

# PROGRESS REPORT ON FIRST 5 CONTRA COSTA'S STRATEGIC PLAN

JUNE 2024



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# INTRODUCTION



## OUR VISION

CONTRA COSTA'S YOUNG CHILDREN WILL BE HEALTHY, READY TO LEARN, AND SUPPORTED IN SAFE, NURTURING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.



[first5coco.org](http://first5coco.org)

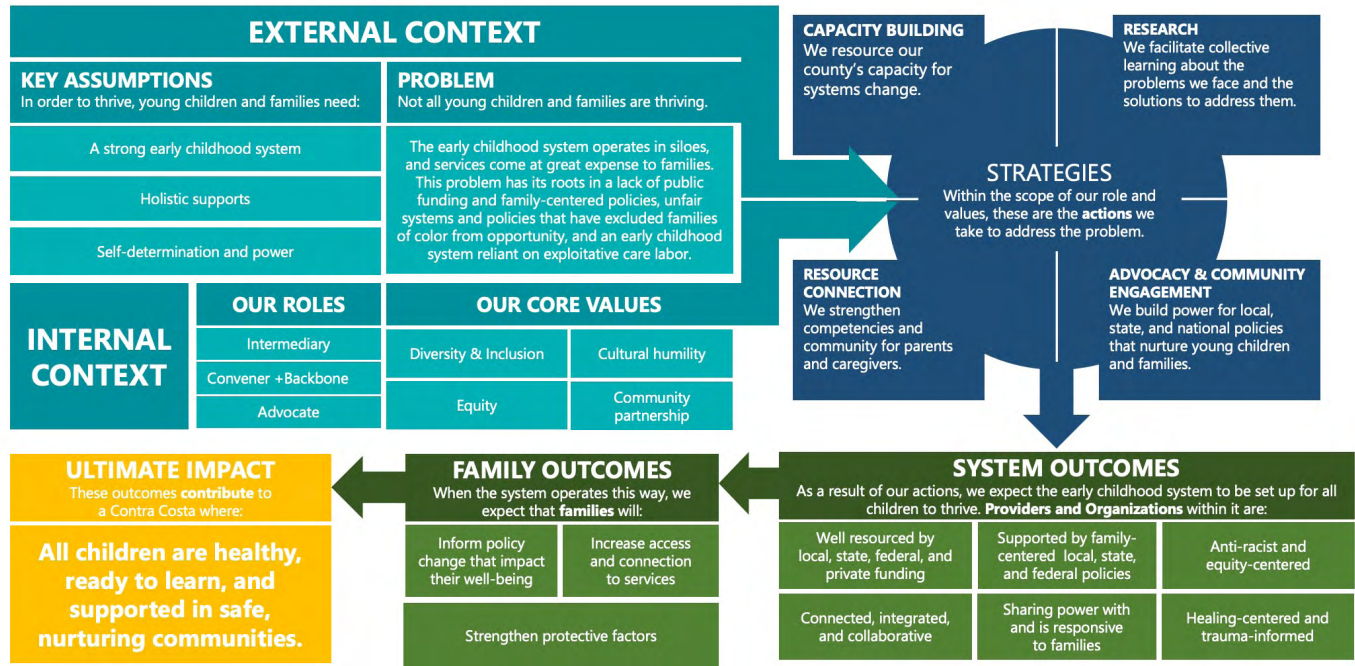
Each of First 5 Contra Costa's strategic plans over the past 25 years has reflected adjustments to changing conditions. In the last five years, our strategic plans have emphasized our shift away from functioning primarily as a funder of direct services and towards greater emphasis on strengthening the systems that serve children and families.

The current strategic plan, which spans 2023–2026, continues that trend by concentrating First 5 Contra Costa's investments and efforts in the three focus areas where we believe we can have the greatest and most enduring impact: Early Childhood Education, Early Intervention, and Family Strengthening. In each of these focus areas, we rely on four core strategies to effect change:

- **Capacity Building**—resourcing Contra Costa County's capacity for systems change.
- **Research**—facilitating collective learning about the problems we face and the solutions to address them.
- **Resource Connection**—strengthening competencies and community for parents and caregivers.
- **Advocacy & Community Engagement**—building power for local, state, and national policies that nurture young children and families.

