,182**
(11% of total children 0-6)

Children and women, especially those who identify as people of color, bear the brunt of structural inequities.

Approximately **1 in 10** children under 6 lives below the Federal Poverty Level. (2019)¹⁶

In Alameda County and the Bay Area, more than **1 in 3 women are caught in financial precarity.**¹⁵

3 out of 4 households struggling to meet their basic needs in Alameda County have a head of household who identifies as a **person of color.**¹⁵

1 in 3 families are struggling to afford diapers.⁴¹

The cost of living continues to rise at an unsustainable rate.

\$ 68%
increase in child care cost (2014–2021)¹⁷

\$ 34%
increase in median family income (2000–2019)¹⁸

\$ 50%
of renters pay more than 1/3 of their income for rent. (2019)¹⁹

Structural Inequities Lead to Racial Disparities

Maternal and Newborn Health¹⁹



Black women and birthing people are 3x more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth and to experience more maternal health complications.



Black women are 2x as likely to live in poverty during pregnancy.



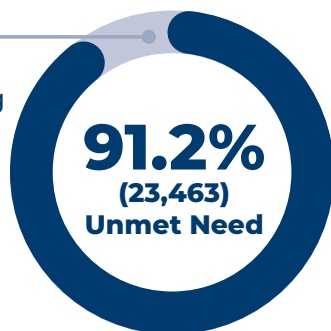
Black babies are 3-4 times more likely to be born too early, too small, or to die before their first birthday.

Access to Child Care

Alameda County is the second most disparate county in California for children enrolled in licensed early care and education—a key driver for kindergarten readiness.²⁰

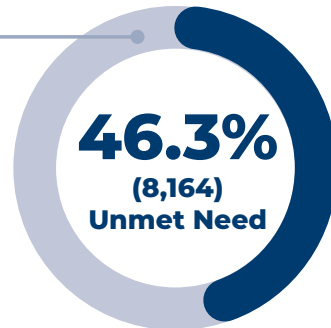
Infant/Toddler Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)²¹

8.8% (2,257)
Number of Eligible Children Accessing Subsidized Care



Preschool Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)²¹

53.7% (9,465)
Number of Eligible Children Accessing Subsidized Care



Child Care Professionals Work in a Critical and Fragile System

There is a significant need for investment and expansion in ECE licensed facilities. We estimate that the facilities cost to meet demand for licensed ECE child care in Alameda is likely in the range of \$2 billion to \$4 billion.²⁸



96%

of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women. (2020)¹³



79%

of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women of color. (2020)¹³



87%

of ECE educators are considered very low income for Alameda County. (2020)¹³



20%

of providers at child care centers reported earning less than \$15 per hour. (2020)¹³



39%

of ECE educators are over 50 years old.¹²

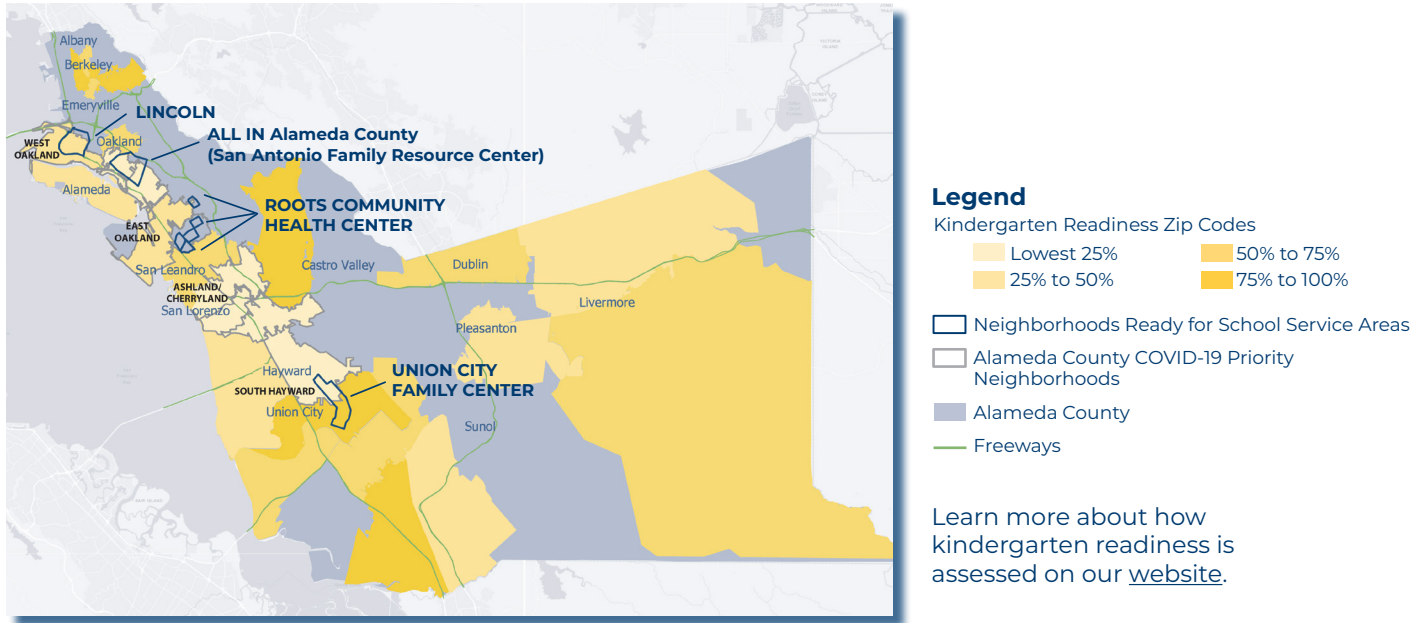
Between March 2020 and January 2021, 153 (7%) licensed child care facilities in Alameda County closed permanently.²⁵ From 2019 to 2021, there were 21 fewer licensed care centers and 270 fewer family child care (FCC) sites in Alameda County.²¹

Child Outcomes

First 5's [2018 longitudinal study](#) found that 4 in 5 children who are behind in kindergarten are still behind in third grade, a predictor of high school graduation and later health and career success.

We find that differences in kindergarten readiness are largely attributable to inequities in access to resources. The greatest movable factor continues to be child health and well-being, which is tied to socioeconomics, housing stability, and stress among parents/caregivers.¹

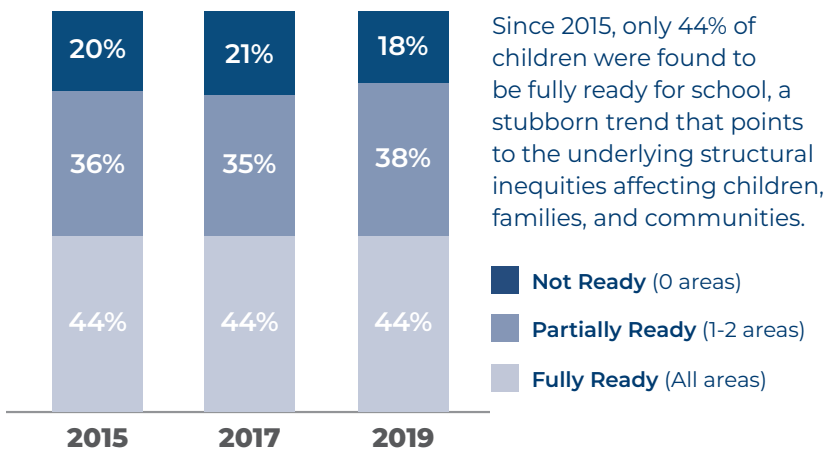
Kindergarten Readiness (2019)¹



*Zip codes with fewer than 5 participants are not shown.

**Readiness scores represent individuals living in the zip code and do not represent the overall readiness of children in that zip code.

Kindergarten Readiness 2015–2019¹



Achievement gaps persist for children who are not ready for kindergarten.



4 in 5

children who are not ready for kindergarten continue to struggle academically in third grade. (2018)²⁴

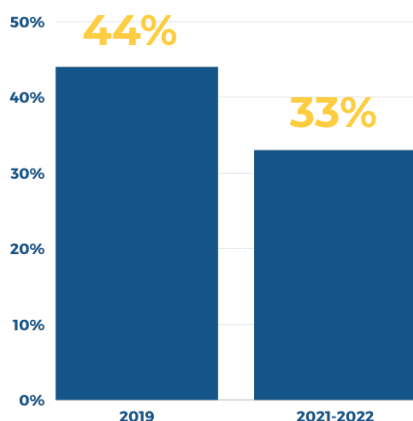


MEETING THIS MOMENT IN TIME

Kindergarten readiness studies have consistently indicated that factors predicting readiness are closely associated with socioeconomic conditions rooted in structural racism, classism, and public disinvestment in neighborhoods with primarily Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents.

The pandemic exacerbated persistent health and economic inequities that disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities, creating increased risks for families' economic security, emotional well-being, educational progress, health, and safety. The long-term effects on kindergarten readiness are not yet fully understood, but in Alameda County we saw a drop in readiness from 44% to 33% in two years.

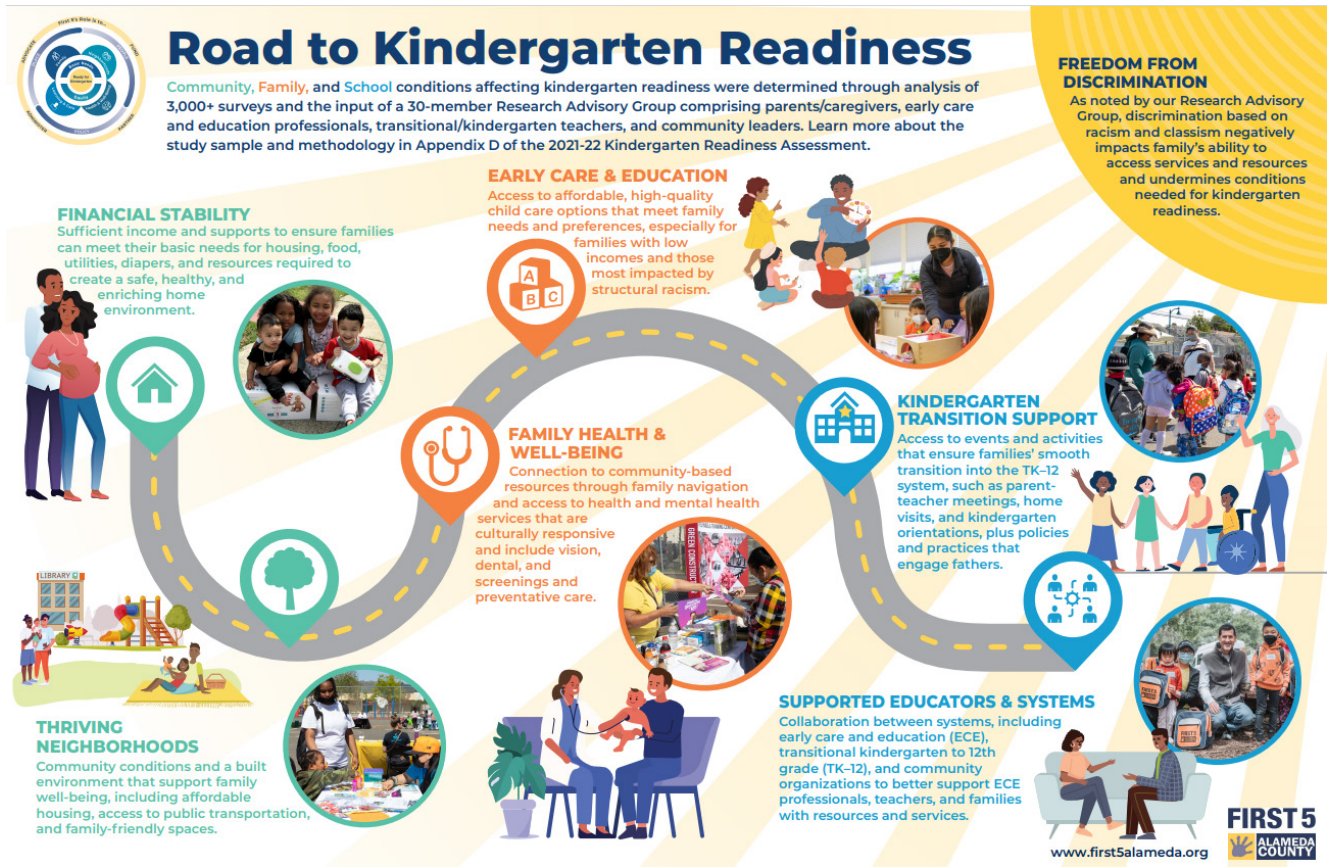
First 5 Alameda County's 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) findings and recommendations point to *systemic inequities* and show how our county can reassess policies, programming, and investment in communities, families, and schools to increase kindergarten readiness. First 5 Alameda County is focused on building and evolving an equity-centered early childhood system that matches the priority areas identified in the KRA study and the "Roadmap to Kindergarten Readiness." (See figure on page 15.)



