

Memo

To: Commission Members
From: Alexander Khu
Re: June 14, 2021 Commission Meeting

To slow the spread of COVID-19, the Health Officer's Shelter Order of March 16, 2020, prevents public gatherings ([Health Officer Order](#)). In lieu of a public gathering, the First 5 Contra Costa Children's & Families' Commission meeting will be accessible via Zoom Meeting to all members of the public as permitted by the Governor's Executive Order 29-20.

Members of the public may participate in the meeting online, or by telephone but MUST register first (see below).

*When: June 14, 2021 at 6:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)
Topic: Commission Meeting*

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-pEDTlVQxyj60WvA9Irhw

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

In lieu of making public comments at the meeting, members of the public also may submit public comments before or during the meeting by emailing comments to Brian Kelley at bkelly@first5coco.org. If you have difficulty emailing a public comment, please contact Brian Kelley, First 5 Contra Costa Communications Department, at 925-289-9758.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

Alexander Khu, Executive Assistant
First 5 Contra Costa
1485 Civic Court
Concord, CA 94520



Commission Meeting Agenda

Monday, June 14, 2021, 6:00 pm

To slow the spread of COVID-19, the Health Officer's Shelter Order of March 16, 2020, prevents public gatherings ([Health Officer Order](#)). In lieu of a public gathering, the First 5 Contra Costa Children's & Families' Commission meeting will be accessible via Zoom Meeting to all members of the public as permitted by the Governor's Executive Order 29-20.

Members of the public may participate in the meeting online, or by telephone but MUST REGISTER in advance in order to do so (see link below).

When: June 14, 2021 06:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Topic: June 14, 2021 Commission Meeting

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All comments submitted by email to the above email address before the conclusion of the meeting will be included in the record of the meeting. When feasible, the Commission Chair, or designated staff, also will read the comments into the record at the meeting, subject to a two-minute time limit per comment.

The Commission Chair may reduce or eliminate the amount of time allotted to read comments at the beginning of each item or public comment period depending on the number of comments and the business of the day. Your patience is appreciated.

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

2.0 Public Comment

The public may comment on any item of public interest within the jurisdiction of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission. In accordance with the Brown Act, if a member of the public addresses an item not on the posted agenda, no response, discussion, or action on the item may occur.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under Item 4.

ACTION

3.1 Approve the Minutes from the April 26, 2021 Special Commission Meeting.

3.2 Approve the Contracts Docket

- 3.2.1 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Contra Costa County Office of Education to provide rating and management of the Contra Costa Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in accordance with local implementation requirements and in



alignment with regional and state QRIS efforts in an amount not to exceed \$146,687 for a term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$928,725). Funded 100% F5 CA Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) funds.

- 3.2.2 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Tandem, Partners in Early Learning to provide a book bag delivery system to train parents in read-aloud strategies to ensure healthy brain development, parent-child bonding and the early literacy skills critical for school success in an amount not to exceed \$173,400 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$928,725). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.3 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Contra Costa Crisis Center to maintain a web-based database of Contra Costa Human Services (www.211database.org) for children birth through age five and their families and to oversee the Help Me Grow 211 call center, a 24-hour phone referral service in which trained information and referral specialists refer callers to needed services in an amount not to exceed \$205,530 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Help Me Grow (\$435,990). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.4 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (Antioch/Delta First 5 Center) to provide classes, workshops, presentations, resource and referral services, child developmental screening, drop-in availability, opportunities for community involvement, and special events in an amount not to exceed \$665,540 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Family Support Initiative: First 5 Centers (\$3,005,391). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.5 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (East County First 5 Center) to provide classes, workshops, presentations, resource and referral services, child developmental screening, drop-in availability, opportunities for community involvement, and special events in an amount not to exceed \$632,400 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Family Support Initiative: First 5 Centers (\$3,005,391). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.6 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with ASPIRANET (Monument First 5 Center) to provide classes, workshops, presentations, resource and referral services, child developmental screening, drop-in availability, opportunities for community involvement, and special events in an amount not to exceed \$440,840 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Family Support Initiative: First 5 Centers (\$3,005,391). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.7 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Bay Area Community Resources (West County First 5 Center) to provide classes, workshops, presentations, resource and referral services,



child developmental screening, drop-in availability, opportunities for community involvement, and special events in an amount not to exceed \$632,400 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Family Support Initiative: First 5 Centers (\$3,005,391). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.

- 3.2.8 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract amendment with ASPIRAnet (Central, East and West County) to increase the payment limit by \$145,000 (from \$305,000 to \$450,000) to provide home visiting services for expectant and new mothers and fathers for term July 1, 2021 to September 30, 2021. FY2021-22 budget line: Family Support Initiative: Home Visiting (\$610,000). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.9 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Applied Survey Research, Inc. to provide data analysis and evaluation support in an amount not to exceed \$120,000 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY 2021-22 budget line: Strategic Information & Planning: Professional Services (\$304,261). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.10 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Baby Builders, Inc. to provide developmental playgroups, curriculum, materials, staffing, and site coordination support and program over-site in an amount not to exceed \$100,425 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY 2021-22 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Help Me Grow: (\$435,990). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.11 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with We Care Services for Children to provide developmental playgroups, curriculum, materials, staffing, and site coordination support and program over-site in an amount not to exceed \$100,425 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY 2021-22 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Help Me Grow: (\$435,990). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.12 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Early Quality Systems, Inc. to implement a comprehensive Quality Matters (QM) application and online portal. These applications include, but are not limited to assessments, rating, coaching, site updates, financial incentives, and participant interface in an amount not to exceed \$104,000 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$928,725). Funded 100% F5 CA Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) funds.
- 3.2.13 AUTHORIZE and RATIFY the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract with Low Income Investment Fund (LIIF) to provide \$130,000 in grants to licensed family child care providers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 for term April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021. FY2020-21 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Child Care Provider Supports. Funded \$100,000 from FY 2020-21 Prop 10 Program Expenses fund balance and \$30,000 from Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation Funds.

- 3.2.14 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director or designee to execute a contract amendment with Maze & Associates Accounting Corporation for a no cost extension (\$83,520) to provide transition information and planning for accounting activities including Annual Audit, OPEB valuation, CERBT, and accounting services as needed for term to extend from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Administrative: Professional Services (\$156,000). Funded 100% Prop 10 funds.
- 3.2.15 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or designee, to execute a contract with CoCoKids Inc. to provide Quality Improvement Navigation (QIN) coaching to provide ongoing technical assistance (TA), guidance and consistent communication to QIS and QRIS sites and support to participate in local implementation of the QRIS in an amount not to exceed \$102,000 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Childhood Education Initiative: Early Learning Quality (\$928,725) Funded 100% F5 CA Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive (IMPACT) funds.
- 3.2.16 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Board Chair, or her designee, to execute a contract with Counseling Options & Parent Education Support Center Inc. to provide Triple P classes to parents with children ages 0-5 utilizing certified trainers with skill sets in serving the development needs of young children and their families throughout Contra Costa County in an amount not to exceed \$136,321 for term July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. FY2021-22 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Triple P Therapeutic Services (\$165,500). Funded \$94,214 from Prop 10 funds and \$42,107 from Contra Costa Health Services-Behavioral Health Services Division/Mental Health funds.

3.3 Approve the Grants Docket

- 3.3.1 AUTHORIZE and RATIFY the Executive Director, or designee, to apply for and accept a grant in an amount not to exceed \$30,000 from Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation to provide grants for licensed family child care providers experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 for term May 1, 2021 to July 1, 2021. Funded 100% Dean and Margaret Leshar Foundation.
- 3.3.2 APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director, or designee, to apply for and, if awarded, execute a grant agreement with All In For Kids (AIFK) in an amount up to \$750,000 over 3 years (up to \$250,000 per year) to provide innovative community-led strategies, policy changes and integrated systems for families, for term September 1, 2021 to August 31, 2024. Funded 100% All In For Kids.

3.4 Accept the third quarter financial report FY 2020-21

3.5 First 5 Program Reports May 2021

3.6 First 5 California Certification of Compliance Fiscal Year 2021-22 Funding

4.0 Consider for discussion any items removed from the consent calendar.



- 5.0 Ready Kids East County Initiative Staff Presentation**
- 6.0 Executive Director's Report**
- 7.0 Communications**
 - Making The Case For the Early Years
 - 2020-21 State Budget Advocacy Correspondence
- 8.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates**
- 9.0 Adjourn**

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to participate in Commission meetings who contact the Commission's offices, at least 48 hours before the meeting, at (925) 771-7300.

Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission to a majority of members of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200, Concord, CA 94520 during normal business hours.



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 3.1

Approve the Minutes from the April 26, 2021 Special Commission Meeting.



**Special Commission Meeting
MINUTES**

Monday, April 26, 2021, 11:00 AM

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice-Chair Dr. Rocio Hernandez called the meeting to order at 11:05 am
Due to COVID-19, the meeting was held on a web-based platform.
Vice-chair introduced the meeting protocols.

Commissions in attendance during roll call were:

District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez
District 2 Alternate: Vidya Iyengar
District 3: Lee Ross
District 4: Gareth Ashley
District 4 Alternate: Matt Regan
Health Services: Dr. Chris Farnitano
Board of Supervisors Alternate: Diane Burgis
EHSD: Kathy Gallagher

Also present: County Counsel Keiko Kobayashi

Commissioners absent were: District 2: Marilyn Cachola Lucey, District 5: John Jones,
Children & Families Services: Kathy Marsh, and Board of Supervisors: Candace Andersen.

Alternates absent were: District 1: Genoveva Garcia Calloway, Health Services: Daniel
Peddycord RN, and Children & Families Services: Roslyn Gentry.

2.0 Public Comment

No comment.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

Kathy Gallagher made a motion to accept the consent calendar, seconded by Lee Ross.

Roll call vote:

District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez - YES
District 2: Vidya Iyengar - YES
District 3: Lee Ross - YES
District 4: Gareth Ashley - YES
Board of Supervisor: Alternate Diane Burgis - ABSTAIN
Health Service Department: Dr. Chris Farnitatno - YES
EHSD: Kathy Gallagher - YES

Nos: None

Abstain: Diane Burgis



Absent: Marilyn Cachola Lucey, John Jones, Candace Andersen, Kathy Marsh, Genoveva Garcia Calloway, Daniel Peddycord and Roslyn Gentry

The Consent Calendar was **APPROVED**.

4.0 Consider for discussion any items removed from the consent calendar.

There were no items removed from the consent calendar for discussion.