# INTRODUCTION

The following Theory of Change graphic outlines how we use these four core strategies to address the problem and move toward the systems and focus outcomes we aspire to achieve.



In addition to these core strategies across our programmatic focus areas, we have continued building and strengthening our organizational culture and internal infrastructure with organizational strategies focused on our people and culture and our operations and processes.

This interim report highlights our progress over the last 11 months on the goals outlined in our strategic plan. Each section of this progress report draws from the strategic plan's definitions of our core strategies and plans for the three-year period, followed by examples that demonstrate our intentional progress in each area. We hope this report invites discussion, conversation, and new ideas as we continue to move forward towards our shared goals. We still have a ways to go, but we're encouraged by the progress we have made in this first year of our three-year strategic plan period.

We also look forward to sharing our Community Impact Report with the community in the fall. Our annual Community Impact Report captures the trends we are seeing in our work in each focus area and highlights the work of our many partnerships with coalitions, systems partners, and service providers.

# CORE STRATEGY: CAPACITY-BUILDING

## How we define capacity-building

We build capacity for systems change by identifying and supporting the professional development of our external and internal partners in the early childhood system. Our capacity-building work supports the incubation, funding, and scaling of initiatives that advance equity, integration, healing-centered practice, parent voice, and power in our organizational and community systems.

## What we said we'd do

Over the next three years, we committed to:

- Continue to uplift **parent** voice, leadership, and power in order to strengthen families' capacity to effectively navigate the early childhood system and advocate for their children's needs.
- Focus on building, strengthening, and sustaining the **early childhood workforce** through training, development, and implementation.
- Provide holistic **capacity building support** to the system that fosters effective cross-sector communication and collaboration with a lens of sustainability, equity, and social justice.

## How we're doing

**Parent voices** are strong at the East County First 5 Center, where the Ready Kids East County Parent Group has become one of the Center's parent support groups. As recently as December 2023, the group had 30 families participating. Since the end of last year, the number of families has more than doubled to 65 families and the group, originally led by a First 5 Contra Costa staff member, is now led by the East County First 5 Center. The growth in



“These services helped my family become more knowledgeable on my son’s development needs. It has also helped my son become more social with other children and engage in activities with others.”

Parent participating in First 5 Contra Costa-funded program

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## CORE STRATEGY: CAPACITY-BUILDING

participation and the transition to thriving under the leadership of the East County First 5 Center staff support illustrate our efforts to uplift parent voice, leadership, and power.

The early childhood workforce includes Family Child Care (FCC) providers who serve infants and toddlers in home-based settings. These dedicated providers often have difficulty accessing **professional development resources** that could contribute to higher quality care. A pilot program recruited 15 FCC providers participating in Quality Matters to learn from a new specialized training program customized to this group of providers.

Participants gained knowledge about supporting high-quality infant/toddler care and will receive a \$650 stipend, as well as window decals demonstrating to families and the public that they completed this specialized training. The pilot program is rigorous; providers complete a 19 week online training led by West Ed, for which they could receive three units of academic credit through California State University, Fresno at no cost to them. They also complete an additional 7 hours of professional training. First 5 Contra Costa plans to replicate this pilot approach in the next fiscal year, fulfilling our goal of building, strengthening, and sustaining the early childhood workforce.

In contrast to training that is tailored to specific provider needs and audiences, First 5 Contra Costa also supports training that potentially benefits all ECE providers and the families they care for. Five **inclusion-focused trainings** fall into this category and were available to any ECE provider in Contra Costa County as part of the Measure X-funded Inclusion Project. Three trainings were from the Beginning Together curriculum focused on universal design concepts, tips on talking to families about concerns, and other strategies to make ECE programs as welcoming as possible. Delivered by First 5 Contra Costa coaches, these trainings reached 37 early educators. We also contracted with CocoKids to offer training on differences in children's sensory abilities, reaching 82 early educators.