According to parents/caregivers, 33% of children were fully ready for kindergarten compared to 44% in 2019. Structural inequities compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted children, families, and communities.

Building an equity-centered early childhood system that centers a "whole community, whole family, whole child" approach to improve kindergarten readiness is essential to the current and future overall health of Alameda County.

It will require the prioritization, commitment, and investment of a cross-section of partners, including public systems, community-based organizations, parent advocates and leaders, and philanthropic organizations. To this end, First 5 funds, partners, administers, and advocates to ensure that families have what they need every step of the way on the "Road to Kindergarten Readiness" and that systems are prepared to meet the needs of children, families, and communities.



SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN PARTNER FEEDBACK

We are building on the partner feedback from our 2021-22 planning process (see Appendix B, page 51), which highlighted priorities for supporting families and providers, and for First 5 and public systems, including:

- Build and evolve the early childhood system.
- Families and communities have strengths to build upon and should be valued, listened to, and leveraged.
- Underlying structural inequities by race and class are impacting families, providers, and communities.

Our system partner, Oakland Thrives, encapsulated our partner feedback succinctly at a November 2022 in-person gathering with this statement:



"We are 'program rich and systems poor.' We have a wealth of programs and opportunities for children, youth, and families in Oakland, but realizing the promise of those programs at neighborhood or citywide scale relies on collaboration, innovation, and alignment of public and private sector leaders, systems, and resources."

We have hosted local, state, and national leaders to support our learning journey, including in March 2023 at an all-staff presentation by Dr. Manuel Pastor who was also the keynote speaker at the First 5 Association state annual summit focused on systems change.



"There is no going back to a normal that did not work for so many. We do not need a recovery but a reimagination, restructuring, and renewal that challenges inequality and lifts commonality."

- Dr. Manuel Pastor, speaking to First 5 Alameda County All-Staff meeting, March 9, 2023

First 5 is guided by a whole community, whole family, whole child approach to our work. With our role as administrators of Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) ballot measures, new sources of revenue are available for critical early childhood programming and system building. With these new investments, First 5 can reallocate Proposition 10 funds to return to source resources for BIPOC and low-income communities, and neighborhoods that have experienced historic and ongoing disinvestment and wealth extraction.

Looking ahead for FY23-24, First 5 Alameda County will continue making progress on (see pages 8-9):

1. System readying, infrastructure, and capacity
2. Operationalizing equity
3. Evolving to more community-centered programming

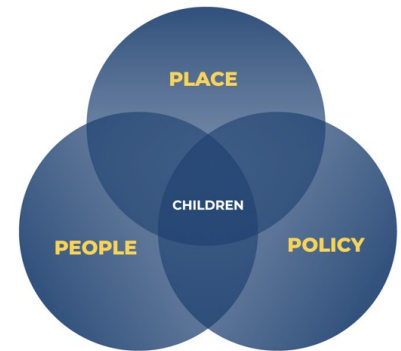


OUR APPROACH

We will be successful when all children in Alameda County are ready for kindergarten.

Our work is to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools are ready to support families and children to position them for lifelong success.

We have learned a lot over the last 25 years about the connection between community conditions and children’s outcomes, and our learning was reinforced again this past year with the 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Given our mission, the consistent KRA findings, and our analysis of opportunities for impact, we have adopted a Place, People, Policy framework to guide our investment in children and families toward building an equity-centered early childhood system.



PLACE

We believe that the health and well-being of children and their families are strongly influenced by the social and economic conditions of their neighborhoods. Strong, supportive communities help children and families thrive. We invest in programs and policies that promote economically prosperous and vibrant environments that afford access to opportunities and promote well-being by:

- Building on Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) place-based investments
- Integrating services across First 5’s targeted neighborhoods, in alignment with Alameda County’s priority ZIP Codes
- Strengthening place-based systems change and care coordination for families in NRFS sites

“What really matters is childhood environment, rather than where you live as an adult. Every extra year of exposure to a positive childhood environment makes a significant impact on long-term outcomes.”

– Dr. Raj Chetty

From Dr. Chetty’s presentation as part of the [2021 First 5 Alameda County Commission Speaker Series](#)

PEOPLE

We believe caregivers are the experts on their needs and the needs of their children and families. We work with them to identify their strengths, resources, and needs. We partner with them to reinforce their family and community supports and improve the effectiveness of our investments by:

- Investing in parent partnership and leadership
- Connecting families to basic needs and resources
- Increasing access to affordable, quality child care options through the mandates of the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and named administrator of The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) that meet the needs of low- to moderate- income families in Oakland and Alameda County
- Supporting educators and education systems to promote success for children by providing educators with wages, facilities resources, workforce development, coaching, and technical assistance
- Promoting early screening and care coordination to address social-emotional, trauma, or developmental concerns
- Fostering family well-being through innovative parent-centered programming
- Maintaining comprehensive, quality early childhood training content to providers, parents/caregivers, and community in line with our commitment to equity

"The financial and material hardships households are experiencing are negatively impacting children because they are disrupting the well-being of caregivers."

– Dr. Philip Fisher, RAPID-EC

"We would want anyone working with children to be healthy and supported and as present with children as they possibly can be. We have to provide the conditions for them to do so."

– Dr. Lea Austin,
Center for the Study of Child Care
Employment at UC Berkeley

POLICY

We believe that our policy work should address structural racism and childhood poverty and their impact on child development and family well-being. Furthermore, our policy work is most effective when families are engaged in its development and active in a leadership role. We believe that data, research, and evaluation should be conducted in partnership with the community, informing an action agenda for advocacy and organizing. We believe that public systems should be accessible, effective, and responsive to families' needs. We take a systems change approach by advancing solutions that move the early childhood system from a patchwork of services to an integrated ecosystem. We build an equity-centered early childhood system of care by:

- Measuring continuous improvement in service to equity
- Evolving quality early care and education and capacity-building for the field
- Expanding local pediatric strategies and systems care coordination capabilities (through Help Me Grow and DULCE)
- Using data and policy advocacy to advance local, state, and national investments in people, place, and systems
- Preparing the agency to administer The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) and other local, state, and federal funding initiatives
- Advancing policies and supports for early child care workers' professional development, workforce diversification, and equitable compensation and working conditions that support providers and quality care

With this scaffolding in place, First 5 Alameda County is well-positioned to build out an equity-centered early childhood system. We will continue this transformation by partnering with parents, caregivers, community, providers, and public systems to address the underlying inequities. We will leverage the assets in Alameda County and seize the opportunity of once-in-a-generation federal, state, and local investments to build a more integrated early childhood system.



COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

First 5 is committed to being an anti-racist organization.

Our 2017–2022 strategic plan explicitly named equity as a central component of our work. Inequity negatively impacts the health and well-being of children and families. We promote equity in our organization and within the community broadly. Equity informs our hiring, staff development, investments, training, community partnerships, program design, approach to [data](#), research, evaluation, and [policy advocacy](#).

Our equity work is an ongoing march toward justice and equality. In 2017 and 2018, we adopted resolutions opposing [inhumane immigration practices](#) and the [enforcement threats](#) to immigrant families by the federal government. In June 2020, the First 5 Alameda County Commission reaffirmed this commitment to equity by adopting a resolution on [equity and social justice](#) to stand united with our Black and African American colleagues, partners, and the entire Black community against racism in all its forms. We consider these resolutions as public commitments by which we hold ourselves accountable.

In 2022, we committed to an agencywide process to create a shared understanding of equity to capture our current work, intentions for continuous learning and improvement, and commitment to accountability. A key consideration is how best to utilize our role within the Early Childhood System of Care to operationalize our shared understanding of equity. We do this by using the population result that guides our work—that all Children Are Ready for Kindergarten—to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools support families and children by creating the conditions that position all for success.

From Fall 2022 through Spring 2023, First 5 Alameda County partnered with [Radicle Root Collective](#) with learning from [Arnold Chandler](#) to engage all staff in a participatory process to articulate our shared understanding of and commitment to equity.

EQUITY STATEMENT

First 5 Alameda County is committed to being an equity-centered, anti-racist, and anti-classist organization. We recognize that we operate in a racialized economic system characterized by extractive and exploitative labor practices and public policies that perpetuate long-standing disparate life outcomes. To this end, we use anti-racist and equity-based practices to invest in and support children, families, and neighborhoods. Our Place, People, Policy framework intentionally prioritizes our investments in communities that have experienced historic and systemic racism and disinvestment.

As a part of this commitment, we use our resources to redress (to set right) these injustices by:

- Celebrating Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) cultures and honoring their assets, values, and needs by ensuring investments, programs, data, and policy work is directed by and reflects the richness and needs of these communities
- Prioritizing the needs of low-to-moderate-income families and neighborhoods with historical disinvestment
- Addressing root causes through the administration of public funds, advocacy, and operationalization of public policy
- Interrupting inequities that impact the conditions needed for kindergarten readiness
- Ensuring that our investments, policies, practices, and agency culture are aligned with our equity principles

We acknowledge that our unconscious and conscious bias impacts our practices. Therefore, we are committed to deepening our understanding of how power, wealth, and opportunity imbalances appear in policies, communities, organizations, and interpersonal relationships. We can only do this as lifelong learners with a growth mindset focused on transformative change. We commit to continuous improvement and to hold ourselves accountable to operationalize this statement and our principles.

In addition to our co-created Equity Statement, we are adopting the “Guiding Principles for Federal Action on Racial Equity” developed by national leaders PolicyLink and Race Forward to further articulate our intentions. The statement and principles are consistent with our systems approach and will be operationalized into each of our strategies.

PRINCIPLES

<p>PRINCIPLE 1 UNDERSTAND THE PAST, THE PRESENT, & YOUR INFLUENCE</p> <p>Understand and acknowledge the federal, state, and local* government’s role in impacting society at a wide scale to this day—whether positive, negative, or seemingly neutral</p>	<p>PRINCIPLE 2 CONSISTENTLY ADDRESS ROOT DRIVERS</p> <p>Target the fundamental root drivers of gaps and inequities and prioritize the people who have traditionally been excluded, recognizing these investments will benefit all</p>	<p>PRINCIPLE 3 WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPACT IN RELEVANT COMMUNITIES</p> <p>Leverage the expertise and experiences of all to promote equity, particularly leaders of color and their communities</p>	<p>PRINCIPLE 4 ADOPT A CONTINUOUS LEARNING & ADAPTIVE APPROACH</p> <p>Acknowledge that the scale and complexity of reaching racial equity will require ongoing commitment, action, and adjustments to drive meaningful change and strengthen our democracy</p>	<p>PRINCIPLE 5 BE TRANSPARENT & ACCOUNTABLE</p> <p>Build public trust and accountability in the long-term commitment for racial equity through data-driven decision-making and outcome tracking</p>
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*Edited from the original “Five guiding principles for federal action on racial equity” developed by PolicyLink. Original source: 2021 PolicyLink report, For Love of Country: A Path for the Federal Government to Advance Racial Equity, page 36.



