



Policy Agenda

2021



01 Advancing Racial Equity & Family Economic Security

- **Increase income and assets for families** (e.g., Earned Income Tax Credit and college savings accounts), promote policies that are supportive of families and caregivers (e.g., affordable housing and transportation), and oppose extractive measures (e.g., erroneous fines and fees) that cause disproportionate harm.
- **Increase access to quality early care and education (ECE).** This includes increasing diversity at all levels of the ECE workforce, improving conditions and compensation for ECE professionals, strengthening learning and care opportunities for infants and toddlers, and ensuring countywide efforts are informing, and informed by, statewide policy changes as well as conversations in the community.
- **Support reproductive justice as a health equity and economic issue** for children 0-5 and their families.
- **Center and prioritize** pregnant people and families experiencing homelessness.
- **Prioritize families with young children** in equitable community investments
- **Serve, advocate for, and defend the rights and safety of families regardless of their race, socio-economic, immigration, or housing status.** Support and advocate for policies that center the needs of children birth to age 5 and their families and caregivers, with a focus on racial equity and reducing family poverty.
- **Advocate for programs and policies that acknowledge the importance of the social determinants of health on school readiness** and leverage social and economic policies to advance health equity and education.
- **Advocate for programs and policies that acknowledge the strain low-income/working people are under** and guarantee families and caregivers have a right to basic needs regardless of their ability to pay (e.g., health and safety supplies, food, housing).
- **Support policy and practice changes** that ensure better access, customer service, and use of the social safety net. Simplify eligibility, enrollment, and renewal processes.
- **Advocate for increased access** to health care, behavioral health, and dental care services for children birth to age 5, their families, and caregivers.



Spotlight on Action for 2021:

- Partner with community to mitigate harm caused by the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on racial and economic justice, ensuring that the COVID-19 crisis does not deepen racial inequality in income, education, health, and other public systems.
- Bolster Community Resilience Fund investments in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including direct financial assistance, supply procurement, access to food, and distribution of items to children, families, and caregivers. Build on the equity framework that prioritizes investment in people and places disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
- Partner with county organizations and agencies to end unsheltered family homelessness.
- Advocate for just immigration policies that support families, children, and caregivers and promote access to health, safety, and opportunity.



02 Advancing Proven Strategies

- Support programs that are easily accessible to families and promote child development and family well-being, such as Help Me Grow, Quality Counts, and family engagement and support programs.
- Coordinate and align neighborhood and countywide family-centered and community-defined programs and investments with those of other systems partners and make the case for sustainability.
- Measure school readiness in Alameda County to better understand and advocate for the family, caregiver, community, and policy factors that lead to children being ready for school, and schools being ready for all children. This includes working with families, early childhood systems leaders, and schools to inform research and policy advocacy.
- Use lessons from the COVID-19 crisis to reform racist, classist systems that serve children birth to age 5 and their families.



Spotlight on Action for 2021:

- Prepare the early childhood education system for broad investment through Alameda County Measure C Children's Health and Child Care Initiative. As the named administrator of the child care portion of the ordinance, First 5 will oversee 80% of the total revenue.
- Scale and sustain safety net supports for families, such as family navigation through Help Me Grow and pediatric practices, that create equitable access to services that mitigate childhood adversity and recognize family resilience.
- Conduct a Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to understand the impact of COVID-19 on young children and inform policy and advocacy efforts.
- Serve as backbone for county partners to convene and continue integrating the early childhood system of care (e.g., Help Me Grow, Quality Rating and Improvement System, DULCE), ensuring the safety net serves all families.
- Expand the early childhood workforce apprenticeship model for CalWORKs participants and other parents, with an equity lens, through the YMCA of the East Bay, in partnership with Tipping Point and Alameda County Social Services.



03 Supporting Family Engagement, Leadership & Community Well-Being

- Advocate for the expansion and sustainability of parent and caregiver support programs (e.g., Paid Family Leave).
- Advocate for programs and policies that assume family resilience and respect families as rational decisionmakers regardless of their income, race, socio-economic, immigration, or housing status.
- Support community-driven improvements to the built environment and public infrastructure (e.g., parks, playgrounds, housing, and transportation).
- Support and advance programs and policies that recognize families as conveners, storytellers, and owners of the data in our work to advance data-driven decisionmaking and the use of data to support community organizing, advocacy, and action.
- Provide capacity building for providers to support parent leadership and advocacy, including promoting the adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles and father-specific services.
- Recognize and support parent and caregiver leaders.



Spotlight on Action for 2021:

- Continue to explore and advance supports for family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) and family child care (FCC) providers, for example continued expansion of grants and technical assistance for family child care providers who have been severely impacted by the pandemic.
- Partner with First 5's Neighborhoods Ready for School grantees to advance policy priorities identified by their communities.
- Recognize and support community leadership and resilience in response to the COVID-19 crisis and leverage systems change in the face of COVID-19 as an opportunity to proactively center and prioritize families and caregivers with an equity lens.