

# First 5 Alameda County Strategic Plan 2022–2027



## Acknowledgments

First 5 wishes to acknowledge the contributions of the many people who made this plan possible. This plan was developed in a challenging time two years into the pandemic, when families, communities, organizations, and public systems were stretched beyond limit. Our deepest respect and gratitude to our community for their fortitude, and appreciation to those who were able to take time to think about how to best use First 5's public resources and to envision an early childhood system where children and families can thrive. Special thanks to:

- Parents and caregivers for their leadership and sharing of their experiences
- Early childhood providers and community-serving organizations for their insight
- Community leaders for their vision and commitment
- First 5 staff for thoughtful participation, dialogue, and decision-making
- Our consultant Hickman Strategies for their backbone support of our strategic planning process
- First 5 Alameda County Commissioners for their guidance and support. Our work continues the legacy of Alameda County Supervisor and First 5 Founding Commissioner Wilma Chan.
- Alameda County and Oakland voters for championing local investments in early care and education through the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children's Health & Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C). For a detailed breakdown of the Measures, see Appendix C.
- Measure C Community Advisory Council members and all the Alameda County families, providers, early childhood partners, and members of the public who contributed their time and input to inform the development of the Measure C 5-Year Plan, see Appendix D.



*Our work is a continuation of the legacy of Alameda County Supervisor and First 5 founding Commissioner Wilma Chan.*

# Table of Contents

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|  |    |
|--|----|
| A Moment of Urgency and Possibility                                  | 4  |
| Who We Are   | 5  |
| Evolving the Early Childhood System of Care                          | 7  |
| Alameda County's Context—Data for Action                             | 11 |
| Meeting This Moment in Time  | 15 |
| Summary of Strategic Plan Partner Feedback                           | 16 |
| Our Approach   | 18 |
| Commitment to Equity   | 20 |
| Working in Partnership   | 22 |
| Strategic Plan Parameters & Financial Picture                        | 23 |
| Local Revenue for Early Care & Education                             | 25 |
| Program Strategies   | 28 |
| Neighborhoods Ready for School                                       | 28 |
| Early Care and Education (ECE)                                       | 30 |
| Parent Partnership   | 32 |
| Pediatric Care Coordination  | 33 |
| Fatherhood   | 35 |
| Agency Strategies  | 36 |
| Training   | 36 |
| Policy and Advocacy  | 37 |
| Data and Evaluation  | 38 |
| Communications   | 39 |
| Introduction to Operational Support Functions                        | 40 |
| Administration and Facilities  | 40 |
| Finance  | 41 |
| Human Resources  | 41 |
| Technology   | 42 |
| Proposition 10 FY 22/23 Investments                                  | 43 |
| Measuring Our Progress   | 44 |
| Appendixes   | 45 |
| A.1: Tracking Our Progress; Program Strategies, Goals, & Investments | 45 |
| A.2: Tracking Our Progress; Policy Advocacy Efforts                  | 51 |
| B: Summary of Strategic Plan Partner Feedback                        | 56 |
| C: Local Child Care Ballot Measures                                  | 57 |
| D: Ready for Measure C   | 60 |
| References   | 62 |



## A MOMENT OF URGENCY & POSSIBILITY

### **Ensuring Alameda County's children grow into healthy, productive adults is fundamental to our community's prosperity, health, and well-being.**

Decades of research have demonstrated that the period from birth to age 5 is the most critical window of opportunity to positively impact a child's future. The correlation between early childhood development, community and family conditions, and lifelong health have also been established and are undeniably intertwined.

The research makes clear that disparate life outcomes of children related to health, education, and employment are the result of historic and ongoing racist, classist policies that extract resources (i.e., poorly paid labor) and harm some communities, families, and children while benefiting others. Despite these forces, there are systemic interventions that can positively change the lives of children and their families. These findings have profound implications for public policy and the role of public systems.

California Governor Gavin Newsom's recent investments in early childhood and the social safety net reflect a growing recognition of the conditions necessary to support family and child well-being, as well as the need for public policy to address increasing inequality. However, these efforts are unfolding in a time of fiscal uncertainty, as the Trump Administration threatens to eliminate vital early learning and safety-net programs designed to improve outcomes for underserved children, including Head Start, preschool development grants, Medicaid, SNAP, and WIC.

Locally, Alameda County voters have made significant investments in children and families. First 5's role in two local ballot measures—as contracted implementation partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and named administrator of The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)—has increased our agency's annual revenue from \$24 million to more than \$250 million annually, a ten-fold increase. A major focus of this strategic plan is to ensure our infrastructure and capacity is positioned to support the effective use of these precious public dollars as First 5 Alameda County adapts to these new local and state historic investments in children and families.

***This is a moment to invest in a better future through long-term, systemic solutions for children and families.***



## WHO WE ARE

### **First 5 was established in 1998 by California's Proposition 10.**

Our role is to improve life outcomes for Alameda County's youngest children. We support, inform, and partner with public systems (i.e., health, early care and education, economic, and family supports) and community resources to create an early childhood system of care that is responsive to the needs of caregivers and families with young children.

We are guided by a “whole community, whole family, whole child” policy and programming approach to our work. First 5 uses lessons learned from our investments, research and data, and partnerships to inform policy positions and influence local, state, and national decision-making.

We recognize that the context of lived experience is essential to impactful investment, program design, and policy advocacy, and we support the efforts of families, caregivers, and community-based organizations to that end. We have a multi-year investment in place-based initiatives, and we have funded community engagement work, including summer pre-kindergarten programs, alongside Alameda County's school districts. We have partnered with community providers and pediatricians to support families' concerns about their child's development and access to resources. We provide technical assistance and infrastructure support to the early childhood education field and community-based providers. We invest in father-friendly programming and systems so men

and dads are not excluded from conversations affecting their children.

*“First 5 policy efforts focus on systems change, particularly across sectors, with an intention to shift the conditions that hold problems in place, in order to achieve meaningful and lasting social change.”*

**-First 5 Association 2022-24 Strategic Plan**

We routinely assess and evaluate our efforts to identify areas for improvement, capacity building, and gaps in the early childhood system. We strive to fund and scale promising programs and proven interventions. Where possible, we integrate and align our activities to improve equitable access to better serve the needs of Alameda County families.

Our “North Star,” the population result that guides our work, is that all ***Children Are Ready for Kindergarten;*** our work is to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools support families and children by creating the ***conditions*** that position all for success.

Since 2008, First 5 has benchmarked results for our county's children by conducting a biannual Kindergarten Readiness Community Study. Results have shown very little improvement over time and consistently point to the countervailing impact of systemic inequities—socioeconomics, community conditions, and limited enrollment in early education as barriers to kindergarten readiness.

**Since 1998, First 5 Alameda County has:**

- Raised \$43.6 million from philanthropic and other funding sources
- Earned \$24 million from federal fiscal leveraging
- Awarded \$295.5 million to community partners and agencies

The findings and recommendations in the 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Community Study indicate a drop in readiness since the pandemic from 44% to 33%, according to parents, and reinforce a systems-based approach to early childhood that centers on equity and basic needs. First 5's programming, investments, and policy agenda are multipronged and cross Place, People, and Policy to improve conditions in the areas we support— Neighborhoods, Health & Well-Being, Learning & Care, and Family.

### Defining Systems Building

Systems initiatives are organized efforts to improve a system and its impacts. They can be publicly or privately funded or a combination of the two. Systems initiatives in the early childhood field may have different labels, such as systems building, systems change, or systems reform. Yet systems initiatives are best understood by their focus or by the areas of the system they are trying to improve. Specifically, an early childhood systems initiative might focus on one or more of the following five areas:

**Context:**

Improving the political context that surrounds the system so it produces the policy and funding changes needed to create and sustain it

**Components:**

Establishing high-performance programs and services that produce results for children and families

**Connections:**

Creating strong linkages across system components that further improve results for children and families

**Infrastructure:**

Developing the support systems needed to function effectively and with quality

**Scale:**

Ensuring a comprehensive system is available to as many people as possible

From the Early Childhood Systems Building Resource Guide (hhs.gov)

# EVOLVING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF CARE

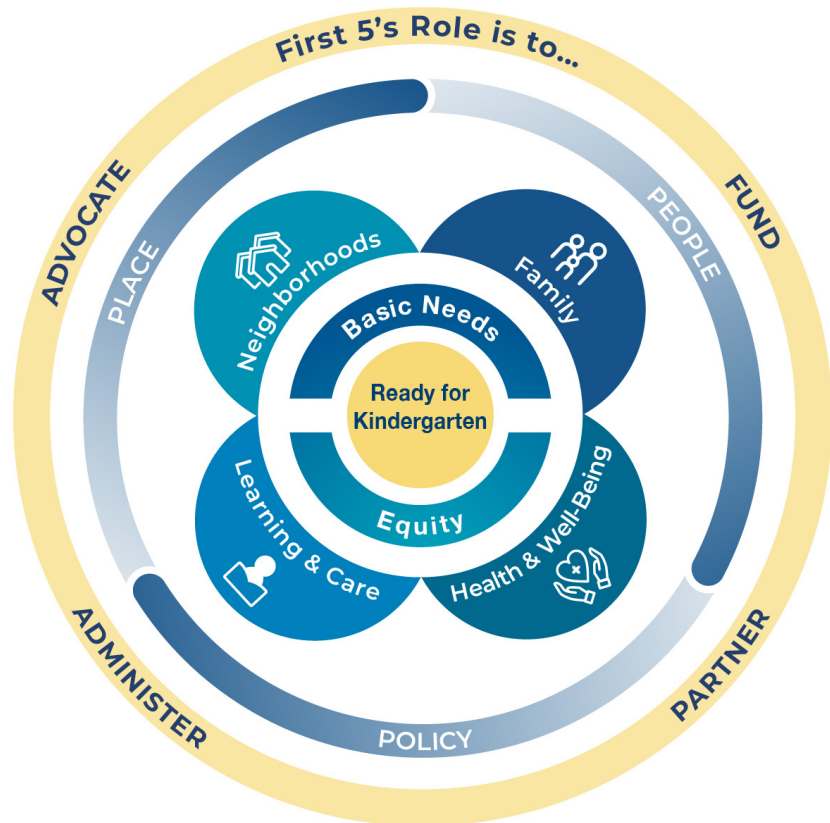
## Within the Early Childhood System, our role is to:

**FUND** organizations and initiatives that are mission- and vision-aligned, and part of a community-based, family-informed early childhood system.

**PARTNER** with parents, caregivers, communities, early childhood providers, organizations, and public agencies in service to an accessible, effective, and responsive early childhood system.

**ADMINISTER** programs for young children and families that offer services, navigation, and care coordination; support and connections to resources; and training and capacity building for providers.

**ADVOCATE** to scale and sustain effective programs and for public policies grounded in equity and justice.



**Figure 1.** An early childhood system of care cultivates community and family conditions for children's kindergarten readiness.

## After taking inventory of our impact, local system opportunities, and the needs of families and children in the 2017–2022 strategic plan, First 5:

- Integrated signature programs into larger systems when applicable and sunsetted programs when appropriate
- Launched substantial investments in community-directed, place-based efforts
- Increased the agency's focus and capacity in policy advocacy, research, and data for action
- Identified public system partners to scale proven strategies, including Early Care and Education (ECE), Pediatric Care Coordination, Fatherhood, and ECE CalWORKs Apprenticeship

Alameda County's context and our analysis of the public policy levers by which conditions for families can be improved have informed our embrace of equity as the center of our work. Coupled with a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco revenues, First 5 has adopted a **systems building approach** strategy—acting as a funder and a policy advocate—to address the underlying structural issues (the root causes) that face communities, families, and children.

**Since the adoption of the 2022-2027 strategic plan in June 2022**, we have continued to leverage our expertise, infrastructure, and investments in Place, People, and Policy, allowing us to scale the past 25 years of our work to build and evolve the early childhood system. Given this, the drivers of our accomplishments and agency growth in this strategic plan update are:



## 1. INVESTING IN TRANSFORMATIVE SYSTEM BUILDING

- **Continued to build and scale the local early childhood system with new revenue.** Our fiscal outlook is strong—buoyed by new funding streams, coupled with a clean audit and a balanced budget. While First 5 Alameda County will be experiencing significant growth in the coming year, all other First 5 agencies around the state have declining revenues and are facing layoffs and program cuts. Our colleagues throughout California, and beyond, look to us as a model for leveraging funding, policy advocacy, and equity-centered systems building as they manage challenging local circumstances.

**At the local, state, and federal level in FY 2024-2025, we received:**

**\$1.1M**

from the Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA)

**\$1.6M**

annual allocation from Alameda Alliance for Health (AAH)

**\$2.5M**

annual allocation for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA)

**\$4.9M**

from multi-year grants from philanthropy and Child Family & Community Services (CFCS)

**\$9.7M**

from California Proposition 10 (75% reduction from its inception in 1998)

**\$32.5M**

from the Oakland Children's Initiative Early Education Fund

- **Implement the Early Development Instrument (EDI) as the new Kindergarten Readiness Community Study tool.** The EDI is a comprehensive tool that provides valuable insights into the conditions that support family well-being and child development. Starting in FY 2025-26, census-tract level information collected from parents/caregivers and educators will be used for our Kindergarten Readiness Community Studies, serving as a critical component in our efforts to improve local systems and foster the conditions that support children 0-5 and their families.
- **Created a Pediatric Care Coordination Division, secured philanthropic funds that seeded a director to oversee that division, and expanded our Pediatric Care Coordination staffing and capacity to reach more Alameda County children and families.** We successfully transitioned our Help Me Grow program from a grant award to a service contract with our local Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan (Alameda Alliance for Health), officially becoming a Community Health Worker (CHS) Medi-Cal provider. We also continued our partnership with Alameda Health System in support of the DULCE Program at Highland Hospital.

- **Continued to expand and completed an evaluation of the Early Education Apprenticeship Program.** This program is an “earn and learn model” that covers tuition and permit fees for early care educators, while providing on-the-job training, as well as stipends and additional supports like tutoring and child care. It is an exemplary model of a public-private partnership as the program is jointly funded by the Alameda County Social Services Agency, First 5 Alameda County, and Tipping Point Community. This is the type of innovative public policy infrastructure necessary to support continued growth in our local early care and education delivery system.
- **Continued to offer training to providers.** First 5 disseminates best practices to professionals working with young children in mental health, early education, health, family support, and administration. In FY 2024-2025, over 280 unique agencies and over 800 unique providers participated in our trainings. In the ECE field, we provided more than 40 trainings and learning opportunities for parents, caregivers, providers, and professionals and we distributed \$326,800 in quality improvement grants to ECE professionals and caregivers participating in First 5's Quality Counts program.
- **Continued to fund Project DULCE at Highland Hospital.** Families enrolled in the program receive enhanced support in which a family specialist in the pediatric setting supports connection of the families to needed resources, including legal support. In FY 2024-2025, Alameda Health System recruited and trained an additional family specialist as a long-term investment to increase service delivery and First 5 anticipates serving over 100 families this fiscal year.
- **Invested \$1.45 million in the Collaborative Diaper Distribution Program,** administered by SupplyBank.org (SBO) and jointly funded by Alameda County Social Services Agency, Alameda County Health, Alameda County Probation Department, and First 5, for a total countywide investment of \$5.8 million. The program will distribute 15 million diapers and 37 million baby wipes to families experiencing diaper need.

## 2. OPERATIONALIZING EQUITY: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & CAPACITY

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- **Restructured the agency and conducted hiring to build the staff capacity and infrastructure needed to administer substantial new public funds.** Spurred by the Oakland Children's Initiative and Measure C, we have been proactively building an organization prepared to manage the significant system building legislatively mandated by these new public resources. Since fiscal year 2022-2023, we added 45 new positions in various areas throughout the agency, including programs, operations, finance, compliance, technology, data and evaluation, planning, communications, and government affairs and policy. The hiring and structural changes will continue into 2025 and beyond, as we continue a 3-to-5-year building phase. We seek to retain and recruit a workforce that reflects the diversity and cultural fabric of Alameda County, support staff development and professional growth, ensure regulatory compliance, and effectively implement existing and new initiatives.
- **Continued centering equity in our programming, investments, and advocacy and intentionally engaging in dialogue regarding organizational culture.** First 5 has centered equity in our work since our founding in 1998. Over the years, we have intentionally built upon and strengthened this commitment, including in our 2017-2022 and 2022-2027 strategic plans. As part of our evolution in fiscal year 2022-2023, we engaged in a participatory agencywide learning and development process to

update our equity statement to encompass our current work, intentions for continuous learning and improvement, and commitment to accountability (see page 21). In fiscal year 2023-2024, our agency took an important step in promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) by engaging in all-staff trainings on unconscious bias. The trainings, led by Dr. Sacha Joseph-Mathews, Vice President and Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer at Stanislaus State University, equipped employees with fundamental knowledge, tools, and resources to identify, address, and minimize unconscious bias in their dealings with fellow team members and stakeholders. In FY 2024-2025, First 5 continued our partnership with Dr. Joseph-Mathews to provide a series of DEIB Lunch and Learn staff trainings to delve into various topics, including understanding unconscious bias, recruiting with inclusion in mind, intersectionality, and microaggressions.