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

In conjunction with our agencywide equity work, First 5 Alameda County will refine its partner engagement approach and practices.

We define partnership as authentic and intentional work to develop responsive and reciprocal practices and relationships—with parents, caregivers, providers, and community so our strategies reflect a collective community vision.

Through our practices, we will increase parent and community engagement to promote equity and broader systems change. This agencywide commitment is represented in all our strategies, and we are nurturing our continued growth in this area to fulfill our commitment.

In the years ahead, we commit to:

- Adopting agency principles for partner engagement in all facets of our work. We will examine existing models and frameworks, including those introduced via the First 5 Association, the Ripples of Transformation, and the Center for the Study of Social Policy’s manifesto for parent engagement to inform the development of agency principles.
- Engaging in a cross-agency effort to operationalize shared principles and goals to align our work, ensure operational equity, and focus the direction of partner engagement.
- Assessing our current approach and practices including resources to support parent, community, and partner participation.
- Providing the necessary resources and capacity to support this agencywide initiative.
- Adopting community advisory and governance mechanisms as mandated by legislation to administer funding from the Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and named administrator of The Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C).



STRATEGIC PLAN PARAMETERS & FINANCIAL PICTURE

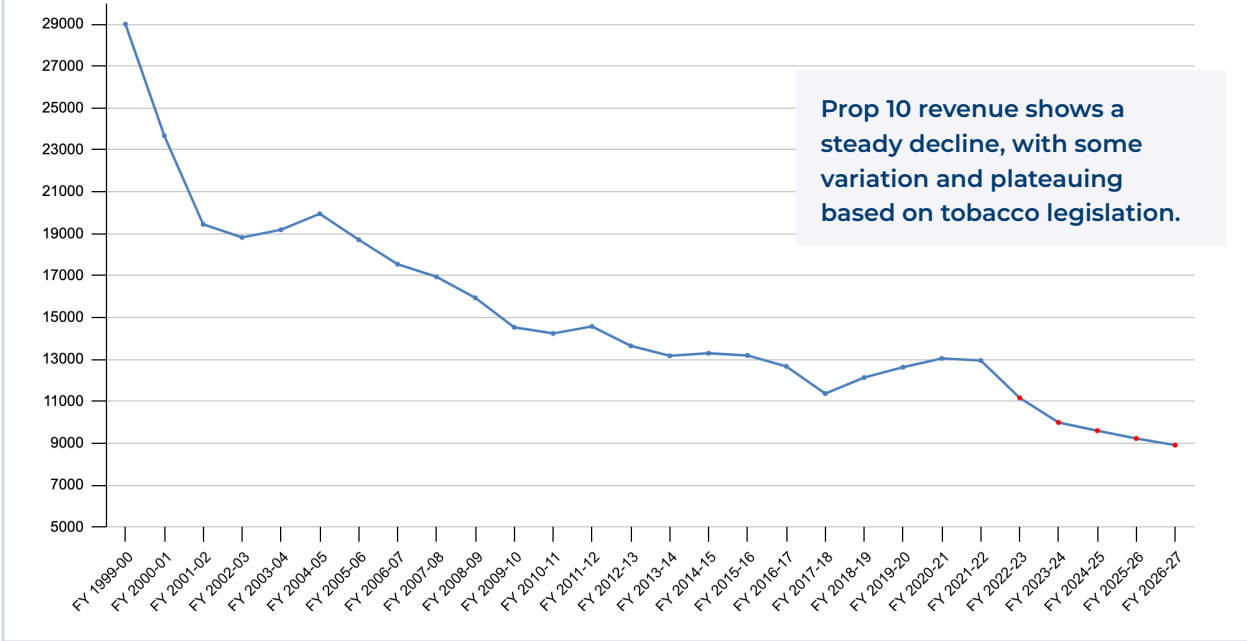
First 5 Alameda County identified the following planning assumptions and parameters, approved by the Commission to guide the development of this document. They are:

- **Continue to diversify revenue to support building an equity-centered early childhood system**, including partnerships with managed care, Social Services Agency, Health Care Services Agency, and other public entities to scale First 5 Alameda County programs fundamental to an early childhood system. This includes leveraging our infrastructure (financial, contract, staff expertise) to build out an equity-centered early childhood system.
 - Proposition 10 has been shoring up the early childhood system in preparation for the type of public investments we are now seeing from managed care for health, the Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA), and The Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) for early care and education.
 - We are temporarily using our Sustainability Fund to make a loan to support a steady state so as not to reduce agency capacity as we anticipate the continued build-out of the early childhood system.
- **New public funding liberates the flexible Proposition 10 funding to resource other parts of the early childhood system**, for example birth equity programs and advocacy supporting the “Family” part of the system (the size of the investment is subject to the decline in Proposition 10 funding).
- **Utilize a largely contracted and community-based, equity-focused model for Proposition 10-funded activities**, including direct services. Available Proposition 10 funds can be used to support proof-of-concept strategies for policy and systems change and provide funding to community-led initiatives. As a declining revenue source, it is not a sustainable funding stream to scale direct services staffed by First 5 Alameda County, or those we consider part of the county safety net.



Prop 10 Revenue 1999-2027

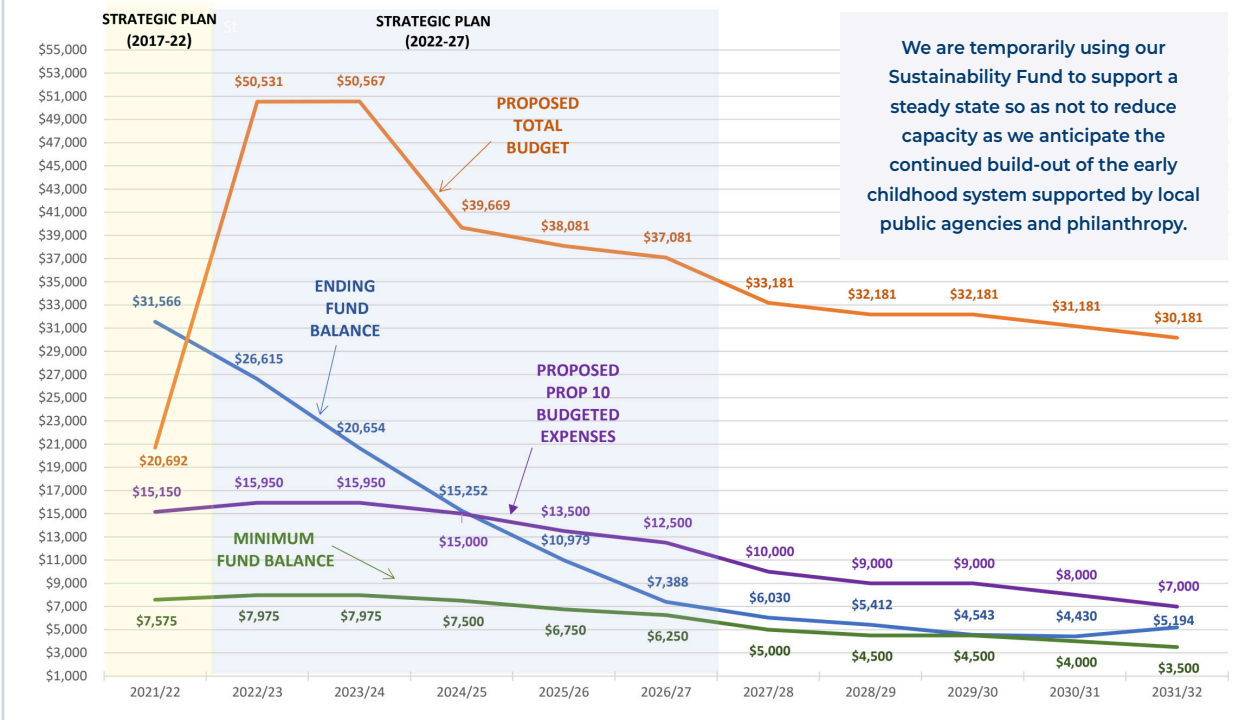
ACTUAL & PROJECTED PROP 10 REVENUE IN MILLIONS



Source: First 5 California, March 2023

Long Range Financial Plan FY 2022-2031

BUDGET & FUND BALANCE IN MILLIONS



The Long Range Financial Plan FY 2022-2031 has been prepared based on information available as of March 2023.

LOCAL REVENUE FOR EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

Additional Resources Create Opportunity

The past five years have been a high-water mark for legislation and funding to address the divide in access to early care and education, healthcare, and social services in California. Both California and Alameda County are making significant investments in children and families. At the state level, California is implementing an unprecedented set of initiatives to redesign its social safety net, including Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK), California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM), and the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI).

In Alameda County there are two active ballot measures related to early care and education (Appendix C, page 52):

- 1. The Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA)** was passed in November 2018 and upheld by the courts in 2021. The Oakland Children's Initiative is funded by a parcel tax projected to provide approximately \$30 million annually in funding for early care and education and college preparedness programs for Oakland residents. In December 2022, First 5 Alameda County was awarded the contract to serve as the Early Care and Education Implementation Partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative.
- 2. The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)**, a countywide measure, was passed by voters in March 2020 and names First 5 Alameda County as the administrator of the Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education portion of the revenue. The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County is facing litigation and if successful is expected to raise approximately \$150M annually for early care and education.

Given these federal and state policy initiatives, local ballot measures, and the groundbreaking partnership with the Alameda Alliance for Health, First 5 Alameda County is uniquely positioned for growth and sustainability when compared to its sister organizations. The new local revenue and scaling of programs, by tapping into federal and state allocations, afford an opportunity to reimagine a more equitable early childhood system. In doing so our lessons learned and local success could very well serve as a model and serve as an example for state and federal policies that recognize and invest in child care and the labor of providers as the public good that they are.

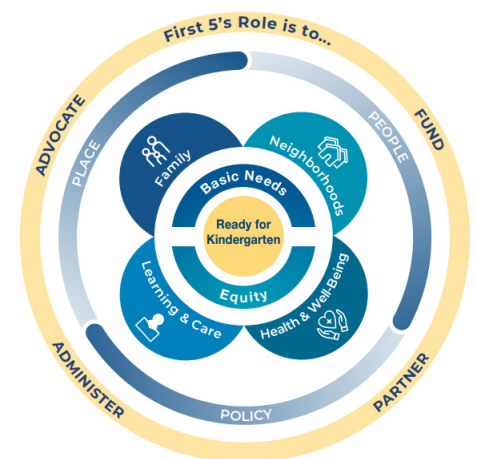


Figure 1. An early childhood system of care cultivates community and family conditions for children's kindergarten readiness.

Local Ballot Measures, First 5 & Alameda County's Early Childhood System

First 5 Alameda County commits to the responsible stewardship of these precious public resources, in partnership with the City of Oakland, Alameda County Board of Supervisors, community governance and advisory bodies, and other early care and education partners, particularly parents/caregivers and early care and education professionals. The Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) will benefit Oakland and Alameda County's early childhood system of care broadly and will impact First 5 Alameda County as the county's only governmental agency solely dedicated to families/caregivers with children 0-5 by:

- Aligning new investment with our current investments and providing resources for backbone support to the early childhood system
- Allowing us to leverage our subject matter expertise, community partnerships, and infrastructure.
- Facilitating integration with our programming and fiscal leveraging of Proposition 10, Measure AA, and Measure C, in addition to federal, state, local, and philanthropic funds
- Liberating the flexible Proposition 10 dollars to fund other components of the early childhood system (e.g., birth equity, neighborhood investments)
- Shifting our role, budget, operations, scale (i.e., staff and contracts), and community and public partnerships

Readying Our County for Systems Change

The intention is for First 5 Alameda County to leverage our agency infrastructure to implement the mandates in the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) and coordinate federal, state, and local funding streams to build a more coordinated, efficient, effective, and equity-centered early childhood system in Alameda County.