Quality Matters coaching and education efforts like the FCC specialization pilot and inclusion trainings are an important contribution to help early learning providers advance in their journeys to enhance program quality. As state funding for continuous quality improvement efforts like Quality Matters declines, First 5 Contra Costa and the Contra Costa County Office of Education (which lead the Quality Matters program) completed **strategic planning** to make the effort more sustainable yet



## CORE STRATEGY: CAPACITY-BUILDING

impactful for participants next fiscal year. Some of the changes include creating three types of quality supports to match where providers are in their continuous quality improvement journey, realigning monetary incentives, and ensuring all program materials are available in both English and Spanish.

Ideally, technology can streamline and improve processes. First 5 Contra Costa's support for an **online tool** to expand and strengthen use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) is one example. For many years, First 5 Contra Costa invested in training and technical assistance to early childhood education programs to use this reliable tool, used to screen children for developmental or social-emotional concerns. This year, we supported a pilot with two school districts and one licensed early childhood program to use an online version of the ASQ instead of paper versions of the tool. Preliminary feedback indicates that use of the online system may result in more children being screened, while also helping program staff to more consistently follow up when the tool identifies concerns with children's development.

Sometimes, technology gets in the way. The **Contra Costa Network of Care**, launched in 2020 with grant funding, was an online interactive hub to share resources among 300 members who had joined the network. The intent was to create a space where members could share and receive information and interact with each other via posts and messages, centered around the theme of building their skills in preventing, treating, and healing childhood adversity. Successful members-only events included an Agents of Change cohort and annual self-care celebration. However, some users grew frustrated with login difficulties that decreased access—the opposite of the network's original purpose. A new public-facing website will house the same resources and information but with improved navigation and a more user-friendly design so that these valuable resources can be shared more widely.

# CORE STRATEGY: RESEARCH

## How we define research

We facilitate collective learning about the problems we face and the solutions to address them by investigating and learning systematically. Our research work takes many forms and uses a variety of methods to advance inquiry, discovery, and solution-seeking.

## What we said we'd do

Over the next three years, we committed to:

- Use a **Results-Based Accountability (RBA)** approach to better understand and communicate the impacts of our investments and efforts, particularly the young children and families that have been most impacted by disparities in our county.
- Expand and enhance the **research methods** we use to ensure our efforts are centered around a whole child/whole family approach and are empowering to those in our community who have experienced historic and structural inequities.

## How we're doing

What is the **impact** of our activities and investments? This question is at the heart of our evaluation efforts, but sometimes is difficult to answer. This year is our first year of implementing some new tools and approaches that aim to answer that question using RBA performance measures with our contracted partners. And how do we measure impact? In several ways. One example was that we adapted our existing anonymous satisfaction surveys used at the First 5 Centers. Two goals of parenting classes offered at First 5 Centers are to increase families' understanding about parenting strategies and that participants make social connections with other families. Previously our surveys, offered in English and Spanish, weren't addressing these key aspects of the classes' impact, so we refreshed the surveys with new questions. The results were affirming: in the first quarter of this fiscal year, between 75–100% of caregivers and parents across all five centers reported making new social connections. An even higher proportion—93–100%—reported that their class strengthened their knowledge of parenting. Along with other feedback about overall satisfaction and specific opportunities for improvement, these results help us understand how well our classes align with First 5 Contra Costa's mission and offer opportunities for improvement in the future.





## CORE STRATEGY: RESEARCH

Building on the work to incorporate RBA into contractors' performance measures, this year we worked on developing performance measures and evaluation tools to gauge the impact of programmatic efforts led by First 5 Contra Costa staff (as opposed to being led by contractors). We are focusing on the Help Me Grow countywide model and quality improvement coaching delivered by our ECE coaches. Staff received training from our evaluation partner, Applied Survey Research, and have participated in work sessions to identify what types of measures we want to collect to gauge the impact of our efforts next year. In addition, one of our staff presented on our RBA journey alongside other First 5s at the Child Health, Education, and Care Summit hosted by First 5 California in March 2024.

**Making sense of the data we collect** about programs is increasingly a team effort. Staff who lead programmatic efforts meet quarterly with the data and evaluation staff to review trends emerging in the data and reflect on questions such as what the data tell us, implications for programs, and elements we may want to learn more about. These discussions have led to shifts in service delivery, metrics used to track services and impact, and surfacing of unmet needs of service providers, families and children—all contributing to our own quality improvement journey.