- **Ensuring that our governing body represents our commitment to community-directed investments by appointing a representative of a parent/community-based building group as a First 5 Commissioner.**

### 3. EVOLVING TO MORE COMMUNITY-CENTERED PROGRAMMING

**Continued implementation of key programmatic and community investments, including:**

- **A new division of Pediatric Care Coordination encompassing our existing family serving programs out of pediatric health settings**, including Help Me Grow's developmental screening, outreach, referral, and navigation and the DULCE's model health, resource, and legal supports.
- **A strategic parent partnership program focused on supporting Black mothers and birthing people** and on investing in community-based strategies to disrupt inequities and disparities in birth outcomes with a focus on lactation supports for Black birthing people.
- **A new Prenatal Black Fathers Group (PBFG) pilot program**, launched in April 2025, which aims to support and prepare Black Fathers in becoming the dads they want to be.

**Reached key programmatic and community investment milestones, including:**

- **Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS)** initiative grantees engaged in a yearlong facilitated strategic planning process with Cities and People Advisors to identify each site's community-directed multi-year priorities and develop strategic work plans and data profiles to implement their priorities. This process also fostered alignment with Oakland Thrives' Rise East Initiative, a place-based investment that raised more than \$100 million from philanthropic partners. Proudly, First 5's NRFS investment was part of the foundation that made the Rise East investment by philanthropy possible.
- **Alameda County Father Corps 10-Year Evaluation.** The evaluation details the history and evolution of the program since its inception in 2013, the impacts on fathers and father figures, service providers, and system leaders who are connected to the Fathers Corps, and recommendations and innovation opportunities for each of the target audiences to improve access, outcomes, and systems change. The evaluation will help the agency continue improving and evolving the program to better serve fathers and father figures and share lessons learned with other agencies who wish to implement fatherhood initiatives.
- **Fatherhood Summit.** Secured a title sponsor, the Kresge Foundation, for the 2025 Fatherhood Summit. This biannual event provides fathers and father figures opportunities to engage in workshops, activities, and trainings, and connect to community resources and employment opportunities. In 2023, we hosted more than 400 fathers and father figures at this free all-day event.




## Alameda County's Context: Data for Action


**Alameda County's context and our analysis of the public policy levers by which conditions for families can be improved have informed our embrace of equity as the center of our work.**

First 5 utilizes a **systems building approach strategy**—serving as a funder and a policy advocate—to address the underlying structural issues (the root causes) that face communities, families, and children.

### Alameda County Family Demographics

 Approximately  
**71,000**  
households with children  
under age 6 (2019)<sup>1</sup>


 More than  
**109,579**  
children under age 6 (2022)<sup>2,3</sup>


 Approximately  
**6.4%**  
of total population under  
age 6 (2022)<sup>2,3</sup>

 More than  
**16,900**  
births (2021)<sup>4</sup>

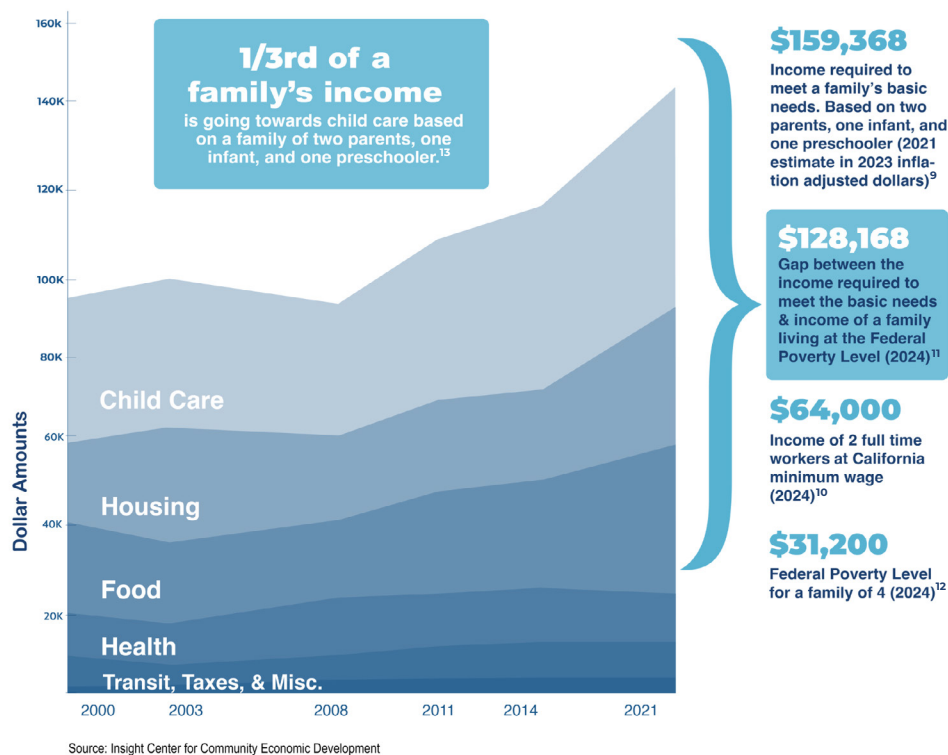
 **3 out of 4**  
children born to  
mothers of color (2019)<sup>4</sup>

 **7<sup>th</sup>** most  
diverse county in the  
United States (2020)<sup>5</sup>

 **1/2**  
Nearly half of children **live in households that speak a language other than English** at home. (2022)<sup>6</sup>

 **1/2**  
Half of children under age 6 **live with at least one parent who was born outside of the US.** (2022)<sup>7</sup>

## Financial Realities of Families in Alameda County<sup>8</sup>



## Children 0-6 Enrolled in Public Benefits in Alameda County (2021)<sup>14</sup>

**+ Medi-Cal 46,269**  
(Approximately 4 out of 10 children 0-6)

**🍏 CalFresh 22,649**  
(Approximately 4 out of 10 children 0-6)

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. (2021)<sup>15</sup>

In Alameda County and the Bay Area, more than **1 in 3 women face economic insecurity.**<sup>13</sup>

**3 out of 4 households struggling to meet their basic needs** are headed by a **person of color.**<sup>13</sup>

**1 in 3** families are unable to afford diapers<sup>16</sup>

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

**68%**  
increase in child care cost (2014–2021)<sup>8</sup>



**30%**  
increase in median family income (2000–2021)<sup>17</sup>

**50%**  
of renters pay more than 30% of their income for rent. (2021)<sup>18</sup>

## Structural Inequities Lead to Racial Disparities

### Maternal and Newborn Health<sup>19</sup>



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



Black women are 2x as likely to live in poverty during pregnancy



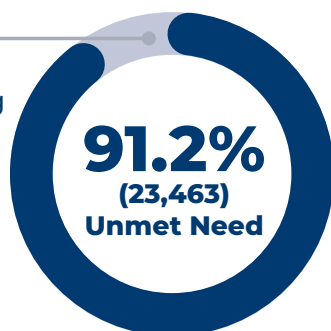
Black babies are 3-4x more likely to be born too early, too small, or to die before their first birthday.

### Access to Child Care

Alameda County is the second most disparate county in California for children enrolled in licensed early care and education—a key driver for kindergarten readiness.<sup>20</sup>

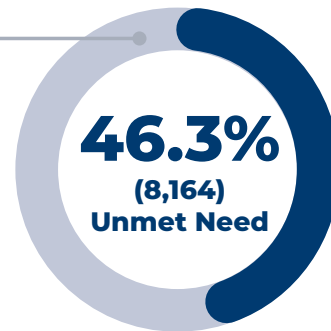
#### Infant/Toddler Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)<sup>21</sup>

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



#### Preschool Unmet Need for Subsidized Care (2021)<sup>21</sup>

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



## Child Care Professionals Work in a Critical and Fragile System

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.<sup>22</sup>



**96%**  
of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women. (2020)<sup>13</sup>



**75%**  
of ECE educators in Alameda County worry about paying their monthly bills. (2022)<sup>24</sup>



**80%**  
of Alameda County ECE educators identify as women of color. (2020)<sup>24</sup>



**52%**  
of ECE educators are over 50 years old.<sup>24</sup>



**20%**  
of providers at child care centers reported earning less than \$15 per hour. (2020)<sup>23</sup>

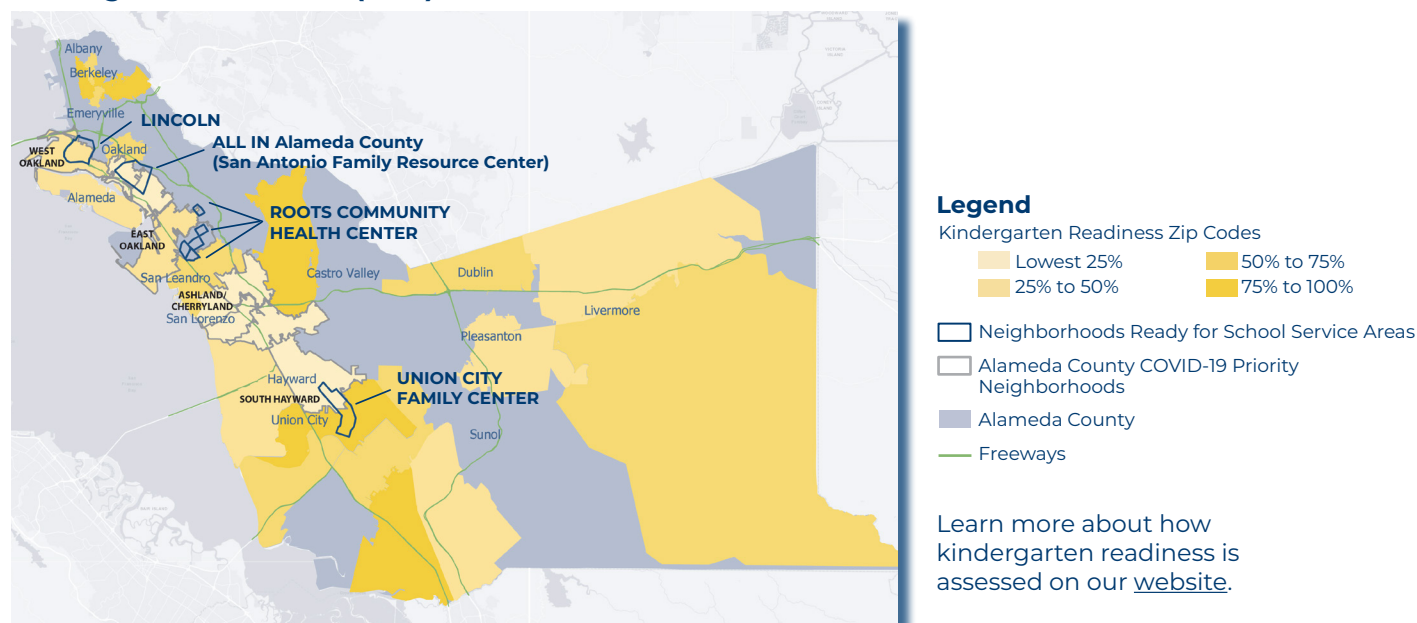
Between March 2020 and January 2021, 153 (7%) of licensed child care facilities in Alameda County closed permanently.<sup>25</sup> From 2019 to 2021, there were 21 fewer licensed care centers and 270 fewer family child care (FCC) sites in Alameda County.<sup>25</sup>

## Child Outcomes

[First 5's 2018 longitudinal study](#) found that four in five children who are behind in kindergarten are still behind in third grade, a predictor of high school graduation and later health and career success.<sup>26</sup>

**We find that differences in kindergarten readiness are largely attributable to inequities in access to resources.** The greatest movable factor continues to be child health and well-being, which is tied to socioeconomics, housing stability, and stress among parents/caregivers.<sup>27</sup>

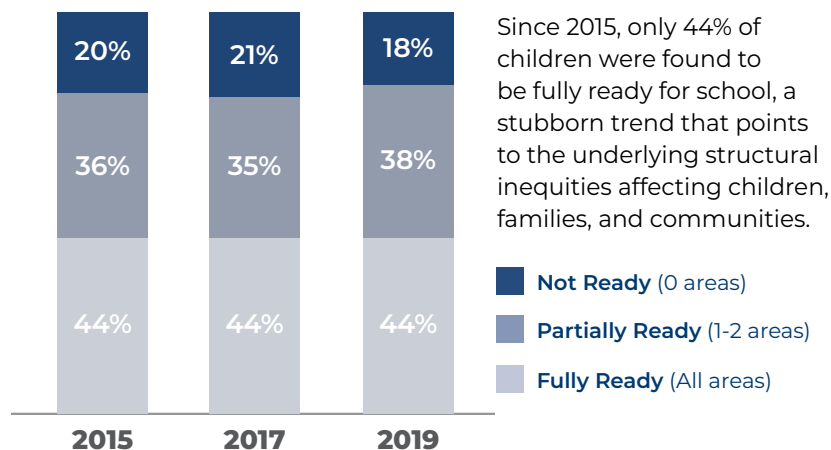
### Kindergarten Readiness (2019)<sup>27</sup>



\*Zip codes with fewer than 5 participants are not shown.

\*\*Readiness scores represent individuals living in the zip code and do not represent the overall readiness of children in that zip code.

### Kindergarten Readiness 2015–2019<sup>27</sup>



**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)<sup>26</sup>

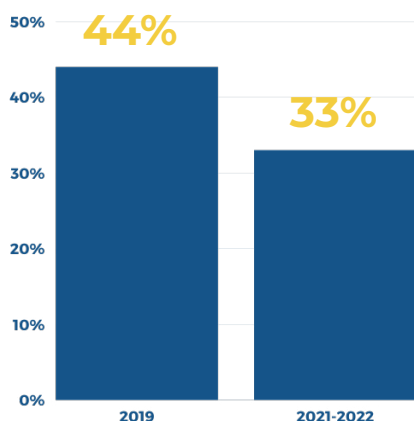


## MEETING THIS MOMENT IN TIME

**Kindergarten readiness studies have consistently indicated that factors predicting readiness are closely associated with socioeconomic conditions rooted in structural racism, classism, and public disinvestment in neighborhoods with primarily Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) residents.**

The pandemic exacerbated persistent health and economic inequities that disproportionately impacted BIPOC communities, creating increased risks for families' economic security, emotional well-being, educational progress, health, and safety. The long-term effects on kindergarten readiness are not yet fully understood, but in Alameda County we saw a drop in readiness from 44% to 33% in two years.

First 5 Alameda County's 2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) findings and recommendations point to systemic inequities and show how our county can reassess policies, programming, and investment in communities, families, and schools to increase kindergarten readiness. First 5 Alameda County is focused on building and evolving an equity-centered early childhood system that matches the priority areas identified in the KRA study, and the ["Roadmap to Kindergarten Readiness"](#) (see figure on page 16).



**According to parents/caregivers, 33% of children were fully ready for kindergarten compared to 44% in 2019. Structural inequities compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted children, families, and communities.**

## Building an equity-centered early childhood system that centers a whole community, whole family, whole child approach to improve kindergarten readiness is essential to the current and future overall health of Alameda County.

It will require the prioritization, commitment, and investment of a cross-section of partners, including public systems, community-based organizations, parent advocates and leaders, and philanthropic organizations. To this end, First 5 funds, partners, administers, and advocates to ensure that families have what they need at every stop along the “[Road to Kindergarten Readiness](#)” and that systems are prepared to meet the needs of children, families, and communities.



## SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PLAN PARTNER FEEDBACK

We are building on the partner feedback from our 2021-22 planning process (see Appendix B), which highlighted priorities for supporting families and providers, and for First 5 and public systems, including:

- Build/evolve the early childhood system.
- Families and communities have strengths to build upon and should be valued, listened to, and leveraged.
- Underlying structural inequities by race and class are impacting families, providers, and communities.

Our system partner, Oakland Thrives, encapsulated our partner feedback succinctly at a November 2022 in-person gathering with this statement:



**We are “program rich and systems poor.” We have a wealth of programs and opportunities for children, youth, and families in Oakland, but realizing the promise of those programs at neighborhood or citywide scale relies on collaboration, innovation, and alignment of public and private sector leaders, systems, and resources.**

We have hosted local, state, and national leaders to support our learning journey, including in March 2023 an all-staff presentation by Dr. Manuel Pastor, who was also the keynote speaker at the 2023 First 5 Association state annual summit focused on systems change.

First 5 is guided by a “whole community, whole family, whole child” approach to our work. With our role as administrators of Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) ballot measures, new sources of revenue are available for critical early childhood programming and system building. With these new investments, First 5 can reallocate Proposition 10 funds to return to source resources for BIPOC communities, low-income communities, and neighborhoods that have experienced historic and ongoing disinvestment and wealth extraction.

