The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda
2017 Data Book

Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life
When we ask how our children are faring, the answer is the most important measure of our community’s health. Our vision is that every child will be safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life.

Too often, fragmented services, outdated practices and unstable funding have prevented us from meeting the challenges facing our children and families. By recognizing that our goals are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, we can work together to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children. Four principles ground our work:

* **We must invest in children early and throughout their development.** Children may be “school-ready,” but poorly designed English language programs or a lack of access to summer learning can make them off-track later in school. We must invest early in our children and throughout their school years if we want them to be ready for college, career, and life.

* **We must address the opportunity gaps that are associated with poverty, race and ethnicity.** Santa Clara County is one of the wealthiest regions in the world. On average, our children are faring well. But these averages mask troubling inequities. Only 32% of Latino and 41% of African American students are proficient in reading by third grade, compared to 72% of white and 78% of Asian students. Low-income children are nearly five times more likely to drop out of high school than their classmates who are not low-income.

* **Families are critical to our children’s health and success.** Parents and caregivers are a child’s first teacher, and children are far more likely to succeed if families are strong and resilient. When we build on family strengths and work in true partnership with parents and caregivers, our children are far more likely to succeed. Strong families build the next generation of strong families.

* **We are committed to continual improvement and to holding ourselves accountable to measurable results.** We need to strive to deliver better supports and services to children, youth and families in terms of individual programming and how we work together. If we do this, we should see measurable improvement in our individual programs and at the community level.

Child Impact Statements: How County Decision-making Affects Our Children

If you are a parent about to make a major decision, one of your first questions will be: “Is it good for our children?” What if our public officials asked the same question before making decisions about our community? Since 2011, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors has made children’s welfare a top consideration in making budget and policy decisions through “Child Impact Statements,” a systematic approach to evaluating and understanding how government decisions will affect children and families. Utilizing the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth and the goals of the Children’s Agenda, Child Impact Statements help the Board by making the needs of children a primary concern early in the decision-making process.
The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

Taking a Stand for Children

Endorsed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on Feb. 9, 2010, the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth ensures that leaders keep the needs of young people at the forefront of decisions about budgets and government policies. The Bill of Rights provides the foundation for the Children’s Agenda and helps our community make children and youth a top priority, even during times of political change and financial upheaval.

All children and youth have a right to be safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life regardless of their language, culture, race, immigration status, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and developmental or physical abilities. Santa Clara County is enriched by the diversity of its children and youth. Therefore, we resolve to support Santa Clara County children and youth so that:

- They have a healthy mind, body, and spirit that enable them to maximize their potential.
- They develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.
- Their essential needs are met—nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care, and accessible transportation.
- They have a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods, and communities.
- They have access to a 21st-century education that promotes success in life and in future careers and a love of life-long learning.
- They have training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient, and contribute to their community.
- They have employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.
- They have freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.
- They have a voice in matters that affect them.
- They have a sense of hope for their future.

About this Data Book

Each year, Kids in Common reports on the progress Santa Clara County is making towards fulfilling the vision of the Bill of Rights. Each section of this report includes updates on individual data indicators, related special topics and recommendations for action that will support our creating a community where every child is safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life.
## Data Dashboard

### Child Hunger
- The percent of children living in food-insecure households has decreased from 19.7% in 2012 to 17.2% in 2014.
- The percent of the children eligible for the Federal Free/Reduced Price (FRP) meal programs and who actually participate in those programs remained flat.

### Child & Family Homelessness
- Between 2013 and 2015, the number of unaccompanied minors, families and transition-age youth who are homeless decreased.
- Between 2013 and 2015, the number of students identified as homeless decreased from 4503 to 3709.

### Children in Foster Care
- After a 40% decline in children entering foster care between 2008 and 2012, the percent of children entering foster care has remained flat the past 2 years. Racial and ethnic disparities have improved, but still remain high.

### Juvenile Justice Engagement
- Since FY 2009, arrests and violations of probation have decreased by 76%, felony arrests and detentions have decreased by 68% and 43% respectively. Racial and ethnic disparities remain significant.

### Access to Health Care
- Insurance enrollment rates and those who report having a usual source of care is at 96% or higher for all Santa Clara County children regardless of race or ethnicity.
- The percent of children who had a routine check-up in the past 12 months improved.

### Health and Fitness
- There was a slight downtick in fitness levels, overall and for all racial/ethnic groups.

### Developmental Assets
- The average number of developmental assets increased between 1999 and 2016.

### Emotional Health & Well-Being
- The annual number of developmental screenings increased from 11,600 in 2013 to 17,981 in 2016.

### School Readiness
- In 2016, there were only 5,435 high-quality subsidized, preschool slots to serve the needs of 11,633 eligible 3- and 4-year olds. This was a small improvement over 2014.

### Third and Eighth Grade English Language Arts & Math Skills
- All ethnic and racial groups experienced three- to six-point gains for all English Language Arts and Math standardized testing between 2015 and 2016.
- Latino and African American students continue to lag 30 – 40 points behind Asian and white students on the standardized tests.