This year, we've been able to share the results from several research projects that share a commitment to **research methods empowering community members**. A 2024 report highlighted findings from Ready Kids East County, a five-year partnership with the Dean and Margaret Leshner Foundation focused on enhancing the school readiness of African-American and Black children in East County. The report covers the project's history, intent, and impact throughout the community. Parents, service providers, and

**"I wanted to share how thrilled and fulfilled I felt watching my child engage in the story time and sing along at the playdate event. He was so happily signing and cheering 'The More We Get Together' and we've continued to enjoy singing and signing at home. He was so filled up with joy and light, as was I. I'm so glad your wonderful team could help us feel so connected, supported and alive. My mothering journey is quite lonely at times, and at the First 5 Center I repeatedly found so much love and so many friends that light up my path in a wonderful way."**

**Parent participating in First 5 Contra Costa-funded program**

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<sup>1</sup><https://bit.ly/ready-kids-east-county-report>

## CORE STRATEGY: RESEARCH

systems partners were all part of the story and their perspectives are prominently featured in the report. To view the report, click [here](#).<sup>1</sup>

### **Family and provider voices**

also are centered in a community planning process led by First 5 Contra Costa and our contractor, Cardea Services. This project, funded in part through Measure X funds, identifies ways to **improve**

**ECE providers' ability to include children with disabilities** in their programs. The Cardea team is conducting an initial landscape scan that inventories current services, based on interviews with ECE providers, early intervention providers, and inclusion programs. Focus groups of parents, providers, advocates, and people with lived experience will add the perspectives of those closest to these issues, to help identify successful approaches as well as gaps and barriers. The insights will yield a two-year comprehensive plan detailing the types of supports needed to better include families and children with disabilities in ECE settings. Updates on the project are available [here](#).<sup>2</sup>

Fulfilling our role as an intermediary to help Contra Costa County create a sustainable, unified system supporting families with the home visiting services they need, First 5 Contra Costa is working with a national expert, Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies, to conduct **fiscal mapping of home visiting programs** in our county. This project will identify, describe, and assess the funding sources used for a wide variety of home visiting programs and models. Working with other key stakeholders across county agencies, the analysis will help us understand the current fiscal landscape to assess opportunities that lead to sustainability and expanded service delivery.

Two related studies are painting a more accurate picture of Contra Costa County's early childhood education workforce. Working with partners also engaged in this issue (including the Contra Costa County Office of Education and Departments of Health, Human Services, and Employment, and CocoKids), First 5 Contra Costa managed a **study to understand early educators' earnings and plans to remain in the field**, conducted by researchers at the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley in 2023. Participants included 520 English- and Spanish-speaking educators from three groups: family child care providers (178 participants), center directors (101 participants), and center teachers and assistants (141 participants). The study findings are sobering:



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.first5coco.org/early-childhood-education/supporting-inclusive-early-care-education-environments/>

## CORE STRATEGY: RESEARCH



on average, Contra Costa County educators earn less than their counterparts statewide, despite the high costs of living in the Bay Area. Not surprisingly given this economic situation, between 29–48% of participants either don't plan to be working in the early childhood field in 3 years, or are unsure whether or not they will be. The full report is available [here](#).<sup>3</sup>

Building on the prior study and addressing the findings about unsustainable income disparities, First 5 Contra Costa is leading an effort to design a **guaranteed income/enhanced compensation pilot program** centered on underpaid early childhood educators. The pilot design will be informed by the voices of ECE educators and an advisory group, which includes both ECE providers and systems leaders. Two contractors are supporting First 5 Contra Costa in this work both with the stakeholder engagement and developing a pilot model. The contractors are Clarity Social Research Group and the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at UC Berkeley; updates are available [here](#).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.first5coco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/contracosta-ec-workforce-study.pdf>  
<sup>4</sup> <https://www.first5coco.org/early-childhood-education/early-learning-workforce/>

# CORE STRATEGY: RESOURCE CONNECTION

## How we define resource connection

We strengthen competencies and community by creating access and opportunities for parents and caregivers to engage in services, programs, and opportunities that meet their needs and interests.