The systems change opportunities for the early care and education system locally are profound. Measures AA and C will approximately double the amount of revenue the Alameda County ECE system receives from state and federal sources for early care and education. Given the local infusion of funding, what has been a broken, fragmented, and under-resourced system could look very different in the next five years. Our success will be dependent on our partnerships with community, providers, and public systems, and our administrative savvy and flexibility.

First 5 Alameda County preparations to administer Measure AA and Measure C required the agency to review its competencies, capabilities, and capacity to perform this expanded role. Preparing our organization for growth was a top priority in 2022. This has included evolving the organizational infrastructure, bringing in resources to manage substantial organizational change, and successfully hiring critical positions. The hiring and structural changes will continue into 2023 – 2024 and beyond, as we have entered a three- to five-year building phase.

To ready the agency and shore up the early childhood system in anticipation of Measure C, First 5 Alameda County has been planning with community and partners in the areas of:

- **Quality Supports**
 - Supporting and advancing quality supports for early care and education providers, including family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers, in meeting their identified quality goals
- **Facilities Needs Assessment**
 - Investing in an early childhood and education [Facilities Needs Assessment](#) for centers and family child care providers to understand the infrastructure and space needed to offer high-quality care
- **Technology, Data Systems**
 - Assessing and planning for technology and data systems that promote and monitor the effectiveness of local strategies, including the mandated evaluation; integrate information on subsidies, quality, and the ECE workforce
 - In FY24 convening a collaborative table inclusive of parents/caregivers, providers, and the ECE field for a local centralized child care subsidy eligibility list, and expanding opportunities for parent, family, provider, and community engagement
- **Research and Evaluation**
 - In FY24 convening a countywide table to identify a common tool for measuring Kindergarten Readiness
- **Workforce Strategies**
 - Partnering with the field to develop workforce strategies to attract, train, retain, and promote early care and education professionals, including a landscape analysis to prioritize investments



PROGRAM STRATEGIES

Overview

Since 2017, First 5 Alameda County has strategically enhanced its organizational capacity to engage in systems building by:

- 1) Increasing organizational capacity to center community needs and voices
- 2) Engaging in policy advocacy
- 3) Leveraging federal, state, and local funds to ensure sustainability and scale of programming vital to an early childhood system

The evolution of our method of systems building has required us to take a multi-pronged approach, incorporating place-based investments, administration of programs, and building policy, data, evaluation, and communications capacity to articulate impact and advocate for resources.²⁹

Using the Place, People, Policy implementation framework, First 5 Alameda County is catalyzing increased access to services and supporting family-friendly community conditions. This enabled us to be nimble in our response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic recovery, alongside support of building an equity-centered early childhood system in service to community, family, and child well-being.



Neighborhoods Ready for School

PURPOSE

Thriving neighborhoods are an essential component of an early childhood system. First 5’s Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) strategy is a place-based investment, asset building, and policy response to the relationship and interplay between neighborhood conditions, family and child well-being, and the structural factors that contribute to overall health, development, and kindergarten readiness. The NRFS strategy funds trusted community-based organizations using an equity index to prioritize neighborhoods with young children that have been historically marginalized due to racist, classist systems and policies.



Our 2019 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) confirmed the importance of this place-based approach. We found that neighborhood assets, especially the presence of mutual support among community members, along with sidewalks, walking paths, and libraries, significantly boost children’s school readiness.²² Families earning at least \$50,000 per year were significantly more likely than lower income families to report the availability of each asset in their neighborhood. Higher income families reported 6.1–6.7 assets in their neighborhoods, while lower income families reported 4.5–5.5 assets. Children in both low-income families and higher-income families had significantly higher kindergarten readiness if they also lived in asset-rich neighborhoods.

The NRFS strategy employs a trust-based philanthropy model that recognizes and prioritizes the knowledge and wisdom of those who live and work within communities. Community partners are best positioned to define their own needs, appropriate responses, and their role in policy advocacy.

The key principles guiding this place-based community capacity building and infrastructure are:

- Strengthening economic supports and basic needs, food and supply distribution during COVID-19 in service to systems change
- Increasing coordination of family services across systems, family navigation, and connection to resources
- Directing early childhood programs and services, including virtual supports
- Expanding the physical infrastructure to promote safe spaces for young children and their families
- Fostering family leadership and civic engagement
- Building partnerships among community organizations and government
- Supporting policy advocacy efforts catalyzed and led by residents



GOALS*

1. Work with NRFS sites to identify priorities and current needs post-COVID-19 and make any needed refinements to the structure of our engagement.
2. Concentrate First 5 programs in NRFS catchment areas to leverage investments and generate multiplier effect across the neighborhoods.
3. Develop an essential data set for reporting and analysis to understand impact, identify areas for continuous improvement, and ease the reporting burden on grantees.
4. Invest in school district, service provider capacity and partnerships, and community infrastructure that supports families (housing, libraries, parks) and kindergarten readiness.
5. In collaboration with NRFS agencies, use the qualitative and quantitative data collected from neighborhood partners and other sources to advocate for policy and systems changes that will help to improve conditions for families with young children.
6. Showcase successes and local stories that demonstrate effectiveness to support sustainability of the NRFS models.



Quality Early Care and Education (ECE)

PURPOSE

Early Care and Education (ECE) is a cornerstone of the early childhood system. ECE enables parents to work outside the home and is a vital part of the local economy. It is an under-resourced and underappreciated profession.

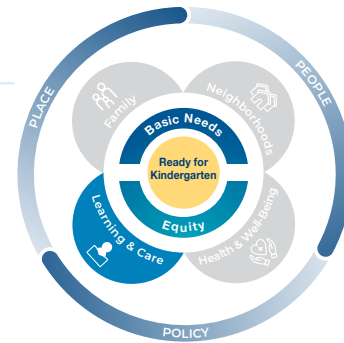
Participation in ECE is a leading factor in predicting kindergarten readiness, as research has shown that **participation in ECE significantly narrowed readiness gaps**.²² Our biannual Kindergarten Readiness Assessments (KRAs) have consistently found less than half of children in Alameda County are fully ready for kindergarten, largely due to socioeconomic factors tied to structural racism, with particular consequences for African-American and Latinx children.

Affordability is a major barrier to accessing ECE. The cost of child care has risen 68% since 2014; a family of four in Alameda County with a preschooler and an infant pay one-third of their income toward child care costs.^{17,9} At the same time, there is a significant gap in access to subsidies for income-eligible families with an unmet need in 2018 of 91% of eligible infants and 46% of eligible preschool children in Alameda County.²¹ The pandemic worsened existing inequities, with families facing historic levels of job loss, school and child care closures, and food insecurity.

ECE professionals are an underpaid and aging workforce, with high attrition rates. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of Alameda County ECE professionals, 79% of whom identify as Black, Indigenous, or other women of color, are considered very low-income for the county.¹² Across the county, the number of licensed family child care providers declined by 34% between 2007 and 2019.²¹ These operational challenges increased in the pandemic. We estimate that the Alameda County ECE field lost \$395 million in FY2020-21 alone (\$220 million without taking into consideration the increased cost of providing care) and these losses are expected to continue in the current fiscal year.²⁴

High-quality ECE and licensed and community-based childhood development programming are key components of the early childhood system of care. The Quality ECE (QECE) strategy provides quality improvement supports for the mixed delivery system—centers, family child care (FCC) providers, and family friend and neighbor (FFN) providers—with coaching, training, professional development, technical assistance, and financial incentives and supports that include learning networks for each type of child care delivery setting, ensuring technical support, and fostering leadership and community. First 5 also partners with libraries and family resource centers to support quality developmental programming for those children who are not in a licensed early educational setting.

We recognize that scarcity of public resources limits the existence of and access to quality child care and quality community-based programming. As a result, we prioritize those caring for children receiving subsidies and those who have historically been unable to access ECE supports, particularly FCCs and FFNs.



We recognize the strengths and needs of dual-language learners and promote inclusive practices in classrooms to meet the requirements of children with special needs, so that all early learners are positioned for success.

Finally, we are updating our child care facilities census and charting the ECE workforce development needs. In addition, First 5 is creating opportunities to generate interest and professionalization of these important roles by creating apprenticeship programs as a pathway to recruit people new to the field and retain current teachers.

GOALS*

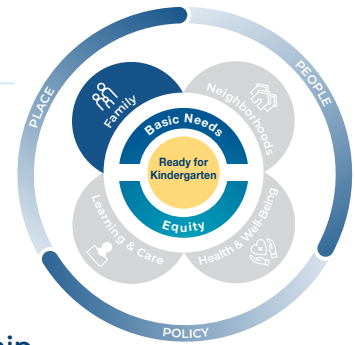
1. Work with partners to design implementation strategy for Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and lay a foundation for the likely implementation of Measure C.
2. Co-design with parents, providers, and community partners a more equity-informed approach to quality rating and Quality, Rating, and Improvement Systems (QRIS) in the mixed delivery system.
3. Shift First 5’s resources from formal assessment and rating to training, professional learning communities, curriculum support, coaching, professional development, stipends, and other financial supports, where allowable.
4. Provide core infrastructure support to the local Quality Counts California activities in Alameda County and maintain county readiness for additional partnership and funding opportunities.
5. Increase the number of FCC and FFN providers participating in Quality Counts, especially those serving low-income, dual-language learners, children with special needs, and children experiencing homelessness.
6. Expand partnerships with parks and recreation departments and libraries to serve children outside of formal care settings, while identifying ways to increase and improve place-based support for FFN and FCC in Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) settings/neighborhoods.
7. Increase collaboration between QECE and other First 5 programs and investments, including NRFS, Help Me Grow, Parent Partnership, and Fatherhood.
8. Leverage and streamline, in partnership with Policy, Planning, and Evaluation staff, the local use of ECE data systems, including Hubbe and the California ECE Workforce Registry, to strengthen the collection of data and to better support planning, data decolonization, and tools for community partners and the ECE field.
9. Conduct and promote an ECE Facilities Needs Assessment to develop strategies to increase capacity and quality of facilities and infrastructure in key areas of unmet need.
10. Monitor, in partnership with Policy, Planning and Evaluation staff, the implementation of TK-Universal Pre-K and support plans that incorporate best practices for meeting family and children’s needs and support the mixed delivery system.
11. Conduct a workforce landscape study, in partnership with the ECE Planning Council, Alameda County Office of Education, and community stakeholders, to develop county strategies for leveraging state and local resources to address ECE workforce development pathways (i.e., apprenticeships, credentialing, higher education cohorts, etc.).



Parent Partnership

PURPOSE

Family Leadership is one of the core components of an early childhood system, as it enhances parents’ leadership and advocacy in early childhood programs and at home. First 5’s redefined Parent Partnership strategy invests in direct services to families and children with a focus on maternal and child health and the 0-3 years and uses parent leadership to inform programming and investments. The Parent Partnership strategy increases access and reduces disparities stemming from inequities through program design, investments, and systems partnerships.



Inequities in policies, systems, and practices with roots in structural racism have an impact on families and children. Black women and birthing people are three times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth and to experience more maternal health complications.¹⁹ Black babies are three to four times more likely to be born too early, too small, or to die before their first birthday.¹⁹ Given the deep disparities and recognizing that the period from birth to age five is a critical time for children and families, First 5 is committed to programming, investments, and engagements that seek to improve underlying structural conditions and outcomes.