## What the Data Tell Us:

- **Making Progress** means the indicator has been improving over time and/or best practices are being implemented that should result in measurable improvement.
- **Losing Ground** means that the indicator is trending in the wrong direction.
- **Mixed Results** means that some aspects of the indicator are doing better while others are doing worse or that this indicator does not have trend information at this time.
Recommendations for Action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>CHA Priority</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>CHA Priority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand food and nutrition programs at school sites and outside of school time in summer, afterschool, childcare programs and at home. (This is also a priority of the CHA.*)</td>
<td>•</td>
<td>Continue to increase participation in Cal-Fresh (formerly called Food Stamps or SNAP) and take steps to prevent or ameliorate cuts to this program.</td>
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<td>Increase high-quality and affordable housing for families. (This is also a priority of the CHA.*)</td>
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<td>Create a centralized point of entry and navigation supports for families and transition-age youth experiencing unstable housing and homelessness.</td>
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<td>Make systemic changes through the California Well-Being Project that focus on prevention of abuse and neglect and on stabilizing families so that children are more likely to remain with their families and in the community whenever possible.</td>
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<td>Prioritize finding housing for families and youth who are already engaged in county support systems.</td>
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<td>Continue to divert youth from detention by providing comprehensive supports in the community.</td>
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<td>Develop a system to identify and support children whose parents are incarcerated.</td>
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<td>Expand and improve the accessibility of high quality medical and dental services for all children in the county. (This is also a priority of the CHA.*)</td>
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<td>Ensure all youth workers understand trauma and have a healing-informed approach as they support children and families.</td>
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<td>Make sure children have opportunities to play outside and exercise, and access to healthy food.</td>
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<td>Embed Project Cornerstone in every school and youth-serving organization.</td>
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<td>Support quality universal preschool and expand quality affordable childcare. (This is also a priority of the CHA.*)</td>
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<td>Institute a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment so we can understand and work to improve children’s readiness to start school.</td>
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<td>Educate and support parents to talk, sing and read to their young children.</td>
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<td>Address chronic absenteeism by putting data and support systems in place that help schools identify and assist children who miss 10% or more days of school.</td>
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<td>Promote the development of early math skills in preschool and at home.</td>
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<td>Ensure schools have a positive school climate that supports the non-academic needs of students and families.</td>
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<td>Implement proven strategies to support proficiency in English by students who are English Learners.</td>
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<td>Provide college enrollment support services including affordable SAT/ACT preparation programs and financial support for college application fees.</td>
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<td>Create a college-going culture at school from kindergarten through high school.</td>
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<td>Promote the Seal of Biliteracy to students at all high schools in order to encourage students to become proficient in more than one language.</td>
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<td>Establish early warning systems to identify youth who are off-track for graduation and develop individualized learning plans to help them get back on track.</td>
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<td>Establish an assessment/diagnosis center to identify and prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs and support youth who have been exposed to these substances.</td>
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<td>Make those students who are ready to re-engage in education or employment, “first in line” to receive services for housing, child care, transportation and behavioral health.</td>
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<td>Develop coordinated transition plans that support children as they move from preschool to elementary school.</td>
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<td>Ensure youth have meaningful adult relationships that support their education and employment journey to adulthood and success in life.</td>
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<td>Fund evidence-based afterschool programs, academic tutoring and summer programming for children who need additional support to meet academic benchmarks.</td>
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<td>Change policies related to juvenile court record-sealing in order to support youth and young adults’ access to employment.</td>
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<td>Support investments that increase family engagement and leadership at school.</td>
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**Children’s Health Assessment (CHA)** In 2015, Board of Supervisors President Dave Cortese called upon the Health and Hospital System to conduct a new assessment of the health and well-being of children in Santa Clara County. The CHA collected new data through interviews, focus groups as well as surveys of parents, community members and key stakeholders. A set of seven top priorities were identified and most are highlighted in this report. For more information go to www.sccgov.org.
Life Course Framework

On Track

Healthy Pregnancy and Birth
Preterm Birth/Low Birth Weight
Ready for School
Not Ready for School
Proficient in 3rd Grade Reading and Math Skills
Not Proficient in 3rd Grade Reading and Math Skills
Proficient in Social-emotional Skills
Not Proficient in Social-emotional Skills
Behavior Problems & Discipline (antisocial behavior,

Off Track

0-5
6-11
The Life Course Framework provides a structured way to understand what leads to a child’s success along each stage of their life path. It emphasizes that there is not one “make or break” point of investment in children’s lives, but that the key factor is for the community to invest early in children’s lives, and to continue that support, if we want to get and keep them on track.

This model of the Life Course Framework is based on Arnold Chandler’s “A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Boys and Men of Color.” For more on this framework visit www.forwardchangeconsulting.com.
There are 436,680 children in Santa Clara County.

Children in Immigrant Families

The county’s foreign-born parent population includes those who are naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants, humanitarian migrants or unauthorized migrants and represent five of the top six countries whose citizens come to the United States: Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam and China.¹

Nationwide, 88% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens.² Children of immigrants are more likely to be low-income than other children. When they live in linguistically isolated households – in which no person age 14 or older speaks English “very well” – they often confront difficulty accessing health care, safety net supports, and quality education.

Additionally, immigration regulations can negatively affect children. The fear of deportation of a parent can prevent families from accessing public benefits and supports such as Medi-Cal and actual deportation creates economic hardship for families as well as exacerbates mental health problems in children.

13% of children live in linguistic isolation.³

24% of children enrolled in Santa Clara County schools are English Language learners.³

62% live with one or more parent who was born in another country.³
Poverty and the Economics of Living in Santa Clara County

Poverty in Santa Clara County
The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 9% of Santa Clara County children lived in households with income that fell below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The FPL is $24,300 for a family of four – two adults living with one preschooler and one school-age child. Eligibility for many public support programs is based on factoring a percentage of the FPL. For example, Federal Free School lunch eligibility is 130% of the FPL, and the Reduced Price lunch program is based on a family earning 185% of the FPL. This family will qualify for the Reduced Price Lunch program only if they earn no more than $44,955 annually.

The Cost of Living in Santa Clara County
The high cost of living in Santa Clara County creates enormous challenges as we endeavor to make every child safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life. The Insight Center for Community Economic Development has estimated that to meet basic needs without public or private assistance, a family of four in Santa Clara County needs a household income of $81,774. This estimate is known as the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard. The gulf between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and the Federal Poverty Level in Santa Clara County is sobering. Even more startling is that a minimum wage job in San Jose – $10.40 per hour or $21,632 annually – does not meet the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four, much less the self-sufficiency standard.

