

Child & Family Data for Action

First 5 Alameda County is committed to achieving equity, with a focus on racial and economic justice, to ensure that all children in Alameda County are born healthy and can achieve their full potential. Given the triple pandemics of COVID-19, racism, and poverty, we have a unique opportunity to remedy historic, structural racism with investments that recognize and correct injustice and exploitation of low-income people and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Alameda County Family Demographics

1,682,353

Total population (2020)¹:

16,864

Babies born in 2021²:

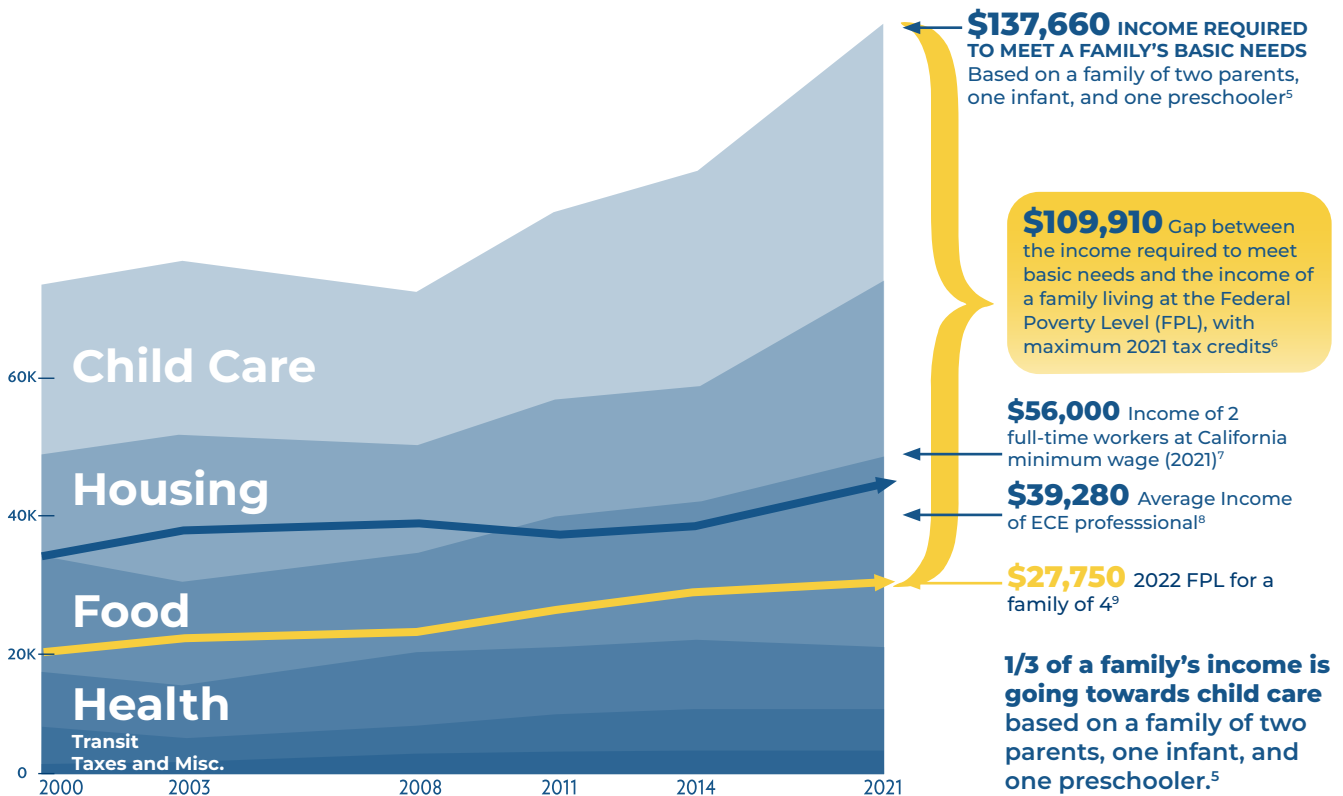
108,264

Children under age 6 (2021)³:
6.4% of the total population

~71,000

Households with children under age 6 (2019)⁴:

Financial Realities for Families in Alameda County



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

Approximately **1 in 10** children under 6 lives below the Federal Poverty Level (2020)¹⁰

1 in 3 women are caught in financial precarity¹¹

3 out of 4 households struggling to meet their basic needs have a head of household that identifies as a person of color¹¹

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

+68%
increase in child care cost (2014-2021)¹¹



+34%
increase in median family income (2000-2019)¹²

50%
of renters pay more than 1/3 of their income for rent (2019)¹³

Addressing Racial Disparities & Family Economic Security

We center equity in our research, advocacy, and policy to create conditions and systems where children can reach their full potential. Infants, children and women, especially those who identify as people of color, bear the brunt of structural inequities.