The revised Parent Partnership strategy includes: 1) formulating parent-advised investments in programs, supports, and services that promote equity in birth outcomes, maternal and child health, family well-being, and kindergarten readiness, 2) ensuring parents representing the diversity of languages in Alameda County can be active partners through interpretation and translation, and 3) building partnerships with maternal and child health-serving agencies and organizations.

GOALS*

1. Collaborate with parents and systems partners to define type of investment, program approach, and guiding frameworks to increase focus on birth equity, Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality, and promoting equity in the 0-3 space.
2. Assess First 5’s Cultural Access Services (CAS) structure within the agency to best meet the diverse interpretation and translation needs of families, providers, and contractors.
3. Identify emerging opportunities, legislative and budgetary, related to maternal health and birth equity to inform program design, policy advocacy, and the evolution of the local early childhood system.
4. Employ data and lessons learned in collaboration with parents, staff, and partners to:
 - Advocate for scaling of DULCE, and the importance of legal, medical, and social services partnerships to address the social determinants of health
 - Demonstrate how parent partnership initiatives have improved outcomes for children and families to make a case for sustainability and systems change

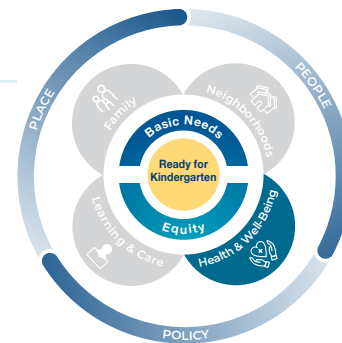




Pediatric Care Coordination

PURPOSE

Comprehensive health and development is a key component of the early childhood system. First 5's Pediatric Care Coordination strategy focuses on achieving a common goal that all children in Alameda County grow up healthy, thriving, and strong. Decades of national research have demonstrated that early childhood development and overall well-being is affected by the social determinants of health including community and environmental conditions, racism, poverty, stress, relationships, access to resources, and education.



There are more than 32,000 low-income children under age six enrolled in Medi-Cal in Alameda County.¹⁸ While Alameda County has been a state leader in enrolling income-eligible children in public health coverage, approximately one in three are not engaging in or receiving regular pediatric preventive care, including but not limited to well-child care and early childhood screenings.³⁰ Approximately 85% of children served through Help Me Grow, First 5's centerpiece program of this strategy, are insured through Medi-Cal, and 20% of families served were also referred to services for basic needs, such as food, housing, health care, and child care.³¹

Given this landscape, the primary goal of this strategy is to connect and integrate public and community screening, referral, and response resources. Our focus is to engage, assess, and connect children, especially Medi-Cal enrolled families, to pediatric preventative care, medically necessary services, and community-based programming and support.

Fundamental to this strategy is maximizing the family's pediatric visits. Pediatric visits are an entry point to care management, resource referral, and other community supports. Research has shown that expanding community-based care management improves overall family health and well-being.³⁰

The Pediatric Care Coordination strategy fosters collaboration with community partners to leverage data and develop targeted strategies to fill service gaps, reduce barriers, and advance racial equity, thereby ensuring equitable access to supports and benefits.

First 5 adopted the nationally recognized Help Me Grow model as the primary implementation framework for the Pediatric Care Coordination strategy. The Help Me Grow program provides:

- Training and technical assistance to providers serving the Medi-Cal pediatric population (0-5) in Alameda County.
- Implementation and referral assistance to pediatric and early child care and education providers with recommended developmental, social-emotional, and/or Adverse Childhood Experiences Screenings (ACEs), commonly known as toxic stress.
- Multilingual access to Help Me Grow's Central Access Point to provide support and care coordination to parents/caregivers for families of children with an identified need for developmental, behavioral, or other resources and services.
- Outreach and convenings to build a coordinated network of services and promote awareness of Help Me Grow.

GOALS*

1. Build a menu of navigation services to provide support to families enrolled in Medi-Cal and other insurance for referrals to early intervention, community resources, family support, and basic needs.
2. Recommend strategies for increasing agency and Help Me Grow community capacity to address unmet needs, with a focus on First 5's Neighborhoods Ready for School catchment areas and other high need areas in the county.
3. Enhance the scope of Help Me Grow program training, screening, and resource referral activities to include social needs, support for pregnant and parenting populations, and those who have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), with a particular emphasis on children insured through Medi-Cal.
4. Expand outreach and education that increases providers', community-based organizations', and partner agencies' understanding of individual and community conditions (such as social determinants of health and protective factors) that impact child development, well-being, and kindergarten readiness.
5. Assess opportunities and risks associated with funding streams that support EISCC, particularly the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) program.
6. Develop strategy and approach to enhance partnerships with early childhood system providers across health and education agencies, including Alameda Alliance for Health, Health Care Services Agency, Regional Center, and Local Educational Agencies to better connect supports and improve experiences for families.
7. Align and expand care coordination through pediatric delivery system programs and partnerships (e.g., Help Me Grow and Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone, DULCE).
8. Assess opportunities for care coordination through early care and education, particularly with the expansion of Universal Transitional Kindergarten.
9. Evaluate new technology solutions, beginning with resource directory and referral platforms, to support improved coordination and communication among parent/families, providers, managed care plans, and First 5.





Fatherhood

PURPOSE

First 5's Fatherhood Program is a unique approach to the early childhood system of care's family leadership principles. Historically, early childhood and family and community support programs have focused on serving mothers and children; in most cases, this unintentionally leaves fathers and father-figures out of the equation.

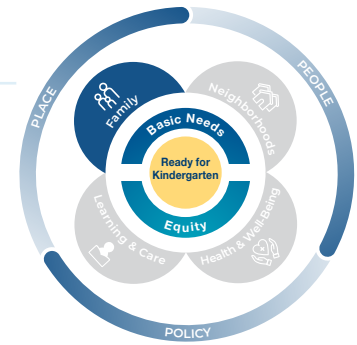
The Fatherhood program raises awareness of the benefits of the active role that fathers and father-figures have in early childhood development. We have focused on strengthening collaboration with public systems and community-based organizations to promote and acknowledge the critical roles fathers and father-figures can play. To increase acceptance of and the experiences of fathers and father-figures participating in child development activities, First 5 sponsors training, support groups, and technical assistance geared toward the development of high-quality, father-centered services.

Our Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) studies have confirmed locally what the national research indicates. High-quality, involved fathering by dads who live in the child's home and apart, has strong, positive impacts on a child's development, including academic achievement, emotional well-being, and behavior.^{31, 32} Locally, we found that fathers who accessed a greater number of community resources (parks, libraries, and museums) with their children contributed to their child's greater readiness for kindergarten.²²

The Fatherhood program supports service providers with training that fosters healthy co-parenting relationships to ensure that parents are functioning as a team. High-functioning, healthier co-parenting relationships support young children's optimal development and bolster their social and emotional learning. These skills and interactions are shown to improve children's cognitive skills, which leads to increased kindergarten readiness.

GOALS*

1. Incorporate Fatherhood and Father-Friendly Principles into First 5 structures and infuse Fatherhood strategies into First 5 programs: Neighborhoods Ready for School, Help Me Grow, Parent Leadership, and Quality ECE.
2. Engage fathers and male providers to inform the development of the Healthy Relationship Principles (HRP) tools to support providers with the integration of HRP in work with families and provide training on HRP.
3. Position the Fatherhood work for sustainability and scale through fund development and public systems partnerships.
4. Promote integration of Father-Friendly Principles in public and community-based systems of care.
5. Identify strategies to strengthen internal collaboration and referral pathways for additional public system support connecting fathers to employment, financial education, health, and housing.





AGENCY STRATEGIES

Agency Strategy: Training

PURPOSE

A diverse, well-informed, and well-trained provider and parent community are critical elements of the early childhood system. In partnership with First 5 staff and community, First 5's training department identifies, coordinates, and delivers instructional content, skill-building workshops, and information sessions to build the capacity of the early childhood system in Alameda County.

Our 2019 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) found that fewer than half of the kindergarten teachers surveyed had received training related to children with special needs, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, and family engagement. Pediatricians have historically had limited specialized training on child development and mental and behavioral health.^{33,34} The same holds true for other direct service workers who serve young children and their families.³⁵ Equally important, parents and caregivers benefit from, and are eager for, information on topics relevant to their young children, but often do not know how to obtain it.³⁶

The training department delivers content aimed at supporting agency priorities and community needs. The Training team provides technical assistance to staff and community partners in best practices for identifying, planning, delivering, and evaluating educational programming.

GOALS*

1. Reassess training offerings to ensure greater alignment with agency and community priorities and needs to ensure programming is focused on areas critical to sustainability of key investments and ongoing service provision.
2. Assist human resources with implementation of staff trainings ranging from professional development and technical assistance directly linked to agency strategy and program goals.
3. Incorporate equity framework into content development and mode of delivery to increase reach into underrepresented child care providers.

Agency Strategy: Policy and Advocacy

PURPOSE

First 5's policy and advocacy strategy utilizes analysis, data, information, and coalitions to support the evolution of an equity-centered local early childhood system. We engage in advocacy to scale and sustain effective programs and to promote public policies grounded in equity and justice.

Our policy work seeks to shape, support, and sustain policies that proactively address the needs of families with young children and their caregivers in public systems. We anchor our policy efforts to our equity framework and the lessons learned from our program work with staff, community partners, providers, parents, and caregivers. Through our policy work, we mobilize a shared vision of an early childhood system of care that is a network of coordinated and responsive organizations that improve outcomes for children from birth to age five. First 5's biannual Kindergarten Readiness Assessment repeatedly points to the importance of structural conditions, e.g., socioeconomic, access to early care and education, as critical to supporting children's success. In Alameda County approximately 1 in 10 children under six years lives below the Federal Poverty Level (\$26,500 for a family of four).¹⁴ It takes \$137,660 to meet the basic needs of a two-parent family with one infant and one preschooler.⁸ Alameda County is the second most disparate county in California for children enrolled in licensed early care and education—a key driver for kindergarten readiness.²⁰

By understanding the legislative, budgetary, regulatory, and administrative levers of public systems, we create a multifaceted policy agenda for systems change. We leverage our resources, access, expertise, analytical skill set, and partnerships to listen, lift up needs, share successes, and evaluate impact of public investments that improve outcomes for children and families.

GOALS*

1. Document success of First 5's work catalyzing sustainability, scale, and systems change initiatives that are contributing to the evolution of an early childhood system of care.
2. Convene partners, community, stakeholders, elected officials and their staff in discussions of policy issues and advocacy specific to families with young children, using findings from the 2021–2022 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) and Neighborhoods Ready for School evaluation.
3. Create an annual policy agenda with input from staff and community; lift messages, insights, and policy priorities learned from programs including direct service needs of parents and caregivers, and gaps in the system.
4. Position First 5 with elected officials, policymakers, First 5 California, and other statewide associations as a key leader, partner, and convener in the work to advance the well-being of families with young children in Alameda County.
5. Craft a policy narrative in support of increased public investments in proven strategies to support an early childhood system of care with input from community leaders and policy makers.
6. Increase integration of data among systems at the local level to support data-driven policymaking with an equity and “whole community, whole family, whole child” approach.



Agency Strategy: Data and Evaluation

PURPOSE

First 5's data and evaluation strategy supports shared accountability, continued organizational learning, public awareness, and policy advocacy as part of our role in evolving the early childhood system.