### Looking ahead for fiscal year 2025-26, First 5 Alameda County will continue making progress on:

1. Implementing the Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative (Measure C) and Oakland Children’s Initiative, local tax measures aimed at strengthening the early learning and care system. Our role is to administer the portion of these taxpayer funds allocated for child care, preschool, and early education for children in Alameda County and Oakland. With the goals of increasing overall educational attainment and reducing disparities in outcomes, such as kindergarten-readiness, First 5 Alameda County is committed to stewarding these public resources responsibly and effectively in partnership with advisory bodies and other community partners—particularly parents, caregivers, and early care and education professionals. Both initiatives create critical opportunities to realize needed systems by strengthening the mixed-delivery system and supporting the ECE workforce.
2. Updating and operationalizing the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan according to the agency’s expansion and system building efforts utilizing a whole community, whole family, whole child approach.

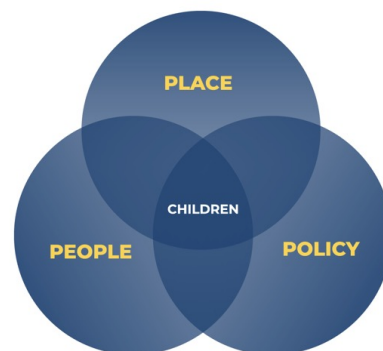


## OUR APPROACH

### We will be successful when all children in Alameda County are ready for kindergarten.

Our work is to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools are ready to support families and children to position them for life-long educational success, health, and well-being.

We have learned a lot over the last 25 years about the connection between community conditions and children's outcomes, and our learning was reinforced again this past year with the [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment \(KRA\)](#). Given our mission, the consistent KRA findings, and our analysis of opportunities for impact, we have adopted a Place, People, Policy framework to guide our investment in children and families toward building an equity-centered early childhood system:



## PLACE

**We believe that the health and well-being of children and their families are strongly influenced by the social and economic conditions of their neighborhoods. Strong, supportive communities help children and families thrive. We invest in programs and policies that promote economically prosperous and vibrant environments that afford access to opportunities and promote well-being by:**

- Building on Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) place-based investments
- Integrating services across First 5's targeted neighborhoods, in alignment with Alameda County's priority zip codes
- Strengthening place-based systems change and care coordination for families in NRFS sites

*"What really matters is childhood environment, rather than where you live as an adult. Every extra year of exposure to a positive childhood environment makes a significant impact on long-term outcomes."*

– Dr. Raj Chetty

From Dr. Chetty's presentation as part of the [2021 First 5 Alameda County Commission Speaker Series](#)

## PEOPLE

We believe caregivers are the experts on their needs and the needs of their children and families. We work with them to identify their strengths, resources, and needs. We partner with them to reinforce their family and community supports and improve the effectiveness of our investments by:

- Investing in parent partnership and leadership
- Connecting families to basic needs and resources
- Increasing access to affordable, quality child care options that meet the needs of low-to-moderate-income families in Oakland and Alameda County as mandated by the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)
- Supporting educators and education systems to promote success for children by providing educators with wages, facilities resources, workforce development, coaching, and technical assistance
- Promoting early screening and care coordination to address social-emotional, trauma, or developmental concerns
- Fostering family well-being through innovative parent-centered programming
- Maintaining comprehensive, quality early childhood training content to providers, parents/caregivers, and community in line with our commitment to equity

*"The financial and material hardships households are experiencing are negatively impacting children because they are disrupting the well-being of caregivers."*

– Dr. Philip Fisher, RAPID-EC

*"We would want anyone working with children to be healthy and supported and as present with children as they possibly can be. We have to provide the conditions for them to do so."*

– Dr. Lea Austin,  
Center for the Study of Child Care  
Employment at UC Berkeley

## POLICY

We believe that our policy work should address structural racism and childhood poverty and their impact on child development and family well-being. Furthermore, our policy work is most effective when families are engaged in its development and active in a leadership role. We believe that data, research, and evaluation should be conducted in partnership with the community, informing an action agenda for advocacy and organizing. We believe that public systems should be accessible, effective, and responsive to families' needs. We take a systems change approach by advancing solutions that move the early childhood system from a patchwork of services to an integrated ecosystem. We build an equity-centered early childhood system of care by:

- Measuring continuous improvement in service to equity
- Evolving quality early care and education and capacity-building for the field
- Expanding local pediatric strategies and systems care coordination capabilities (through Help Me Grow and DULCE)
- Using data and policy advocacy to advance local, state, and national investments in people, place, and systems
- Administering The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) and other local, state, and federal funding initiatives
- Implementing the Early Development Instrument (EDI) as the new Kindergarten Readiness Community Study tool to gather valuable insights into the conditions that support family well-being and child development
- Advancing policies and supports for early childcare workers' professional development, workforce diversification, and equitable compensation and working conditions that support providers and quality care

With this scaffolding in place, First 5 Alameda County is well-positioned to build out an equity-centered early childhood system. We will continue this transformation by partnering with parents, caregivers, community, providers, and public systems to address the underlying inequities. We will leverage the assets in Alameda County and seize the opportunity of once-in-a-generation federal, state, and local investments to build a more integrated early childhood system.



## COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

### **First 5 is committed to being an anti-racist organization.**

Our 2017–2022 strategic plan explicitly named equity as a central component of our work. Inequity negatively impacts the health and well-being of children and families. We promote equity in our organization and within the community broadly. Equity informs our hiring, staff development, investments, training, community partnerships, program design, approach to data, research, and evaluation, and policy advocacy.

Our equity work is an ongoing march toward justice and equality. In 2017 and 2018, we adopted resolutions opposing inhumane immigration practices and the enforcement of threats to immigrant families by the federal government. In June 2020, the First 5 Alameda County Commission reaffirmed this commitment to equity by adopting a resolution on equity and social justice to stand united with our Black and African American colleagues, partners, and the entire Black community against racism in all its forms. We consider these resolutions as public commitments by which we hold ourselves accountable.

In 2022, we committed to an agencywide process to create a shared understanding of equity to capture our current work, intentions for continuous learning and improvement, and commitment to accountability. A key consideration is how best to utilize our role within the Early Childhood System of Care to *operationalize* our shared understanding of equity. Our work is guided by a population-level result—all children are ready for kindergarten—which informs efforts to ensure that policies, systems, communities, and schools support families and children by creating the conditions that position all for success.

During the Fall of 2022 to Spring 2023, First 5 Alameda County partnered with Radicle Root Collective with learning from Arnold Chandler to engage all staff in a participatory process to articulate our shared understanding of and commitment to equity.

## EQUITY STATEMENT

First 5 Alameda County is committed to being an equity-centered, anti-racist, and anti-classist organization. We recognize that we operate in a racialized economic system characterized by extractive and exploitative labor practices and public policies that perpetuate long-standing disparate life outcomes. To this end, we use anti-racist and equity-based practices to invest in and support children, families, and neighborhoods. Our Place, People, Policy framework intentionally prioritizes our investments in communities that have experienced historic and systemic racism and disinvestment.

**As a part of this commitment, we use our resources to redress these injustices by:**

- Celebrating Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) cultures and honoring their assets, values, and needs by ensuring investments, programs, data, and policy work is directed by and reflects the richness and needs of these communities
- Prioritizing the needs of low-to-moderate-income families and neighborhoods with historical disinvestment
- Addressing root causes through the administration of public funds, advocacy, and operationalization of public policy
- Interrupting inequities that impact the conditions needed for kindergarten readiness
- Ensuring that our investments, policies, practices, and Agency culture are aligned with our equity principles

We acknowledge that our unconscious and conscious bias impacts our practices. Therefore, we are committed to deepening our understanding of how power, wealth, and opportunity imbalances appear in policies, communities, organizations, and interpersonal relationships. We can only do this as lifelong learners with a growth mindset focused on transformative change. We commit to continuous improvement and to hold ourselves accountable to operationalize this statement and our principles.

In addition to our co-created Equity Statement, we are adopting the “Guiding Principles for Federal Action on Racial Equity” developed by national leaders PolicyLink and Race Forward to further articulate our intentions. The statement and principles are consistent with our systems approach and will be operationalized into each of our strategies.

## PRINCIPLES

### PRINCIPLE 1

#### UNDERSTAND THE PAST, THE PRESENT, & YOUR INFLUENCE

Understand and acknowledge the federal, state, and local\* government’s role in impacting society at a wide scale to this day—whether positive, negative, or seemingly neutral

### PRINCIPLE 2

#### CONSISTENTLY ADDRESS ROOT DRIVERS

Target the fundamental root drivers of gaps and inequities and prioritize the people who have traditionally been excluded, recognizing these investments will benefit all

### PRINCIPLE 3

#### WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH IMPACT IN RELEVANT COMMUNITIES

Leverage the expertise and experiences of all to promote equity, particularly leaders of color and their communities

### PRINCIPLE 4

#### ADOPT A CONTINUOUS LEARNING & ADAPTIVE APPROACH

Acknowledge that the scale and complexity of reaching racial equity will require ongoing commitment, action, and adjustments to drive meaningful change and strengthen our democracy

### PRINCIPLE 5

#### BE TRANSPARENT & ACCOUNTABLE

Build public trust and accountability in the long-term commitment for racial equity through data-driven decision-making and outcome tracking

\*Edited from the original “Five guiding principles for federal action on racial equity” developed by PolicyLink. Original source: 2021 PolicyLink report, [For Love of Country: A Path for the Federal Government to Advance Racial Equity](#), page 36.



## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

### **In conjunction with our agencywide equity work, First 5 Alameda County will refine its partner engagement approach and practices.**

We define partnership as the authentic and intentional work to develop responsive and reciprocal practices and relationships—with parents, caregivers, providers, and community so that our strategies reflect a collective community vision.

Through our practices, we will increase parent and community engagement to promote equity and broader systems change. This agencywide commitment is represented in all our strategies, and we are nurturing our continued growth in this area to fulfill our commitment.

#### **In the years ahead, we commit to:**

- Adopting agency principles for partner engagement in all facets of our work. We are examining existing models and frameworks, including those introduced via the First 5 Association, the Ripples of Transformation, the Center for the Study of Social Policy's manifesto for parent engagement, as well as frameworks adopted by other public agencies, to inform the development of agency principles
- Engaging in a cross-agency effort to operationalize shared principles and goals to align our work, ensure operational equity, and focus the direction of partner engagement
- Assessing our current approach and practices including resources to support parent, community, and partner participation
- Providing the necessary resources and capacity to support this agencywide initiative
- Adopting community advisory and governance mechanisms as mandated by legislation to administer funding from the Oakland Children's Initiative and the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)
- Continuing the convening of community advisory and governance bodies to administer funding from the Oakland Children's Initiative and the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) in ways that engage stakeholders and include the community in participatory policy-making

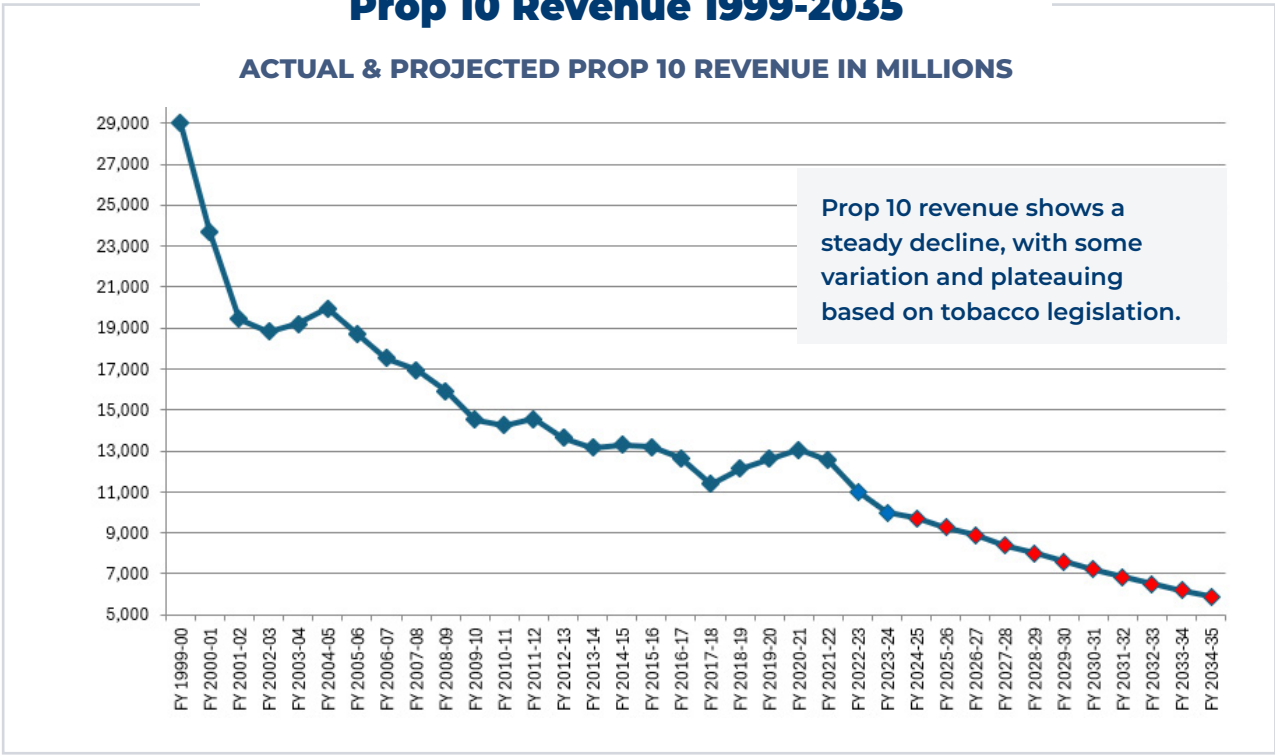


## 2022–2031 STRATEGIC PLAN PARAMETERS & FINANCIAL PICTURE

**First 5 Alameda County identified the following planning assumptions and parameters, approved by the Commission to guide the development of this document. THEY ARE:**

- **Continue to diversify revenue to support building an equity-centered early childhood system**, including partnerships with the county Medi-Cal managed care plan, Social Services Agency, Alameda County Health and other public entities to scale First 5 Alameda County programs fundamental to an early childhood system. This includes leveraging our infrastructure (financial, contract, staff expertise) to build out an equity-centered early childhood system.
  - Proposition 10 has been shoring up the early childhood system in preparation for the type of public investments we are now seeing from our managed care plan to support pediatric care coordination, the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA), and the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) for early care and education.
  - We have temporarily used our sustainability fund to offset Proposition 10 reductions while planning for diversified revenue sources and scale of successful programs.
- **New public funding preserves the flexible Proposition 10 funding to resource the early childhood system**, for example investments in birth equity programs and advocacy supporting the “family” part of the system.
- **Utilize a largely contracted and community-based, equity-focused model for Proposition 10-funded activities**, including direct services. Available Proposition 10 funds can be used to support proof-of-concept strategies for policy and systems change and provide funding to community-led initiatives. As a declining revenue source, it is not a sustainable funding stream to scale direct services staffed by First 5 Alameda County, or those we consider part of the county safety net.