The Economics of Neighborhoods
The Human Development Index on page 10 (Figure 4) shows how neighborhoods in Santa Clara County vary in terms of opportunity to graduate from high school and attend college, and ultimately earn an income to be self-sufficient. A neighborhood’s HDI score varies from a high of 9.3 in Northern Santa Clara County to a low of 4.9 in East San Jose (the top HDI score is 10). This score correlates to the median income of the people who live in the neighborhood.
By the Numbers

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<td>$150,000 or higher</td>
<td>$131,108</td>
<td>$128,119</td>
<td>$109,884</td>
<td>$81,774</td>
<td>$62,923</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under $25,000</td>
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<td>$31,005</td>
<td></td>
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Full-time Salary at minimum wage ($10.40 per hour)

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a Family of Four

Reduced Cost Lunch Eligibility (185% of FPL)

Free School Lunch Eligibility (130% of FPL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>HD Index</th>
<th>Less than High School</th>
<th>At Least Bachelor’s</th>
<th>Median Earnings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cupertino, Saratoga Cities &amp; Los Gatos Town</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>$85,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View, Palo Alto &amp; Los Altos</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>$61,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyvale &amp; San Jose (North)</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>$58,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Southwest/Almaden Valley)</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>$52,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose (Northwest) &amp; Santa Clara</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>$48,974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose (West Central) &amp; Campbell</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>$45,756</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose City (South Central/Branham) &amp; Cambrian Park</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>$44,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milpitas &amp; San Jose (Northeast)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>$41,801</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Southeast/Evergreen)</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>$41,663</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Central)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<td>Gilroy, Morgan Hill &amp; San Jose (South)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>$33,855</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose City (East Central) &amp; Alum Rock</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>$31,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Northwest)</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>$30,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (East Central/East Valley)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>$24,877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3 – Income Distribution in Santa Clara County

Figure 4 – Human Development Index (See description on page 9)
Addressing Race and Inequity in Santa Clara County

Despite the good intentions of Santa Clara County community leaders and policy makers, data about how the county’s children are faring provides us with a narrative that illustrates inequities based on race and ethnicity. Here are a few data points for Santa Clara County that demonstrate these inequities:

• 17% of African American and 16% of Latino children live at or below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) of $24,300 for a family of four. Only 4% of Asian and white children live at or below the FPL.

• There has been a 73% decrease in juvenile arrests since 2009, however 77% of those being arrested are Latino or African American despite making up only 38% of the population.

• Since 2008, there has been a 40% decline in children entering foster care. However there are still stark racial inequities. White children enter foster care at a rate of 1.3 per thousand children and Asian children enter at a rate 0.4 per thousand. Latino, Native American and African American children enter at a rate of 4.5, 7.2 and 12.4 per thousand children, respectively.

• The percent of Latinos and African Americans who meet or exceed the standards for math and English on standardized tests lag 30-40 points behind white and Asian students.

• 77% of Asian and 64% of white students graduated with the a-g requirements, an indicator of college readiness. Only 31% of African American and 30% of Latino students did.

• 5% of white students and 3% of Asian students left high school without graduating. In contrast, 15% of African American and 21% Latino students left school without graduating.

“Racial equity results when you cannot predict an outcome by race. It is quantifiable and measurable.” The Race Matters Institute
Historical Racism and its Legacy of Structural Racism

Neighborhoods Matter
Segregation of children into poor neighborhoods has historical roots that have been coded into the genetic material of this country. These policies go back to the forced removal of native people from their ancestral lands, slavery, and the Jim Crow South which left African-ancestry families behind the growing middle class. After World War II, lending and real-estate practices of “red-lining” excluded people of color and established “white only” neighborhoods. The GI Bill supported education and accumulation of assets for white veterans but not for African American and Latino veterans.

Today, one can see the legacy of these practices and policies in San Jose’s neighborhoods. Some neighborhoods are well-lit, tree-lined, and have safe places to play. But others are pot-holed, dark, littered, and lack parks or other safe and clean places to play. These differences don’t go unnoticed by many of those who live here. One participant in the Children’s Health Assessment survey said, “What makes me sad is that the areas in which people have more money, they have lots of parks. We are in a poorer area with more young kids who really need those parks.”

Education Matters
Another consequence of these structural policies and practices is the historical segregation of African American and Latino children into poorly resourced schools. In “Brown at 60,” The Civil Rights Project writes about segregation by race and poverty that still exists throughout the United States. Here in Santa Clara County, 56% of Latino students – about 60,000 – attend schools where 10% or fewer of the students are white. (Whites make up 24% of and Latinos make up 36% of the child population.) Eighty-one schools (out of 419) have student populations that are 80% or more Latino. Students in these schools are also low-income – a majority of these schools have more than 75% of their students on Free/Reduced Price Lunch.

Bilingual Education Matters
In 1998, the passage of Proposition 227 – which many regarded as anti-Latino and anti-immigrant – relegated English Learners to English-only immersion programs in our public schools. The Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence conducted a narrative review of 200 studies and determined that more instruction in a student’s first language over a longer period of time produced higher levels of achievement and introduces long-term cognitive benefits including increased memory and abstract reasoning skills.

The ineffectiveness and long-term negative consequences of English-only immersion programs in California have contributed to the dismal results on standardized testing and graduation rates. Only 13% of English Learners in eighth grade met or exceeded the Math Standards on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CASSP). 27% of English Learners left high school and did not receive their diploma. In November of 2016, voters’ overwhelming approval of Proposition 58 repealed the English-only requirement and will bring back bilingual education, an approach proven to be more effective.
Our Response to Adolescent Behavior Matters

Zero Tolerance policies and aggressive arrest policies that began in the 1970’s have led to significant increases in school suspensions, expulsions and juvenile arrests that have disproportionately affected Latino and African American youth. Our county schools have focused on decreasing the use of suspensions as a disciplinary tool and this has led to a 42% reduction in suspensions, from 19,970 in 2011 to 11,562 in 2014. However, 73% of these suspensions were given to Latino and African American students though they make up only 41% of the student population. This is important because one suspension triples the probability of a student’s involvement with the justice system.

Between 1973 and 2010, imprisonment rates throughout the country have more than quadrupled. This was largely due to policies that increased incarceration rates and sentence-lengths, particularly for drug-related offenses (which, it should be noted, could have been treated with a public health approach instead).

Incarceration has a harsh impact on families and children. First, an Incarcerated parent means the family is missing a wage-earner. There is a negative social-emotional impact on children when a parent is missing. When felons leave prison, they then face legal employment discrimination that often leads to decreased family earnings.

