First 5 Alameda County (First 5) supports an integrated early childhood system that works to ensure all children arrive at school ready to learn and are free from abuse and neglect.

Improving school readiness countywide requires cooperation from all sectors serving children and families. We seek to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones with public, private and nonprofit sector entities, especially those that do not currently see early childhood as a core part of their mission.

Only 44% of Alameda County Children were FULLY READY for KINDERGARTEN in 2015

Call to Action:

1. Preserve, sustain, and scale proven and successful First 5 programs.

2. Increase utilization of the social safety net by eligible families with young children.

3. Develop leadership pathways for families with young children enabling them to advocate for their priorities.
What is School Readiness?

**SCHOOL READINESS IS A MEASURE OF HOW PREPARED A CHILD IS TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL PHYSICALLY, COGNITIVELY, SocialLY AND EMOTIONALLY.**

Every two years, First 5 partners with Applied Survey Research to assess school readiness in the County.

In 2015, 89 kindergarten classrooms throughout Alameda County were assessed across four domains of readiness:

- **Motor Skills**
- **Self-Regulation**
- **Social Expression**
- **Academics**

The school readiness assessment identifies factors that predict a child’s readiness for school. In addition to addressing the barriers facing low-income families, English Language Learners and children of color, all children need to:

- **Arrive at School Healthy, Fed and Well-Restved**
- **Experience Quality Early Care and Education Programs**
- **Be Screened for Developmental Delays and Have Access to Early Intervention When Appropriate**

The study shows the predictive factors of children’s school readiness. However, schools, public systems and community based organizations must also be ready to serve children from all backgrounds and experiences. We can work together to change policies and improve practices to ensure all children are ready for school.

### School Readiness Predictive Factors (In Order of Impact)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less Ready</th>
<th>More Ready</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy, Fed &amp; Well-Restved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Early Childhood Education</td>
<td>Older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Have Special Needs</td>
<td>White or Asian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>Higher Socio Economic Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy</td>
<td>Not in a Single Parent Household</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Screentime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opportunities and Partnerships to Turn the Curve on School Readiness

Improve Child Health and Well-Being

Children who come to school tired, sick, or hungry are less ready for school. First 5 addresses child health and well-being by funding home visiting programs, connecting parents to supports that address their basic needs and providing leadership pathways for parents.

**Partnership Opportunities:**

- **INCREASE ACCESS** to health care services, including developmental screening as well as vision, dental and asthma services.

- **ENSURE LONG TERM SUSTAINABLY** of programs promoting healthy development of infants and care coordination such as home visiting, Perinatal Health Outreach Coordinators, Project DULCE, and Help Me Grow.

- **SUPPORT EFFORTS TO USE FOOD AS MEDICINE** and enhance access to healthy foods.

- **REMOVE BARRIERS FOR ENROLLMENT** in food assistance programs like WIC, CalWORKs, CalFresh and the summer food program.

- **DEVELOP PARENT-INFORMED POLICIES** and promote parent leadership opportunities that help young families become advocates on a local, state and federal level.

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**Public Benefits Enrollment**
NUMBER OF CHILDREN 0–6 RECEIVING BENEFITS IN ALAMEDA COUNTY JULY 2016
115,012 total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medi-Cal</td>
<td>45,000</td>
<td>1 out of 3 Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CalFresh</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>1 out of 6 Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CalWORKs</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>Nearly 1 in 10 Children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Partners**

Alameda County Community Food Bank, Alameda County Early Childhood Policy Committee (ACECPC), Alameda County Health Care Services Agency, Alameda County Social Services Agency, ALL IN Alameda County, Committee on Children With Special Needs, Health Care Providers, Philanthropy
**Remove Barriers for Low Income Families and English Language Learners**

Children from families with low socioeconomic status and/or who are English Language Learners are less ready for kindergarten. In FY17–18, First 5 will fund early childhood programming operated by neighborhood collaboratives in areas of the county with the highest need.

**Partnership Opportunities:**

**IMPROVE SERVICES** by making them more culturally and linguistically appropriate and provide better service coordination for families with young children in targeted neighborhoods.

**SUPPORT EFFORTS TO SUSTAIN FUNDING** for parent support programs such as playgroups, early childhood programs at parks and libraries, and Parent Cafes.

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**Address the Needs of Children of Color**

Children of color, particularly boys, are less likely to be ready for school than their peers. First 5 is committed to racial equity and sees a role for all systems players to help reduce the readiness gap.

**Partnership Opportunities:**

**ADDRESS THE EFFECTS OF IMPLICIT BIAS AND INSTITUTIONAL RACISM** on young children of color through staff professional development and program design.

**ADOPT THE FATHER FRIENDLY PRINCIPLES** to improve outreach and support fathers. Authorize staff to join the Alameda County Fathers Corps, the learning community for male service providers.

**INCORPORATE EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES** into programs that address the needs of boys and men of color.

**COLLECT COMMUNITY LEVEL DATA** that can help us understand the impacts of implicit bias and institutional racism on the families we serve.
Improve Access to Quality Early Care and Education Programs

Attending licensed early care and education (ECE) programs improves school readiness. First 5 provides coaching and professional development to ECE providers, supports Quality Counts, a statewide voluntary rating system for child care sites, and advocates to make ECE more affordable for parents.

Partnership Opportunities:

**INSTITUTE UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL** and an increase in subsidized quality child care.

**ENSURE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY** of quality ECE programs and strengthen the qualifications, compensation, and stability of the early learning workforce.

**SUSTAIN OR EXPAND NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAMS** by supporting services outside the traditional ECE setting, such as summer Pre-K, as well as programs at libraries, parks and recreation centers.

Early Identification of Special Needs

While children with a diagnosed special need have lower school readiness scores, early identification and intervention can mitigate the challenges these students face. First 5 supports Help Me Grow which promotes early detection for developmental concerns/delays in children under 5, provides parents with child development information, and makes referrals to appropriate services.

Partnership Opportunities:

**STRENGTHEN THE COUNTY’S ABILITY** to identify developmental concerns early and link families to community resources by supporting the sustainability, expansion and integration of Help Me Grow (HMG) into existing systems of care.

**ADVOCATE AT THE STATE LEVEL** for better access to services for children with special needs. Provide a range of services for children with developmental needs that are not eligible for entitlement programs.

**CHAMPION EARLY IDENTIFICATION** strategies, including developmental screening, in programs and practices.

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**Number of Children 0–4 Eligible for Subsidized Childcare**

- **DEMAND:** 21,151
- **SUPPLY:** 9,592
- **GAP:** 11,559

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**Improving School Readiness: A Call to Action**

**WWW.FIRST5ALAMEDA.ORG**