Research and data can provide a roadmap to systems change. Our research has pointed to the underlying structural conditions and opportunities necessary to support families with young children. Our Kindergarten Readiness Assessment shows that differences in kindergarten readiness are largely attributable to inequities of access to resources and educational experiences.²² Our 2018 longitudinal study found that four out of five children who are not ready for kindergarten are still not caught up to grade level by third grade, pointing to the importance of early investments in children, families, and communities.²³

Working Definitions to Support Continued Learning and Practice:

Data Decolonization refers to practices adopted to intentionally shift focus and ownership of data collection and analysis to Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities.³⁷

Data Democratization refers to practices adopted to intentionally approach data collection and analysis with a community lens, supporting broad access to data and data analysis, including by those whom the data is about, as powerful tools for change, and eliminating unnecessary barriers to accessing and utilizing data.

We believe data, research, and evaluation are tools for making policy change, and creating a shared system and partner understanding of community priorities and needs. We focus on generating and sharing data, research, and results to inform internal agency decision-making and our work with partners, public policy, planning, and advocacy. Through participatory research, storytelling, and other practices consistent with data decolonization and democratization, we put the power of data back into the hands of the people. We use data to highlight community conditions, the strengths and needs of our county's youngest children, their families, and the providers who serve them, and to advance policies that promote equity.

We partner with colleagues and community stakeholders on data and evaluation efforts to identify promising practices, demonstrate effectiveness, support efforts to scale and sustain effective strategies, and promote continuous quality improvement in the early childhood system.

GOALS*

1. Deepen our understanding of equitable data and research practices, data decolonization, and democratization. Document learning, practices, and opportunities.
2. Use First 5's biannual Kindergarten Readiness study and NRFS evaluation in collaboration with the community to inform policy advocacy and program investments.
3. Streamline production and elevate dissemination of data and research products as policy and communication tools for use by external partners and staff.
4. Strengthen understanding and support the interconnected needs of families and communities by developing robust data sharing agreements with public agencies and other key partners.
5. Identify opportunities for evaluation/research projects in collaboration with partners and community to make a case for sustainability, scale, and/or systems change.
6. Streamline data collection, Results Based Accountability (RBA) measures, and reporting with an eye to information that would most meaningfully contribute to agency decision-making, continuous improvement, and the identification of promising practices.
7. Complete agencywide implementation of RBA framework so staff and leadership consistently use data and research findings to inform decisions and promote continuous improvement across all programs.

Agency Strategy: Communications

PURPOSE

First 5's communications strategy builds public awareness, mobilizes support, promotes systems coordination, and advocates for investments in an equity-centered early childhood system of care. The communication department works with internal and external audiences to inform and guide key partners and decision-makers in understanding, building, and supporting an equitable, sustainable, and comprehensive early childhood system.

First 5's communications department creates compelling narratives about the importance of early childhood, positive and adverse childhood experiences, and "whole community, whole family, whole child" policy and programs. We use messages, stories, and data that point to the structural conditions, including racism and classism, underpinning children's outcomes and highlight opportunities to build thriving communities, families, and children.

First 5's communications strategy reinforces the agency's position as a leading local policy voice for children and families. Communications initiatives provide support for the early childhood system in the form of investments, capacity building, and community data to inform priorities and decision-making. We promote centralized resources, information, and services for parents, caregivers, and service providers.

First 5 advances equity and partner engagement in its communications by using feedback loops to listen to and report back to community partners, allowing us to:

- Create accessible content and design, using multiple languages and modalities
- Elevate community voice in communications materials
- Highlight family and community successes despite structural barriers
- Represent diverse families and family structures across all media

GOALS*

1. Update First 5's communications plan to advance equity commitment, promote programmatic success, policy advocacy, and partnerships for systems change, and to sustain and scale effective and promising programs.
2. Generate and disseminate content for policymakers, advocates, and providers by producing multimedia collateral material, policy and data briefs, case studies, website, social media, and media engagement.
3. Increase access to and ease of navigation of centralized information and resources for neighborhoods, families, caregivers, providers, and policymakers.





INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

First 5 Alameda County Operations Division includes finance, human resources, technology, facilities, and administration.

These teams support the day-to-day operations of the agency and allow the organization to play a backbone role to community-based organizations, providers, and public agencies that are part of the early childhood system.

The next phase of First 5 Alameda County will require us to continue doing our core work, while adding new capabilities, infrastructure, and capacity. Consistent with the direction set with our 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, much of our new funding will likely be contracted out to external parties. As a result, our hiring will reflect the staffing skillsets needed to support contract development (what to procure), performance measurement, planning and project management, communications, government relations, policy advocacy, and financial budgeting and forecasting.

As the administrative lead of significant public resources, we are uniquely positioned and have the responsibility to partner with community, parents, and providers to reimagine an early childhood system that is equity-centered.

Administration and Facilities

First 5's administration and facilities' strategy is to provide a safe, productive, efficient, and inclusive work environment for staff and partners. Administrative and facilities staff ensure that the facility is operating as it should on a daily basis by completing regular inspections, ensuring compliance with all relevant requirements and standards, and conducting repairs and maintenance. Office administrative operations are performed in a seamless manner to ensure the efficient operations of the agency.

GOALS*

1. Maintain and operate an office facility that provides for a safe, clean, functional, and welcoming environment.
2. Perform maintenance and repairs in a minimally disruptive manner.
3. Review operational efficiencies to maximize the utilization of resources.
4. Ensure that the office facility meets legal requirements and health and safety standards.
5. Provide efficient and effective administration procedures and practices.

Finance

PURPOSE

First 5's finance strategy enables the agency to use Proposition 10 funds strategically for direct service programs, as First 5 transitions away from providing direct services funded by Proposition 10 to a contracted and community-based model.

Finance focuses on budgeting, financial planning, forecasting, and managing revenue and expenditures for programs core to the agency's mission. The finance department effectively and transparently communicates fiscal data to the First 5 Alameda County Commission to ensure the ongoing health and viability of the organization.

GOALS*

1. Develop and maintain fiscally responsible and sustainable budgets that reflect our strategies with input from partners and systems.
2. Present timely financial reports to identify current and future revenue and expenditure trends.
3. Implement the agency's financial policies and procedures to ensure the timely, accurate, and complete reporting of financial information.
4. Ensure that financial operations and transactions are accurate and in compliance with federal, state, and financial requirements.

Human Resources

PURPOSE

To serve First 5's function as a backbone to the early childhood system, human resources builds the capacity of the agency and our workforce. First 5's human resources strategy focuses on aligning agency structure, staffing, operations, and culture with its organizational focus on systems change work. Human resources serves as an effective partner by providing efficient and solution-focused services, maintaining a culture of inclusiveness and belonging, and ensuring First 5 has the requisite expertise, competencies, and skills needed to successfully execute the 2022–2027 Strategic Plan. We seek to retain and recruit a diverse workforce that reflects Alameda County, supports staff development, ensures regulatory compliance, and supports agency planning to inform organizational structure and business processes.

GOALS*

1. Engage in organizational development to improve the agency's capability through alignment of our mission, strategy, people, structure, and processes.
2. Focus our talent acquisition strategies on attracting, developing, and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.
3. Expand professional development and create resources dedicated to offering learning opportunities that support our organizational goals while enhancing the knowledge and skills of our workforce and increasing employee engagement, retention, and morale.
4. Provide support and guidance to agency equity training and definition processes, incorporating future recommendations into internal practices.
5. Cultivate leadership within the agency, including succession planning and staff capacity building. Doing so will help to support the agency and develop leaders for the early childhood field.

Technology

PURPOSE

First 5's technology strategy focuses on deploying technology applications and tools to support coordination and linkages, communication, and shared accountability among agency staff, partners, and grantees. With equity at the center of service design and delivery, this strategy provides support to staff and partners for operational efficiencies, data collection and tracking, and performance management.

GOALS*

1. Conduct a technology assessment to create a roadmap for decision-making regarding applications for accounting, Salesforce, case management, resource directory, and website applications.
2. Develop a process for selection of technology solutions that foster teaching, learning, research, and operations.
3. Plan for the eventual implementation of data systems to prepare for the likely implementation of Measure C, including a child care Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) and enrollment systems, contingent on funding.

**Goals are listed in no particular order.*



PROPOSITION 10 FY 22/23 INVESTMENTS

First 5 is using a Maintenance of Effort approach to this Strategic Plan for fiscal year 2023–2024 to maintain strategy budgets as we seek to build out the early childhood system. The budget will be updated annually.

Neighborhoods Ready for School (\$3,200,000) is a place-based investment, asset building, and policy response to the relationship and interplay between neighborhood conditions, family, and child well-being, and the structural factors that contribute to overall health, development, and kindergarten readiness.

Early Care and Education (\$1,922,500) provides quality improvement supports for centers, family child care (FCC) providers, and family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers with coaching, training, professional development, technical assistance, and financial incentives and supports; provides learning networks for each type of child care delivery setting; funds community-based programming for those children who are not in a licensed early educational setting.

Parent Partnership (\$1,693,672) provides direct services to families and children with a focus on maternal and child health and the 0-3 years and uses parent leadership to inform programming and investments.

Pediatric Care Coordination (\$1,801,328) connects and strengthens public system and community resources to engage, assess, and connect children, with a focus on Medi-Cal-enrolled families, to pediatric preventative care, medically-necessary services, and community-based programming and support.

Fatherhood (\$312,500) strengthens collaboration with public systems and community-based organizations, increases the representation and improves the experiences of men and fathers through training, strategic messaging, and the development of high-quality father-centered services.

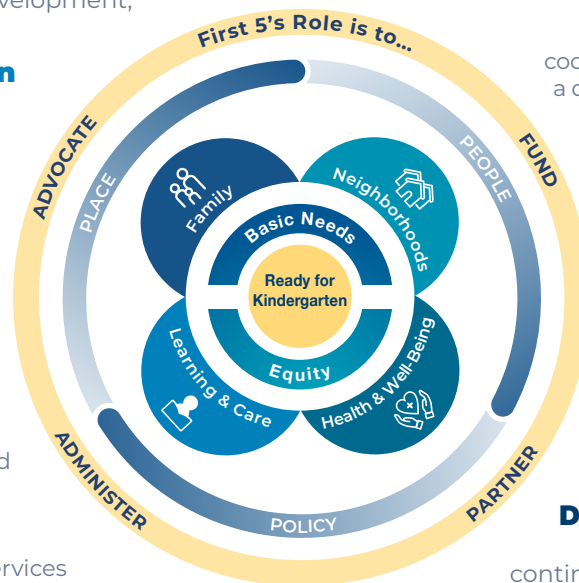
Training (\$700,000) identifies, coordinates, and delivers training to foster a diverse, well-trained provider workforce and supports awareness, leadership, and linkages in each of the core components of the early childhood system.

Policy (\$1,146,600) utilizes analysis, data, information, and coalitions to support the evolution of an equity-centered local early childhood system. We engage in advocacy to scale and sustain effective programs and to promote public policies grounded in equity and justice.

Data and Evaluation (\$1,058,400) supports shared accountability, continued organizational learning, public awareness, and policy advocacy as part of our role in evolving the early childhood system.

Communications (\$605,000) works with internal and external audiences to inform and guide key stakeholders and decision-makers in understanding, building, and supporting an equitable, sustainable, and comprehensive early childhood system.

Operations and Administration (\$3,510,000) includes finance, human resources, technology, facilities, and administration.





MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

To understand, track, and guide our progress we use data, research, and parent and community knowledge.

Together this information helps us understand how well children and families in the county are doing in areas that we know correspond to kindergarten readiness—like access to basic needs, participation in early care and education, and neighborhood conditions.

We also use data to help us understand the performance and impact of our programs and investments and opportunities for continuous improvement.

This method of distinguishing “population” and “performance” data is part of a framework called Results Based Accountability (RBA), which is widely used by funders and public agencies, including Alameda County. It is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve quality of life in communities, as well as to improve the performance of programs. Results Based Accountability (RBA) is a simple, plain language approach to measurement that puts the focus on the ends and works backward to the means.