One factor behind racial inequities in California’s rates of imprisonment has been prosecutors’ ability to charge youth as adults (known as “direct file”) and to increase the seriousness of the charges by adding “gang enhancements.” In 2015 in Santa Clara County, 158 youth were eligible for direct file based on their charges. The data shows that 17% of African American youth who were eligible for direct file were charged as adults and 19% of eligible Latino youth were charged as an adult. Only 12% of Asian youth and 4% of white youth who were eligible for direct file were charged as an adult.

Adolescent brain development should be taken into consideration when charging youth as adults or adding gang enhancement charges. Instead of increasing the charges, we should take a rehabilitative approach to these young offenders. The recent passage of Proposition 57 will move the decision about whether a young person should be charged as an adult from the district attorney’s office to the courts. It is hoped this will lead to fewer youth being formally charged as adults because prosecutors must make direct file decisions within 48 hours of arrest, without the statutory parameters that guide juvenile court judges when making these determinations.

Implicit Bias Matters

According to The Kirwan Institute implicit bias is defined as “the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner, encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control, and do not necessarily align with our declared beliefs or even reflect stances we would explicitly endorse.”

The well-known Implicit Association Test (IAT, https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/) shows how implicit bias works. Among respondents who took the test, whites found it easier to quickly pair a positive word (e.g., happy, honest) with a white face and a negative word (e.g., violent, angry) with an “African American” face. Interestingly, IAT respondents of color were also more likely to associate “white” faces with more positive dispositions.

The implication is that when two pieces of information are so closely associated and reinforced by one’s surroundings, the uncoupling requires extra time. Everyone is vulnerable to this type of bias, and it is easy to see how it can lead to inequitable outcomes for children of color.
Addressing Racial Inequity

Utilize data to identify implicit bias and structural/institutional racism. There are many decision points and decision-makers that can be influenced by both structural racism and implicit bias when a young person is disciplined at school, arrested or enters into foster care. One place to begin to address inequity in our community is by gathering data that will help us understand when these factors are in play. Data, collected at key decision-making points in our education, justice and child welfare systems, disaggregated by race and ethnicity, allows us to analyze the factors that may be leading to disparate outcomes for our youth and families of color. This requires investment of time, money and other resources, but can be one of the most effective ways to move the needle on racial and ethnic disproportionate results.

Identify strategies and target resources to address root causes of inequities.

While it may seem like too large a task to address the structural or institutional barriers to achieving equitable outcomes for people of all races, ethnicities and incomes, it can be done. We can invest in schools and provide financial and social supports to help families thrive. We can invest in improving the physical environment and remake neighborhoods so that there isn’t a visible divide between poor and rich neighborhoods. Current and future policies that are created around schools, health care and resource allocation can be analyzed for implicit bias and should be based in principles that take into account the racial inequities that exist within our communities.

An example of how this can work happened here in Santa Clara County. In 2005, community leaders made a decision to provide health insurance to all children who live here regardless of race, ethnicity or immigration status. This required a significant financial investment and, perhaps even more difficult, changing practices that created barriers to insurance enrollment. Today, as a result of those investments and practice changes, we have a system where a remarkable 96% of children in our county – no matter their race or ethnicity – have health insurance. And 96% of families reported they had a regular source of health care for their children.12

Focus on Racial Healing

We have a long history in the United States that has created a false hierarchy of human value based on race, class, religion, and immigration status. The effect of this false hierarchy is evident all around us – in our policies, hiring decisions, education and bureaucracies – and it results in poorer outcomes for children in Santa Clara County. It creates one of the greatest obstacles to our goal of having a community where every child is safe, healthy, and successful in learning and life.

In order to achieve racial equity, we need to address the root causes of inequity and heal the wounds of racism. The Walter K. Kellogg Foundation provides an example of this by placing “truth and racial healing” at the center of its work. The foundation has created tools and resources designed to bring members of the community together to talk openly about the role of race in their lives. By overcoming past differences and implementing strategies that will heal the wounds and address inequities, we can create more nurturing environments. Santa Clara County should adopt this model, working towards creating a community that understands the complex roots of racial inequity. To do so will allow us to stand together and make the investments and changes necessary to transform our systems and achieve equity.

Address structural and institutional racism, discrimination, harassment, and biases across systems (health, education, criminal justice, and other service sectors) that contribute to inequitable outcomes for children and their families. – A top priority of the 2016 Santa Clara County Children’s Health Assessment

Santa Clara County Office of Cultural Competency

The County Executive Office of Cultural Competency (OCC) was established in 2013 with the mission to support County Agencies and Departments to adopt and implement culturally responsive practices. The OCC’s mandate is also to plan, organize, adopt, monitor, and evaluate programs and policies to effectively dismantle disproportionalities affecting ethnic children and youth in the child-welfare and juvenile-justice systems. The OCC supports the Inter-Cultural Competency Advisory Council which is informing this work and is committed to further developing the underlying work of healing at the community level and through county system-community partnerships. For more information, contact Arcel Blume at Arcel.Blume@ceo.sccgov.org.
The Power of Two-Generation Approaches

Children look to their families to provide them with safety, stability and love. Parents are their first teachers. However, too often, programs designed to improve outcomes for children and families – particularly low-income children and families – focus only on the child or the parent rather than programs that incorporate both. Two-generation approaches have been shown to put the entire family on a path to economic security and well-being.

The Aspen Institute’s Ascend initiative promotes two-generation approaches. Ascend encourages a focus on education, economic supports, social capital, health, and well-being for both the child and the parent in order to move the whole family to long-term economic security.

The components of this intergenerational cycle of opportunity are:

**Economic supports** during a child’s early years can have a lasting impact on his or her life. It has been shown that as little as an additional $3,000 family income per year, when a child is young, is associated with a 17% increase in the child’s future earnings. It is also important to help families develop assets, such as savings accounts, which are essential to managing unexpected financial setbacks and build economic security.

**Social capital** is the formal and informal networks of families, friends, neighbors and institutions that help a family develop meaningful connections and build economic security. As families’ networks expand, resources and support also grow. Families can develop social capital through career coaches, mentors, case managers, family, friends, neighbors, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, leadership/empowerment programs and through connections and engagement in their children’s schools.