5.0 Consider approval of Thrive By Five Proposal for American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Ruth Fernandez reported on the First 5 Contra Costa Thrive by Five Proposal for ARPA funding. In her report, she highlighted the following:

- Acknowledgement that this proposal is directly aligned with the current Strategic Plan goals.
- Aims to build sustainable growth for First 5 Early Childhood investments in the community.
- In the wake of the pandemic, based on the data we collected, and the data we see regionally and across the nation, families with lowest household income are most affected.
- ARPA funding is an opportunity to repair, restructure and improve the way we support young children and families especially those farthest from opportunity.
- We disseminated over \$125 million dollars of the Proposition 10 funding over the past 10 years.
- Staff recommendation is to leverage First 5 Contra Costa's role as a long standing county partner and proven steward of public funding.
- Staff recommend that the Commission approve the Thrive By Five Proposal with an ask of \$11 million or 5 % of the American Rescue Plan Local COVID-19 Response Funding allocated to the county to ensure that young children and their families have the support they need.
- This allocation will be spaced over a 3-year period (2021-2024) would provide \$3.7 million annually to increase access to critical resources and services.

Proposal includes 5 budget categories (these categories are most critical now).

- o Tackling long term effect of trauma: 10%
- o Immediate support to mitigate current mental health crisis: 40%
- o Family Resource Centers, trusted connections and brokers for families: 15%
- o Immediate financial assistance to child care providers at risk of permanent closure: 30%
- o Community organizing to advance equitable and community-driven recovery policies: 5%

If approved by county leadership, the three years that ARPA funds are available, First 5 Contra Costa would be contributing approximately \$1 million in in-kind support via reporting and evaluation and staff time & expertise.

After presentation, the staff answered questions from the panel:

Q& A:

Lee Ross asked about the allocation of the 5% towards community organizing. He asked if there were groups specified for this or if it was intentionally unnamed at this time. He asked if there will be an RFP.

Ruth informed that at this stage of the proposal it was premature to make specific identification of who it will be assigned to. She mentioned the Regional Groups are kept in mind but also kept the proposal broad intentionally.



Gareth Ashley: assumed this wasn't in the budget as revenue that was approved last month. The expenditure associated with this proposal is going to additional program expenses. He then asked the panel members from the county if this item is in line to the County spending allocation.

Diane Burgis read the current county budget document:

"Contra Costa County will receive \$223.7 million for COVID related expenditures incurred or from lost revenues resulting from the pandemic. This funding is for the time frame from March 6, 2021 through December 31, 2024. Additionally, the Health Department budget assumed any costs or losses related to COVID during July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. We still do not know what those costs are."

She added that the County is looking to spend \$110 million for the FY2021-22, \$110 million for FY 22-23 and \$110 million for FY 23-24. Diane also mentioned that "right now it costs \$14 million to maintain housing and funding ends in June 2021. The county continues to vaccinate people and are hitting a wall with getting to "herd immunity" and may require to allocate additional funds to further the effort into more vaccination (citing booster shots and children's vaccination).

She stated that she really supports First 5 and wants to have reasonable expectations of that money. She had received other requests of a percentage of that fund from other organizations that provide services as well and want to help explain what is available out of this fund.

Dr. Farnitano supported Diane Burgis' budget and said that the estimated allocation for the vaccines were accurate. He expects that another million doses are still needed (includes children). He explained that vaccinations are in line for teenagers and boosters in the future. A vaccine infrastructure needs to be maintained for at least another year.

Kathy Gallagher commented that she supports the First 5 Contra Costa proposal with all the services outlined in the Staff Report and recognized its necessity. However, the ARPA fund of \$223.7 million is for the County to replenish funding from the reserves the county had put forward to respond to COVID. Beyond that there are other sources of funds earmarked for Child Care and Early Education Resources. She asked if staff had looked into those other funds. Those monies are under the direct guidance of State Agencies (e.g. Department of Education or State Department of Education, State Department of Social Services, Health Care Services). EHSD could be provided direction as to where they can focus spending for the county and create flexibility to use those funds through EHSD.

Ruth replied that staff had looked at state connected ARPA funds through First 5 Network. There are multiple efforts to long-term planning with other state budget allocations through multiple state-level coalitions.

Kathy asked what First 5 CA is doing with regards to the ARPA funds.

Ruth responded that First 5 CA is currently in deliberation on efforts to support and compliment relief investments. First 5 CA invested \$4 million in PPE, diapers, and other supplies to help child care providers and families. Ruth also mentioned that she would welcome support and collaboration from leadership at the County Departments to advocate and identify opportunities to align state to county policies to streamline resource allocation and dissemination.



Kathy offered to provide staff resources to build this proposal and in parallel create some advocacy through our state associations and directly through our state departments on how to create the guidance, to define how to spend the ARFA funding on the local level before they get too deeply into regulations. We should be looking at any other funding sources available.

Diane Burgis added that she asked County Administrator to provide a funding source list to the County Department Heads and the County's trusted partners so we can all work together.

Ruth thanked everyone on the panel and expressed her great respect for the very difficult decisions they have to make regarding the fund allocation. Ruth acknowledged that the circumstances are dire and she is aware that there are a lot of other agencies advocating for these funds. She stated that it's imperative to boldly ask for children's needs be elevated and looked at intentionally. It is important step to take to speak on behalf of the children of Contra Costa County and advocate for them.

Dr. Hernandez asked if what we are proposing is being asked in other counties as well.

Ruth responded that other First 5s are having the same conversations.

Camilla Rand, gave this additional comment: at the state level there is a lot of discussion around transitional kindergarten and pre-school slots and access. This is important and also something we intentionally did not include in the plan for that reason.

Gareth Ashley made a motion, and seconded by Vidya Iyengar to approve the Thrive By Five Proposal for American Rescue Act Fund.

Roll call vote:

District 1: Dr. Rocio Hernandez - YES

District 2: Vidya Iyengar - YES

District 3: Lee Ross - YES

District 4: Gareth Ashley - YES

Board of Supervisor: Alternate Diane Burgis - ABSTAIN

Health Service Department: Dr. Chris Farnitarno - ABSTAIN

EHSD: Kathy Gallagher - YES

Nos: None

Abstain: Diane Burgis, Dr. Chris Farnitano

Absent: Marilyn Cachola Lucey, John Jones, Candace Andersen, Kathy Marsh, Genoveva Garcia Calloway, Daniel Peddycord and Roslyn Gentry

The motion was **APPROVED**.

6.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

There were no Commissioner updates.

7.0 Adjourn

Dr. Rocio Hernandez adjourned the meeting at 11:47 am.

She announced next standing meeting on June 14, 2021.



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 3.4

Accept the third quarter financial report FY 2020-21



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 3.5

First 5 Contra Costa Program Reports May 2021

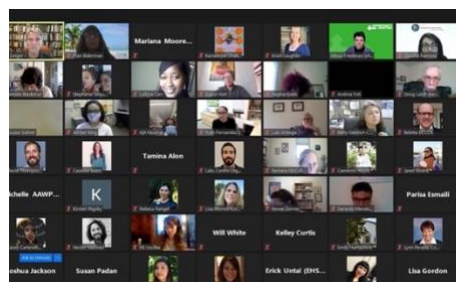
Family Economic Security Partnership

The Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) is a public, private and nonprofit collaboration dedicated to increasing the income and building the assets of low-income families and individuals living in Contra Costa County.

Family Economic Security Partnership (FESP) Activities

The FESP meeting on April 30 highlighted COVID-19's impact on financial stability. Jamila Henderson from PolicyLink shared Bay Area Equity Atlas data about the disparate impact of COVID on low-wage workers and communities of color. Kristen Schumacher and Eric Saucedo from the California Budget and Policy Center talked about the state budget and the American Rescue Plan and shared several potential policy options for building back better. Their PowerPoints are on the [FESP website page](#).

FESP members also participated in a "FESP Feedback" poll to share their thoughts about FESP, what they see as most important service FESP provides, to identify barriers to engagement in advocacy, and to identify the primary economic concerns for constituents. The results indicate that the majority of FESP members think FESP and its focus on financial stability is extremely or very relevant to their work. The service of most importance to them are the presentations on selected economic/racial/social justice issues closely followed by information about available resources and county updates. The primary economic concerns for their constituents were low wages and the need for affordable housing, closely followed by inability to pay rent due to COVID and loss of job. In addition, when asked about their engagement in policy advocacy, 36% said they engage always or often; 30% said sometimes; and 31% said rarely or never, attributing the top reasons to "lack of time" or "not in my agency's mission."



The Executive Committee will be meeting in the near future to review the feedback from the poll and formulate any next steps. Fran Biderman, Special Projects Coordinator, continues to send out relevant information to FESP members on COVID, Measure X, listening sessions for the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, Budget Justice Coalition meetings, vaccine distribution, rental assistance, and other issues as they arise.

Community Advocacy + Partnership Project (CAPP)

FESP and Ensuring Opportunity have been busy conducting outreach and recruitment for the new CAPP project. Applications to participate in the cohort were due May 21 and the project has already received more applications than we can accommodate, demonstrating tremendous interest in this project. Seven individuals/organizations applied for the consultant position that will facilitate the project and interviews with two finalists will be conducted the last week in May. Development of the curriculum has also begun. The two-year project, which intends to launch in Mid-July, will work with a cohort of direct service providers, advocacy organizations, and residents with lived experience, aimed at building a broader, better-connected, and more powerful base to advocate for policies and systems that increase equity in Contra Costa.

Measure X: Healthy and Safe Contra Costa

The Measure X Community Advisory Board (MXCAB) is meeting every Wednesday at 5:30 pm and meetings are open to anyone who is interested. The MXCAB is conducting a series of "listening sessions" at each meeting to learn more about the range of critical issues facing the county. On May 26, the

PROGRAM UPDATES

MAY 2021



presentation focused on the early childhood system. Anyone can sign up to receive the agendas for the meeting, or to review past agendas at <https://www.contracosta.ca.gov/agendacenter>.

Early Learning Leadership Group (ELLG)

The ELLG held a meeting on May 18 to discuss emerging revenue opportunities including First 5's Thrive by Five proposal, Measure X, and the American Relief Fund. ELLG members also received an update on the Contra Costa Child Care Relief Fund and our successful partnership with LIIF (Low Income Investment Fund)—75 grants were made to family child care providers in Antioch, Concord, Pittsburg, Richmond and San Pablo. Over 200 applications were received, indicating much greater need than we currently have funding for. The committee also talked about the state budget with an increased focus on and funding for early childhood issues and discussed some concerns about the Governor's proposal for Universal Transitional Kindergarten for all four-year-olds.

Partnerships

FESP continues to participate on numerous coalitions/partnerships related to economic security, COVID-19, and racial justice.

Budget Justice Coalition (BJC)

Fran Biderman, Special Projects Coordinator, participates on the monthly BJC Coalition meetings, which focus on the county budget and how best to engage community in budget decisions. The BJC held a successful town hall with Employment and Human Services (EHSD) and Health Services to learn more about their budget needs and gaps. BJC members also asked for a separate Town Hall session on the allocation of American Rescue Plan funds, which likely will occur in June 2021.

CalFresh Partnership

Fran participates on monthly Cal Fresh Partnership meetings where discussions occur on ways to increase CalFresh participation and decrease hunger in the county.