In our approach we strive to use data for action, and we work within our agency and with partners to make data accessible, relevant, and actionable. We want to find the story behind the data. In other words, what does the data tell us? We also want to identify the partners who have a role to play and the steps we can take, including the steps that are community-driven and that include low-cost and no-cost ideas.

We use evaluation as a tool to help us get “under the hood” to understand why and how investments or programs might be working, and lift promising practices for policy advocacy, sustainability, and scale.

Finally, we recognize the critical role of intentionally centering our approach around equity. We are committed to participatory, equity-informed, and community driven practices in our data, research, and evaluation work. This means that at every stage—from identifying research questions and measures, to data collection methods, to interpreting findings and developing recommendations—we seek to be in deep partnership with community.

Implementation

The 2022-2027 purpose statements, goals, and key initiatives are the next phase of the new strategic direction set for First 5 Alameda County in the 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. In the first year of the implementation phase, we engaged in a participatory process with internal teams to identify performance measures to understand progress towards our goals and are collecting baseline data in fiscal year 2022-2023. The agency continues to prepare, adapt, and respond to the changing landscape as an influx of local resources becomes available to First 5 Alameda County and the larger early childhood system. As these shifts occur, we will continue to identify data, research, and evaluation approaches, in close partnership with community, to understand, monitor and ultimately improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

Results Based Accountability (RBA) as a Tool for Equity

Population Result: The well-being of a whole population in a geographic area (e.g., all children under five in Alameda County, or all families with children under five in a zip code)

All Children in Alameda County are Ready for Kindergarten

We look at disaggregated data to understand structural inequities that create disparities in outcomes. This helps to inform our programs and investments.

Performance Accountability: The well-being of client populations for programs, agencies, or service systems (e.g., all children 0-5 on Medi-Cal, all families served by ABC community organization)

For our programs and investments, we ask ourselves:

- How much do we do?
- How well do we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

For more on RBA and Equity, Racial Equity: [Getting to Results \(2017\)](#)

APPENDIX A:

Examples of First 5 Priority Efforts

Source: [Kindergarten Readiness in Alameda County 2021-22: Appendix B – May 2023 Update](#)



FINANCIAL STABILITY

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Invested over \$5 million in [distribution of essential supplies](#), including diapers.
- Worked with family-serving shelters and provided capital awards, [supply stipends](#), and technical assistance.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Advocated for increases in economic supports for families at local, state, and federal levels, e.g., child tax credits, diaper banks, supports for CalWORKs.
- Funded the [evaluation](#) of Help A Mother Out's diaper distribution and provided a [letter of recommendation](#) for the successful application to the California Commission on the Status of Women for a \$25,000 Women's Recovery Response grant.
- Signed on to an [open letter from the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers](#), laying out a vision for increased investments in prenatal-to-three issues in 2022 and beyond.
- Provided [public comment](#) to support Stable Rents and Stable Families campaign to strengthen rental protections for the unincorporated communities in Alameda County.
- Provided public comment in support of [AB 2053: The Social Housing Act](#) (Assemblymember Lee) to connect early childhood and affordable and stable housing.
- Submitted a [comment letter](#) to the City of Oakland's General Plan Housing Element highlighting the housing needs of families with young children and early care and education professionals living in Oakland and Alameda County.
- Signed on to a [federal letter](#) urging Congress to include housing investments in the revised budget reconciliation bill.
- Submitted a letter in support of SB 1083 to increase access to homeless assistance support for pregnant CalWORKs families. The bill was signed into law in September 2022.
- Supported AB 230 (Assemblymember Reyes) and SB 59 (Assemblymember Skinner), which proposes increased access to period products as a form of basic needs.
- Signed on to a letter and provided public comment supporting a State Budget Proposal for \$30M over three years for diaper and wipe distribution.
- Submitted a [federal regulatory comment](#) in support of proposed updates to modernize the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) by allowing online ordering and transactions and food delivery.
- Submitted a letter of support for AB 309 (Assemblymember Lee) which proposed to increase access to affordable and stable housing.



PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- As part of the Neighborhoods Ready for School strategy, First 5 funds trusted community organizations and family resource centers to build an ecosystem of support for families in the community.
- Contracting with Cities and People Advisors to facilitate grantee strategic planning process in 2023, and support intentional integration with the Oakland Thrives 10-year plan and significant philanthropic investment in Oakland.
- Provide training and coaching in early identification to newly recruited family child care providers.
- Help Me Grow trains providers to offer their families early screenings and offers direct screening through the [Developmental Screening Program](#); provides care coordination and navigation support to families referred to the Central Access Point (phone line); and conducts community outreach and networking events to stay on top of available services and resources.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Signed on to a [budget letter](#) requesting that the California legislature and administration increase wage replacement rates for low-wage workers in the State Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave programs.
- In partnership with the City of Oakland, submitted a [one-time state budget request](#) to improve Oakland's play spaces for young children and their families.
- Funded an [evaluation](#) of our place-based Neighborhoods Ready for School strategy to inform policy advocacy and public investments.
- Partnered with parents and caregivers to inform the design, implementation, and interpretation of the 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) as part of a research to action approach and commitment to equity.
- Submitted letters of support for AB 2517 (Assemblymember Bonta) and AB 1321 (Assemblymember Bonta) which propose to establish a two-year California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services grant program to implement new, and strengthen existing, neighborhood and regional cradle-to-career networks to reduce inequities and increase economic mobility in communities across California through integrated place-based support systems.
- Advocated to ensure equitable implementation of CalAIM; submitted a letter to the state budget subcommittees in response to the state's proposed sunset of the Child Health and Disability Prevention program.
- Submitted a [letter](#) to the City of Oakland in support of San Antonio Neighborhood's recommendations and work with neighborhood members to finalize and implement a Master Plan that supports the health and well-being of children ages birth to five.
- Submitted a public comment on the Draft PY21-24 Regional Plan Biennial Modification highlighting the workforce needs of families with young children and early care and education professionals living and working in Alameda County.



FAMILY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Help Me Grow Alameda County supports families to connect to medical check-ups, with particular focus on Medi-Cal clients; trains providers to offer screenings; and provides the Help Me Grow Central Access Point (phone line) for information and care coordination.
- Awarded \$1.45 million from the Alameda Alliance for Health for an expanded partnership through HMG program to support access to pediatric preventative care, care management, and quality improvement.
- Fund Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone (DULCE) at Highland Hospital to provide health, family, and legal services to families.
- As part of the Alameda County Emergency Child Care Response Team, partnered with Samuel Merritt University School of Nursing and ECE providers to provide health consultation support through the Health Heroes program.
- Support for Afrocentric playgroups and promotora programming. Promotores and community health workers are liaisons between their communities and health providers, social service providers, and resources.
- Served as lead on a regional grant application with Contra Costa to support Afghan family resettlement, funding planning and direct services, engaging in community events and advocacy.
- Participation in workgroup led by the Alameda County Office of Dental Health to improve access to dental care for the 0-5 age group through communication, outreach, and integration with primary care.
- Partner with the Alameda Alliance for Health, federally qualified health centers, and UCSF Benioff Children's hospital on efforts to expand care coordination and navigation to services through pediatric sites.
- Our Cultural Access Services program provides language supports and promotes cultural humility and appreciation of the county's diverse population through interpretation and translation for First 5 and partner programs to increase access to community-based services.
- Fund parent and caregiver supports, such as [Dad-scussions](#), Parent Cafés, and culturally specific playgroups, through the work in each of the Neighborhoods Ready for School sites.
- Participation in systems building as a member of Alameda County's Perinatal Equity Initiative Steering Committee to dismantle unjust systems and practices that harm Black birthing people and their babies by addressing the causes of persistent inequality and identifying best practices to improve outcomes.
- Contracted with Mothers-for-Mothers Postpartum Justice to support a pilot project, Honoring & Unifying Gatherings (HUGs). This project will partner with local Black-owned cafes to provide a safe space for new mothers, birthing people, and caretakers of infants in the community to come and connect with each other weekly over a free beverage and pastry.
- Contracted with TLC Consulting & Maternal Healing-Midnight Milk Program to offer free afterhours infant feeding, pregnancy, and postpartum virtual support group to address existing inequities in accessing lactation support and workforce development for participants interested in becoming lactation peer educators or birth workers.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Submitted a letter in support of AB 1995, a proposal to eliminate monthly Medi-Cal premiums or copayments so that low-income households can put resources toward other essential needs.
- In support of continuous Med-Cal eligibility, AB2402, staff gave [testimony](#) (beginning at the 2:36:50 mark) at the California State Assembly.

- Submitted a [letter](#) in support of SB 65, the California Momnibus bill, which would re-imagine maternal health to improve perinatal outcomes, close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes.
- Provided the California Department of Health Care Services feedback on a draft of the Medi-Cal Community Health Worker Provider Manual to ensure that its language supports implementation to advance health equity.
- Wrote a [letter](#) to the state supporting the California Department of Public Health's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health priorities to advance health equity for women, birthing people, children, adolescents, and families.
- Signed on to a [letter](#) rejecting the Governor's proposal to delay implementation of the Community Health Workers, Promotoras, and Representatives (CHWPR) workforce and training funds. We also signed on to a letter requesting that the Governor use funds from the Managed Care Organization Tax Proposal to raise CHWPR wages.
- Supported Alameda County's Social Services Agency's ask for three enrollment office mobile vehicles to help connect families to programs and services they are eligible for.
- Submitted a [letter](#) in support of AB 583 (Assemblymember Wicks), which would establish the Birthing Justice for California Families Pilot Project to support specified groups, including community-based doula groups, to provide full-spectrum doula care to pregnant and birthing people who are low income and do not qualify for Medi-Cal or who are from communities that experience high rates of negative birth outcomes, among others.
- Published a [Birth Equity Policy Brief](#) highlighting recommendations and local strategies to ensure Black women and birthing people have safe and healthy births.



EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

- Named administrator of Measure C: Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County. Measure C creates a half-percent (0.5%) sales tax, estimated to raise ~ \$150 million per year, to provide support and enhancements for child care, preschool, early education, and pediatric health care in Alameda County. Measure C provides an opportunity to expand access to subsidized early care and education for thousands of families in Alameda County.
- Selected as the Early Education Fund implementation partner for Measure AA: Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI, also known as Measure AA). The Oakland Children's Initiative will leverage approximately \$30 million in annual revenue to dramatically expand availability, affordability, and the quality of preschool and early care and education, as well as significantly increase college enrollment and college graduation rates. Approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of the funds raised by Measure AA will support early childhood education and approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the funds will support college access and persistence support.

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Awarded \$1,000,000 from Alameda County Social Services Agency in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) to build a countywide child care centralized eligibility list (CEL) that will help caregivers access subsidized child care.
- Expanded number of licensed family child care providers participating and benefiting from Alameda County Quality Counts, building peer support.
- Jointly funded Alameda County's [ECE Apprenticeship Program](#) and evaluation to provide CalWORKs participants training, advanced degrees, and employment in ECE settings; advocated for additional investments in the model.

- Help Me Grow care coordination and family navigation services provide connections to services and supports for parents and caregivers, as well as emotional support.
- Supported child care providers with technical assistance in English, Spanish, and Chinese for the statewide Minor Renovation and Repair Grant [Request for Applications](#) for both centers and family child care.
- Supported libraries to provide children's books in multiple languages, offer playgroups, provide take-home resources for parents, including over 1,000 literacy kits, and provided developmental screening and referral on-site through Help Me Grow.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Provided a letter of support for Food with Care: SB 1481 (Assemblymember Becker) that would provide free daily meals to children in child care by enabling all child care providers to qualify for the highest level of reimbursements for the meals they serve.
- Wrote to the Federal Alameda County Delegation urging them to support child care in the reconciliation process.
- Signed-on and wrote to our Federal Alameda County Delegation for their support on the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act designed to strengthen school meals, child care food programs, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other federal nutrition programs for children.
- Submitted a letter of support for AB 679 (Assemblymember Wicks) to support an increased meal rate reimbursement for meals served by family child care providers.
- Submitted [public comment](#) on Alameda County's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) three-year plan for FY 2022-23. The letter highlights findings from the 2021-22 KRA report and the continued need for mental health services and supports that target young children, their parents/caregivers, and the early care and education workforce.
- Submitted letters of support for AB 1352 (Assemblymember Bonta) which proposes to expand the Alameda County's Child Care Pilot Program that will be expiring June 30, 2023.
- Submitted a [letter of support](#) for AB 51 (Assemblymember Bonta) to support effective and equitable functioning of California's early childhood system so that it meets the diverse childcare needs of families and the workforce in every community.



KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION SUPPORTS

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Funded school districts in Alameda County, using an equity index, to support kindergarten transition programming (educational materials, books, tablets) and supports for families (basic needs).
- Developed a Summer Pre-K (SPK) Program that partnered with low-performing and high need elementary schools in Alameda County. SPK provides quality transitional early childhood experiences for children without prior preschool or child care experience entering kindergarten in the fall.
- Through the Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) initiative, community partners promote child-and-family friendly communities, strong families, and school readiness.
- Leader of Alameda County Fathers Corps, a collaborative focused on empowering and supporting fathers, service providers, agencies, systems, and the wider community to raise awareness of the critical role of fathers and father-figures and the benefits of active father involvement on young children's development; provide training and support to service providers with implementation of the [Father-Friendly Principles](#); and advocate for more father-specific and father-friendly services.

- Awarded grants to community-based organizations to provide drop-in groups to support fathers in addressing their challenges in accessing public and community supports.
- Partnered with 10 libraries across the county to facilitate story time and playgroups for the community. At these events, families are also connected to the Help Me Grow program, where they can access support and resources for children's development, learning, and behavior.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Alameda County Fathers Corps advocates for local systems change and has championed a state resolution on the adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles.
- In partnership with Oakland Unified School District, Union City Family Center, and county libraries, First 5 published a policy brief on kindergarten transition supports.
- Hosted a Policy Breakfast focused on sharing and digesting key findings from the recent Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), and highlighting remarks from featured speaker Assemblymember Mia Bonta.



SUPPORTED EDUCATORS & SYSTEMS

- Named administrator of Measure C: Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County. Measure C creates a half-percent (0.5%) sales tax, estimated to raise ~ \$150 million per year, to provide support and enhancements for child care, preschool, early education, and pediatric health care in Alameda County. Measure C provides an opportunity to improve compensation for the early care and education workforce.
- Selected as the implementation partner for the Early Education Fund of Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA). The Oakland Children's Initiative will leverage approximately \$30 million in annual revenue to dramatically expand availability, affordability, and quality of preschool and early childhood education, as well as significantly increase college enrollment and college graduation rates. Approximately 2/3 of the funds raised by Measure AA will support early childhood education and approximately 1/3 of the funds will support college access and persistence support. OCI also includes a minimum wage requirement for providers.

PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Expand participation in the number of providers participating in Quality Counts program for quality improvement, coaching, professional learning communities, and quality grants.
- Investing in training (over 4.5k attendees and 11k [YouTube views](#)) to strengthen providers' and families' understanding of best practices for early education, mental health, family support, health, and administration.
- Financially support school districts with kindergarten transition efforts, including through the Community Resilience Fund grants allocated using an equity index.
- Partnered with Alameda County Social Services Agency and Supplybank.org to distribute 880 air purifiers to 440 family child care providers.
- Administered \$3 million in family child care grants provided by Alameda County Social Services Agency from CARES Act funds.
- Invest in the CARE Family Resource Navigation program, which has been effective in supporting families experiencing homelessness with child care and access to basic needs.
- Distributed over 12,000 backpacks with supplies to incoming kindergarteners through schools and community partners.

POLICY ADVOCACY

- Provided public comment to the Alameda County Behavioral Health — Mental Health Services Act Plan FY 2022-23 to highlight the need for infant and early childhood mental health services and supports through investments in the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Workforce and Consultation programs.
- Submitted a letter to the state supporting the Rate and Quality Stakeholder Workgroup's recommendations for investments in the workforce and for an equitable rate reimbursement system.
- Promote coordination between school districts and the early care and education mixed delivery system in planning for implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten/Prekindergarten.
- Signed on to a [letter](#) urging Governor Newsom and State Legislators to adopt an alternative methodology utilizing a cost-estimation model and multi-year transition plan to address the child care crisis and transform child care and early learning in California.
- Provided public comment at state workgroup meetings advocating for meaningful weights on regional adjustments that reflect the local cost of quality child care and cost of living.

APPENDIX B:

Summary of Strategic Plan Partner Feedback (June 2022 Version)

Summary of Strategic Plan Stakeholder Feedback

Build/evolve the early childhood system.

Families and communities have strengths to build upon and should be valued, listened to, and leveraged.

Underlying structural inequities by race and class are impacting families, providers, and communities.



Families



Staff



Community
Data



Stakeholder
Interviews

PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORTING FAMILIES

A “seamless” system that addresses basic needs (i.e., food, housing, transportation), child care, health and mental health/social connections

PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORTING PROVIDERS

Wages and professional development, flexible funding, and organizational capacity building

PRIORITIES FOR FIRST 5

- Define and clarify role
- Emphasize partnerships with families, community, community-based organizations, and systems
- Leverage place-based investments and consider other opportunities by place and population
- Use data and policy advocacy in partnership with community for systems change
- Build agency capacity to meet new need and opportunity
- Support staff leadership and well-being

PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEMS

- Invest in families with young children
- Coordinate resources for a system that is responsive and accessible
- Invest in community infrastructure that supports families (housing, libraries, parks)

APPENDIX C: Local Child Care Ballot Measures

	The Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA)	The Children’s Health & Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)
Geography	City of Oakland	Alameda County
Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-year annual parcel tax of \$198 per year on single-family homes and \$135 a year per unit of each multi-unit residence • Revenues support early child care and preschool programs, and fund college readiness programs, tuition assistance, and efforts to fix racial inequities in access to higher education • Raises approximately \$25-\$30million annually with funds divided into three subaccounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 62% to Early Education Fund • 31% to the Oakland Promise Fund • 7% for oversight and accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 20-year half-percent (0.5%) sales tax that would raise an estimated \$150 million per year to provide support and enhancements for child care, preschool, early education, and pediatric health care in Alameda County • The funds will be divided 80/20 into two subaccounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Pediatric Health Care Account (20%), overseen by a citizen oversight committee • A Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education Account (80%), administered by First 5
Status	<p>The Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) was passed in November 2018 and upheld by the courts in 2021. In December 2022 First 5 Alameda County was awarded the contract to serve as the Early Education Implementation Partner.</p>	<p>Currently the implementation of Measure C is delayed due to litigation pending in Alameda County Superior Court that challenges Measure C on numerous grounds, including that it required a two-thirds vote, an argument that has already been rejected by several appellate courts. The trial court upheld the validity of Measure C, and the Court of Appeal is expected to rule on the plaintiffs’ appeal of that decision later this year.</p>
Key Components of Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand existing public services; first funding priority is to public agencies, particularly programs at Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and Oakland Head Start • Priority on serving the children of families with the lowest incomes and/or those who are in high need. Support families who need FFN care • In order or priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of free or affordable and high quality ECE or preschool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year-olds from low-income families • 3-year-olds from low-income families • Increase affordability or quality of preschool (not ECE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 4-year-olds • All 3-year-olds • Increase the availability and/or quality of child development support services for children from birth through age 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases access to quality care for participating providers through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New enrollments • Rate enhancements • Ensures teacher wages at a minimum of \$15 to be increased annually with revenue increases • Allows services to 0–12-year-olds, but defines a focus on 0–5-year-olds • Targets low-income families and those children/families with the greatest needs, e.g., families experiencing homelessness and children in foster care

<p>Provider/Program Wage Requirements</p>	<p>Pay all employees minimum \$15/hr to be adjusted annually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjusted annually based on the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Consumer Price Index (CPI) The City of Oakland has its own minimum wage schedule for employees working within the geographic boundaries of Oakland (\$15.97/hr in 2023) 	<p>Pay all ECE educator employees minimum \$15/hr to be adjusted annually on January 1, beginning in 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the percentage increase in revenues raised during the previous calendar year by tax (whichever is less)
<p>Provider Quality Requirement Responsibilities</p>	<p>Participating center-based programs are able to, within reasonable timeframe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve baseline rating of 3 on QRIS or new system Utilize developmentally appropriate curriculum, aligned with CDE standards, and evidence-based and/or demonstrated success in improving preparation for kindergarten Conduct formative assessments <p>Participate in valid, regular, and reliable assessments of quality in order to foster continuous improvement and to reduce disparities by income/wealth in child outcomes</p>	<p>Measure C outlines multiple strategies for improving ECE quality, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive training and professional development system Support for educational advancement and degree attainment Teacher retention Maintaining, enhancing, and expanding quality ECE facilities
<p>First 5's Role as Administrator of Funds</p>	<p>Contractor with the City of Oakland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Education Implementation Partner Contracts are on a five-year cycle 	<p>First 5's role as outlined in section 2.08.305.B of the Ordinance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing Program Plan and Annual Expenditure Plan Allocating funds based on Expenditure Plan Developing, implementing, administering, and overseeing all programs and services paid for by the Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education account Providing staff support for the CAC Developing the Program Plan Evaluation Operating with transparency and public accountability, good fiscal stewardship of public resources; annual audit to ensure compliance Awarding funds pursuant to our contracting policies and the Ordinance requirements

<p>Governing Bodies & Responsibilities</p>	<p>Accountability Officer duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee programs and provide recommendations to the Citizens Oversight Commission • Preparing subsequent five-year guidelines • Leading the selection process and contracting for the Implementation Partners, making recommendations to the Citizens Oversight Commission. • Ensuring independent financial audits • Monitoring performance of Implementation Partners • Oversee external evaluations, including selection 	<p>Alameda County Board of Supervisors (BOS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts the annual independent audit • Can terminate First 5 and select a different entity as the Administering Agency • Approves Five-Year Program and Budget Plans <p>First 5 Alameda County Commission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves Annual Expenditure Plan • Approves Five-Year Program and Budget Plans
<p>Community-Seated Bodies</p>	<p>Citizen’s Oversight Commission (COC) duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves (or rejects) City of Oakland staff’s recommendation of the Early Education Implementation Partner • Approves the five-year Guidelines for the Early Education funds • Approves or rejects plans, recommendations, audits • Approves (or rejects) recommendations; does not develop policy and programmatic recommendations <p>Oakland City Council Mayor appoints COC members and Council confirms</p>	<p>Community Advisory Council (CAC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops policy and programmatic recommendations related to the Measure C account • First 5 has not initiated the Program Plan, which must be developed in coordination with the Community Advisory Committee (still to be seated) and community, for approval by the First 5 Alameda County Commission and Board of Supervisors
<p>Auditing</p>	<p>Accountability Officer ensures annual audits are completed and presented to COC</p>	<p>Board of Supervisors conducts annual independent financial audit of Measure C revenues and expenditures</p>
<p>Evaluation Cycles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability Officer oversees external evaluations of Implementation Partners’ performance • Progress and performance reporting due to COC every two years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluations during implementation period of each Plan and prior to the development of a new Plan (every fourth year) • First 5 oversees external evaluations with input for CAC for presentation to BOS
<p>Data Reporting</p>	<p>Oakland City Administrator has the authority to enter into a contract with legally required terms such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance metrics and benchmarks • Data sharing agreements 	<p>First 5 develops data collection strategies and collects data from participants in Measure C programs as part of initial application and evaluation process</p>

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