**Health and well-being** is a critical component to two-generation approaches because physical and mental health has a major impact on a family’s ability to thrive. Health and well-being include access to health insurance and a place to receive routine health care, mental health supports, preventing toxic stress, and support to build strong parent-child relationships and family planning. Many struggling parents experienced trauma in childhood that will have an impact on their own ability to parent, and there must be healing to support a positive relationship with their children. Studies have shown that parents who have health insurance are more likely to seek care for themselves and their children.

“For us, it’s fundamental that if the goal is to get good outcomes for children, you have to work with their parents. And, if you want good outcomes for parents, you have to recognize that they are parents and build in attention and recognition for the role of the children.” – Mark Greenberg, Acting Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Every Child Safe

Safety is integral to a child’s healthy growth and development. Children raised in safe and stable homes are more likely to be healthy, successful in learning and successful in life. Children who face challenges in their home environment such as unstable housing or food insecurity, family violence or parents with mental health or substance use issues are more likely to drop out of school, become engaged in the juvenile justice system and need government supports as adults.¹⁴

Recommendations for Action

Child Hunger
- Expand food and nutrition programs at school sites and outside of school time in summer, afterschool, childcare programs and at home. *(This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*
- Continue to increase participation in Cal-Fresh (formerly called Food Stamps or SNAP) and take steps to prevent or ameliorate cuts to this program.

Child and Family Homelessness
- Increase high-quality and affordable housing for families. *(This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*
- Create a centralized point of entry and navigation supports for families and transition-age youth experiencing unstable housing and homelessness.
- Prioritize finding housing for families and youth who are already engaged in county support systems.

Children in Foster Care
- Make systemic changes through the California Well-being Project that focus on prevention of abuse and neglect and on stabilizing families so that children are more likely to remain with their families and in the community whenever possible.

Juvenile Justice Engagement
- Continue to divert youth from detention by providing comprehensive supports in the community.
- Develop a system to identify and support children whose parents are incarcerated.
By the Numbers

Figure 5 – Percent of Children in Food Insecure Households

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 – Children Eligible and Participating in Free/Reduced Price Meal Programs (FRP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children Eligible for Subsidized Meals</td>
<td>92,742</td>
<td>84,691</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in FRP Lunch</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in FRP Breakfast</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Summer Feeding Programs</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7 – Number of Homeless Children, Youth and Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied Minors</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeless Families</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8 – Children in Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity (per 1,000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9 – Number of Juvenile Citations/Arrests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Arrests</td>
<td>14,663</td>
<td>3,587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felony Arrests</td>
<td>3,615</td>
<td>1,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juvenile Hall Detentions</td>
<td>2,003</td>
<td>1,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation Violations</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview

A safe and stable home is vital to children’s physical and mental health and their capacity to learn. There is disproportionate representation of Latino and African American children in both the child welfare and juvenile justice system. It is important that we look at the data and strategies for change through a lens that considers how to end disparities.

Key findings from research conducted by the National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP) describe a relationship between low family income and family stability. The findings show higher risk factors for depression, substance use and domestic violence in low-income families. NCCP recommends promising strategies that include integrating family support systems, early childhood education, substance use prevention and mental health services.15

Children’s lives evolve within families, schools and communities. We increase the ability of families to support their children’s success when we support families’ health and well-being, make schools capable of linking families with appropriate programs and services, and ensure that our communities are safe.

Working Collectively to Make Every Child Safe

The following collaborative or community efforts are working to make every child safe:

- The Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative sccgov.iqm2.com/citizens/
- The Juvenile Justice Commission www.scscourt.org
- The Child Well-Being Project Contact jennifer.puthoff@ssa.sccgov.org
- Santa Clara County Child Abuse Council sccgov.iqm2.com/citizens/
- Santa Clara County Social Services Advisory Commission sccgov.iqm2.com/citizens/
- Santa Clara County Safety Net Meeting Contact Michelle.Campos@ssa.sccgov.org
- Step Up Silicon Valley stepupsv.org

Bill of Rights for Every Child Safe

Children and youth have a right to a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.

Children and youth have a right to have their essential needs met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care and accessible transportation.

Goals for Every Child Safe

- Eligible children and families are enrolled in federal food programs.
- All children and families have safe and healthy housing.
- Children remain safely in their own homes or the homes of relatives. When they do enter the child welfare system, there are few or no placement changes.
- Fewer youth are arrested for felony and misdemeanor offenses, fewer are detained and recidivism decreases.
- The racial and ethnic disparities for children in foster care and youth in juvenile probation is eliminated.
Child Hunger

Food insecurity and hunger are strongly associated with many negative outcomes for children, including:

- Maternal depression that has an impact on a young child’s social-emotional development;
- Susceptibility to illness and infection;
- Deficits in cognition, attention and behavior;
- Increased school absences, students repeating a grade, suspensions and higher rates of tardiness;
- Depressive disorders and suicidal behaviors in teenagers;
- Greater likelihood of dropping out of high school;
- Greater rates of and obesity and health problems caused by being overweight.16

**What the Data Tell Us:**

- The percent of children living in food-insecure households has decreased from 19.7% in 2012 to 17.2% in 2014.
- The percent of the children eligible for the Federal Free/Reduced Price (FRP) meal programs and who actually participate in those programs has remained flat for the past two years, at 68% in FRP lunch, 35% in FRP breakfast and 10% in the Summer Feeding program.

**Recommendation:**

Expand food and nutrition programs at school sites and outside of school time in summer, after-school, child-care programs and at home. (This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)

The county’s agencies, schools, parent groups, faith communities, policy-makers and programs (such as YMCA, libraries, Parks & Recreation Departments) can work with Second Harvest Food Bank to promote full participation in federal and local children’s nutrition programs. Expanding these services will contribute to promoting access to healthy food and ensuring that our children, particularly the most vulnerable, have what they need to thrive and learn.