West and Central/East County CARES Coalitions

Fran participates on the West and Central/East County CARES Coalitions where a tremendous amount of information is shared and later distributed to FESP members and others.

Family Support

*Our **Family Support (FS)** initiative helps families build healthy relationships, strengthen support systems, and nurture their children's development.*

Community Advisory Council Recommendations

On May 21, 2021, First 5 Center Community Advisory Council (CAC) Members gathered via Zoom to present the recommendations they developed over the past year to improve First 5 center operations. In addition to the parent volunteers that make up the CACs, the event included First 5 Center staff who highlighted the impact of the CAC recommendations on their work. This past year CACs proved to be flexible, resilient and steadfast. While the First 5 Centers worked on the technical aspects of service delivery, the CACs focused on and helped the Centers respond to the emerging and ever shifting needs of their communities. As the CACs anticipate returning to in-person meetings once the Centers reopen in July, there will be some elements of this past year incorporated into the CAC program model.



California Family Resource Association (CFRA) Highlights Family Support Program Officer

Lisa Korb, Family Support Program Officer, was highlighted recently by the CFRA. Lisa has been a member of CFRA for several years, and most recently has been active in the Networks and Policy Committees and was quoted as saying “Helping support the Family Resource Centers (FRCs) through all the stages of development has been a long road and journey filled with learning, growing, accomplishments, failures and a culmination of many contributions made by numerous individuals, including those affiliated with CFRA.” Lisa continues to be an active participant in ongoing conversations and encourages anyone who can, to get involved with CFRA or other organizations that provide an opportunity to expand their horizons.

Community Engagement Program

Our **Community Engagement Program (CE)** supports three Regional Groups made up of 200 parents and residents to make Contra Costa County safer, healthier and more equitable for families.

Regional Groups Advocate for Young Children at Immigrant Advocacy Day

30 Regional Group leaders and CE staff met with 4 state legislators on May 25 to promote the health, safety and dignity of all young children and families, regardless of immigration status. Regional Group members shared compelling, emotional testimony about the barriers faced with inadequate health care coverage, limited worker protections, hunger, ineligibility for safety net programs, and threats of family separation. Regional Groups demonstrated impressive leadership and advocacy in each visit, championing the needs of young children and families. We will follow up on legislative visits next month.



We Count and We Vote! Report is Here

Our recently released [We Count, and We Vote!](#) report summarizes the Regional Group's impressive organizing to document pressing priorities of young children and families and to facilitate participation in the 2020 Census and elections. The report shares findings from a countywide community survey, outcomes of peer-to-peer mobilizing, and lessons learned. The community-based project was a collaborative effort between Regional Groups, Healthy & Active Before 5 and First 5 Contra Costa's CE Team. We hope the report is useful and shared widely.

Regional Groups Welcome New Members

The CE Team and Regional Groups hosted 20 parents at our New Member Leadership Orientation on May 15, 2021. This semi-annual training builds community and orients new parent participants to foundational approaches of organizing, advocacy and systems change on behalf of young children. The New Member Leadership Orientation is a requirement for Regional Group membership. We welcome and congratulate the newest Regional Group members!

Antioch CHANGE is in Full Swing

The East County Regional Group (ECRG) continues its participatory community assessment to document Antioch families' housing experiences and needs for greater housing security. The ECRG members are doing phenomenal outreach through canvassing and phone banking to collect stories from underrepresented families. Data collection will continue until early summer.

Regional Groups advocate for housing security and all-inclusive parks

The West (WCRG), Central (CCRG) and East County Regional Groups (ECRG) demonstrated extraordinary leadership and advocacy this month at local council meetings, urging anti-displacement and tenant protections as well as an investment in all-inclusive play spaces. During one city council meeting, ECRG members stayed until almost 11:00pm to weigh in on an Antioch decision to include universal designs and accessibility in local parks. Similarly, the CCRG attended back-to-back council meetings to press for council intervention in the face of sunseting eviction moratoria that puts thousands of renting families with young children at risk of displacement. The WCRG continues to participate actively in the development of Boorman Park to support building this dream park for Richmond. The relentless advocacy of Regional Groups this month on behalf of young children and residents' priorities is admirable and invaluable.

Early Intervention

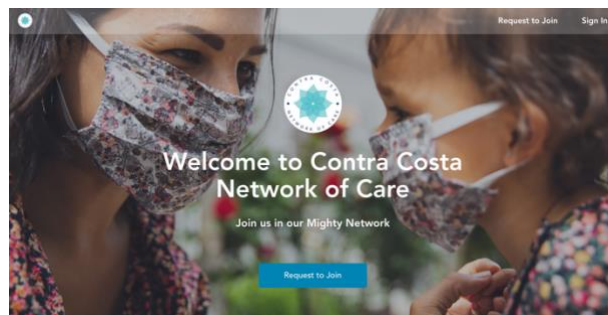
Our **Early Intervention (EI)** initiative aims to ensure that families have access to prevention and early intervention supports and services that foster the optimal development of all children.

ACES Round One

First 5 Contra Costa was awarded a Network of Care Convening grant which required us to offer two large convenings—one in Fall 2020 and one in Spring 2021—with cross-sector stakeholders focused on fostering a trauma informed network of care within Contra Costa County. The Spring Network of Care convening was held on May 16 with approximately 200 attendees. The event featured a conversation with Alicia Lieberman and with local family support staff who inspired the group to make changes inward and outward so that we can be a more trauma-informed system. The evaluation results were strong—[please click here to view the results.](#)

Contra Costa Network of Care Has Arrived

An outcome of our ACEs work has been the development of the online hub. This was a collaborative effort with Families Thrive and Trauma Transformed. The site contains Contra Costa specific resources, links to both convenings, and ACEs-related tools. It also spotlights local professionals engaged in this work and opportunities to connect on shared interests. Check it out at contracostanetworkofcare.org.



Building Strong Connections

The Help Me Grow (HMG) Café offered this month had over 30 attendees. The Cafés bring professionals together to build deeper connections between each other, strengthen cross-system work, increase resource knowledge, and to help learn about work going on amongst organizations. This Café focused on ACEs and trauma-informed care and featured video segments from Oprah and Bruce Perry discussing their new book “What Happened to You.” The attendees then linked this information to their work and shared what resources they have access to in order to support healing and resilience. They were also introduced to the new Contra Costa Network of Care online hub as additional support for their work.

Early Childhood Education

Our Early Childhood Education (ECE) Initiative aims to ensure that all children have access to high-quality, affordable child care and early learning.

Dual Language Learner Course & Continual Learning Opportunities

A large part of the Dual Language Learner (DLL) initiative includes a college credit course series direct to providers. The first course in the two-part series wrapped up on May 26, 2021. The sessions introduced participants to key elements that influence the development of DLLs in early learning settings. It unpacked implicit bias, explored creative ways to learn from and with families, and discussed sound DLL assessments and bilingual language development with an emphasis on the critical relationship between home language and culture and children's healthy sense of identity. Providers attended a series of five virtual sessions and completed coursework and coaching sessions in between. The second course will start in August of 2021.

In addition to the course, the First 5 Early Childhood team is busy continuing our learning around Dual Language Learning and implementation. The First 5 Coaches attend a multi-part Coaches' Institute and Community of Practice (CoP) with other Coaches in the Bay Area to support providers in applying DLL strategies. Deputy Director, Camilla Rand, Early Childhood Program Officer, Melissa Cunningham, and Evaluation Analyst, Tatiana Hill, are part of a California statewide Community of Practice designed to collaborate, troubleshoot, and brainstorm with other counties around implementing, evaluating, and building systems of change for DLL. These learning experiences are ongoing to support our DLL initiative efforts.

Final Teaching Pyramid Module Complete

Throughout the course of the program year, First 5 Coaches delivered trainings on the Teaching Pyramid. Consistently, these trainings received the highest scores of "strongly agree" and positive open comments on exit surveys. In between training sessions, the First 5 Coaches were busy supporting providers in ongoing Teaching Pyramid implementation. The final training module and coaching sessions wrapped up on May 1, 2021.



Focus on Inclusion

The First 5 Coaches continue to reflect and apply lessons learned from the Inclusion Train the Trainer delivered by WestEd this spring. In partnership with the Inclusion Facilitator at CocoKids, Megan Miccio, the First 5 Coaches are reaching out to Inclusion Service Providers throughout Contra Costa to discuss an Inclusion Train the Trainer certification plan. Additionally, they hope to learn more about referral pathways for early care providers and families.



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 3.6

First 5 California Certification Compliance FY 2021-22

Certification of Compliance

Fiscal Year 2021–22 Funding

I attest that I am duly authorized to certify to First 5 California that the county cited on page 2 has satisfied all requirements of Health and Safety Code Section 130140 to remain eligible to receive tax revenue as of July 1, 2021.

Each of the following checked boxes confirms the stated requirement has been satisfied. Additionally, the required county commission action information is included/attached for reference.

The county commission has reviewed its current county strategic plan, or adopted either a new or revised county strategic plan. **Please check only one of the two boxes below.**

- The county commission has reviewed its county strategic plan, pursuant to the requirements of Health and Safety Code Section 130140 (a)(1)(C)(iii).
- The county commission has adopted either a new or revised county strategic plan, conducted the required public hearing, and submitted the adopted plan and any revisions to the state commission, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 130140 (a)(1)(D), (E) and (F).

Reference Commission Minutes dated:

Agenda Item Number

The county commission has conducted the required public hearing on its FY 2019–20 annual audit, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 130140(d)(2).

Reference Commission Minutes dated:

Agenda Item Number

The county commission has conducted the required public hearing on its FY 2019–20 annual report (e.g., data submitted through First 5 California’s Annual Report Web-based Reporting System), pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 130140(d)(2).

Reference Commission Minutes dated:

November 17, 2020

Agenda Item Number

Item # 6.0

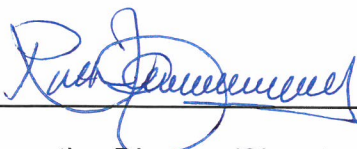
The county commission has conducted the required public hearing on the State Commission's FY 2019–20 annual report, pursuant to Health and Safety Code Section 130140(d)(3).

Reference Commission Minutes dated:

April 12, 2021

Agenda Item Number

Item # 6.0



Date:

June 9, 2021

Executive Director (Signature)

Executive Director (Type/Print Name):

Ruth Fernández, Ed.D.

County Commission Name:

First 5 Contra Costa

For questions, contact Latresia Wright at (916) 263-1348 or lwright@ccfc.ca.gov.

Return the completed Certification of Compliance using one of the following methods:

E-mail: statutorydocuments@first5.ca.gov

Mail: First 5 California
Administrative Services Office
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive, Suite 260
Sacramento, CA 95833

Fax: (916) 263-1360



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 5.0

Ready Kids East County Initiative Staff Presentation

Ready Kids East County 2021-22 Work Plan

RKEC Steering Committee

Ready Kids East County

Core Beliefs & Values

Individual and systemic racism is the root cause of school readiness disparities.