Source: First 5 California, September 2024

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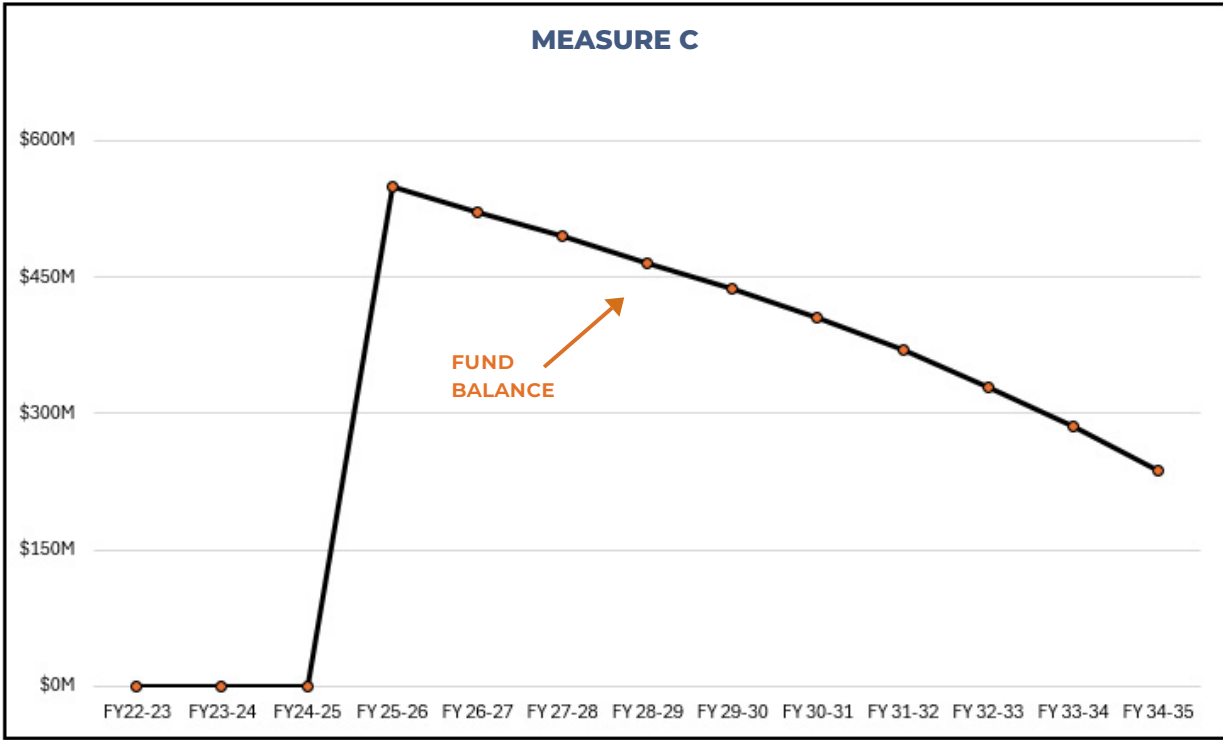
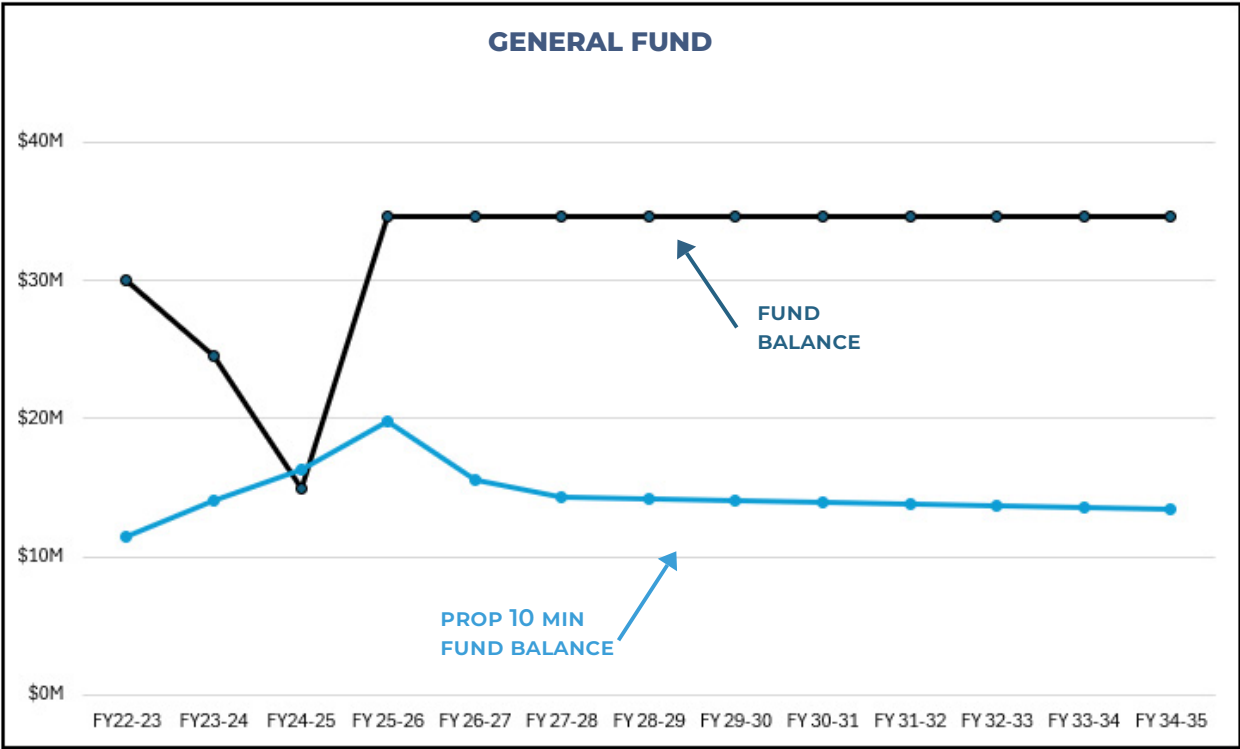
**“There is no going back to a normal that did not work for so many. We do not need a recovery but a reimagination, restructuring, and renewal that challenges inequality and lifts commonality.”**

- Dr. Manuel Pastor, speaking to First 5 Alameda County All-Staff meeting, March 9, 2023



## Long Range Financial Plan FY 2022-2035

### BUDGET & FUND BALANCE IN MILLIONS



# LOCAL REVENUE FOR EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

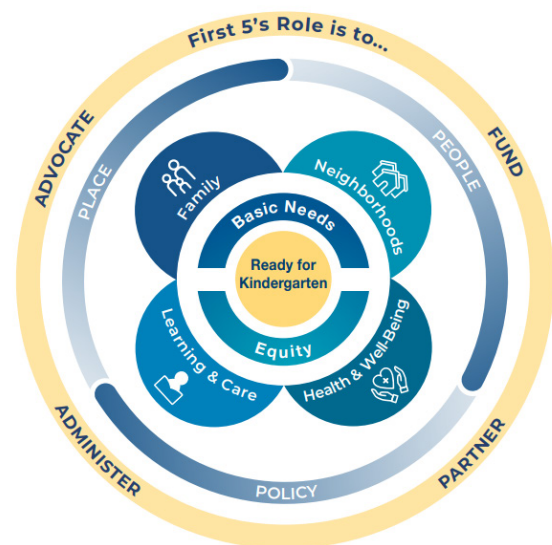
## Additional Resources Create Opportunity

The past several years have been a high-water mark for legislation and funding to address the divide in access to early care and education, healthcare, and social services in California. Both California and Alameda County are making significant investments in children and families. At the state level, California is implementing an unprecedented set of initiatives to redesign its social safety net, including [Universal Pre-Kindergarten \(UPK\)](#), [California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal \(CalAIM\)](#), and the [Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative \(CYBHI\)](#).

In Alameda County, there are two active ballot measures related to early care and education (see Appendix C for more details):

- 1. The Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA)** was passed in November 2018 and upheld by the courts in 2021. The Oakland Children's Initiative is funded by a parcel tax projected to provide approximately \$30 million annually in funding for early care and education and college preparedness programs for Oakland residents. In December 2022, First 5 Alameda County was awarded the contract to serve as the Early Education Implementation Partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative
- 2. The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)**, a countywide measure, was passed by voters in March 2020 and names First 5 Alameda County as the administering agency of the Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education portion of the revenue. The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County is expected to raise approximately \$150M annually for early care and education. The Measure was upheld by the courts in April 2024. In fiscal year 2024-25, First 5 began a year of planning to develop the initial five-year program plan and budget for approval by the First 5 Alameda County Commission and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors. In fiscal year 2025-26, First 5 will begin implementation of the initial Measure C investments, see Appendix D.

Given these federal and state policy initiatives, local ballot measures, and the groundbreaking partnership with the Alameda Alliance for Health, First 5 Alameda County is uniquely positioned for growth and sustainability when compared to its sister organizations. The new local revenue and scaling of programs, by tapping into federal and state allocations, afford an opportunity to reimagine a more equitable early childhood system. In doing so our lessons learned and local success could very well serve as a model for state and federal policies that recognize and invest in child care and the labor of providers as the public good that they are.



**Figure 1.** An early childhood system of care cultivates community and family conditions for children's kindergarten readiness.

## Local Ballot Measures, First 5 & Alameda County's Early Childhood System

First 5 Alameda County commits to the responsible stewardship of these precious public resources, in partnership with local public agencies, community governance and advisory bodies, and other early care and education partners, particularly parents/caregivers and early care and education professionals. Both the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C) will benefit the early childhood system of care in Oakland and Alameda County. These initiatives will impact First 5 Alameda County as the county's only governmental agency solely dedicated to families/caregivers with children 0-5 by:

- Aligning new investment with our current investments and providing resources for backbone support to the early childhood system
- Allowing us to leverage our subject matter expertise, community partnerships, and infrastructure
- Facilitating integration with our programming and fiscal leveraging of Proposition 10, Measure AA, and Measure C, in addition to federal, state, local, and philanthropic funds
- Leveraging the flexible Proposition 10 dollars to fund components of the early childhood system (e.g., birth equity, neighborhood investments)
- Shifting our role, budget, operations, scale (i.e., staff and contracts), and community and public partnerships



## Seizing Opportunities for Systems Building

**The intention is for First 5 Alameda County to leverage our agency infrastructure to implement the mandates in the Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA) and the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C), and to coordinate federal, state, and local funding streams to build a more coordinated, efficient, effective, and equity-centered early childhood system in Alameda County.**

The systems change opportunities for the early care and education system locally are profound. Measures AA and C generate approximately \$180 million annually to support Alameda County's early learning and care system. The community, providers, and public systems partners are all collaborating to implement these measures and build effective new systems as described in the Measure C 5-Year Plan (see Appendix D). The Measure C 5-Year Plan was developed with guidance from the Measure C Community Advisory Council and requires approval from the First 5 Alameda County Commission and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors (expected June 2025).





## PROGRAM STRATEGIES

### Overview

**Since 2017, First 5 Alameda County has strategically enhanced its organizational capacity to engage in systems building by:**

- 1) Increasing organizational capacity to center community needs and voices
- 2) Engaging in policy advocacy
- 3) Leveraging federal, state, and local funds to ensure sustainability and scale of programming vital to an early childhood system

The evolution of our method of systems building has required us to take a multi-pronged approach, incorporating place-based investments, administration of programs, and building policy, data, evaluation, and communications capacity to articulate impact and advocate for resources.<sup>28</sup>

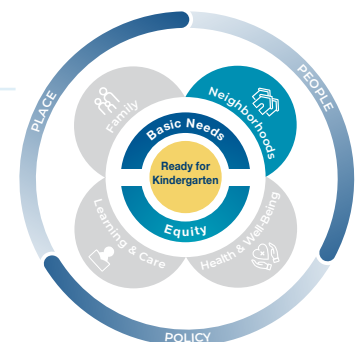
Using the Place, People, Policy implementation framework, First 5 Alameda County is catalyzing increased access to services and supporting family-friendly community conditions. This enabled us to be nimble in our response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, alongside support of building an equity-centered early childhood system in service to community, family, and child well-being.



### Neighborhoods Ready for School

#### PURPOSE

Thriving neighborhoods are an essential component of an early childhood system. First 5's Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) strategy is a place-based investment, asset building, and policy response to the relationship and interplay between neighborhood conditions, family and child well-being, and the structural factors that contribute to overall health, development, and school readiness. The NRFS strategy funds trusted community-based organizations using an equity index to prioritize neighborhoods with young children that have been historically marginalized due to racist, classist systems and policies.



Our 2019 Kindergarten Readiness study confirmed the importance of this place-based approach. We found that neighborhood assets, especially the presence of mutual support among community members, along with sidewalks, walking paths, and libraries, significantly boost children's school readiness.<sup>29</sup> Families earning at least \$50,000 per year were significantly more likely than lower income families to report the availability of each asset in their neighborhood. Higher income families reported 6.1–6.7 assets in their neighborhoods, while lower income families reported 4.5–5.5 assets. Children in both low-income families and higher-income families had significantly higher kindergarten readiness if they also lived in asset-rich neighborhoods.

The NRFS strategy employs a trust-based philanthropy model that recognizes and prioritizes the knowledge and wisdom of those who live and work within communities. Community partners are best positioned to define their own needs, appropriate responses, and their role in policy advocacy.

**The key principles guiding this place-based community capacity building and infrastructure are:**

- Strengthening economic supports and basic needs, food and supply distribution in service to systems change
- Increasing coordination of family services across systems, family navigation, and connection to resources
- Directing early childhood programs and services, including virtual supports
- Expanding the physical infrastructure to promote safe spaces for young children and their families
- Fostering family leadership and civic engagement
- Building partnerships among community organizations and government
- Supporting policy advocacy efforts catalyzed and led by residents



## GOALS

1. Work with NRFS sites to implement the strategies developed in response to the priorities and needs identified by the community as part of the facilitated strategic planning process completed in fiscal year 2023-2024.
2. Concentrate First 5 programs in NRFS catchment areas to leverage investments and generate multiplier effect across the neighborhoods.
3. Develop an essential data set for reporting and analysis to understand impact, identify areas for continuous improvement, and ease the reporting burden on grantees.
4. Invest in school district, service provider capacity and partnerships, and community infrastructure that supports families (housing, libraries, parks) and kindergarten readiness.
5. In collaboration with NRFS agencies use the qualitative and quantitative data collected from neighborhood partners and other sources to advocate for policy and systems changes that will help to improve conditions for families with young children.
6. Showcase successes and local stories that demonstrate effectiveness to support sustainability of the NRFS models.



## Early Care and Education (ECE)

### PURPOSE

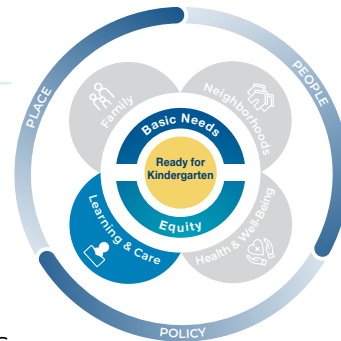
Early Care and Education (ECE) is a cornerstone of the early childhood system and a vital part of the local economy. However, the field has historically been under-resourced and underappreciated.

Participation in ECE is a leading factor in predicting kindergarten readiness, as research has shown that **participation in ECE significantly narrowed readiness gaps**.<sup>29</sup> Our biannual Kindergarten Readiness Community Studies have consistently found less than half of children in Alameda County are fully ready for kindergarten, largely due to socioeconomics tied to structural racism, with particular consequences for African-American and Latinx children.

Affordability is a major barrier to accessing ECE. The cost of child care has risen 68% since 2014; a family of four in Alameda County with a preschooler and an infant pays one-third of their income toward child care costs.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, there is a significant gap in access to subsidies for income-eligible families with an unmet need in 2018 of 91% of eligible infants and 46% of eligible preschool children in Alameda County.<sup>21</sup> The pandemic worsened existing inequities, with families facing historic levels of job loss, school and child care closures, and food insecurity.

ECE professionals are an underpaid and aging workforce, with high attrition rates. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of Alameda County ECE professionals, 79% of whom identify as Black, Indigenous, or other women of color, are considered very low-income for the county.<sup>24</sup> Across the county, the number of licensed family child care providers declined by 34% between 2007 and 2019.<sup>21</sup> These operational challenges increased during the pandemic. We estimate that the Alameda County ECE field lost \$395 million in fiscal year 2020-2021 alone (\$220 million without taking into consideration the increased cost of providing care) and these losses are expected to continue in the current fiscal year.<sup>30</sup>

To better support families and educators and to improve the spaces where students learn, Alameda County voters made significant investments in children and families through their support of two local ballot measures—the Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and the Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C). As the implementation partner and administrator of these measures, First 5 is taking on the complex and deeply fragmented system that has traditionally patched together early education in Alameda County and is now serving as the public system backbone to these initiatives.



## GOALS

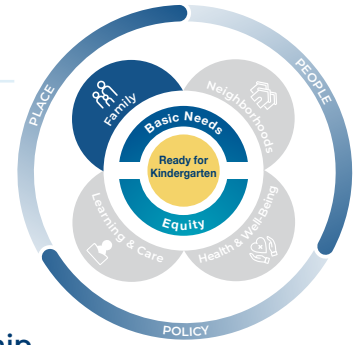
1. Work with partners to design, administer, and implement programmatic strategies for two local child care measures—the Oakland Children’s Initiative (Measure AA) and the Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C).
2. Co-design with community, families, and provider partners a more equity-informed approach to the early learning and care ecosystem inclusive of the full mixed delivery system.
3. Shift First 5’s resources from formal assessment and rating to support early learning and care professionals in coordinated training, coaching, mentorship, professional learning communities, curriculum support, stipends, and other financial supports, where allowable.
4. Provide core infrastructure support to the local Quality Counts California activities in Alameda County and maintain county readiness for additional partnership and funding opportunities.
5. Increase the number of FCC and FFN providers participating in Quality Counts, especially those serving low-income, dual-language learners, children with special needs, and children experiencing homelessness.
6. Expand partnerships with community organizations and public agencies such as parks and recreation departments and libraries to serve children outside of formal care settings, while identifying ways to increase and improve place-based support for FFNs and FCCs in Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) settings/neighborhoods.
7. Increase collaboration and integration between ECE and other First 5 programs and investments, including NRFS, Help Me Grow, Parent Partnership, and Fatherhood.
8. Leverage and streamline, in partnership with Data and Evaluation staff, the local use of ECE data systems, including Hubbe and the California ECE Workforce Registry, to strengthen the collection of data and to better support planning, data decolonization, and tools for community partners and the ECE field.
9. Based on the ECE Facilities Needs Assessment, develop and implement strategies to increase capacity and quality of facilities and infrastructure in key areas of unmet need.\*\*
10. Monitor, in partnership with Government Affairs and Policy staff, the implementation of TK-Universal Pre-K and support plans that incorporate best practices for meeting family and children’s needs and support the mixed delivery system.
11. Based on the workforce landscape study, in partnership with the Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council, Alameda County Office of Education, and community partners, develop and implement county strategies for leveraging state and local resources to address the well-being of the ECE workforce (e.g., career pathways, wages and benefits, quality jobs, etc.)\*\*



## Parent Partnership

### PURPOSE

Family Leadership is one of the core components of an early childhood system, as it enhances parents' leadership and advocacy in early childhood programs and at home. First 5's redefined Parent Partnership strategy invests in direct services to families and children with a focus on maternal and child health and the 0-3 years and uses parent leadership to inform programming and investments. The Parent Partnership strategy increases access and reduces disparities stemming from inequities through program design, investments, and systems partnerships.