With only 68% of eligible children receiving FRP lunch, 35% in FRP breakfast and 10% in the Summer Feeding program, Santa Clara County could have a significant impact on child and family hunger by increasing the rate of enrollment in these programs. Full participation in federal food programs (including CalFresh) would bring the county an additional $160 million in economic activity.17

**Recommendation:**

Continue to increase participation in Cal-Fresh (formerly called Food Stamps or SNAP) and take steps to prevent or ameliorate cuts to this program.

In a study conducted in 2012 by Children’s Health Watch, young children in families receiving SNAP (Cal-Fresh) assistance were less likely to be overweight or at risk for developmental delays. The Santa Clara County Social Services Agency has long recognized the value of partnering with Second Harvest Food Bank and other agencies to combat the effects of hunger by spreading the word about the CalFresh program and enrolling all eligible participants.

A slate of proposals from the Trump administration to decrease funding for CalFresh are likely to include new time limits, economic reductions and program restrictions. It is critical that Santa Clara County maintain a watchful eye to insure that this federal program remains intact for our low-income families and children.
A child who is or has been homeless has a greater likelihood of suffering from hunger as well as poor physical and mental health. They are also more than twice as likely to repeat a grade in school, be expelled or suspended.  

Families that experience homelessness are most often headed by a young, single woman with limited education and are likely to have experienced domestic violence or mental health problems. Often these families become homeless due to unforeseen circumstances such as a death in the family, a lost job or an unexpected expense, such as a hospital stay. In many cases families find housing and stabilize quickly, however some require more intensive assistance.

**Homeless Youth and Young Adults**

There are segments of the older youth population (unaccompanied youth) that are at greater risk of becoming homeless. These include:

- Victims of physical, verbal or sexual abuse at home;
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth;
- Former foster youth and youth exiting the juvenile justice system; and,
- Pregnant or parenting youth.

Two strategies that address homelessness for families and youth are Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) and Rapid Rehousing (RRH). PSH targets those who are chronically homeless, defined as being homeless for more than a year. Many people who are chronically homeless also need mental health services, substance use services or other medical care. RRH provides transitional housing for those who have an income but have experienced brief periods of homelessness. The goal of RRH is to create enough stability for families and youth to move into permanent housing after 18 months. RRH often serves those who have been in the foster care system or are survivors of domestic violence or human trafficking.

**McKinney-Vento**

Another measure of child and youth homelessness is the number of students served through the McKinney-Vento Act, which protects the educational rights of homeless students. The act ensures that homeless children and youth have the right to go to their school of origin the entire time they are homeless. If they find permanent housing, they can finish the school year at their school of origin. Under McKinney-Vento, children can also get preschool services, free or reduced meal services, special education, before- and after-school care and many other services. McKinney-Vento expands the definition of homeless to include not only those who are unsheltered, but those who are living in temporary housing situations such as doubling up with family members, couch-surfing or staying in a hotel.

**What the Data Tell Us:**

- Between 2013 and 2015, the number of unaccompanied minors, families and transition-age youth who are homeless decreased.
- Between 2013 and 2015, the number of students identified as homeless through McKinney-Vento decreased from 4,503 to 3,709. Of these 80% were doubled up with friends or families.

**Santa Clara County Point-in-Time Homeless Census and Survey**

Every two years, Santa Clara County participates in a comprehensive count of its homeless population, as required by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This count aids Santa Clara County in its planning of programs and services, evaluation of existing efforts and allocation of future funding. The results from the 2017 survey were not available in time for this report. The data below reflects the 2015 survey:

The results of the survey found:

- 528 children under the age of 18 were living in 266 homeless families.
- There were 61 unaccompanied minors and 745 homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24 (Transition Age Youth or TAY).
- Of the TAY, 40 were parenting (51 children).
- Of the TAY, 40% reported having been in the foster care system and 31% reported having spent at least one night in jail or prison in the past month. Thirteen percent reported that their criminal record prevented them from obtaining work.
**Recommendation:**

*Increase high-quality and affordable housing for families. (This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*

In November 2016, voters approved Measure A, a $950 million general obligation bond that will support the development of permanent affordable housing for our most vulnerable populations. This includes Permanent Supportive Housing, Rapid Rehousing and Very Low Income Housing, for those who earn 31-50% of the median income. Permanent affordable housing funding by Measure A also includes housing assistance for moderate-income households and support for moderate-income, first-time homebuyers.20

For the past five years, a coalition of agencies – including Destination Home, the County of Santa Clara, the Housing Authority, the City of San Jose and many community-based partners – have worked to take collective responsibility for systematically ending homelessness. Progress has been made by establishing a centralized data-collection system and a relentless commitment to making homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. In the first 10 months of 2016, more than 1,450 formerly homeless individuals – including families and youth, veterans and those who are chronically homeless – have been housed and are still living in their homes.21

Of course, one of the greatest obstacles to find housing for low-income people is the lack of affordable units in Santa Clara County. Measure A has great promise to address this issue and provide the resources needed to end homelessness here.

**Recommendation:**

*Create a centralized point of entry and navigation supports for families and transition-age youth experiencing unstable housing and homelessness.*

In a recent informal survey of thirty community leaders and youth workers, 30 percent did not know where to send families or young adults who were sleeping in a car or park or at risk of losing their housing. Further, when volunteers utilized Google and 211 (and 211.scc.org) to find housing for people in need, the results were incomplete and inconsistent. In one search on Google, a list of 20 organizations came up with little description of which services might be most appropriate for a family’s or youth’s circumstances, leaving it up to the individual to decide who to call first.

At a time when families and young adults are facing unsafe and uncertain circumstances, it is important for them to connect quickly with a centralized system, such as a phone number or website that will route them to supportive services and the appropriate housing resource. Even better, it would be ideal if this call would lead to connection with a “navigator” who can support the family or youth until they find housing.

Not only is a centralized point of entry important, it is also important to invest in search engines to have this point of contact be the “first up” number when a person searches for housing supports. The number and website should also be widely advertised on buses, transit kiosks and other visible locations. Educators, social services workers and others who work with families and children should be educated about this resource number and services available through McKinney-Vento.