## What we said we'd do

Over the next three years, we committed to:

- Continue to leverage our **Proposition 10 funding** to incentivize increased local, state, and federal investments in piloting new programmatic approaches to address service gaps in our early childhood systems.
- Partner with **families** to refine the cultural and linguistic relevancy of programming and outreach efforts focused on BIPOC families to ensure more offerings are meeting families' needs.
- Recruit and engage more **service providers and partners** to engage in our networks and efforts to coordinate the early childhood systems.

## How we're doing

The expansion of a pilot program designed to reach BIPOC parents with free one-time parent education seminars, delivered by facilitators who represent the same families, is an example of how First 5 Contra Costa is leveraging funds to reach more local families while also engaging families in shaping the project. Partnering with

“The Center has helped me so much and I’m really happy about the improvement in the relationship between my husband and twins. Since he started taking the kids to the developmental playgroup, he has been more understanding of me when the children have tantrums after class because they don’t want to leave because now he experiences it as well. He’s more patient with the children and wants to learn more why they’re having this behavior, instead of just correcting them or relying on me to take care of it. Coming to the Center helps keep our family more positive.”

Parent participating in First 5 Contra Costa-funded program

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## CORE STRATEGY: RESOURCE CONNECTION

COPE Family Support Center, First 5 Contra Costa secured funding from a state **Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative (CYBHI)** grant to launch the seminars. The first series of seminars primarily engaged families with young children working with the Family Justice Center. By June 2025, the seminars should reach 370 families. African-American and Latinx parents provided input on outreach materials designed to reach parents who would be interested in practical, supportive parenting education but may not be able to commit to multiple sessions.



The Ready Kids East County school readiness effort described earlier is another example of **working to create more culturally responsive programming**. To plan the next phase of this effort, an interdisciplinary team of First 5 Contra Costa staff have been meeting with community partners and reflecting on successes and challenges of the initial phase of the effort together. These conversations are exploring new partnerships, shifts in community needs, and additional strategies to ensure there is community-wide awareness and engagement to support the school readiness of Black and African-American children.

First 5 Contra Costa's support of home visiting programs is an example of how we are working to **engage more service providers and partners in our networks**. Working in partnership with Contra Costa Health, we have planned quarterly trainings and professional development opportunities for home visitors to learn about effective practices, explore new trends and research, and connect with each other. The training activities have led to new connections with individuals and programs, including 56 individuals from 4 organizations in the first quarter of 2024, with another training with an expanded list of invitees scheduled for June 2024.



# CORE STRATEGY: ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## How we define advocacy and community engagement

We build power for local, state, and national policies that nurture young children and their families. We do this through advocacy (supporting and taking action on specific causes or proposals) and community engagement (thoughtfully creating bi-directional communication and engagement with groups in a mutually beneficial way to strengthen a common shared outcome).

## What we said we'd do

Over the next three years, we committed to:

- Thoughtfully engage those involved with and impacted by proposed policy or system changes to **inform the approach and outcome** and strive to ensure the process is mutually beneficial.
- Create and identify avenues for parents/ caregivers and service providers to understand their power and ability and opportunities to be **advocates for policy and systems change** in our three focus areas.
- Champion **policy changes** and the **allocation of public resources** related to our three focus areas that will lead to the family and system outcomes in our Theory of Change.

## How we're doing

Just as parents and caregivers are engaged in shaping the programs and services for their families, we want to create similar opportunities for them to participate in all of First 5 Contra Costa's system change efforts. First 5 Contra Costa is developing a **Parent Advisory Group** that will be launched in fiscal year 2025. The new group will draw from members at each First

**A parent of a 3-year-old boy had expressed interest in joining the Antioch First 5's Community Advisory Council. When talking to the Center Director about the reason for her interest she responded with, "We are so thankful for the center. My son didn't speak until after I started bringing him here to the center. He was a pandemic baby so he hadn't had any socializing other than me and his dad, so this has helped immensely and I'd love to give back in anyway I could."**

**Reported by First 5 Center staff**

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## CORE STRATEGY: ADVOCACY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

5 Center’s Community Advisory Council, which are action research groups composed of parents and interested community members who want to explore and make recommendations for how the center can address the needs of the immediate community. Staff are recommending members from each Community Advisory Council apply to join the countywide Parent Advisory Group to provide input on the needs impacting families with children under age 6. Staff plans to launch this new effort in the new fiscal year.