Inequities in policies, systems, and practices with roots in structural racism have an impact on families and children. Black women and birthing people are three times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth and to experience more maternal health complications.<sup>19</sup> Black babies are three to four times more likely to be born too early, too small, or to die before their first birthday.<sup>19</sup> Given the deep disparities and recognizing that the period from birth to age five is a critical time for children and families, First 5 is committed to programming, investments, and engagements that seek to improve underlying structural conditions and outcomes.

The revised Parent Partnership strategy includes: 1) formulating parent-advised investments in programs, supports, and services that promote equity in birth outcomes, maternal and child health, family well-being, and kindergarten readiness, 2) ensuring parents representing the diversity of languages in Alameda County can be active partners through interpretation and translation, and 3) building partnerships with maternal and child health-serving agencies and organizations.

### GOALS

1. Collaborate with parents and systems partners to define type of investment, program approach, and guiding frameworks to increase focus on birth equity, Black Maternal Morbidity and Mortality, and promoting equity in the 0-3 space. \*\*
2. Assess First 5's Cultural Access Services (CAS) structure within the agency to best meet the diverse interpretation and translation needs of families, providers, and contractors. \*\*
3. Identify emerging opportunities, legislative and budgetary, related to maternal health and birth equity to scale promising programs and supports and to inform program design, policy advocacy, and the evolution of the local early childhood system.
4. Employ data and lessons learned in collaboration with parents, staff, and partners to:\*\*
  - i. Advocate for scaling of DULCE, and the importance of legal, medical, and social services partnerships to address the social determinants of health.
  - ii. Demonstrate how parent partnership initiatives have improved outcomes for children and families to make a case for sustainability and systems change.

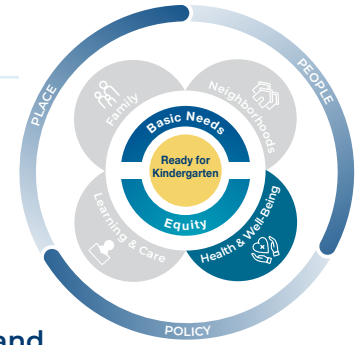




## Pediatric Care Coordination

### PURPOSE

Comprehensive Health and Development is a key component of the early childhood system. First 5's Pediatric Care Coordination (PCC) strategy focuses on achieving a common goal that all children in Alameda County grow up healthy, thriving, and strong. Decades of national research has demonstrated that early childhood development and overall well-being is affected by the social determinants of health including community and environmental conditions, racism, poverty, stress, relationships, access to resources, and education.



There are more than 32,000 low-income children under age 6 enrolled in Medi-Cal in Alameda County.<sup>14</sup> While Alameda County has been a state leader in enrolling income-eligible children in public health coverage, approximately one in three are not engaging in or receiving regular pediatric preventive care, including but not limited to well-child care and early childhood screenings.<sup>31</sup> Approximately 85% of children served through Help Me Grow, First 5's centerpiece program of this strategy, are insured through Medi-Cal, and 20% of families served were also referred to services for basic needs, such as food, housing, health care, and child care.<sup>32</sup>

Given this landscape, the primary goal of this strategy is to connect and integrate public and community screening, referral, and response resources. Our focus is to engage, assess, and connect children, especially Medi-Cal enrolled families, to pediatric preventative care, medically necessary services, and community-based programming and support.

Fundamental to this strategy is maximizing the family's pediatric visits. Pediatric visits are an entry point to care management, resource referral, and other community supports. Research has shown that expanding community-based care management improves overall family health and well-being.<sup>33</sup>

The PCC strategy fosters collaboration with community partners to leverage data and develop targeted strategies to fill service gaps, reduce barriers, and advance racial equity, thereby ensuring equitable access to supports and benefits.

**First 5 adopted the nationally recognized Help Me Grow model as the primary implementation framework for the PCC strategy. The HMG program provides:**

- Training and technical assistance to providers serving the Medi-Cal pediatric population (0-5) in Alameda County
- Implementation and referral assistance to pediatric and early child care and education providers with recommended developmental, social-emotional, and/or Adverse Childhood Experiences Screenings (ACEs)
- Multilingual access to HMG's Central Access Point to provide support and care coordination to parents/caregivers for families of children with an identified need for developmental, behavioral, or other resources and services
- Outreach and convenings to build a coordinated network of services and promote awareness of HMG

## GOALS

1. Build a menu of navigation services to provide support to families enrolled in Medi-Cal and other insurance for referrals to early intervention, community resources, family support, and basic needs.
2. Recommend strategies for increasing agency and HMG community capacity to address unmet needs, with a focus on First 5's Neighborhoods Ready for School catchment areas and other high need areas in the county.
3. Enhance the scope of Help Me Grow program training, screening, and resource referral activities to include social needs, support for pregnant and parenting populations, and those who have been exposed to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), with a particular emphasis on children insured through Medi-Cal.\*\*
4. Expand outreach and education that increases providers', community-based organizations', and partner agencies' understanding of individual and community conditions (such as social determinants of health and protective factors) that impact child development, well-being, and kindergarten readiness.
5. Assess opportunities and risks associated with funding streams that support Early Identification, Screening, and Care Coordination, particularly the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) program.\*\*
6. Develop strategy and approach to enhance partnerships with early childhood system providers across health and education agencies, including Alameda Alliance for Health, Health Care Services Agency, Regional Center, and Local Educational Agencies to better connect supports and improve experiences for families.
7. Align and expand care coordination through pediatric delivery system programs and partnerships (e.g., HMG and Developmental Understanding and Legal Collaboration for Everyone, DULCE).
8. Assess opportunities for care coordination through early care and education, particularly with the expansion of Universal Transitional Kindergarten.
9. Evaluate new technology solutions, beginning with resource directory and referral platforms, to support improved coordination and communication among parents/families, providers, managed care plans, and First 5.





## Fatherhood

### PURPOSE

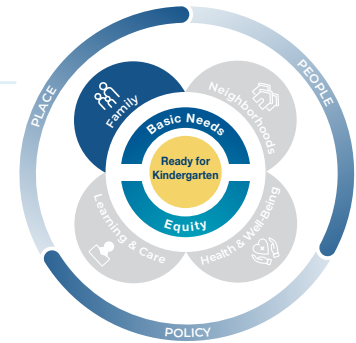
First 5's Fatherhood program is a unique approach to the early childhood system of care's family leadership principles. Historically, early childhood and family and community support programs have focused on serving mothers and children; in most cases, this unintentionally leaves fathers and father-figures out of the equation. The Fatherhood program raises awareness of the benefits of the active role that fathers and father-figures have in early childhood development. We have focused on strengthening collaboration with public systems and community-based organizations to promote and acknowledge the critical roles fathers and father-figures can play. To increase acceptance of and the experiences of fathers and father-figures participating in child development activities, First 5 sponsors training, support groups, and technical assistance geared toward the development of high-quality, father-centered services.

Our Kindergarten Readiness studies have confirmed locally what the national research indicates. High-quality, involved fathering by dads who live in the child's home and apart, has strong, positive impacts on a child's development, including academic achievement, emotional well-being, and behavior.<sup>34, 35</sup> Locally, we found that fathers who accessed a greater number of community resources (parks, libraries, and museums) with their children contributed to their child's greater readiness for kindergarten.<sup>29</sup>

The Fatherhood program supports service providers with training that fosters healthy co-parenting relationships to ensure that parents are functioning as a team. High-functioning, healthier co-parenting relationships support young children's optimal development and bolster their social and emotional learning. These skills and interactions are shown to improve children's cognitive skills, which leads to increased kindergarten readiness.

### GOALS

1. Incorporate Fatherhood and Father-Friendly Principles into First 5 structures and infuse Fatherhood strategies into other First 5 strategies: Neighborhoods Ready for School, Pediatric Care Coordination, Parent Leadership, and ECE.
2. Engage fathers/father-figures and male service providers in implementing the Healthy Relationship Principles (HRP) to support organizations and providers with integrating the HRP in their work with families and training providers on how to incorporate the HRP in their work.\*\*
3. Position the Fatherhood work for sustainability and scale through fund development and public systems partnerships.
4. Promote integration of Father-Friendly Principles in public and community-based systems of care.
5. Identify strategies to strengthen internal collaboration and referral pathways for additional public system support connecting fathers to employment, financial education, health, and housing.





## Agency Strategy: Training

### PURPOSE

Diverse, well-informed, and well-trained provider and parent communities are critical elements of the early childhood system. In partnership with First 5 staff and community, First 5's Training department identifies, coordinates, and delivers instructional content, skill-building workshops, and information sessions to build the capacity of the early childhood system in Alameda County.

Our 2019 Kindergarten Readiness study found that fewer than half of the kindergarten teachers surveyed had received training related to children with special needs, trauma-informed care, cultural humility, and family engagement. Pediatricians have historically had limited specialized training on child development and mental and behavioral health.<sup>37,38</sup> The same holds true for other direct service workers who serve young children and their families.<sup>36</sup> Equally important, parents and caregivers benefit from, and are eager for, information on topics relevant to their young children, but often do not know how to obtain it.<sup>39</sup>

The Training department delivers content aimed at supporting agency priorities and community needs. This team also provides technical assistance to staff and community partners in best practices for identifying, planning, delivering, and evaluating educational programming.

### GOALS

1. Reassess training offerings to ensure greater alignment with agency and community priorities and needs to ensure programming is focused on areas critical to sustainability of key investments and ongoing service provision.
2. Assist human resources with implementation of staff trainings ranging from professional development and technical assistance directly linked to agency strategy and program goals.
3. Incorporate equity framework into content development and mode of delivery to increase reach to underrepresented child care providers and to support parents and other community members (i.e., NRFS).

## Agency Strategy: Government Affairs and Policy

### PURPOSE

**First 5's Government Affairs and Policy strategy utilizes analysis, data, information, and coalitions to support the evolution of an equity-centered local early childhood system. We engage in advocacy to scale and sustain effective programs and to promote public policies grounded in equity and justice.**

Our policy work seeks to shape, support, and sustain policies that proactively address the needs of families with young children and their caregivers in public systems. We anchor our policy efforts to our equity statement and the lessons learned from our program work with staff, community partners, providers, parents, and caregivers. Through our policy work, we mobilize a shared vision of an early childhood system of care that is a network of coordinated and responsive organizations that improve outcomes for children from prenatal to age 5. First 5's biannual Kindergarten Readiness study repeatedly points to the importance of structural conditions, e.g., socioeconomic and access to early care and education, as critical to supporting children's success. In Alameda County approximately one in 10 children under 6 years old lives below the Federal Poverty Level (\$26,500 for a family of four).<sup>15</sup> It takes \$137,660 to meet the basic needs of a two-parent family with one infant and one preschooler.<sup>8</sup> Alameda County is the second most disparate county in California for children enrolled in licensed early care and education—a key driver for kindergarten readiness.<sup>20</sup>

By understanding the legislative, budgetary, regulatory, and administrative levers of public systems, we create a multifaceted policy agenda for systems change. We leverage our resources, access, expertise, analytical skill set, and partnerships to listen, lift up needs, share successes, and evaluate the impact of public investments and policy choices that improve outcomes for children and families.

### GOALS

1. Document success of First 5's work catalyzing sustainability, scale, and systems change initiatives that are contributing to the evolution of an early childhood system of care.
2. Convene partners, community, and elected officials and their staff in discussions of policy issues and advocacy specific to the conditions that support communities and families with young children, using findings and recommendations from First 5 Alameda County programs, data, and evaluations.
3. Create an annual policy agenda with input from staff and community; lift messages, insights, and policy priorities learned from programs including direct service needs of parents and caregivers, and gaps in the system.
4. Position First 5 with elected officials, policymakers, First 5 California, and other statewide associations as a key leader, partner, and convener in the work to advance system building and the well-being of families with young children in Alameda County.
5. Craft a policy narrative in support of increased public investments in proven strategies to support an early childhood system of care with input from community leaders and policy makers.



## Agency Strategy: Data and Evaluation

### PURPOSE

**First 5's Data and Evaluation strategy supports shared accountability, continued organizational learning, public awareness, and policy advocacy as part of our role in evolving the early childhood system.**

Research and data can provide a roadmap to systems change. Our research has pointed to the underlying structural conditions and opportunities necessary to support families with young children. Our Kindergarten Readiness study shows that differences in kindergarten readiness are largely attributable to inequities of access to resources and educational experiences.<sup>27</sup> Our 2018 longitudinal study found that four out of five children who are not ready for kindergarten are still not caught up to grade level by third grade, pointing to the importance of early investments in children, families, and communities.<sup>26</sup>

#### **Working Definitions to Support Continued Learning and Practice:**

**Data Decolonization** refers to practices adopted to intentionally shift focus and ownership of data collection and analysis to Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities.<sup>40</sup>

**Data Democratization** refers to practices adopted to intentionally approach data collection and analysis with a community lens, supporting broad access to data and data analysis, including by those whom the data is about, as powerful tools for change, and eliminating unnecessary barriers to accessing and utilizing data.

We believe data, research, and evaluation are tools for making policy change and creating a shared system and partner understanding of community priorities and needs. We focus on generating and sharing data, research, and results to inform internal agency decision-making, our work with partners, and public policy, planning, and advocacy. Through participatory research, storytelling, and other practices consistent with data decolonization and democratization, we put the power of data back into the hands of the people. We use data to highlight community conditions, the strengths and needs of our county's youngest children, their families, and the providers who serve them, and to advance policies that promote equity.

We partner with colleagues and community stakeholders on data and evaluation efforts to identify promising practices, demonstrate effectiveness, support efforts to scale and sustain effective strategies, and promote continuous quality improvement in the early childhood system.

### GOALS

1. Deepen our understanding of equitable data and research practices and data decolonization and democratization. Document learning, practices, and opportunities.
2. Use First 5 evaluations such as the Kindergarten Readiness Community Study and Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) evaluation in collaboration with the community to inform policy advocacy, program investments, and continuous quality improvement.
3. Streamline production and elevate dissemination of data and research products as policy and communication tools for use by external partners and staff.
4. Strengthen understanding and support the interconnected needs of families and communities by developing robust data sharing agreements with public agencies and other key partners and increasing integration of data among systems at the local level to support data-driven policymaking with an equity and "whole community, whole family, whole child" approach.
5. Identify opportunities for evaluation/research projects in collaboration with partners and community to make a case for sustainability, scale, and/or systems change.
6. Streamline data collection, Results Based Accountability (RBA) measures, and reporting with an eye to information that would most meaningfully contribute to agency decision-making, continuous improvement, and the identification of promising practices.
7. Complete agencywide implementation of RBA framework so staff and leadership consistently use data and research findings to inform decisions and promote continuous improvement across all programs.

## Agency Strategy: Communications

### PURPOSE

First 5's communications strategy builds public awareness, mobilizes support, promotes systems coordination, and advocates for investments in an equity-centered early childhood system of care. The communication department works with internal and external audiences to inform and guide key partners and decision-makers in understanding, building, and supporting an equitable, sustainable, and comprehensive early childhood system.

First 5's communications department creates compelling narratives about the importance of early childhood, positive and adverse childhood experiences, and "whole community, whole family, whole child" policy and programs. We use messages, stories, and data that point to the structural conditions, including racism and classism, underpinning children's outcomes and highlight opportunities to build thriving communities, families, and children.

First 5's communications strategy reinforces the agency's position as a leading local policy voice for children and families. Communications initiatives provide support for the early childhood system in the form of investments, capacity building, and community data to inform priorities and decision-making. We promote centralized resources, information, and services for parents, caregivers, and service providers.

First 5 advances equity and partner engagement in its communications by using feedback loops to listen to and report back to community partners, allowing us to:

- Create accessible content and design, using multiple languages and modalities
- Elevate community voice in communications materials
- Highlight family and community successes despite structural barriers
- Represent diverse families and family structures across all media

### GOALS

1. Implement First 5's Communications Plan to advance equity commitment, promote programmatic success, policy advocacy, and partnerships for systems change and to sustain and scale effective and promising programs.
2. Generate and disseminate content for policymakers, advocates, community partners, media, funders, and providers by producing multimedia collateral material, policy and data briefs, case studies, website, social media, and media engagement.
3. Increase access to and ease of navigation of centralized information and resources for neighborhoods, families, caregivers, providers, and policymakers.