**Recommendation:**

*Prioritize finding housing for families and youth who are already engaged in county support systems.*

Not having housing can be a significant barrier to parents who want to reunite with their children in the foster care system. These parents should be prioritized for housing so they can become a family again. Additionally, youth and young adults who are leaving the foster care, juvenile and adult justice systems often do not have a plan for housing before they exit the system. Effective transition-planning from the child welfare and justice systems and substance treatment programs can identify those at-risk of homelessness. This planning would facilitate linkages to needed housing and other supports to avoid homelessness and end costly recycling through the service systems.
Children who are victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to suffer from depression, attempt suicide, use alcohol and drugs and demonstrate learning and behavioral difficulties in school. They are also more likely to commit crimes, mistreat their own children and become involved in domestic violence as adults.

Separation from a primary caregiver can also be traumatic for children, especially those under the age of six. Therefore it is important that children be taken away from those caregivers only when their safety is truly at risk. When we provide supports to families at the first sign of chronic stress, we can prevent their entry into the child welfare system.

**Recommendation:**

*Make systemic changes through the California Well-being Project that focus on prevention of abuse and neglect and on stabilizing families so that children are more likely to remain with their families and in the community whenever possible.*

More than 80% of the children entering the foster care system are removed from their families because parents or guardians are charged with “child neglect.” In these cases, the parents may be experiencing mental health issues or substance abuse issues, or are otherwise unable to provide their child with a safe and stable environment. Separation from a parent can be as traumatizing as the neglect itself, so, if possible, it is important to take steps to support families and keep their children safe without removing the child. When children are removed from the home, it is important to make their placement stable and with extended family members if possible, so that there is no risk of school disruption or a sense of uncertainty for the child.

Many times, calls to the county’s child abuse hotline do not rise to the level of an official report of abuse or neglect. In these cases, however, families may still need support. By differentiating the level of risk among families that are under stress, community-based services can be offered to families that have lower risk factors without further involvement in the child.

**What the Data Tell Us:**

- After a 40% decline in children entering foster care between 2008 and 2012, the percent of children entering foster care has remained fairly flat.
- Racial and ethnic disparities have improved, but still remain high.

The California Well-Being Project

Santa Clara County is participating in the California Well-Being Project, a state waiver, granting the county greater flexibility in how it spends funds dedicated to child safety and well-being. Prior to the waiver, most child welfare funding was focused on children who were removed from their families and placed in foster care. The waiver allows the Santa Clara County Department of Family and Children’s Services to explore different ways of improving results for children and families. It will enable our county to create a system that focuses on strengthening families and supporting the development of protective factors for children and families. These include:

- Strong social connections;
- Knowledge of parenting and child development;
- Social and emotional competence of children;
- Nurturing and attachment;
- Parental and child resilience; and
- Concrete support for parents.

Implementation of the California Well-Being Project in Santa Clara County will have an impact in both child welfare and juvenile probation. In child welfare, resources will be directed towards establishing a collection of practice strategies and concrete tools that will improve family participation and create more equitable decision-making processes, ultimately increasing child safety without an overreliance on out-of-home care. Probation will focus on increasing wraparound services to youth and their families. (Wraparound is a family-centered, needs-driven practice that offers individualized alternative services to youth in high-level group home placements, or to those at risk of group home placement.)
Important Santa Clara County Resources to Help Families Be Safe and Stable

Family Resource Centers
FIRST 5 has established Family Resource Centers (FRCs) throughout Santa Clara County that increase access to services and provide opportunities for parents/caregivers to become more engaged in their children’s healthy development, school readiness, and other collaborative efforts to improve their lives and the communities in which they live. Activities at the FRCs include:

- Fun and educational parent and child activities
- Nutrition, health and wellness programs for the whole family
- Health insurance application assistance – Eligible parents and caregivers receive application assistance for Medi-Cal and other affordable health insurance programs for children
- Developmental screenings for children from birth through age five
- Professional development opportunities, resources, and other support services for licensed family child care providers.
- Parent and caregiver workshops and seminars including Triple P – Positive Parenting Program, SEEDS of Early Literacy and more.
- Family Engagement Advisory Committees provide leadership opportunities for parents, caregivers, and community members.
- Volunteer Opportunities for parents, caregivers, and community members to assist with programs and activities.

For more information on the FRCs, including location addresses and a map, visit www.first5kids.org, and under Parenting Resources click on Family Resource Centers.

Two Efforts Focused on Improving Community Safety and Well-Being
The Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit, funded by the county, utilizes a public health approach to foster community cohesion and provide services to neighborhoods with high juvenile criminal activity. This strategy in two neighborhoods – one in east San Jose and one in Gilroy – is working to engage and develop local leadership through resident-led community improvement projects, parent and youth leadership opportunities, afterschool and summer programming and service coordination for local health, healing and wellness activities.

To learn more, contact Charmayne Moran at Charmayne.Moran@PRO.SCCGov.org.

The East San Jose PEACE Partnership, an Accountable Community for Health, is a comprehensive violence prevention effort to advance health, peace and empowerment throughout three zip codes (95116, 95122, 95127). PEACE – Prevention Efforts Advance Community Equity – addresses racial and health inequities by reducing youth, family and community violence and increasing resiliency, social, cultural capital and community assets.

The PEACE Partnership identifies, prioritizes and funds existing and new violence prevention strategies through a new infrastructure model, an Accountable Community for Health. It is one of six pilots in California supported by the California Accountable Communities for Health Initiative which aims to assess the feasibility, effectiveness and value of a more expansive prevention-oriented health system. To learn more, contact Andrea Flores Shelton at Andrea.FloresShelton@phd.sccgov.org.
Juvenile Justice Engagement

While many youth will have a single arrest and never become reengaged in the juvenile justice system, others have a very lengthy involvement within the system. Justice-engaged youth often suffer a lifetime of low educational achievement and marginal attachment to the labor force. Those living in low-income areas with sub-standard housing that lack quality education and access to meaningful employment are also more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system. While many youth will have a single arrest and never become reengaged in the juvenile justice system, others have a very lengthy involvement within the system. Justice-engaged youth often suffer a lifetime of low educational achievement and marginal attachment to the labor force. Those living in low-income areas with sub-standard housing that lack quality education and access to meaningful employment are also more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system. Decreasing the juvenile arrest rate involves both decreasing the number of youth who enter the system and decreasing the number of youth who re-enter or become more deeply involved with it (either through violation of probation or by committing another crime).