The burden of change is on us, not on parents and families of Black children. We must do our part in acknowledging, reckoning with, and repairing the harms of racist policies, structures, and culture.

We redistribute power to families of Black children.

We work in service to them. Black families lead the way, and their voices drive everything we do.

We're humble - no one of us has all the answers.

We have to listen, learn, and work together.

We create brave space for mutual learning and open communication, where all of us in the school readiness system can come together and create change.

We value the unique expertise of everyone who touches a Black child's life.

Parents, caregivers, educators, and researchers all contribute knowledge and wisdom to our growing understanding of school readiness.

We advocate for equity.

All families should have access to the resources they need to get their children ready for school.

Problem & Possibility

Problem: Disparities in school readiness by race persist because we're approaching school readiness with a frame that Black children and families are solely responsible for being ready for school.

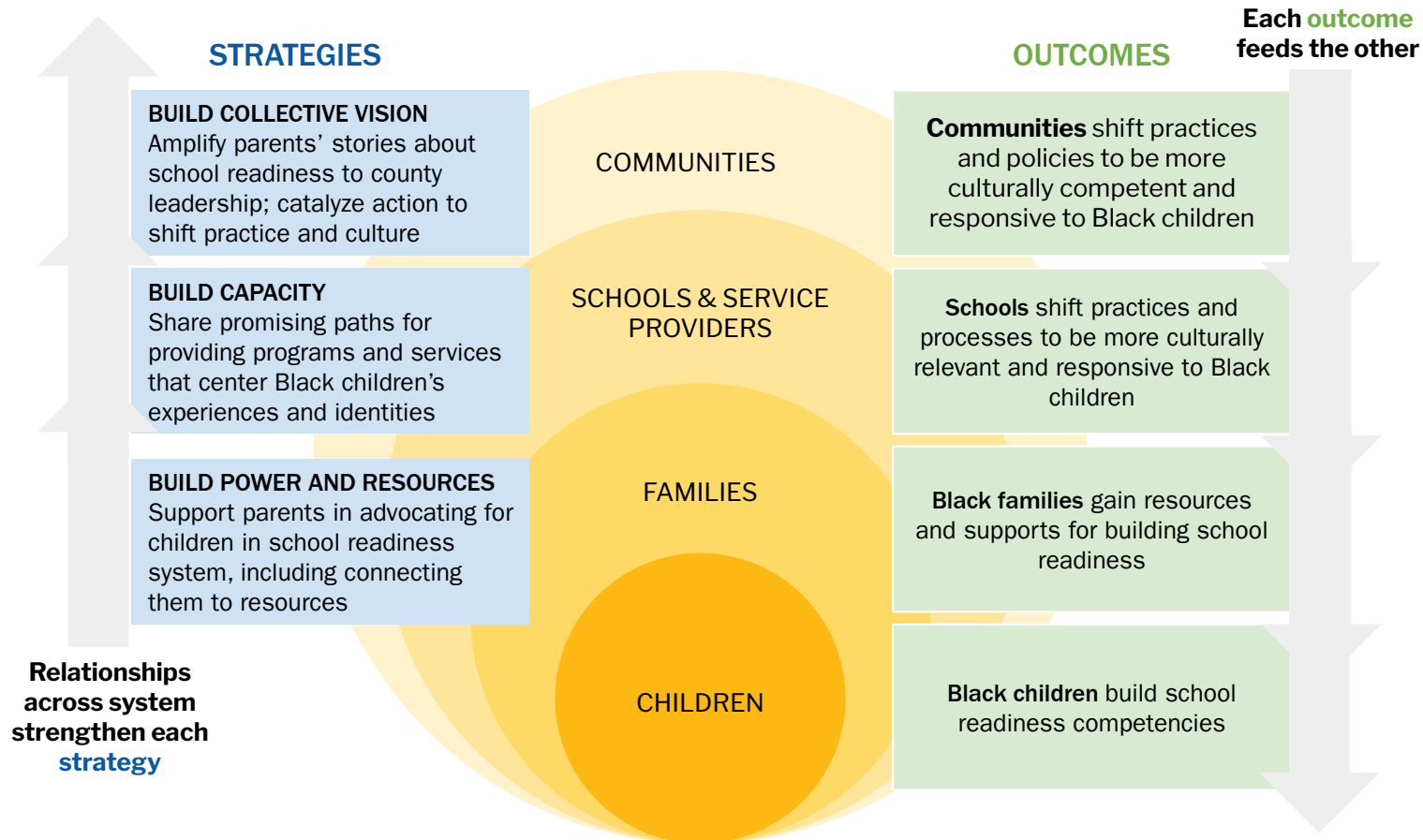
Possibility: What would it look like if we instead put the burden of change on the entire schools and community ecology to be ready for Black children and families, rather than the other way around?

Strategies	Short-term Outcomes (1-2 yrs)	Long-term Outcomes (2-3 yrs)	Assumptions
<p>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: Create bridging spaces for parents, school leaders, county leaders, teachers, and service providers to learn from one another</p> <p>BUILD COLLECTIVE VISION: Amplify parents' stories about school readiness to county leadership; catalyze action to shift practice and culture</p> <p>BUILD CAPACITY: Share promising paths for providing programs and services that center Black children's experiences and identities,</p> <p>BUILD POWER AND RESOURCES: Support parents in advocating for children, building competencies to thrive in the school readiness system, and connecting them to resources</p>	<p>Stakeholders 1) learn from one another 2) clarify their role in the school readiness ecology for Black children and 3) begin to adjust practices to be more culturally relevant</p>	<p>READY FAMILIES: Black families have tools, resources, and relationships to advocate for learning environments where their young children will thrive.</p> <p>READY SCHOOLS: Community organizations and schools shift their practices, environments, and cultures to serve, center, and celebrate Black children and their families.</p> <p>READY COMMUNITIES: A coalition of fierce advocates for Black children in East County forms and propels family-centered and culturally relevant policies, funding, and service provision.</p>	<p>BECAUSE whole ecosystems (families, schools, communities) shape children's development of school readiness and families' ability to support development of school readiness</p> <p>BECAUSE when you're in relationship with somebody, you listen, exchange information, and are accountable with one another.</p> <p>BECAUSE With relationships, knowledge, and power combined, parents are better equipped to advocate for themselves and their children.</p> <p>BECAUSE families' beliefs and expectations are central to a culturally relevant, whole-family approach to school readiness.</p>
	<h3>Players/Stakeholders</h3>		
	<p>Parents, caregivers of Black children Black children Tandem, COPE First 5-funded partners First 5 Commissioners First 5 Centers - leadership and staff ECE Providers Design Team members PUSD school staff, board County, local government + law enforcement Faith-based organizations Other CBOs + social clubs/groups</p>		

Ultimate Impact

Among schools and community organizations, there are resources, information, and a culture that center and celebrate Black children in East County and equip them and their families with everything they need to be ready for kindergarten.

SYSTEMS APPROACH TO SCHOOL READINESS OF BLACK CHILDREN



Work Plan: 2021-22 Activities Mapped to Strategies

BUILD COLLECTIVE VISION

Share what we learned from Parent Cafes with:

1. Parent cafe participants
2. First 5 Contra Costa staff
3. First 5 Center staff, contractors
4. RKEC Design Team
5. PUSD leadership
6. Community members: CAC, Regional Groups

BUILD CAPACITY

Host and facilitate learning communities for dismantling bias and racism, and using trauma-informed, culturally relevant practices in the early childhood sector

1. Primary recipients: First 5 contractors and their staff, EC service providers
2. Offer support to PUSD on what they're currently doing
3. Support First 5 Center learning, gather data on participants' growth

BUILD CAPACITY

Research and reflect on promising programming and curricula that center Black experiences

1. Connect and learn from Strong Start and OUSD, Kidango
2. Partner with and collectively learn from Tandem's math curriculum pilot
3. Document and learn from COPE's outreach and programming for East County Black families
4. Elicit suspension and expulsion data for Black children in East Contra Costa County

BUILD POWER & RESOURCES

Connect families to school readiness resources and advocacy

1. Provide a series of parent cafes beginning in the fall addressing issues identified as a need in the parent cafes, e.g.,
2. Partner with Tandem to support StoryCycles programming with PUSD
3. Partner with COPE to provide culturally relevant seminars for parents

ACTIVITY

Who is doing the work:

First 5 Contra Costa and contractors

Connect families to school readiness resources and advocacy

1. Provide a series of parent cafes beginning in the fall addressing issues identified as a need in the parent cafes
2. Partner with Tandem to support StoryCycles programming with PUSD
3. Partner with COPE to continue culturally relevant parenting classes for parents

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Who is changing as a result:

Parents, First 5 contractors

- Parents have increased access to parenting and literacy resources
- Parents increase competency in supporting children's school readiness
- Service providers have a better understanding of the challenges, hopes, and values of parents of Black children regarding school readiness
- Black/African American families deepen their trust in service providers

EVALUATION METHODS

- Surveys/Evaluations
- Qualitative analysis of parent cafe breakout room sessions
- Quarterly attendance and retention data by racial/ethnic group

BUILD CAPACITY

READY SCHOOLS & PROVIDERS

ACTIVITY

Who is doing the work:

First 5 Contra Costa and contractors

Host and facilitate learning communities for dismantling bias and racism, and using trauma-informed, culturally relevant practices in the early childhood sector

1. Primary recipients: First 5 contractors and their staff, EC service providers
2. Offer support to PUSD on what they're currently doing
3. Support First 5 Center learning, gather data on participants' growth

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Who is changing as a result:

First 5 Contra Costa and contractors, EC service providers, and school staff

First 5 Contra Costa, First 5 contractors, EC service providers, and school staff

- Make changes to their practice to be more culturally relevant to Black families
- Increase awareness of lessons learned and best practices for culturally responsive service provision

EVALUATION METHODS

- Interviews
- Assessments built into training
- Participation and sharing of learnings in Professional Learning Communities

First 5 Centers

- Center director and staff logs

BUILD CAPACITY

READY SCHOOLS & PROVIDERS

ACTIVITY

Who is doing the work:

First 5 Contra Costa and contractors

Research and reflect on promising programming and curricula that center Black experiences

1. Connect and learn from Strong Start and OUSD, Kidango
2. Partner with and collectively learn from Tandem's math curriculum pilot
3. Document and learn from COPE's outreach and programming for East County Black families
4. Elicit suspension and expulsion data for Black children in East Contra Costa County

SHORT-TERM OUTCOME

Who is changing as a result:

First 5 Contra Costa, First 5 contractors, EC service providers, and school staff

First 5 Contra Costa, First 5 contractors, EC service providers, and school staff

- Make changes to their practice to be more culturally relevant to Black families
- Increase awareness of lessons learned and best practices for culturally responsive service provision

EVALUATION METHODS

- Documentation of implementation and outreach strategies
- Sharing of lessons learned for implementation

ACTIVITY

Who is doing the work:

First 5 Contra Costa and contractors

Share what we learned from Parent Cafes with:

1. Parent cafe participants
2. First 5 Contra Costa staff
3. First 5 Center staff, contractors
4. RKEC Design Team
5. PUSD leadership
6. Community members: CAC, Regional Groups

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

Who is changing as a result: First 5 staff and contractors, County leadership, school leadership and staff, community members

Stakeholders

- learn about and embrace perspectives and needs of Black families for school readiness
- build shared values and goals around a systems approach to school readiness for Black children
- define the role of school environments, structures, and practices in supporting Black children's school readiness

EVALUATION METHODS

- Interviews/Reflection questions
- Self-assessment of systems readiness to support Black children's school readiness



June 14, 2021

Agenda Item 7.0

Communications

- Making the Case for the Early Years
- 2020-21 State Budget Advocacy Correspondence



Making the Case for The Early Years

Measure X Report on Contra Costa County's County Early
Childhood System

MAY 26, 2021

About This Report

This report provides Measure X Community Advisory Board members and alternates with an overview of the current early childhood landscape for young children and their families in Contra Costa County and highlights priority needs and gaps in serving our children and families.