\*\*Indicates goals that have been accomplished as of fiscal year 2023-2024.

A photograph of two men and a young child sitting on a green lawn. The man on the left is wearing a dark blue polo shirt and is looking down at the child. The man on the right is wearing a dark blue polo shirt and is also looking down at the child. The child is wearing a light-colored shirt with a pink design and is looking down at something on the grass. The background is a blurred green lawn and some bushes.

## INTRODUCTION TO OPERATIONAL SUPPORT FUNCTIONS

### **First 5 Alameda County Infrastructure Division includes finance, human resources, technology, facilities, planning and project management, and administration.**

These teams support the day-to-day operations of the agency and allow the organization to play a backbone role to community-based organizations, providers, and public agencies that are part of the early childhood system.

The next phase of First 5 Alameda County will require us to continue doing our core work, while adding new capabilities, infrastructure, and capacity. Consistent with the direction set with our 2017-2022 strategic plan, much of our new funding will likely be contracted out to external parties. As a result, our hiring will reflect the staffing skillsets needed to support contract development (what to procure), performance measurement, planning and project management, communications, government relations, policy advocacy, and financial budgeting and forecasting.

As the administrative lead of significant public resources, we are uniquely positioned and have the responsibility to partner with community, parents, and providers to reimagine an early childhood system that is equity centered.

### **Administration and Facilities**

First 5's Administration and Facilities' strategy is to provide a safe, productive, efficient and inclusive work environment for staff and partners. Administrative and facilities staff ensure that the facility is operating as it should on a daily basis by completing regular inspections, ensuring compliance with all relevant requirements and standards, and conducting repairs and maintenance. Office administrative operations are performed in a seamless manner to ensure the efficient operations of the agency.

#### **GOALS**

1. Maintain and operate an office facility that provides for a safe, clean, functional, and welcoming environment.
2. Perform maintenance and repairs in a minimally disruptive manner.
3. Review operational efficiencies to maximize the utilization of resources.
4. Ensure that the office facility meets legal requirements and health and safety standards.
5. Provide efficient and effective administration procedures and practices.

## Finance

### PURPOSE

**First 5's Finance strategy enables the agency to use Proposition 10 funds strategically for direct service programs, as First 5 transitions away from providing direct services funded by Proposition 10 to a contracted and community-based model.**

Finance focuses on budgeting, financial planning, forecasting, and managing revenue and expenditures for programs core to the agency's mission. First 5 has been updating governance, financial and compliance structures, policies, and practices and building the capacity and infrastructure needed to administer the new public funds (Measure AA and Measure C). The Finance department effectively and transparently communicates fiscal data to the First 5 Alameda County Commission to ensure the ongoing health and viability of the organization.

### GOALS

1. Develop and maintain fiscally responsible and sustainable budgets that reflect our strategies with input from partners and system partners.
2. Present timely financial reports to identify current and future revenue and expenditure trends.
3. Implement the agency's financial policies and procedures to ensure the timely, accurate, and complete reporting of financial information.
4. Ensure that financial operations and transactions are accurate and in compliance with federal, state, and financial requirements.

## Human Resources

### PURPOSE

**To serve First 5's function as a backbone to the early childhood system, Human Resources builds the capacity of the agency and our workforce.** First 5's Human Resources strategy focuses on aligning agency structure, staffing, operations, and culture with its organizational focus on systems change work. Human Resources serves as an effective partner by providing efficient and solution-focused services, maintaining a culture of inclusiveness and belonging, and ensuring First 5 has the requisite expertise, competencies, and skills needed to successfully execute the 2022–2027 Strategic Plan. We seek to retain and recruit a diverse workforce that reflects Alameda County, support staff development, ensure regulatory compliance, and support agency planning to inform organizational structure and business processes.

### GOALS

1. Engage in organizational development to improve the agency's capability through alignment of our mission, strategy, people, structure, and processes.
2. Focus our talent acquisition strategies on attracting, developing, and retaining a talented and diverse workforce.
3. Expand professional development and create resources dedicated to offering learning opportunities that support our organizational goals while enhancing the knowledge and skills of our workforce and increasing employee engagement, retention, and morale.
4. Provide leadership, support, and guidance for operationalizing internal agency equity practices.
5. Cultivate leadership within the agency, including succession planning and staff capacity building. Doing so will help to support the agency and develop leaders for the early childhood field.

## Technology

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### PURPOSE

**First 5's Technology strategy focuses on deploying technology applications and tools to support coordination and linkages, communication, and shared accountability among agency staff, partners, and grantees.** With equity at the center of service design and delivery, this strategy provides support to staff and partners for operational efficiencies, data collection and tracking, and performance management.

### GOALS

1. Conduct a technology assessment to create a roadmap for decision-making regarding applications for accounting, Salesforce, case management, resource directory, and website applications.
2. Identify, develop, and implement technology solutions that further data integration across agency divisions in support of decision-making, learning, research, policy advocacy, and operations.
3. Plan for the implementation of data systems and data warehouse to prepare for the implementation of additional public funding, including a child care pathways (Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment System) database.

# PROPOSITION 10 FY25-26 INVESTMENTS

**First 5 is using a Maintenance of Effort approach to this Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2025-2026 to maintain strategy budgets as we seek to build out the early childhood system. The budget will be updated annually.**

## Family (1,038,596)

### Parent Partnership, Fatherhood

Parent Partnership provides direct services to families and children with a focus on maternal and child health and the 0-3 years and uses parent leadership to inform programming and investments. Fatherhood strengthens collaboration with public systems and community-based organizations, increases the representation and improves the experiences of men, fathers, and father-figures through training, strategic messaging, and the development of high-quality father-centered services.

## Learning and Care (\$1,000,757)

### Early Care and Education

Early Care and Education provides support for centers, family child care (FCC) providers, and family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) caregivers with coaching, training, professional development, technical assistance, and financial incentives; funds community-based programming for those children who are not in a licensed early educational setting; and advances systems-building efforts, including workforce development and facilities, utilizing Measure C and OCI funds to expand and strengthen early care and education in Alameda County.

## Policy (\$376,959)

Policy utilizes analysis, data, information, and coalitions to support the evolution of an equity-centered local early childhood system. We engage in advocacy to scale and sustain effective programs and to promote public policies grounded in equity and justice.

## Operations and Administration (\$4,008,767)

Operations and Administration includes finance, human resources, technology, facilities, and administration.

## Neighborhoods (\$1,011,725)

### Neighborhoods Ready for School

The Neighborhoods Ready for School initiative is a place-based investment, asset building, and policy response to the relationship and interplay between neighborhood conditions, family and child well-being and the structural factors that contribute to overall health, development, and kindergarten readiness.

## Health and Well-Being (\$997,980)

### Pediatric Care Coordination

Pediatric Care Coordination connects and strengthens public system and community resources to engage, assess, and connect children, with a focus on Medi-Cal-enrolled families, to pediatric preventative care, medically-necessary services, and community-based programming and support.

## Data and Evaluation (\$365,963)

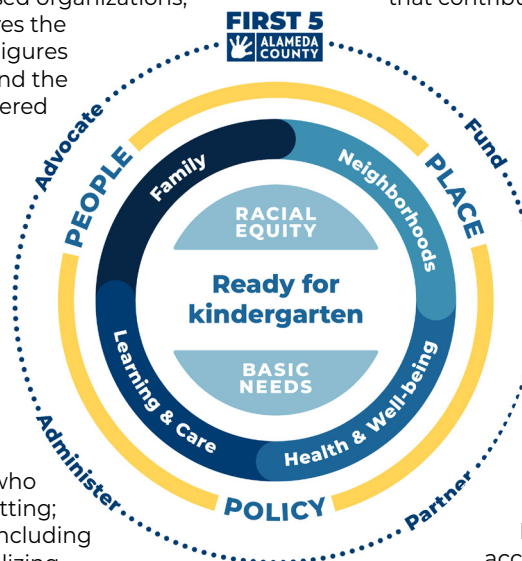
Data and Evaluation supports shared accountability, continued organizational learning, public awareness, and policy advocacy as part of our role in evolving the early childhood system.

## Communications (\$368,154)

Communications works with internal and external audiences to inform and guide key stakeholders and decision-makers in understanding, building, and supporting an equitable, sustainable, and comprehensive early childhood system.

## Training (\$97,902)

Training identifies, coordinates, and delivers training to foster a diverse, well-trained provider workforce and supports awareness, leadership, and linkages in each of the core components of the early childhood system.





## MEASURING OUR PROGRESS

### To understand, track, and guide our progress we use data, research, and parent and community knowledge.

To understand, track, and guide our progress towards the results outlined in this plan, we use data, research, and parent and community knowledge. Together this information helps us understand how well children and families in the county are doing in areas that we know correspond to kindergarten readiness, such as access to basic needs, participation in early care and education, and neighborhood conditions.

We also use data to help us understand the performance and impact of our programs and investments and opportunities for continuous improvement.

This method of distinguishing “population” and “performance” data is part of a framework called Results Based Accountability which is widely used by funders and public agencies, including Alameda County. It is a disciplined way of thinking and taking action that can be used to improve quality of life in communities, as well as to improve the performance of programs. Results Based Accountability is a simple, plain language approach to measurement that puts the focus on the ends and works backward to the means.

In our approach we strive to use data for action, and we work within our agency and with partners to make data accessible, relevant, and actionable. We want to ask the “story” behind the data (what does the data tell us?), the partners who have a role to play, and steps we can take, including those that advance our equity commitment, are community-driven, and are low-cost to no-cost ideas.

We use evaluation as a tool to help us get “under the hood” to understand why and how investments or programs might be working, and lift promising practices for policy advocacy, sustainability, and scale.

Finally, we recognize the critical role of intentionally centering our approach around equity. We are committed to participatory, equity-informed, and community driven practices in our data, research, and evaluation work. This means that at every stage—from identifying research questions and measures, to data collection methods, to interpreting findings and developing recommendations—we seek to be in deep partnership with community.

### Implementation

The 2022-2027 purpose statements, goals, and key initiatives are the next phase of the new strategic direction set for First 5 Alameda County in the 2017-2022 strategic plan. In the first year of the implementation phase, we engaged in a participatory process with internal teams to identify performance measures to understand progress towards our goals and are collecting baseline data in fiscal year 2022-2023. The agency continues to prepare, adapt, and respond to the changing landscape as an influx of local resources becomes available to First 5 Alameda County and the larger early childhood system. As these shifts occur, we will continue to identify data, research, and evaluation approaches, in close partnership with community, to understand, monitor, and ultimately improve outcomes for children, families, and communities.

#### Results Based Accountability as a Tool for Equity

**Population Result:** The well-being of a whole population in a geographic area (e.g., all children under five in Alameda County, or all families with children under five in a zip code)

#### *All Children in Alameda County are Ready for Kindergarten*

We look at disaggregated data to understand structural inequities that create disparities in outcomes. This helps to inform our programs and investments.

**Performance Accountability:** The well-being of client populations for programs, agencies, or service systems (i.e., all children 0-5 on Medi-Cal, all families served by ABC community organization)

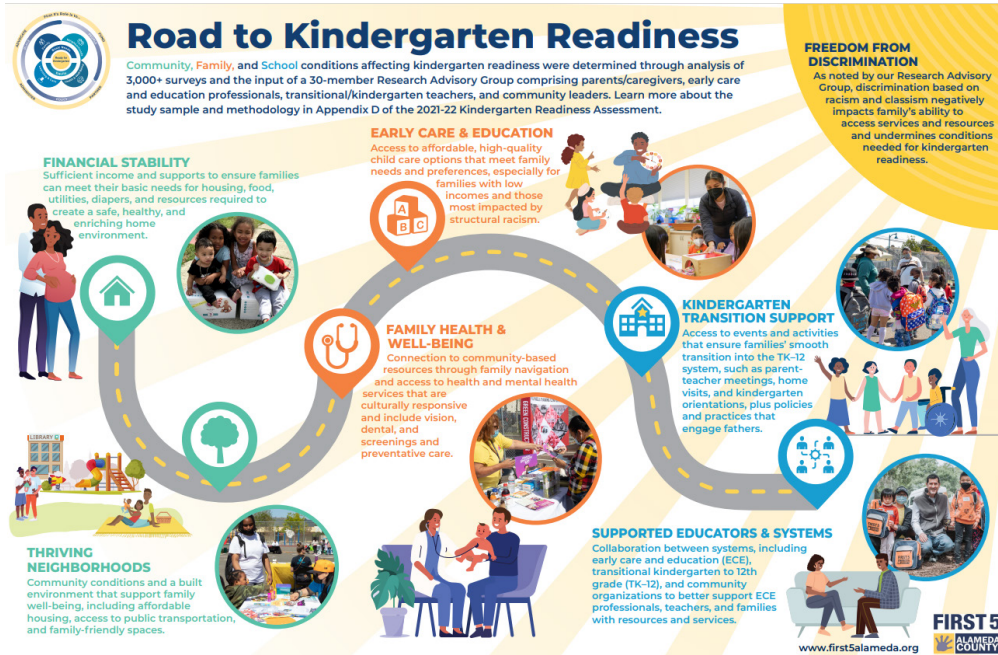
For our programs and investments, we ask ourselves:

- *How much do we do?*
- *How well do we do it?*
- *Is anyone better off?*

For more on RBA and Equity, Racial Equity: [Getting to Results](#) (2017)

# APPENDIX A.1: Tracking Our Progress; Program Strategies, Goals, & Investments

Source: [Kindergarten Readiness in Alameda County 2021-22: Appendix B](#)) – May 2023 Update



In support of reaching our “North Star,” we fund organizations and initiatives, partner with parents and caregivers, providers, communities, and organizations and agencies, and administer programs for young children and families. The appendix below details our investments, partnerships, and programs through FY 22-23 and how they align with the data-driven strategies that are shown to prepare children for kindergarten, outlined in our [Road to Kindergarten Readiness](#). It also shows which strategic goals we have completed to track our progress in implementing the 2022-27 Strategic Plan.

## Support Communities

### FINANCIAL STABILITY

#### PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Invested over \$5 million in distribution of essential supplies, including diapers.
- Worked with family-serving shelters and provided capital awards, supply stipends, and technical assistance.
- Paid tuition and permit fees for early care educators through the Early Education Apprentice Program, increasing the average apprentice wage of \$19.13 per hour to \$28.00 per hour upon completion of 12 units and receipt of an Associate Teacher Permit
- Invested \$487,000 to support basic needs programming and distribution of diaper kits through a partnership with Neighborhoods Ready for School grantees and SupplyBank.org
- Provided referrals for basic needs support through our Help Me Grow Program; 33% of all referrals from Help Me Grow are for basic needs supports.

## **THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS**

### **ACCOMPLISHED GOALS**

- Neighborhoods Ready for School, Goal #1: In January 2024, the NRFS partners presented their final four-year strategic workplans and data profiles to First 5, highlighting the needs and priorities of each community.

### **PROGRAM INVESTMENTS**

- As part of the Neighborhoods Ready for School strategy, First 5 funds trusted community organizations and family resource centers to build an ecosystem of support for families in the community.
- First 5 provides training and coaching in early identification to newly recruited family child care providers.
- HMG trains providers to offer their families early screenings and offers direct screening through the Developmental Screening Program; provides care coordination and navigation support to families referred to the Central Access Point (phone line); and conducts community outreach and networking events to stay on top of available services and resources.
- Invested more than \$3 million in four neighborhoods across Alameda County through our Neighborhoods Ready for School Initiative
- Contracted with Cities & People Advisors to facilitate a strategic planning process specific to the Neighborhoods Ready for School initiative to help identify areas of opportunity and to foster alignment with Oakland Thrives' RiseEast

## **Support Families**

## **FAMILY HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

### **ACCOMPLISHED GOALS**

- Parent Partnership, Goal #1: A strategic and visioning brief was completed in February 2024 providing context and recommendations for the evolution of this work.
- Parent Partnership, Goal #2: The assessment was completed, and CAS will transition to the Operations Division to centralize its functions across the agency.
- Parent Partnership, Goal #3: DULCE joined the Pediatric Care Coordination Division and data and lessons learned will inform the division's work.
- Pediatric Care Coordination, Goal #1: This work is completed yearly and remains ongoing, as resources must be updated each year.
- Pediatric Care Coordination, Goal #5: A CalAIM Opportunity roadmap for scaling and sustaining First 5's Pediatric Care Coordination services was developed. The roadmap outlines opportunities and risks with funding streams that support early identification, screening and care coordination, as well as a Care Management Continuum approach and three key phases for First 5 to leverage CalAIM opportunities to enhance care coordination for young children in Alameda County.