Structural Inequities Lead to Racial Disparities

Maternal & Newborn Health



Black women and birthing people are 3x more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth and to experience more maternal health complications.¹⁴



Black babies are 3-4x more likely to be born too early, too small, or to die before their first birthday.¹⁴

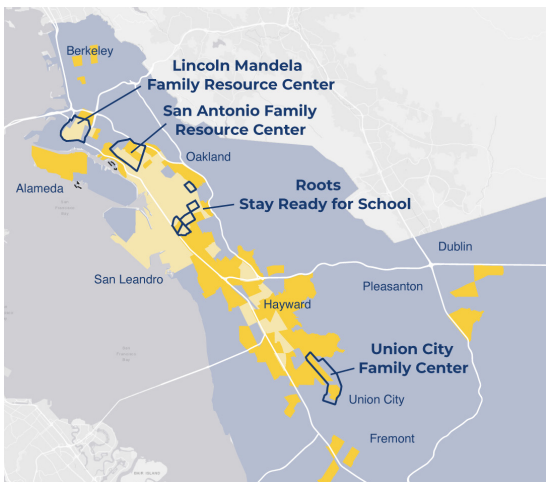


Black women and families are 2x more likely to live in poverty or experience hardships during pregnancy.¹⁴

Place-Based Strategies

As part of our commitment to equity, we invest our resources into the communities that need support.

First 5's Priority Areas & Strong Start Index¹⁵



The Strong Start Index collates information routinely collected at birth for every child in the state to help communities ensure that all babies begin life with a strong, thriving start. Some infants are born with more assets, like parental employment history and ability to afford and access health care. We can use these data to create a holistic view of the conditions into which children are born - and examine differences across communities.

Legend

- First 5 Neighborhoods Ready for School Grantee Service Areas
- Alameda County

Strong Start Index - Average Number of Assets (Census Tract)

- Less than 9 of 12 Assets on Average
- Average between 9 and County average of 9.8 assets

First 5's Priority Areas & Kindergarten Readiness¹⁶



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

Legend

- First 5 Neighborhoods Ready for School Grantee Service Areas
- Alameda County

Parent's perception of their child's readiness for kindergarten

- More than 50%
- 33% to 50%
- 20% to 33% (County Average)
- Less than 20% of parents feel their child is ready

The Social Safety Net for Families in Alameda County

First 5 advocates for policies that advance economic justice, and supports strategies such as Universal Basic Income, an improved public safety net, living wage jobs, education and apprenticeship programs, work supports, and savings and wealth-building that promote the health and well-being of families with young children.

Families with Children Accessing Health & Economic Supports

Children 0-6 Enrolled in Public Benefits in Alameda County 2021

 **Medi-Cal 32,008**
(28% of total children 0-6)¹⁸

- **2 out of 3 parents of children ages 3-6 reported that their children had not received a developmental screening** and only 6% of parents reported their children having an Adverse Childhood Experience screen¹⁶.
- In a recent survey of Alameda County parents, **children who regularly attended well-child visits had a higher level of kindergarten readiness.** The survey also indicated that 4 out of 10 children missed these visit(s) over the past three years.¹⁶

 **CalFresh 12,182**
(11% of total children 0-6)¹⁷

- **In 2020, more than 1 in 10 children in Alameda County have experienced food insecurity in the past year.**¹⁹
- In First 5's most recent KRA study, **65% of parents reported needing free/affordable food & nutrition** while only 31% reported receiving this support.¹⁶

Helping Families Navigate the Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic

With families facing historic levels of job loss, child care and school closures, health care challenges, and food and housing insecurity, the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated persistent health and economic inequities. These challenges pose a particular threat with long-term implications for the health and well-being of children under age five, especially children of color.