CONTRIBUTORS

The foregoing information in this report was a collaborative effort across multiple County departments, First 5 Contra Costa, and other community-based organizations and providers of early childhood services, including:

First 5 Contra Costa

Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD)

CocoKids, Inc.

Community Services Bureau Head Start (CSB)

Contra Costa County Health Services Department (CCHS)

Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE)

Contra Costa County Local Planning Council for Early Care and Education (LPC)

Healthy and Active Before 5 (HAB45)

We Care Services for Children

Making the Case for the Early Years

Measure X Report on Contra Costa County's County Early Childhood System

MAY 26, 2021

INTRODUCTION

The brain is built through a process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood. In these first five years, children are developing the foundations by which they will learn, behave, and grow. Scientific research continues to demonstrate the long-term effects of supporting young children and their families during this most rapid period of a child's brain development.¹ Further, research has also shown that making investments in programs that support these families yields a 13% annual return on investment by improving life outcomes related to health, education, employment and social behaviors.²

Contra Costa is one of the fastest growing counties in the Bay Area. The population growth rate has generally exceeded the Bay Area's average growth rate every decade since 1940. Young children under the age of six represent 7% of Contra Costa's population, which equates to roughly 80,000 children.³ This growth, combined with an established research base on the critical importance of the first five years of life, indicates a growing need for services, systems, and policies that support Contra Costa's youngest residents.

When we support children and their families during a child's first five years of life, we make the most of the incredible human potential in all of us. Yet, not every child and family has access to the same level of resources that help realize this potential. In Contra Costa County, a need persists to build the supply of services and strengthen early childhood systems to support all children and families in the critical first five years.

A HOLISTIC, SYSTEMS APPROACH TO SUPPORTING YOUNG CHILDREN

To make the most of these critical early years, all children, prenatal to age five and their families need:

- Access to affordable, quality, and culturally relevant early learning opportunities through childcare and preschool
- Support for mental, physical, and behavioral health
- Food, housing, and economic security
- Strong caregiver and community relationships

The success and impact of these services depends on a strong infrastructure that supports the child and their family; if services are disconnected, at best, children miss out on the reinforcing benefits of

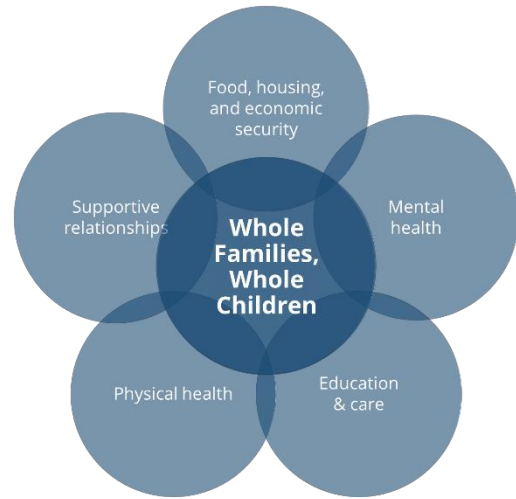
¹ <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

² <https://heckmanequation.org/resource/lifecycle-benefits-influential-early-childhood-program/>

³ California Dept. of Finance, Population Estimates and Projections (May 2020); U.S. Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates (Jul. 2020).

supports, and at worst, families and children do not connect to the supports they need when they need them.

Simply put, effective early childhood systems must be organized and structured in a cohesive, comprehensive, coordinated, and well-funded “system of care” that aligns a broad array of services, with a lens grounded in equity and addressing the root causes of disparities. To support the well-being and healthy development of all children, responsive “early childhood systems” that look at the whole child and whole family are necessary to ensure children are safe, healthy, loved, educated, and have the social-emotional skills to thrive in school and throughout life.



THE 0-5 LANDSCAPE IN CONTRA COSTA

Demographics of Children Under Six in Contra Costa

A diverse county, with a blend of rural and urban communities, Contra Costa is home to primarily White (34.9%) and Hispanic/ Latino (34.2%) children who make up the majority of the child population, with Asian (13.4%), African American (9%) and multi-racial (6.7%) populations at smaller percentages.⁴

Children in Poverty

Too many Contra Costa children live in deep poverty, defined as 50% of the Federal Poverty Level (i.e., an annual income of \$12,550 for a family of four). Countywide, 16.2% of families with children under the age of six live in deep poverty, and in 22 of the county’s census tracts, between 25-49% of households with children under six live in this deep level of poverty.

Young children of color represent a disproportionately high percentage of children under the age of six living in poverty (at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level) in Contra Costa. While there is a nearly equal percentage of Latino children and White children under the age of six in Contra Costa, Latino children make up over half (53%) of all children under the age of six who live at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level. The disparity is there for African American children too, who make up 7% of the population but 15% of those children under age six who live at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level.⁵

Furthermore, defining poverty according to the Federal Poverty Level does not paint a complete picture of families’ and children’s economic statuses in Contra Costa County. According to “The Cost of Being Californian” (2021), Contra Costa ranks the fifth most expensive county in the state.⁶ To cover the costs of basic needs for a family of four with an infant and a toddler requires a household annual income of

⁴ Kidsdata.org. <https://www.kidsdata.org/region/171/contracosta-county/summary#37/family-economics>

⁵ Briefing Book page 6. <http://www.first5coco.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/BriefingBook2019.pdf>

⁶ https://insightccd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/INSIGHT_CostofBeingCalifornian_5_web.pdf

\$141,641.⁷ When the median household income for a family with children in Contra Costa is \$103,685, a significant proportion of families in the county struggle to make ends meet. The pandemic has deepened economic insecurity for these families, as low-wage workers have been hit especially hard by unemployment.⁸

School Readiness

A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment⁹ (KRA) commissioned by First 5 Contra Costa in 2018 revealed that only 44% of Contra Costa children are fully ready for kindergarten. The data indicates that children who are well-fed, well-rested, visit a library with a caregiver, attend preschool or Transitional Kindergarten (TK), or have parents who are confident and knowledgeable about parenting are more prepared to enter kindergarten ready to learn.

To understand why over half of young children in Contra Costa are not ready for kindergarten, we can look to ongoing adversity that families face in health, safety, and education—painful corollaries of the generational cycle of poverty and racism, which, according to Kidsdata.org, low-income or ethnically diverse families experience at disproportionate rates. For example, one in five Contra Costa children experienced food insecurity (not having reliable access to enough affordable, nutritious food). Although it’s encouraging that nearly 56% of 3- and 4-year old children in the county are enrolled in preschool, it’s equally concerning that over one-third of Contra Costa’s children are not. We explore these two components, as well as other factors of child and family well-being, below in describing gaps in our county.

Child Care

According to the most recent 2017 Child Care Needs Assessment conducted by the Contra Costa Local Child Care Planning Council for Early Care and Education (LPC)¹⁰, there were about 40,000 licensed child care spaces available to meet an estimated need of 75,000 children birth to 12 years old. Infants and toddlers (birth to 2 years old) care has the greatest shortage.

Child Care Supply. The table below is a breakdown of child care spaces in Contra Costa County for children from birth to 12 years old by age category (FCCH = family childcare homes).

Age of Children	FCCH Spaces	Center Spaces	Total Number of Spaces	Percentage of Supply
0 to 2 years	1,933	1,459	3,398	9%
3 to 4 years	3,866	14,861	19,085	48%
School age	2,487	14,806	17,293	43%
Total supply	8,286	31,126	39,776	100%

⁷ <https://insightccd.org/family-needs-calculator/>

⁸ <https://www.epi.org/publication/state-of-working-america-wages-in-2020/>

⁹ Ready or Not, Here We Come! First 5 Contra Costa Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, <http://www.first5coco.org/results/kindergarten-readiness-assessment/>

¹⁰ <http://plan4kids.org/resources/reports-and-assessments/>

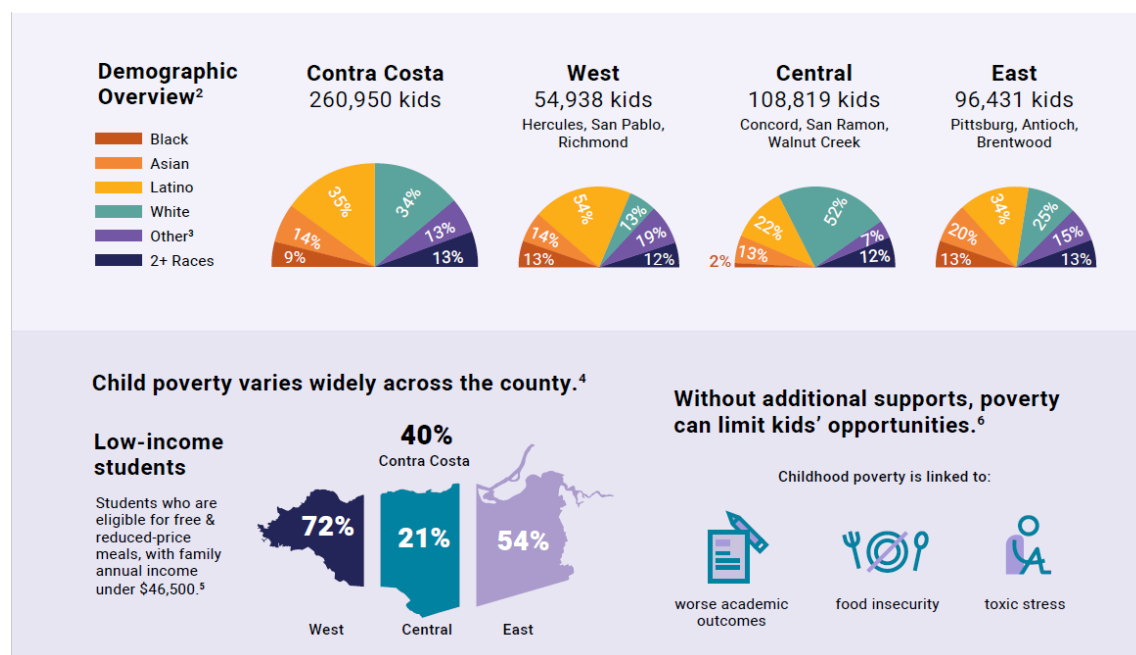
GAPS

Racial Inequities: Contra Costa Opportunity Gap¹¹

The Contra Costa County Opportunity Gap analysis, developed in 2019, highlights this important context that, when it comes to availability, affordability, and quality of services for families, far too many children in the county have fewer opportunities to succeed than others.