To inform First 5 Contra Costa’s own efforts and to make it easier for individuals and organizations to understand the various advocacy efforts in the county, we conducted a landscape scan of 23 policy advocacy efforts. The scan helped identify that there are several existing opportunities for parents, caregivers, and service providers to advocate directly on the issues First 5 Contra Costa champions. The scan also will help inform future efforts related to advocacy and building power. Download the new *Directory of Advocacy Efforts in Contra Costa County Related to Early Childhood Issues* [here](#).<sup>5</sup>

The county-wide advocacy scan was sparked, in part, by our own internal scan. An internal interdisciplinary group examined First 5 Contra Costa’s advocacy efforts over time, presenting findings to all staff and to the Commission, who approved their recommendations at their April 2024 meeting. In addition to launching the Parent Advisory Group described above and continuing to support advocacy among parents and service providers, we plan to launch a new training series and mini-grant opportunity for parents and service providers in 2025 specifically geared to building advocacy skills and capacity. We also will explore ways to better leverage and connect the three service provider coalitions led by First 5 Contra Costa.



<sup>5</sup> <https://bit.ly/2024-advocacy-efforts-directory>

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

## How we define organizational strategies

Our organizational strategies are summarized within two workstreams: 1) People and Culture, and 2) Operations and Processes. These workstreams provide a bridge between our high-level strategic plan, agency-wide tactical plan, and department work plans.

## What we said we'd do

- **Expand professional development opportunities and resources** for First 5 Contra Costa staff that support our organizational goals while enhancing the knowledge and skills of our workforce, ensuring First 5 Contra Costa has the needed expertise and competencies to execute the strategic plan.
- Strengthen First 5 Contra Costa's **culture of inclusivity and belonging** that is reflected in its policies and communication, cultivates internal leadership, and increases employee engagement.
- Invest in necessary **upgrades in information technology tools, software and technology equipment** that supports effective and efficient communication, operations, and connection across internal and external stakeholders including First 5 Contra Costa staff, Commissioners, contractors, grantees, funders, families, community partners, and the public.
- Strengthen **fiscal tools and update policies that safeguard fiscal stewardship** and increase agility and adaptability necessary to administer and disseminate diverse funding streams.
- Preserve and leverage existing First 5 Contra Costa **owned and rented facilities** as welcoming, safe, and equipped spaces for collaboration, learning and co-designing of innovative solutions and models supporting young children and their families.

## How we're doing

Like many organizations, First 5 Contra Costa has had to adjust to retirements of long-time staff and other staff turnover, which can mean both losing years of institutional history and experience as well as effectively onboarding and welcoming new staff and talents. We are proud of the way our strategies of cross-training and succession planning have eased these transitions and position the organization for the future. Both strategies grew out of an organizational study that identified these gaps. The interdisciplinary internal workgroups described above, such as the group interpreting our data together or exploring advocacy opportunities, are reflections of more intentional efforts to understand all the different roles and perspectives within the organization so that everyone can contribute their talents as team members. These structures have helped engage staff throughout the organization in rich discussions ranging from advocacy aims and data sense-making to the nuances

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

and implications of budgets. It also addresses the issue of blind spots and silos as staff are more naturally exposed to each other's roles and functions.

As new staff have joined the organization, we have renewed our commitment to provide training to make sure we continue building our internal competencies and support staff moving into these roles. This year we had two staff complete supervisory training and we are identifying additional professional development opportunities to nurture their growth. Our Communications staff also

worked with a communications consultant to help all staff see themselves as spokespersons for the organization and to develop tools that help them translate their dedication and commitment into "Ambassador" roles, in any setting. Our consultant held two trainings on being Ambassadors for the agency, and our communications staff invited the First 5 Association to provide an in-service training on communications and working with the media. One of our coordinators also has completed a multi-week training on advocacy strategies led by one of the coalitions in East County in which we actively participate, and two of our program staff attended a national conference on Help Me Grow efforts. In addition, 10 of our staff attended First 5 California's Child Health, Education, and Care Summit in Oakland in March 2024. All of these are examples of how we are investing in leaders within our organization to provide opportunities for staff while building overall capacity and effectiveness.