### **PROGRAM INVESTMENTS**

- Help Me Grow (HMG) Alameda County supports families to connect to medical check-ups, with particular focus on Medi-Cal clients; trains providers to offer screenings; and provides the HMG central access point (phone line) for information and care coordination.
- Grant awarded from the Alameda Alliance for Health for an expanded partnership through HMG program to support access to pediatric preventative care, care management, and quality improvement

- Fund DULCE at Highland Hospital to provide health, family, and legal services to families
- As part of the Alameda County Emergency Child Care Response Team, partnered with Samuel Merritt University School of Nursing and ECE providers to provide health consultation support through the Health Heroes program
- Support Afrocentric playgroups, *promotora* programming. *Promotores* and community health workers are liaisons between their communities and health providers, social service providers, and resources.
- Took lead role on a regional grant application with Contra Costa to support Afghan family resettlement, funding planning and direct services and engaging in community events and advocacy
- Participate in workgroup led by the Alameda County Office of Dental Health to improve access to dental care for the 0-5 age group through communication, outreach, and integration with primary care
- Partner with the Alameda Alliance, federally qualified health centers, and UCSF Benioff Children's hospital on efforts to expand care coordination and navigation to services through pediatric sites
- Our Cultural Access Services program provides language supports and promotes cultural humility and appreciation of the county's diverse population through interpretation and translation for First 5 and partner programs to increase access to community-based services.
- Fund parent and caregiver supports, such as Dad-scussions, Parent Cafés, and culturally specific playgroups, through the work in each of the Neighborhoods Ready for School sites
- Participate in systems building as a member of Alameda County's Perinatal Equity Initiative Steering Committee to dismantle unjust systems and practices that harm Black birthing people and their babies by addressing the causes of persistent inequality and identifying best practices to improve outcomes
- Contracted with Mothers-for-Mothers Postpartum Justice to support a pilot project, Honoring & Unifying Gatherings (HUGs), which will partner with local Black-owned cafes to provide a safe space for new mothers, birthing people, and caretakers of infants in the community to come and connect with each other weekly over a free beverage and pastry
- Contracted with TLC Consulting & Maternal Healing-Midnight Milk Program to offer free afterhours infant feeding, pregnancy, and postpartum virtual support group to address existing inequities in accessing lactation support, as well as workforce development for participants interested in becoming lactation peer educators or birth workers
- Created a new Pediatric Care Coordination division, secured philanthropic funds to hire a director to oversee that division, and expanded our Pediatric Care Coordination staffing and capacity to reach even more Alameda County children and families
- Renewed funding for our Help Me Grow and DULCE programs and collaborated with local partners, including our local Medi-Cal Managed Care Plan and Alameda Health System leadership, to identify additional funding sources to sustain these vital programs, which led to the successful 154% increase of Help Me Grow's annual budget
- Enrolled and provided enhanced support for 162 families at Highland Hospital's family birthing center through Project DULCE, which provides a family specialist in the pediatric setting to support connection of the families to needed resources, including legal support
- Served 8,600+ children and families through our Pediatric Care and Coordination division, which provides care coordination, connection to pediatric visits, developmental screenings, health and parenting education, resource information, family navigation, and/or peer support
- Benefited 1,323 children and 1,451 parents through investments in lactation supports for African American mothers and birthing people, with leadership from Alameda County Public Health Department, as part of our Birth Equity policy agenda
- Funded HUGS Cafes, a program of Mothers-for-Mothers Postpartum Justice Project, which partners with local Black-owned cafés to provide safe spaces for Black mothers, birthing people, and caregivers of infants in the community to gather and connect once every week. The program benefited more than 700 Black and African American women. Participants have reported maintaining continued relationships, connections, and support networks beyond the structured HUGs sessions.



## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION

### ACCOMPLISHED GOALS

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- ECE, Goal #9: ECE Facilities Needs Assessment has been completed and focus now turns to implementation.
- ECE, Goal #20: The first Workforce Taskforce and preliminary landscape study with Social Policy Research Associates (SPRA) has been completed and focus now turns to implementation.

### ONGOING

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- Named administrator of Measure C: Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County. The agency will now begin implementation of Measure C building off prior years' work to prepare for its role as administrator by restructuring the agency, convening an ECE Workforce Task, conducting an ECE Facilities Needs Assessment, and preparing for the staffing, facilitation, and orientation of the Measure C Community Advisory Council (CAC) members. (See Appendix D)
- Selected as the Early Education Implementation Partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI). In the first year of implementation, First 5 has allocated more than \$10 million to stabilize and strengthen existing early education programs at Oakland Unified School District and the City of Oakland Head Start. Initial allocations fund growing staffing needs and supports, family navigators, and one-time physical infrastructure projects to improve and increase capacity of current early care sites.

### PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

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- Awarded \$1,000,000 from Alameda County Social Services Agency in General Fund to build a countywide child care centralized eligibility list (CEL) that will help caregivers access subsidized child care
- Expanded number of licensed family child care providers participating and benefiting from Alameda County Quality Counts, building peer support
- Jointly funded Alameda County's ECE Apprenticeship Program to provide CalWORKs participants training, advanced degrees, and employment in ECE settings; advocated for additional investments in the model
- HMG care coordination and family navigation services provide connections to services and supports for parents and caregivers, as well as emotional support
- Supported child care providers with technical assistance in English, Spanish, and Chinese for the statewide Minor Renovation and Repair Grant Request for Applications for both centers and family child care
- Support libraries to provide children's books in multiple languages, offer playgroups, provide take-home resources for parents, including over 1000 literacy kits, and provide developmental screening and referral on-site through HMG
- Hired a permanent Director of Early Care and Education and increased staffing and capacity to lead the implementation of the Oakland Children's Initiative Early Education Fund
- Supported 153 Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) child care and 97 Family Child Care (FCC) providers with quality improvement programming such as trainings and individualized supports

## Support ECE Professionals, Teachers, and Care and Education Systems



### KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION SUPPORTS

#### ACCOMPLISHED GOALS

- Fatherhood, Goal #2: In 2023, Healthy Relationship Principles (HRP) were adopted, and a new learning community was implemented. The focus now shifts to supporting their implementation in internal programs and with funded partners.

#### PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Funded school districts in Alameda County, using an equity index, to support kindergarten transition programming (educational materials, books, tablets) and supports for families (basic needs)
- Developed a Summer Pre-K (SPK) Program that partnered with low-performing and high need elementary schools in Alameda County, providing quality transitional early childhood experiences for children without prior preschool or child care experience entering kindergarten in the fall
- Through the Neighborhoods Ready for School (NRFS) initiative, community partners promote child-and-family friendly communities, strong families, and school readiness
- Leader of Alameda County Fathers Corps, a collaborative focused on empowering and supporting fathers, service providers, agencies, systems, and the wider community to raise awareness of the critical role of fathers and father-figures and the benefits of active father involvement on young children's development; provide training and support to service providers with implementation of the Father-Friendly Principles; and advocate for more father-specific and father-friendly services
- Awarded grants to community-based organizations to provide drop-in groups to support fathers in addressing their challenges in accessing public and community supports
- Partnered with 10 libraries across the county to facilitate story time and playgroups for the community, where families are also connected to the Help Me Grow program, with which they can access support and resources for children's development, learning, and behavior
- Invested \$227,000 in support of the Oakland Unified School District Summer Kinder/TK Program. Funding also supports year-round school readiness and transition programming
- Fathers Corps program celebrated its 10th anniversary, completed an evaluation of the program, and rolled out a new set of Healthy Relationship Principles for organizations engaging fathers
- 411 fathers, father-figures, educators, and providers engaged in workshops, activities, and trainings during the 2023 Fatherhood Summit.



## SUPPORTED EDUCATORS & SYSTEMS

### ONGOING

- Named administrator of Measure C: Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County. The agency will now begin implementation of Measure C building off prior years' work to prepare for its role as administrator by restructuring the agency, convening an ECE Workforce Task, conducting an ECE Facilities Needs Assessment, and preparing for the staffing, facilitation, and orientation of the Measure C Community Advisory Council (CAC) members. (See Appendix D).
- Selected as the Early Education Implementation Partner for the Oakland Children's Initiative (OCI). In the first year of implementation, First 5 has allocated more than \$10 million to stabilize and strengthen existing early education programs at Oakland Unified School District and the City of Oakland Head Start. Initial allocations fund growing staffing needs and supports, family navigators, and one-time physical infrastructure projects to improve and increase capacity of current early care sites.

### PROGRAM INVESTMENTS

- Expand participation in the number of providers participating in Quality Counts program for quality improvement, coaching, professional learning communities, and quality grants
- Investing in training (over 4.5k attendees and 11k YouTube views) to strengthen providers' and families' understanding of best practices for early education, mental health, family support, health, and administration
- Financially support school districts with kindergarten transition efforts, including through the Community Resilience Fund grants allocated using an equity index
- Partnered with Alameda County Social Services Agency and Supplybank.org to distribute 880 air purifiers to 440 family child care providers
- Administered \$3 million in family child care grants provided by Alameda County Social Services Agency from CARES Act funds
- Invest in the CARE Family Resource Navigation program, which has been effective in supporting families experiencing homelessness with child care and access to basic needs
- Distributed over 12,000 backpacks with supplies to incoming kindergartners through schools and community partners
- Convened 47 cross-sector stakeholders on First 5's Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Task Force to inform initial recommendations for a more coordinated local response to the ECE employment crisis
- Provided more than 50 trainings and learning opportunities for parents, caregivers, providers, and professionals in the ECE field
- Distributed \$288,430 in professional development and training stipends to ECE professionals and caregivers participating in First 5's Quality Counts program
- Together with Alameda County Social Services Agency and Tipping Point Community, continued to fund the Early Education Apprentice Program, administered by YMCA of the East Bay, which provides financial and academic support, as well as on-the-job training and mentorship while students pursue their ECE-related degrees and teaching permits

# APPENDIX A.2: Tracking Our Progress; Policy Advocacy Efforts

Source: [Kindergarten Readiness in Alameda County 2021-22: Appendix B](#)) – May 2023 Update



First 5 Alameda County works to advance county, state, and federal policies through budgetary, legislative, and administrative advocacy to cultivate an equity-centered local early childhood system of care that prepares and supports children, families, and communities so that children are ready for kindergarten. Below are the policy advocacy activities we've engaged, by year, to advance each of our priority issue areas, to ultimately make progress toward our "North Star."

## Support Communities

### FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Advocated for increases in economic supports for families at local, state, and federal levels, e.g., child tax credits, diaper banks, supports for CalWORKs
- Funded the [evaluation](#) of Help A Mother Out's diaper distribution and provided a [letter of recommendation](#) for the successful application to the California Commission on the Status of Women for a \$25,000 Women's Recovery Response grant
- Signed on to an [open letter from the National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers](#), laying out a vision for increased investments in prenatal-to-three issues in 2022 and beyond
- Provided [public comment](#) to support Stable Rents and Stable Families campaign to strengthen rental protections for the unincorporated communities in Alameda County
- Provided public comment in support of [AB 2053: The Social Housing Act \(Lee\)](#) to connect early childhood and affordable and stable housing
- Submitted a [comment letter](#) to the City of Oakland's General Plan Housing Element highlighting the housing needs of families with young children and early care and education professionals living in Oakland and Alameda County

- Signed-on to a [federal letter](#) urging Congress to include housing investments in the revised budget reconciliation bill
- Submitted a letter in support of SB 1083 to increase access to homeless assistance support for pregnant CalWORKs families, which was signed into law in September 2022
- Supported AB 230 (Reyes) and SB 59 (Skinner), which proposes increased access to period products as a form of basic needs
- Signed on to a letter and provided public comment supporting a State Budget Proposal for \$30M over three years for diaper and wipe distribution
- Submitted a federal [regulatory comment](#) in support of proposed updates to modernize the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) by allowing online ordering and transactions and food delivery
- Submitted a letter of support for AB 309 (Lee) which proposed to increase access to affordable and stable housing
- Submitted a [letter](#) to our Alameda County State Delegation urging them to support policies that aid families through the pandemic including increased paid family leave and state disability insurance payment rate, extending access to COVID supplemental paid sick leave as well as streamlining construction of affordable housing
- To elevate diaper need as a gap in the safety net, presented the findings from our Help a Mother Out Diaper Bank Evaluation at the California Welfare Directors Association annual conference in October 2022
- Signed onto a [letter](#) urging the Governor to sign SB 951 (Durazo): Affordable Paid Leave for All into law. SB 951 would increase wage replacement rates for PFL + SDI to 90% for lower wage workers by January 1, 2025, making paid family leave and state disability insurance accessible to all Californians.
- Provided public comment at state committee hearings in support SupplyBank.org's budget proposal for a statewide diaper bank program

## THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS

- Signed on to a [budget letter](#) requesting that the California legislature and administration increase wage replacement rates for low-wage workers in the State Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave programs
- In partnership with the City of Oakland, submitted a [one-time state budget request](#) to improve Oakland's play spaces for young children and their families
- Funded an [evaluation](#) of our place-based Neighborhoods Ready for School strategy to inform policy advocacy and public investments
- Partnered with parents and caregivers to inform the design, implementation, and interpretation of the [2021-22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment](#) study as part of a research to action approach and commitment to equity
- Submitted letters of support for [AB 2517 \(Bonta\)](#) and AB 1321 (Bonta) which propose to establish a two-year California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services grant program to implement new, and strengthen existing, neighborhood and regional cradle-to-career networks to reduce inequities and increase economic mobility in communities across California through integrated place-based support systems
- Advocated to ensure equitable implementation of CalAIM; submitted a [letter](#) to the state budget subcommittees in response to the state's proposed sunset of the Child Health and Disability Prevention program
- Submitted a [letter](#) to the City of Oakland in support of San Antonio Neighborhood's recommendations and

work with neighborhood members to finalize and implement a Master Plan that supports the health and well-being of children ages birth to 5

- Submitted a [letter of support](#) for AB 1321 (Bonta): California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services Grant Program, which would have established a California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services grant program to implement new, and strengthen existing, neighborhood and regional cradle to career (C2C) networks to reduce inequities and increase economic mobility in communities across California through integrated place-based support systems
- Provided [public comment](#) to the Draft PY21–24 Regional Plan Biennial Modification highlighting the workforce needs of families with young children and early care and education professional living and working in Alameda County
- Submitted a [letter of support](#) for AB 309 (Lee): Social Housing Act, which would introduce social housing to California

## Support Families

### FAMILY HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- Submitted a letter in support of [AB 1995](#), a proposal to eliminate monthly Medi-Cal premiums or copayments so that low-income households can put resources toward other essential needs
- In support of continuous Medi-Cal eligibility, AB2402, Diana Garcia, Data and Policy Analyst, [gave testimony](#) (beginning at the 2:36:50 mark) at the California State Assembly
- Submitted a letter in support of [SB 65 the California Momnibus bill](#), which would re-imagine maternal health to improve perinatal outcomes, close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes
- Provided the California Department of Health Care Services feedback on a draft of the Medi-Cal Community Health Worker Provider Manual to ensure that its language supports implementation to advance health equity
- Wrote a [letter](#) to the state supporting the California Department of Public Health's Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health priorities to advance health equity for women, birthing people, children, adolescents, and families
- Signed on to a [letter](#) rejecting the Governor's proposal to delay implementation of the Community Health Workers, Promotoras, and Representatives (CHWPR) workforce and training funds and signed on to a letter requesting that the Governor use funds from the Managed Care Organization Tax Proposal to raise CHWPR wages
- Submitted a [letter](#) in support of AB 583 (Wicks), which would establish the Birthing Justice for California Families Pilot Project to support specified groups, including community-based doula groups, to provide full-spectrum doula care to pregnant and birthing people who are low income and do not qualify for Medi-Cal or who are from communities that experience high rates of negative birth outcomes, among others
- Published a Birth Equity Policy [Brief](#) highlighting recommendations and local strategies to ensure Black women and birthing people have safe and healthy births

- Signed on to a [letter](#) rejecting the Governor’s proposal to delay implementation of the Community Health Workers, Promotoras, and Representatives (CHWPR) workforce and training funds. We also signed on to a letter requesting that the Governor use funds from the Managed Care Organization Tax proposal to raise CHWPR wages.
- Supported Alameda County Social Services Agency ask for three enrollment office mobile vehicles to help connect families to program and services they are eligible for
- Supported Asian Health Services and UCSF Oakland Children’s Hospital with letters of support for Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) federal funds to increase childhood developmental screenings and necessary follow-up services and referrals