Before delving into the specific gaps for young children in Contra Costa County, it is important to underscore that those who experience these gaps the most—and disproportionately so—are communities of color. Because policies and funding practices have excluded these communities from accessing resources, Black and brown families have had to support their children with far less systemic and structural support than their White counterparts, leading to disparities in health, education, and economic outcomes. These disparities have their roots in the public and private under-resourcing of Black, brown, and Indigenous communities, most clearly and blatantly through redlining policies that prevented these communities from owning homes and building wealth across generations,¹² resulting in disparities that fall along geographic, income, and racial lines.

Excerpt from “The Opportunity Gap for Children Across Contra Costa County”:



Gaps: Supply of Services and Supports

The findings of the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment highlight the necessary components of an early childhood system of supports—those that support a child’s emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being. However, due to both a lack of supply in these supports and the need to strengthen the

¹¹ <https://www.childrennow.org/portfolio-posts/opportunity-gap-contra-costa/>

¹² https://ncrc.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2018/02/NCRC-Research-HOLC-10.pdf

coordination across them, many children are not able to connect to the resources that best support their development.

Basic needs

Families need affordable, stable, safe homes, adequate household resources, healthy neighborhoods, and access to quality opportunities, education, and services—all of these factors are intricately connected and influence life outcomes at all ages.¹³ Unfortunately, too many of Contra Costa’s families do not have their basic needs met.

With housing being a significant share of most Contra Costa families’ monthly costs, lack of safe, secure, and affordable housing represents a large gap in the system of support for young children and families. According to Bay Area Equity Atlas, 52% of renters in Contra Costa County are housing burdened, i.e., those households that pay more than 30% of their income to housing. Housing burdened individuals are more likely to be Black or Latinx due to a legacy of discriminatory housing policies and practices, both public and private. When households are housing burdened, they become more vulnerable to homelessness, the rates of which increased in Contra Costa by more than 40% from 2017-2019.¹⁴ While difficult to quantify, many of those who are unhoused are families with children. The pandemic has pushed more families to the brink of homelessness; according to the Bay Area Equity Atlas, it is estimated that 12,100 children are at risk of eviction when state pandemic projections expire.¹⁵

Food insecurity also presents a gap in children’s basic needs. Almost one in five California children live in households with limited or uncertain access to adequate food. California consistently has a higher percentage of children living in food-insecure households than the U.S. overall and in Contra Costa¹⁶, 17% of the children live in food insecure homes. Food-insecure children are more likely to experience a host of health problems, including developmental, cognitive, behavioral, and mental health issues.¹⁷

Child care

Access. Before the pandemic, Contra Costa County was already short 12,625 child care slots.¹⁸ Since the start of the pandemic, Contra Costa has lost at least 1,126 more slots.¹⁹ The Measure X Needs Assessment estimated that 17,900 children ages 0-5 years who are eligible for subsidized child care cannot access it due to low supply. Community Services, the largest childcare provider in the county, has a current waitlist of 5,358 children 0-5 and CocoKids, the resource and referral agency for the county, has a waitlist of 5,380 children.

¹³ <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/721/crowded-housing/table#fmt=1022&loc=171,2&tf=108&sortColumnId=0&sortType=asc>

¹⁴ <https://www.kqed.org/news/11748762/homelessness-in-contra-costa-jumped-more-than-40-since-2017>

¹⁵ https://www.google.com/url?q=https://bayareaequityatlas.org/research/CCCEviction&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1621363358485000&usg=AOvVaw1_4TeKsK3gjFKrZQL0xVo3

¹⁶ <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/764/food-insecurity/table#fmt=1168&loc=171,2&tf=95&sortType=asc>

¹⁷ <https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/764/food-insecurity/table#fmt=1168&loc=171,2&tf=95&sortType=asc>

¹⁸ http://plan4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2017LPCNeedsAssessment_PDF.pdf

¹⁹ Data from the California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division, January, 2021: <https://app.box.com/s/hsgbvgqptmjer2u0cdp5nrc5ic4tqat4>

This lack of capacity has staggering implications for families as more caregivers begin returning to work, as well as for the child care providers, most of whom are women of color and who, without adequate supports and wages, are at risk of going out of business permanently.²⁰

The effects of scarce childcare ripple out to the community as well. An economic impact multiplier analysis was conducted for the child care industry in Contra Costa County for 2013. “The impact analysis shows that for every \$1 spent in the County on child care; an additional \$0.68 is generated in additional spending.” The spending results in a multiplier effect that increases economic output, jobs, and tax revenue throughout the entire economy. In 2012, \$300 million were spent annually on child care in Contra Costa County which generated an additional \$203 million in economic activity.²¹

Affordability. For many families, child care is an option beyond reach due to lack of affordability. Many families have reached the subsidized “cliff”, in which making even one dollar over the threshold for subsidy prevents them from placing their child in one of the 7,800²² subsidized child care spaces in the county. In California, a family of four cannot make more than \$84,822 to qualify for a State-subsidized preschool or infant/ toddler program, while the federal Head Start guidelines are lower at \$26,500 for a family of four. Given a family of four needs \$141,641²³ to cover their basic needs, these ceilings often prevent families from accessing adequate care. Parents often have to pass up increased pay opportunities to remain eligible for subsidized child care as they cannot afford it otherwise.

Wage disparity. At the same time, early care educators were leaving the field at a rapid pace even before the pandemic. This exodus is a result of low wages and the inability to make ends meet given the high cost of living in California. Although child care worker wages increased more than other education occupations between 2017 and 2019, this 4-percent increase, adjusted for inflation, adds only \$0.44 to the median hourly wage, which rose from \$11.21 in 2017 (in 2019 dollars) to \$11.65 in 2019. The median salary of a childcare worker is approximately \$17.93 per hour less than their kindergarten counterpart and for a Preschool Teacher it is \$14.53 less.²⁴ Further, California’s rate of child care workers living in poverty pre-pandemic was at 17% as compared to their K-8 counterparts at 2.5%.²⁵ Child care workers’ chronically low wages are rooted in the systemic undervaluing of labor traditionally held by women, and particularly women of color, who make up 40% of the childcare workforce.²⁶

²⁰ <https://calmatters.org/children-and-youth/2021/03/child-care-centers-close/>

²¹ Economic Impact of Child Care Services in Contra Costa County: <http://plan4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/LPCEconImpactReport.pdf>

²² Contra Costa County Child Care Needs Assessment 2017, https://issuu.com/cccoe/docs/for_issu

²³ <https://insightcced.org/family-needs-calculator/>

²⁴ <http://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/the-early-educator-workforce/early-educator-pay-economic-insecurity-across-the-states/>

²⁵ https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/02/Appendix-2_2020-Index.pdf

²⁶ <https://cscce.berkeley.edu/racial-wage-gaps-in-early-education-employment/>

Title	Median hourly wage in California ²⁷
Childcare worker	\$13.43
Preschool teacher	\$16.83
Kindergarten teacher	\$31.36

Unmet need for early childhood mental health services

It is estimated that 9.5–14.2% of all children birth to six experience emotional, relational, or behavioral disturbances that require mental health intervention. Considering recent population numbers for Contra Costa County (e.g., 2018 data from the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health), there are approximately 80,000 children who are 0 to 5 in the county. It is therefore reasonable to estimate that, in Contra Costa County, there are approximately 7,900 to 10,900 children in need of early childhood mental health intervention for mental illnesses meeting medical necessity criteria, including trauma or “toxic stress” effects in babies and young children that can arise as a result of abuse, neglect, violence, and inconsistent parenting related to parental mental illness, substance abuse, and poverty. Present Medi-Cal contracts to the early childhood community-based organizations support approximately 610 children 0-5 annually. The unmet need for varying levels of early childhood mental health interventions in Contra Costa is thus on the order of 7,000 to 10,000 children. Not only are these services immediately needed to address current problems, but investing in mental health intervention and prevention services for young children also, importantly, ameliorate or prevent future mental health needs once these children reach adolescence and adulthood.

Unmet need for developmental services for children with disabilities

There is an ever present gap in services for children aged 0 to 3 with disabilities. Currently there are 783 infant and toddlers and 2,371 preschool children with a diagnosed disability, yet this number is surely an undercount. For many families, pediatric visits and the developmental screenings conducted by pediatricians are their entry point into referrals and connections to additional support for their children, particularly when they have developmental concerns. Yet well-child visits were down an estimated 24% nationally from pre-pandemic baselines in December 2020.²⁸ According to Contra Costa Health Services, developmental screenings for children 0-11 fell from approximately 62% in January 2020 to approximately 55% in April 2021. This lack of screening compounded by decreased well-child visits present a highly significant barrier to preventive care and families’ access to an entire system of early childhood resources.

²⁷ https://cscce.berkeley.edu/workforce-index-2020/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2021/02/Appendix-2_2020-Index.pdf

²⁸ Ateev Mehrotra et al., The Impact of COVID-19 on Outpatient Visits in 2020: Visits Remained Stable, Despite a Late Surge in Cases (Commonwealth Fund, February, 2021). <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/2021/feb/impact-covid-19-outpatient-visits-2020-visits-stable-despite-late-surge>

For those children that do have diagnoses, any subsidized programs in the county combine state and federal funding to create full-day, full-year services, requiring family income to not exceed the state median income ceilings. Given the high cost of living in Contra Costa, this has resulted in an unmet need with incredibly high stakes, as brain development research shows the critical role of early intervention in these cases.

TRANSFORMATIONAL IDEAS:

Children and Families

1. **Immediate support to families in need:** We need immediate provisions to support the urgent gaps hard-working families face in meeting their basic needs. These supports could take the form of:
 - a. Financial supports, such as direct cash assistance to families, rental assistance, debt relief, and legal aid for tenants
 - b. Safety net supports, including expanding access to resources for food, internet, and utilities
 - c. Resources dedicated to partnering with families, residents, and community-based organizations to shape housing and city planning policies that prevent displacement and strengthen community fabrics.