We have also worked to strengthen our organizational culture of inclusivity and belonging. Last fall, a Team Building Committee was created to plan and coordinate activities and events that promote relationship and trust building for staff across the organization. The Committee has a designated Chair to facilitate meetings which are held monthly to plan year-round activities some of which include: potlucks, individual engagement & reflective activities posted in the employee breakroom, holiday celebrations, and seasonal events including a summer staff picnic. The Team Building Committee also created and distributed a staff survey to gather input from all staff about desired level of engagement, frequency, and themes/types of activities. Also, a staff library was also initiated to encourage staff conversations about a diversity of subjects. Books can be donated to and check-out from the library by staff. An idea board was also created to encourage different ways of communication about the books read, share reflections and to spark dialogue of relevant topics. We are working to secure resources to support a restorative staff retreat this fall, where we can reflect





## ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES



on strengths and challenges, and unify behind our agency-wide and individual work plans for the coming year. We are in the early phases of conducting a collaborative process to assess our strengths and weaknesses related to our organization's anti-racist approaches. The assessment covers areas from workplace culture to community engagement and has sparked conversations about our assets as well as areas that need more development.

While investing in our people, we also recognize the need to upgrade key aspects of our infrastructure that make their work

possible. We secured foundation funding to revamp the technology in our conference center, making this a state-of-the-art, accessible community resource that will soon be available for third-party use. To prepare for outside use of the conference center, staff drafted a Facility Use Application and Agreement and a packet for prospective users that includes a welcome letter, reservation policies and procedures, fee schedule, diagram for room set-up options, and a clean-up/vacating checklist. The agreement language is currently under review by County Risk Management and we hope it will be finalized in time to offer the facility to groups this summer.

Technology and connectivity upgrades also have been crucial to help staff working in a hybrid environment, which is likely to continue for some time. All staff switched to docking stations and received new laptops to replace those that were not optimal for productivity. In addition, to prevent injuries and make the work environment as safe and comfortable as possible, we have invested in adjustable monitor arms as well as new and larger monitors with improved resolution and clarity to reduce eye strain, replacing monitors that in many cases are over a decade old.

Several of our facilities have received upgrades that make the spaces more welcoming, safe, and comfortable. The interior of the **Monument (Concord) First 5 Center** has been repainted and will soon have new VCT tile flooring installed in the main classroom this summer. Privacy film has been installed on the Monument Center's windows and a doorbell camera and floodlights were installed in response to safety concerns in the area. Future plans include installing new fencing around the building's perimeter so that children and families can enjoy an expanded outdoor learning space.

The **East County (Pittsburg) First 5 Center** also received a fresh coat of paint in its small and large conference rooms, as well as a whiteboard wall for teaching staff. Future plans include a garden area for outdoor learning opportunities. An adjoining suite at the site, formerly occupied by the Welcome Home Baby Program, has been repainted and recarpeted for the next occupant. At the



## ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

**West County (San Pablo) First 5 Center**, new fencing and plants in the front of the building have erased damage from a collision earlier in the year; the site's nature yard also will receive some new items soon. At the **Antioch First 5 Center**, staff are optimistic that talks with Mayor Thorpe and his team will soon lead to sprucing up the center's back gravel parking lot and expand outdoor learning opportunities for children.

We also have been working to make our policies and procedures less bureaucratic and more consistent. Simplified procurement policies are in the works, which also will incorporate REDI practices and principles. Even seemingly small changes, such as shifting from "wet" signature requirements to using DocuSign during the last fiscal year, have increased ease and efficiency for us and for our partners and contractors.



# CONCLUSION



We are proud of the progress we have already made in advancing our core and operational strategies, while recognizing we still have more work to do. Using our strategic plan and theory of change as guiding frameworks, we see all of these activities aligned not only with our planning frameworks, but also with the way we have construed our role with partners and community members.

We look forward to reporting on more progress on all these fronts as we continue to implement, fine-tune, and evaluate our strategies.



[first5coco.org](http://first5coco.org)