## **EARLY CARE & EDUCATION**

- Provided a letter of support for Food with Care: [SB 1481](#) (Becker) that would provide free daily meals to children in child care by enabling all child care providers to qualify for the highest level of reimbursements for the meals they serve
- Wrote to the Federal Alameda County Delegation urging them to support child care in the reconciliation process
- Signed on and wrote to our Federal Alameda County Delegation for their support on the [Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act](#) designed to strengthen school meals, child care food programs, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and other federal nutrition programs for children
- Submitted public [comment](#) on Alameda County’s Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) three-year plan for FY 2022-23, highlighting findings from our most recent KRA report and the continued need for mental health services and supports that target young children, their parents/caregivers, and the early care and education workforce
- Submitted letters of support for AB 1352 (Bonta) which proposes to expand the Alameda County’s Child Care Pilot Program set to expire June 30, 2023
- Submitted a [letter of support](#) for AB 51 (Bonta) to advocate for effective and equitable functioning of California’s early childhood system so that it meets the diverse childcare needs of families and the workforce in every community
- Provided a [letter of support](#) for AB 679 (Wicks): Family Daycare Homes: Meals Reimbursement Rate which proposed to eliminate the unfair meal reimbursement rate gap that discriminates against family child care providers

## Support ECE Professionals, Teachers, and Care and Education Systems



### KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION SUPPORTS

- Alameda County Fathers Corps advocates for local systems change and has championed a state resolution on the adoption of the Father-Friendly Principles
- Hosted a Policy Breakfast focused on sharing and digesting key findings from the recent Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and highlighting remarks from featured speaker Assemblymember Mia Bonta
- Hosted a Policy Breakfast focused on sharing and digesting key findings from the recent Kindergarten Readiness Assessment study and highlighting remarks from featured speaker Assemblymember Mia Bonta
- In partnership with Oakland Unified School District, Union City Family Center, and county libraries, First 5 published a [policy brief](#) on kindergarten transition supports
- Submitted a [letter of support](#) for AB 1321 (Bonta): California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services Grant Program, which would have established a California Coordinated Neighborhood and Community Services grant program to implement new, and strengthen existing, neighborhood and regional cradle to career (C2C) networks to reduce inequities and increase economic mobility in communities across California through integrated place-based support systems



### SUPPORTED EDUCATORS & SYSTEMS

- Provided public comment to the Alameda County Behavioral Health — Mental Health Services Act Plan FY 2022-23 to highlight the need for infant and early childhood mental health services and supports through investments in the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health workforce and Consultation programs
- Submitted a [letter](#) to the state supporting the Rate and Quality Stakeholder Workgroup's recommendations for investments in the workforce and for an equitable rate reimbursement system
- Promoted coordination between school districts and the early care and education mixed delivery system in planning for implementation of Universal Transitional Kindergarten/Prekindergarten
- Signed on to a [letter](#) urging Governor Newsom and State Legislators to adopt an alternative methodology utilizing a cost-estimation model and multi-year transition plan to address the child care crisis and transform child care and early learning in California
- Provided public comment at state workgroup meetings advocating for meaningful weights on regional adjustments that reflect the local cost of quality child care and cost of living
- Submitted public comment on Alameda County's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) three-year plan for FY 2022-23, which highlights findings from our most recent KRA report and the continued need for mental health services and supports that target young children, their parents/caregivers, and the early care and education workforce

## APPENDIX B:

### Summary of Strategic Plan Partner Feedback

#### Summary of Strategic Plan Stakeholder Feedback

**Build/evolve the early childhood system.**

**Families and communities have strengths to build upon and should be valued, listened to, and leveraged.**

**Underlying structural inequities by race and class are impacting families, providers, and communities.**



Families



Staff



Community



Stakeholder



Data Interviews

#### PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORTING FAMILIES

**A “seamless” system that addresses basic needs ( i.e., food, housing, transportation), child care, health and mental health/social connections**

#### PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORTING PROVIDERS

**Wages and professional development, flexible funding, and organizational capacity building**

#### PRIORITIES FOR FIRST 5

- **Define and clarify role**
- **Emphasize partnerships with families, community, community-based organizations, and systems**
- **Leverage place-based investments and consider other opportunities by place and population**
- **Use data and policy advocacy in partnership with community for systems change**
- **Build agency capacity to meet new need and opportunity**
- **Support staff leadership and well-being**

#### PRIORITIES FOR SYSTEMS

- **Invest in families with young children**
- **Coordinate resources for a system that is responsive and accessible**
- **Invest in community infrastructure that supports families (housing, libraries, parks)**

## APPENDIX C: Local Child Care Ballot Measures

|                                   | The Oakland Children's Initiative<br>(Measure AA)   | The Children's Health & Child Care Initiative<br>for Alameda County (Measure C)  |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Geography                         | City of Oakland   | Alameda County   |
| Overview                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30-year annual parcel tax of \$198 a year on single-family homes and \$135 a year per unit of each multi-unit residence</li> <li>• Revenues support early child care and preschool programs, and fund college readiness programs, tuition assistance, and efforts to fix racial inequities in access to higher education</li> <li>• Raises approximately \$25-\$30million annually with funds divided into three subaccounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62% to Early Education Fund</li> <li>• 31% to the Oakland Promise Fund</li> <li>• 7% for oversight and accountability</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 20-year half-percent (0.5%) sales tax that would raise an estimated \$150 million per year to provide support and enhancements for child care, preschool, early education, and pediatric health care in Alameda County</li> <li>• The funds will be divided 80/20 into two subaccounts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Pediatric Health Care Account (20%), overseen by a citizen oversight committee</li> <li>• A Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education Account (80%), administered by First 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Status                            | <p>The Oakland Children's Initiative (Measure AA), was passed in November 2018 and upheld by the courts in 2021. In December 2022 First 5 Alameda County was awarded the contract to serve as the Early Care and Education Implementation Partner</p>   | <p>Measure C was passed in March 2020 and upheld by the courts in 2024. First 5 facilitated the development of a five-year program plan and budget that requires approval from the First 5 Commission and Alameda County Board of Supervisors (expected in June 2025).</p>   |
| Key Components of Early Childhood | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand existing public services; first funding priority is to public agencies, particularly programs at Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and Oakland Head Start</li> <li>• Priority on serving the children of families with the lowest incomes and/or those who are in high need. Support families who need FFN care</li> <li>• In order of priority: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of free or affordable and high quality ECE or preschool <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-year-olds from low-income families</li> <li>• 3-year-olds from low-income families</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increase affordability or quality of preschool (not ECE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All 4-year-olds</li> <li>• All 3-year-olds</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increase the availability and/or quality of child development support services for children from birth through age 3.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increases access to quality care</li> <li>• Ensures teacher wages at a minimum of \$15 to be increased annually with revenue increases</li> <li>• Allows services to 0-12-year-olds, but defines a focus on 0-5-year-olds</li> <li>• Targets low-income families and those children/families with the greatest needs, e.g., families experiencing homelessness and children in foster care</li> </ul>   |

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|--|--|--|
| <b>Provider/Program Wage Requirements</b>            | <p><b>Pay all employees minimum \$15/hr. to be adjusted annually</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adjusted annually based on the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Consumer Price Index (CPI)</li> <li>The City of Oakland has its own <u>minimum wage schedule</u> for employees working within the geographic boundaries of Oakland (\$16.10/hr in 2024).</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Pay all ECE educator employees minimum \$15/hr. to be adjusted annually on January 1, beginning in 2022</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on the San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the percentage increase in revenues raised during the previous calendar year by tax (whichever is less)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Provider Quality Requirement Responsibilities</b> | <p><b>Participating center-based programs are able to, within reasonable timeframe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieve baseline rating of 3 on QRIS or new system</li> <li>Utilize developmentally appropriate curriculum, aligned with CDE standards, and evidence-based and/or demonstrated success in improving preparation for kindergarten</li> <li>Conduct formative assessments</li> </ul> <p>Participate in valid, regular, and reliable assessments of quality to foster continuous improvement and to reduce disparities by income/wealth in child outcomes</p> | <p><b>Measure C outlines multiple strategies for improving ECE quality, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comprehensive training and professional development system</li> <li>Support for educational advancement and degree attainment</li> <li>Teacher retention</li> <li>Maintaining, enhancing, and expanding quality ECE facilities</li> </ul>  |
| <b>First 5's Role as Administrator of Funds</b>      | <p><b>Contractor with the City of Oakland</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early Education Implementation Partner</li> <li>Contracts are on a five-year cycle</li> </ul>   | <p><b>First 5's role as outlined in section 2.08.305.B of the Ordinance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing Program Plan &amp; Annual Expenditure Plan</li> <li>Allocating funds based on Expenditure Plan</li> <li>Developing, implementing, administering, and overseeing all programs and services paid for by the Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education account</li> <li>Providing staff support for the CAC</li> <li>Developing the Program Plan Evaluation</li> <li>Operating with transparency and public accountability, good fiscal stewardship of public resources; annual audit to ensure compliance</li> <li>Awarding funds pursuant to our contracting policies and the Ordinance requirements</li> </ul> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <b>Governing Bodies &amp; Responsibilities</b> | <p><b>Accountability Officer duties include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overseeing programs and providing recommendations to the Citizens Oversight Commission</li> <li>• Preparing subsequent 5-year guidelines</li> <li>• Leading the selection process and contracting for the Implementation Partners, making recommendations to the Citizens Oversight Commission</li> <li>• Ensuring independent financial audits</li> <li>• Monitoring performance of Implementation Partners</li> <li>• Overseeing external evaluations, including selection</li> </ul> | <p><b>Alameda County Board of Supervisors (BOS)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducts the annual independent audit</li> <li>• Can terminate First 5 and select a different entity as the Administering Agency</li> <li>• Approves Five-Year Program &amp; Budget Plans</li> </ul> <p><b>First 5 Alameda County Commission</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves Annual Expenditure Plan</li> <li>• Approves Five-Year Program &amp; Budget Plans</li> </ul> |
| <b>Community-Seated Bodies</b>                 | <p><b>Citizen's Oversight Commission (COC) duties include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approves (or rejects) City of Oakland staff's recommendation of the Early Education Implementation Partner</li> <li>• Approves the five-year Guidelines for the Early Education funds</li> <li>• Approves or rejects plans, recommendations, audits</li> <li>• Approves (or rejects) recommendations; does not develop policy and programmatic recommendations</li> </ul> <p><b>Oakland City Council</b><br/>Mayor appoints COC members &amp; Council confirms</p>        | <p><b>Community Advisory Council (CAC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops policy and programmatic recommendations related to the Measure C account</li> <li>• First 5 will develop the Program Plan, which must be developed in coordination with the Community Advisory Council (still to be seated) and community, for approval by the First 5 Alameda County Commission and Board of Supervisors.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Auditing</b>                                | <p>Accountability Officer ensures annual audits are completed and presented to COC.</p>   | <p>BOS conducts annual independent financial audit of Measure C revenues and expenditures</p>   |
| <b>Evaluation Cycles</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability Officer oversees external evaluations of Implementation Partners' performance.</li> <li>• Progress and performance reporting are due to COC every two years.</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluations during implementation period of each Plan and prior to the development of a new Plan (every fourth year).</li> <li>• First 5 oversees external evaluations with input for CAC for presentation to BOS</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Data Reporting</b>                          | <p>Oakland City Administrator has the authority to enter into a contract with legally required terms such as (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance metrics and benchmarks</li> <li>• Data sharing agreements</li> </ul>  | <p>First 5 develops data collection strategies and collects data from participants in Measure C programs as part of initial application and evaluation process.</p>   |

# APPENDIX D: Administering Measure C

**The Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County (Measure C)**, a countywide measure, was passed by voters in March 2020 and names First 5 Alameda County as the administrator of the Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education portion of the revenue. Upheld by the courts in 2024, the Children's Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County is expected to raise approximately \$150M annually for early care and education. **In FY 2024-2025, First 5 Alameda County began implementation by staffing a Community Advisory Council and facilitating a series of Community Listening Sessions with community, providers, families, and early childhood partners to guide the development of the initial five-year program plan and budget. The Measure C 5-Year Program Plan and Executive Summary will be presented to the First 5 Alameda County Commission and the Alameda County Board of Supervisors for approval in June 2025.**

Since the passage of Measure C in 2020 and throughout the four years of litigation, First 5 Alameda County took significant steps to leverage our agency infrastructure to prepare the agency for implementation in key areas, including:

## ADMINISTRATION & FACILITIES

- **Invested in a Facilities Needs Assessment** for centers and family child care providers in Alameda County to understand the infrastructure and space needed to offer high-quality care.
- **Published Early Care and Education Needs Assessment** for the urban unincorporated areas of Alameda County in partnership with the Alameda County Community Development Agency to understand the supply of licensed and affordable child care, access to high-quality services, and needs of child care facilities in these areas.
- **In fiscal year 2023-2024, we released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to secure a contractor for the Early Childhood Facilities Fund and Technical Assistance program.** The primary goals of this funding will include supporting children's kindergarten readiness, asset building, developing more stable, high-quality facilities for the early childhood field, and leveraging other funding streams for facilities where possible. The contractor, Low Income Investment Fund, will support the development of recommendations for the Early Childhood Facilities Fund Program with accompanying policy recommendations, dissemination of capital, and technical assistance to providers.

## COLLABORATION & PLANNING

- **We started community engagement planning and meetings with key partners**, such as the Alameda County Administrator's Office (CAO), the Valley Family Child Care Association (VFCCA) FCC Listening Session, Alternative Payment agencies, Resource & Referral agencies, school districts, and Head Start programs. We also embarked on informational presentations across the county to share our Oakland Children's Initiative implementation and Measure C readying work with community, parents, providers, and partners. We continue to benefit from the community engagement that resulted in these two measures, including listening sessions to consider how Measure C can best support our diverse mixed delivery system in the county.

## DATA & EVALUATION

- **Adopted the Early Development Instrument (EDI) as the new Kindergarten Readiness Community Study tool.** The EDI is a comprehensive tool that provides valuable insights into the development of children, helps us predict health, education, and social outcomes, and informs policy decisions and investments. The adoption of this new tool was a collaborative decision made by all school districts involved in the Countywide Kindergarten Readiness Tool Decision-Making Series, a sequence of meetings that was co-chaired by Alameda County Superintendent Alysse Castro and First 5 Alameda County CEO Kristin Spanos and included school district representatives and labor representation. The series culminated in the unanimous decision to adopt the EDI. The EDI will serve as a critical component in our efforts to improve local systems that support children 0-5 and their families.

## EARLY CARE & EDUCATION WORKFORCE

- **Continued to expand and completed an evaluation of the Early Education Apprentice Program.**  
This program is an “earn and learn model” that covers tuition and permit fees for early care educators while providing on-the-job training, stipends, and additional supports like tutoring and child care. It is an exemplary model of a public-private partnership between Alameda County Social Services Agency, First 5 Alameda County, and philanthropy (Tipping Point Community), and the type of innovative public policy infrastructure necessary to support the continued growth in our local early care and education delivery system.

## OPERATIONS, INFRASTRUCTURE, & TECHNOLOGY

- **Worked on an ECE financial landscape to inform key programmatic investments for Measure C** with national and state consulting experts in support of our financial forecasting and implementation planning.
- **First 5 Alameda County proactively built its capacity and readied its infrastructure to implement Measure C.** We restructured the agency and conducted hiring to ensure the staffing and infrastructure needed to administer substantial new public funding. Since fiscal year 2022-2023, we have added 45 new positions in various areas throughout the agency, including programs, operations, finance, compliance, technology, data and evaluation, planning, communications, and government affairs and policy. These changes will continue into 2025 and beyond, as we continue a three-to-five-year building phase. We aim to retain and recruit a workforce that reflects the diversity and cultural fabric of Alameda County, support staff development and professional growth, ensure regulatory compliance, and effectively implement existing and new initiatives.
- **Reviewed, prepared, and revised** governance, financial, and compliance structures, policies, and practices, e.g., investment and conflict of interest policies and practices
- **Reprocured an auditing firm** for annual financial and program compliance
- **Secured contracts with expert consultants to strengthen the foundation and capacity of the agency:**
  - Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies supports First 5 with financial modeling and advising on the governance structure for the Children’s Health and Child Care Initiative for Alameda County’s Community Advisory Council.
  - School Readiness Consulting supports First 5’s Leadership and ECE team on a broad range of system readying and planning efforts, including the development of recommendations and a community engagement strategy for key partners to inform a Centralized Eligibility and Enrollment (CEE) technology tool build and the development of an initial ECE System program design and operational approach to implementation.
  - Wellbrook Partners to support the implementation of the Early Care and Education (ECE) Emergency Grants and provide consultation on financial modeling.
- **Secured Technology Development Liaison consultants:**
  - SRI International to support the procurement and implementation of a technology system for the centralized eligibility and enrollment system, which we call Child Care Pathways. The technology system will support eligibility for, and enrollment into, ECE services.
  - Child Trends to advise on efforts to integrate early childhood data from across data systems and in the development of requirements for a data warehouse.

In fiscal year 2025-26, First 5 Alameda County will begin implementing the first year of investments from the inaugural Measure C Child Care, Preschool, and Early Education Program Plan and Budget 2025-2030 approved by the Alameda County Board of Supervisors June 10, 2025. The Measure C 5-Year Plan is hereby incorporated into First 5 Alameda County Fiscal Year 2022-27 Strategic Plan as the major significant strategic update to the agency’s work for fiscal years 2025-27.

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