2. **Funding for childcare slots:** At a minimum, bringing the field up to pre-pandemic numbers will help soften the current childcare crisis. *A public-private collaboration to make up the gap of childcare slots, primarily infant and toddler, for those who do not qualify for a subsidy, will ensure that more children will benefit from early care and that their parents can work and attend school.* To meet this need, local funding could be used to pay local rates for child care using a voucher system similar to the system used by CalWorks Stages 1 and 2, but with a higher income ceiling that better meets the cost of living in the Bay Area. This would boost the child care work industry, help families get quality care they cannot afford otherwise, and would not require additional facilities which are at an all-time low. CocoKids, the resource and referral agency for the county, and Employment and Human Services, Community Services and Workforce Services Bureaus administer the CalWorks programs and have existing mechanisms in place to support a system like this.

3. **Funding for early childhood mental health services:** Contra Costa County needs increased levels of funding for prevention and intervention services based in early childhood mental health, specifically for families with children from birth to age six. Support for provision of these services is needed to improve children's social-emotional development as a preventive strategy, and to begin to help treat and overcome the effects of traumatic stress that many young children experience as a result of growing up in environments of abuse, neglect, interpersonal

and community violence, systemic oppressions, and parental mental illness and substance abuse.

The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) and the Office of the Surgeon General have initiated an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screening project in pediatric primary care which began in January 2020 as a public health strategy to address toxic stress in children. Pediatricians are now incented to screen all patients for ACEs and are referring children and families for “toxic stress treatment” which clearly includes early childhood mental health services. Funding is needed for early childhood mental health agencies as they rise to address new demands necessitated by this initiative, as well as striving to meet, more generally, the current significant unmet need for early childhood mental health services in the county.

The social-emotional well-being of young children is often implicitly mentioned in Behavioral Health and Mental Health Master Plans. It is imperative that early childhood mental health be explicitly called out as a dedicated funding strand in county-level services. *The Early Childhood Prevention and Intervention Coalition (ECPIC) is an existing county-wide coalition of early intervention and prevention service partners, including early childhood mental health agencies, focused on the social-emotional needs of young children.* They take a ‘coordinated and holistic’ approach to leveraging allocated Mental Health Services Act and MediCal funds with other local funding to address the emerging needs of young children and their families or preschool/daycare providers. *The coalition’s ability to leverage funding can help to maximize services to ensure more families can be served.*

- 4. Supporting children with disabilities:** Children with developmental disabilities such as down's syndrome or autism show great gains in mainstream settings with typically developing peers. Funding can be used to support children in an early learning environment through consultation and guidance to providers on strategies to modify their setting to be inclusive of all children. Funding can also be used to fill the gap resulting from income ceilings that are too low for families with disabled children 0-3 years of age, who require the type of comprehensive services offered at programs with combined state and federal funding. *This could be in the form of a voucher to the provider on behalf of the family as described above.*

TRANSFORMATIONAL IDEAS:

Service Providers

- 1. Network supports to connect providers with each other and ensure families get properly referred and connected to services:** This county has begun the essential work of creating and connecting the network of care and service providers for children and families, yet more work remains to create a more connected and relational system of care. This work has evolved thanks to Help Me Grow and efforts to connect families with developmental supports and safety net navigation. It continues to evolve and grow as service providers across the county, from pediatricians and behavioral health providers to teachers, childcare workers, and more unpack

their role in supporting young children’s development and particularly the effects of adverse childhood experiences and toxic stress.

Through a one-time grant from ACEs Aware, First 5 is forming a burgeoning Contra Costa Network of Care (<https://www.contracostanetworkofcare.org/>) where these providers connect, exchange resources, and build relationships with one another, ultimately in service of providing stronger, more appropriate, and trauma-informed referrals and supports to families and children. This work has only begun and will need to be sustained and supported beyond the life of the ACEs Aware grants to ensure that every provider has the necessary tools, resources and supports to connect families in their care to the multitude of services they need, and that there is adequate funding to support the provision of these services. *This could take the form of ongoing convenings, networking and relationship-building opportunities, and supporting the online network community and learning hub.*

2. Funding family partners and resource navigator roles: As we continue our efforts to elevate and enhance the early childhood system, barriers often emerge in the referral and linkage process due to a lack of resource navigation. Health and Resource Providers can confidently support families within their scope of work but often find it challenging to provide additional information and support connections to external resources due to a limited bandwidth for follow up and knowledge of community resources. With the growing efforts on health, developmental, behavioral, and now ACEs screening, health and education providers find themselves seeking the support of programs like First 5’s Help Me Grow where resource navigators support families in targeting primary needs and connecting them to resources available, but this is not enough. *Family partners and navigators can help both families and providers navigate this complicated system.*

3. Early care and education supports for providers: Supporting the childcare workforce is critical to Contra Costa’s economy. Incentives are necessary for retention, to attract new providers, and help the county recover from this crisis.

Stipends. A recent survey conducted by CocoKids indicated that 100% of childcare providers in the county were adversely impacted by the pandemic. New requirements have resulted in less children being served (many providers are forced to serve at half capacity), increased costs for PPE and cleaning supplies, and facilities changes to account for social distancing and new health standards. The Early Learning and Leadership Group (a collaboration of First 5, Employment and Human Services, Community Services, CocoKids, County Office of Education, and Healthy and Active Before 5) in partnership with LIIF (Low Income Investment Fund), and through a public-private collaboration, recently administered \$600,000 in cash stipends to family child care providers in 5 key areas of high need: Concord, Richmond, Antioch, Pittsburg and San Pablo. *Of the 279 eligible applicants, funds were only available for 75. Our hope is to secure matching funds for this effort so that all the eligible applicants can receive the help they need.*

These grants can be used to cover an array of needs including essential facilities costs, defaulting mortgage payments for those operating their business in their home, to payroll costs to keep their workers employed. Expanding this stipend program to distribute more funds to those in desperate need will allow providers to keep their doors open and continue to keep children healthy and safe and parents working.

Incentive grants tied to professional development. *Critical to supporting the field are incentives for child development permit attainment and upgrades, and Bachelor's and Associate's degree attainment. We hear from providers that the greatest barrier to education is the cost.* In December 2020, the State released its [Master Plan for Education](#), a bold 10-year plan with goals and strategies meant to build and professionalize the field of early care. This plan emphasizes a tiered professional development approach; however, the plan has no funding attached to ensure its success. It is apparent that it will be up to local communities to fund pieces of this Plan. First 5 with AB 212 funds have in the past been the “holder” of these incentives, but with the funds on rapid decline each year, the current incentive program has not met the steadily growing need. Without local investment in this area, our community will continue to struggle to attract and retain high quality Early Care Educators.

Technology grants to support infrastructure and distance learning. Approximately 48% of children are home distance learning as childcare remains at minimum capacity and school age children remain at home. Maintaining a direct link with those children and their families is critical for support, on-going learning, and nurturing connections. This pandemic has shown that the digital divide is real, and many providers and families do not have the broadband support needed to maintain the crucial school to home connection. Unfortunately, it is often the low income families that are the most impacted due to the lack of access to tools to support their children. *Technology grants will benefit providers by allowing them to upgrade their and their families' broadband by providing hotspots and laptops for home use.* These tools will also allow more providers to keep up with their professional development through on-line courses in the evenings, while remaining at home with their families.

TRANSFORMATIONAL IDEAS:

Integrated Systems

- 1. Dedicated resources for a countywide, cross-sector leadership body for children (Children's Leadership Council):** While adequate and consistent funding for direct services is critical, so is the investment in community-driven networks and the leadership and infrastructure needed to promote an integrated and coordinated system of care. This is an area that necessitates more investment and prioritization when developing funding priorities for early childhood systems.

A coordinated and integrated system of care would not only yield increased services and strengthen referral pathways for so many more children, it would also open the door to

leverage existing funding streams to increase Contra Costa County’s eligibility for expanded levels of federal and state funding drawdown.

The [Contra Costa Children’s Leadership Council](#) (CLC) is a countywide, cross-sector coalition of public and nonprofit agencies, community leaders, and elected officials whose **purpose** is to develop and strengthen the ecosystem of programs, policies, and partners that support child, youth, family, and community resilience and well-being. Established in 2019 by the Contra Costa Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD), Health Services Department (HSD), County Office of Education (COE), and First 5 Contra Costa (First 5), the CLC **envisions** a future where in every region of Contra Costa:

- **All children and youth** are safe, healthy, loved, educated, and have the social-emotional skills to thrive throughout life.
- **All families** are resilient, connected, empowered, and have the social and economic resources to raise thriving children and youth.
- **All neighborhoods** are safe, just, and vibrant places for families to raise children and youth.
- **All partners** in community-led, public, non-profit, and private groups and organizations advocate for and take collective action to create a healthy ecosystem that recognizes and supports resilience and well-being.

The CLC serves as the ‘big tent’ under which all stakeholders can collaboratively plan, co-design, and coordinate services that support the well-being and success of all children. The CLC intends to do this work shoulder to shoulder with all county departments, local coalitions, and partners dedicated to ensuring children and families emerge from this pandemic healthy, housed, and financially stable. The CLC’s systems integration work depends on the voice of the community in developing programs that best meet the needs of families in the County. Groups such as Healthy and Active Before 5, Parent Voices, the First 5 Regional Groups and the Community Services Head Start Parent Policy Council, inform and guide the important work of the Council. We know that to build back stronger communities, families, and residents, particularly those most impacted by the effects of this pandemic, we have to lead the way in creating programs grounded in equity and in community voice.

Building and strengthening continuous communication, partnerships, and collective action among resident leaders and agency leaders in the CLC requires dedicated resources to coordinate the CLC and compensate resident leaders for their contributions. In addition, the CLC’s work is enriched by the voices and experiences of resident leaders participating in the CLC, and the Steering Committee firmly believes their time and expertise are just as valuable as the time and expertise of paid professionals. Without dedicated resources, the coordination tasks are typically spread among leaders who are already juggling multiple priorities, limiting the coalition’s capacity to take collective action.

Resources dedicated for integration of systems would include consulting services for planning, coordination and facilitation of CLC activities and projects, technical support and services for data collection, assessment and analysis, and financial incentives for community residents engaged in CLC activities.

- 2. Invest in a countywide annual Children’s Well-being Index:** The CLC has begun to identify essential data points and indicators related to child, youth, and family well-being to include in a Children’s Report Card, using the Measure X Needs Assessment, the Children Now county report card, and the Leshner Foundation’s “Opportunity Gap” infographic as the starting point. The intent is to develop a Children’s Well-being Index that serves as the basis of “Child & Youth Well-being Agenda” that includes a dedicated Children’s Budget and local, state, and federal policy priorities a countywide vision, action plan, and investments to ensure all children and families in Contra Costa are healthy and thriving.