Diaper Need



Without a supply of clean diapers, families cannot leave their children with child care providers and cannot go to work. Diaper need is a predictor of postpartum depression in mothers and can make it difficult for mothers and babies to form an attachment.²⁰



It costs approximately \$18 a week to diaper one child, and \$1,872 per year to diaper two.²¹ For a parent earning the federal minimum wage, **diapering two children accounts for about 12% of their annual gross income.**²²



California provides \$30 a month for families receiving CalWORKs to purchase diapers.²⁴



1 in 3 families struggled to afford diapers prior to the pandemic.²³

First 5 funded an [evaluation](#) of the diaper distribution efforts of **Help a Mother Out (HAMO)** in Alameda County. The evaluation of HAMO's work demonstrated success to make the case for expanded public investment.

Families who received diapers, a form of income support, reported being healthier and happier.²¹

97%

say their child is healthier

98%

say their family feels less stressed

95%

have more money in their budget for food

99%

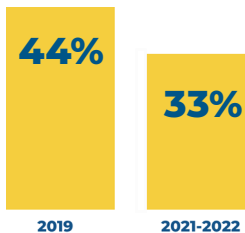
say they are a happier caregiver

Kindergarten Readiness

Our participatory community-centered approach to our [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment \(KRA\)](#) study established the largest local data set on kindergarten readiness, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, and the conditions that families say are important.

Kindergarten Readiness in 2021-2022¹⁶

According to parents/caregivers, 33% of children were fully ready for kindergarten compared to 44% in 2019²⁵. **Structural inequities compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted children, families, and communities.**



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

 4 in 5

children who are not ready for kindergarten continue to struggle academically in third grade (2018)²⁶.

Road to Kindergarten Readiness¹⁶

Community, family, and school conditions affecting kindergarten readiness were determined through an analysis of 3,000+ surveys and the input of a 30-member Research Advisory Group comprising parents/caregivers, early care and education professionals, transitional/kindergarten teachers, and community leaders.

 100%

of the families in the KRA 2021-22 study who participated in the Oakland Resilient Families Guaranteed Income pilot reported significantly higher readiness than other similar families.

 65%

of families indicated that help connecting to resources was important to them; only 12% of all families had actually received this kind of assistance.

 75%

of families reported barriers to ECE, primarily due to COVID-19-related closures and reduced hours and the cost of care.

 44%

of parents/caregivers reported visiting their children's school compared to 87% in 2019.

 67%

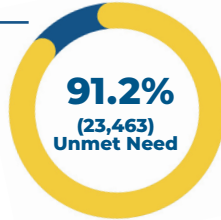
of parents/caregivers expressed concern about their child's health and well-being.

Access to Child Care

Scarcity of public resources limits the existence of, and access to, quality child care and quality community-based programming. Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ECE system suffered from low supply and high cost. The shortage of licensed child care is particularly acute in infant and toddler settings.

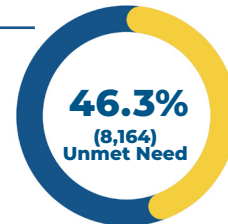
Infant/Toddler Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)²⁷

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



Preschool Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)²⁷

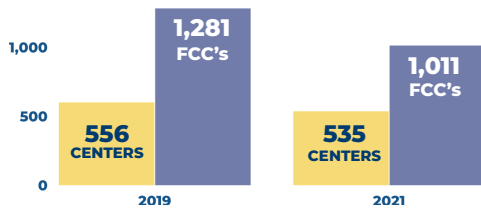
53.7% (9,465)
Number of Eligible Children Accessing Subsidized Care



Early Care & Education Professionals Work in a Fragile System

The COVID-19 pandemic decimated an already fragile, underfunded, and fragmented “system” of licensed care and exacerbated historic labor shortage of early care and education professionals.

From 2019 to 2021, there were **21 fewer licensed centers and 270 fewer family child care (FCC) sites** in Alameda County.²⁷



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

Early Care & Education (ECE) professionals experienced the greatest changes to their hours and income during the COVID-19 pandemic¹⁶:

49%
reported decreased hours

43%
reported decreased wages

57%
reported decreased household income

Demographics of ECE Professionals⁸

96%
of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women

79%
of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women of color

87%
of ECE educators are considered very low income for Alameda County

39%
of ECE educators are over 50 years old

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