A Contra Costa Children’s Well-being Index would be a natural extension of existing efforts led by Living Contra Costa but with indicators called out specifically for children. The cross-sector public and nonprofit partnerships that make up the CLC position us to be stewards of the Children’s Well-being Index, providing current and relevant data on an annual basis to the Measure X Community Advisory Board.

SUMMARY

Supporting a child’s well-being includes supporting the well-being of their family and the environment where that child lives, learns, grows, and plays. While this means the scope of the early childhood system is quite vast, it also speaks to the profound, rippling effects of supporting young children. When we support children in their earliest years, we make sure that they can reach their potential and fully contribute to our communities. The early years of a child’s life represent an unparalleled opportunity to make the most of this potential, but doing so requires a well-resourced and coordinated system of services and supports that reach all children, no matter where they live or what they look like. It truly does take a village, yet both the supply of these services and the degree to which they are connected and coordinated represent critical gaps in our county. When we address these gaps through Measure X revenue, we can change the landscape, not just for young children, but the future of our county.



2020-21 State Budget Advocacy Correspondence

March 10, 2021 – June 7, 2021

Subject	Recipients
Family Strengthening Supports: COVID-19 Response & DDS Community Navigators (3/10/21)	CA Leg Budget Leadership: <i>letter to Senator Eggman and Assemblymember Arambula included as an example</i>
Joint Request for Additional State Diaper Bank Funding in the 2021-22 Budget (3/24/21)	CA Leg Budget Leadership
Re: Budget Request for \$10 million Investment for Statewide Diaper and Wipe Distribution (5/4/21)	CA Leg Budget Leadership
One-Time COVID Relief Funding for Local Early Childhood Systems Integration (5/5/21)	CA Representatives: <i>letter to Senator Skinner's staff included as an example</i>
Prioritizing Young Children and Their Families in Final 2021-22 State Budget (5/24/21)	CA Representatives: <i>letter to Assemblymember Wicks's staff included as an example</i>
Please Support SB 395, the Vape Tax (5/26/21)	CA Senator Steve Glazer
Prioritizing Prevention in the Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and Ensuring Supports for Children Ages 0-5 (5/28/21)	CA Representatives: <i>letter to Assemblymember Frazier's staff included as an example, as well as budget proposal from Assemblymember Blanca Rubio</i>
A Note on Childcare (6/3/21)	East Bay Leadership Council: <i>Lindy Lavender and Kristin Connelly</i>
Ongoing commitment to young children and families in Final 2021-22 State Budget (6/7/21)	CA Representatives: <i>letter to Senator Dodd's staff included as an example</i>



March 10, 2021

The Honorable Susan Eggman
Chair, Senate Budget SubCommittee #3
State Capitol, Room 4052
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Joaquin Arambula, MD
Chair, Assembly Budget SubCommittee #1
State Capitol, Room 5155
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Family Strengthening Supports: COVID-19 Response & DDS Community Navigators – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Eggman and Assemblymember Arambula:

On behalf of First 5 Contra Costa, I am pleased to strongly support the Governor's budget proposals to bolster Child Welfare Services for foster youth and caregivers and to create a peer-to-peer Community Navigators model under the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Both budget proposals aptly identify Family Resource Centers (FRCs) as critical hubs for family support and strengthening. First 5 applauds both budget proposals and encourages the Legislature to build upon the critical role of FRCs as indispensable tools in a toolkit of early childhood family strengthening systems that exist throughout communities. This will ensure a no-wrong-door approach to supporting children and families to truly meet these exceptional times.

For over 20 years, First 5 Contra Costa has built early childhood systems to ensure California's young children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and life. **Contra Costa's FRCs, called First 5 Centers—of which there are five across the county—are key pillars in a system of care that supports families in their resilience, connects them to a range of prevention services, and promotes optimal child development.** Embedded throughout communities, our Centers serve populations that systems of care have historically under-resourced. For many of our families, they also serve as an entry point and guide for navigating community supports that are often siloed across service sectors.

Alongside the essential operating funding we have provided for First 5 Centers in Contra Costa, we have also built infrastructure to connect families to essential safety net services focused on family well-being, enhance cross-system data collection and evaluation, and serve as an administrative backbone. In this role, we, like many other First 5s, have blended and leveraged multiple funding streams to streamline service delivery for families beyond the 0-5 focus as well.

FRCs have long played a critical role in supporting families, neighborhoods, and communities in times of instability and crisis. In our current COVID-19 environment, the presence of Contra Costa's FRCs has only grown in importance, and they serve as a lifeline for many families – connecting and enrolling newly qualified families for public and private services, offering family strengthening programming to reduce stress and isolation, and even providing concrete supplies, including: diapers, food, infant formula, baby wipes, and more. Our First 5 Centers delivered supplies to 310 families, including over 1,200 giftcards and diapers to over 200 of these families. Like many service providers, our Centers have pivoted to online programming for parents and children and in so doing, have provided desperately needed support and community.

In a state as diverse as California, it has long been proven that a one-size fits all approach simply will not work in addressing the varied needs of families. As such, First 5 recommends that the legislature look to FRCs alongside an array of community-based assets that also provide culturally relevant and critical



family strengthening programs, but may be located in health clinics, libraries, or other community-based settings. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has illuminated the need for and effectiveness of varied service delivery modalities. In person supports like those provided at Family Resource Centers, and virtual touchpoints, such as those provided by systems like First 5 Help Me Grows or virtual home visits, are important aspects of a no-wrong-door approach to reaching families.

Specific, to the DDS proposal, the First 5 Association and the First 5 Center for Children’s Policy submitted the attached memo to highlight examples of peer-to-peer supports that work in conjunction with a backbone entity of Help Me Grow to ensure families are connected to the developmental services they are entitled to as early as possible.

When families struggle, children struggle, and COVID-19 has only heightened inequities and stressors that families face daily. California must deploy all resources available to truly meet the moment that we face to support children and families now, and mitigate the impacts of trauma and toxic stress to come. For reasons, **First 5 Contra Costa, in partnership with First 5 Association, supports both budget proposals, and encourages the legislature to utilize both FRCs and all existing family strengthening assets within our communities.** If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach me at rfernandez@first5coco.org.

Sincerely,
Ruth Fernández, Ed.D.
Executive Director
[First 5 Contra Costa](http://www.first5coco.org)

About First 5 Contra Costa:

First 5 Contra Costa helps young children start school healthy, nurtured and ready to learn by investing in programs and activities focused on children during their first five years—the most important time in children's development.



Contra Costa Early Learning Leadership Group
c/o 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200, Concord, CA 94520

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol, First Floor

May 24, 2021

Re: Concerns re: Transitional Kindergarten Budget Proposal/AB 22

Dear Governor Newsom,

We applaud your strong leadership in support of early childhood issues and specifically for understanding the value of and need for quality child care. The COVID-19 crisis has served to highlight both the indispensable need for child care and the dire impact the pandemic has had on child care providers and therefore children, throughout the state.

The Contra Costa Early Learning Leadership Group (ELLG) works to increase collaboration, share data, identify gaps, improve service delivery, and to advocate for policies at the local, state and federal levels so that the early care and education system meets the needs of all children and their families. The ELLG includes representatives from the County Office of Education, Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education, CocoKids, Community Services Bureau/Head Start, First 5 Contra Costa, Healthy and Active Before 5, and the Employment and Human Services Department. Combined, our agencies oversee nearly \$70 million of the \$80 million public investment in early learning each year in Contra Costa.

We are writing to express our concerns regarding the budget proposal for Transitional Kindergarten (TK) for all 4-year-olds. While we appreciate the bill's intent (AB22) to ensure that children are ready to thrive when they enter a public school system, we believe there are a number of unintended consequences that will arise as a result of implementation that would harm, not help, specifically California's low-income children and families.

Part Day does not meet the needs of children or families: Families must depend on full day care in order to work. Providing a part-day program would cause disruptions during the day to move children to other programs to meet the full day needs of their families. Children this age need consistency, attachment and a nurturing environment that can manage not only their early learning, but also more importantly, their social and emotional development and basic self-regulation skills. For parents to work, they need childcare options that are flexible and convenient for families and that meet their individual needs. Overnight workers will need a different schedule than those who work in offices or retail stores. Family work schedules in California are just as diverse as our population. Transitional Kindergarten does not offer the same whole child approach.





Teacher-child ratio: We applaud the recommendation to reduce the adult-to-child ratio from 1:24 to 1:12! However, this raises the question of where those additional teachers will come from and how they will receive the training that they will need to provide developmentally appropriate learning to four-year-olds. The training that K-12 teachers receive is vastly different from the quality, play-based, early learning four-year-olds need. Head Start, for example, requires extensive training to qualify as a teacher, requiring a *minimum* of a Child Development Associate's degree or equivalent credential *and* training in early childhood development.

Impact on the current early learning and care system. We are deeply concerned that expansion to TK will create challenges for a system already taxed by the pandemic and drain an already lean workforce.

TK would create the need for more qualified staff that are already difficult to recruit and retain. This is partly due to an underfunded system that undervalues and underpays the workforce. In addition, school districts, which typically pay higher wages, will attract qualified staff, thereby draining the current field of trained, caring, dedicated providers, ultimately causing many to leave the field and thereby leaving families with younger children fewer options. Children do best when their parents can choose which type of setting is best for their child – whether family child care, center-based (public or private), or school-based. Thus, sustaining an inclusive and diverse child care system that promotes parental choice is critical to meet the diverse needs of California families.

In addition, prior to the pandemic, Contra Costa County was already short 12,625 child care slots. Since the start of the pandemic, Contra Costa has lost at least 1,126 more slots. Community Services, the largest childcare provider in the county, has a current waitlist of 5,358 children 0-5 and CocoKids, the resource and referral agency for the county, has a waitlist of 5,380 children. This lack of capacity has staggering implications for families as more caregivers begin returning to work, as well as for the child care providers, most of whom are women of color and who, without adequate supports and wages, are already at risk of going out of business permanently. The transition to TK for four-year-olds will only further decimate the existing system.

Eligibility for other programs: If TK is implemented what will happen to low-income four-year-olds who continue to be eligible for State Preschool or Head Start programs – will they still be able to receive the wraparound services provided through those programs? Wraparound services include counseling, crisis care and outreach, special education services and tutoring, health services, legal services, and family support. We are concerned that eligible students and families who are placed into TK, who need these services the most, will not have access to them.

We ask that you address these concerns in order to ensure that a cohesive, comprehensive, coordinated and well-funded system is established to support the wellbeing and healthy development of all children.

Sincerely,



Members of the Early Learning Leadership Group

- Ruth Fernández, Ed.D., Executive Director, First 5 Contra Costa
- John Jones, Executive Director, CocoKids
- Lynn Mackey, Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools, Contra Costa County Office of Education
- Denise Clarke, Coordinator, Contra Costa Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education (LPC)
- Katharine Mason, Interim Director, Community Services Bureau, Employment and Human Services
- Ali Usilka, Director, Healthy and Active Before 5

CC: Giannina Perez, Governor's Office