What the Data Tell Us:

- Since FY 2009, arrests and violations of probation have decreased by 76%, felony arrests and juvenile hall detentions have decreased by 68% and 43% respectively.
- Racial and ethnic disparities remain significant. African American and Latino youth comprise only 38% of the youth population, but are 77% of those arrested.

Recommendation:
Continue to divert youth from detention by providing comprehensive supports in the community.

Detention in the juvenile justice system is associated with poor education outcomes for youth, recidivism and eventual entry into the adult justice system. A 2009 study done by the American Academy of Pediatrics shows that youth who spend time in a juvenile detention facility are more likely to die a violent death, with a mortality rate more than four times that of the general population. Another study found that “youth who had been involved in the juvenile justice system were seven times more likely to have adult criminal records than youth with the same backgrounds and self-reported delinquency, but no juvenile court record.” It states that “the more restrictive and more intense the justice system intervention was, the greater was its negative impact.”

Over the past several years, Santa Clara County has had great success in decreasing engagement in the justice system and increasing community supports for youth who have committed crimes. For example, the Direct Referral Program provides early screening, assessment, prevention and intervention services to youth who are first-time offenders and their families. Instead of a formal arrest, a referral is made to a community-based organization that is able to provide an array of support services.

Another program that shows promise to reduce recidivism is the Court-Appointed Friend and Advocate (CAFA) program, a partnership between the courts, the probation department, and the community-based program Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY). Modeled on the court-appointed advocate program for youth in the child welfare system, CAFA volunteers receive 32 hours of training and provide advocacy for the youth in the court setting.

Recommendation:
Develop a system to identify and support children whose parents are incarcerated.

Recent studies have demonstrated that nationwide, more than 5 million children – one in 14 – have had a parent behind bars. One in eight poor children and one in nine African American children have a parent who has been incarcerated. This can lead to increased emotional and behavioral difficulties, poor academic performance and a higher likelihood of experiencing trauma. Given these poor outcomes and the disproportionate incarceration of African American and Latino men, one cannot help but wonder how this impacts the disparities in health and well-being outcomes we see in our community.

A first step in Santa Clara County is to establish a baseline count of children whose parents are engaged in the justice system and identify schools or neighborhoods that would benefit from increased supports and services. Some of these supports may be emotional and behavioral to help deal with the trauma of seeing a parent arrested and the stigma of having an incarcerated parent. Other supports may be basic such as dealing with the financial instability of having an incarcerated parent, helping children find their parents and maintaining family unity by supporting visits and telephone calls. It is also important to provide adequate supports to incarcerated parents when they come back to the community.

County programs such as School Linked Services, the California Well-being Project and the Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit all have a role to play in supporting these children and helping them stay on a trajectory to positive outcomes.
Improving Results for Dually Involved Youth (DIY)

Research has clearly established that victims of abuse and neglect are at increased risk for entering the juvenile justice system.\(^3^1\) One study revealed that delinquency rates for youth with at least one substantiated allegation of maltreatment were 47\% higher than for youth with no abuse history.\(^3^2\) Here in Santa Clara County, a recent review of data revealed that 55\% of youth on probation had at least one referral to the child welfare system. The increased risk of delinquency can be explained by a multitude of complex factors. Common adolescent misbehavior that would typically be dealt with by parents at home is quickly brought to the attention of law enforcement for youth living in a group home. For example, a youth who goes for a joyride in his parent’s car may have consequences not related to the juvenile justice system. When a youth in foster care takes the group home’s van out for a joyride, they are almost always cited by law enforcement. Other challenging behaviors that may bring a young person in foster care to the attention of law enforcement are often the manifestation of unprocessed trauma.\(^3^3\)

In June 2014, the Dually Involved Youth (DIY) Unit was officially launched. In this unit, teams composed of a social worker, probation officer and a youth advocate provide holistic services tailored to the needs of the youth. One youth served by the unit said in a survey that this was the first time she “felt the probation officer and social worker really understood” her needs and were responding to her complex history.\(^3^4\) The Board of Supervisors see the promise of this approach and in the 2016 budget process invested to expand the program so more youth will be served in the coming year.

The Beat Within

The Beat Within gives incarcerated youth the opportunity to share their ideas and life experiences in a safe space that encourages literacy, self-expression, some critical thinking skills, and healthy, supportive relationships with adults and their community. For more information visit www.thebeatwithin.org.

I’m More than Just a Nobody

I believe we all make mistakes and it doesn’t make us any better when we blame someone else for those mistakes.

In order for me to change I would really have to get away from everybody no matter now much it hurts.

This life is crazy and a lot of people seem to look at me like I’m a nobody. Seems like people want to see you do good but never better than them.

A lot of young ninjas don’t realize that no matter now hard you fall, you can always get back up. We all have things we have to work on but before we can start on that we have to put the bullshhh to the side.

I’ve disappointed a lot of people specially my parents, but once I get back on my feet, those are the first people that will come up with me.

Doesn’t matter if I’m locked up right now, I will make the best out of it. Once I get out I will prove to people I’m more than just a nobody, I’m the future.

Eddie
Santa Clara County
Juvenile Hall

Figure 11 – Ethnicity of Youth at Arrest (Nov, 2016)
Every Child Healthy

Physical health sets the stage for healthy development in childhood and later years. Physical and mental health outcomes for children and youth include normal growth and development, minimum disability from acute and chronic diseases, a strong sense of self and respect for others, and positive health behavior.

Recommendations for Action

**Access to Healthcare**

❤️ Expand and improve the accessibility of high quality medical and dental services for all children in the county. *(This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*

**Health and Fitness**

❤️ Make sure children have opportunities to play outside and exercise, and access to healthy food.

**Developmental Assets**

❤️ Embed Project Cornerstone in every school and youth-serving organization

**Emotional Health and Well-being**

❤️ Adopt universal developmental milestone screenings for all children in Santa Clara County. *(This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*

❤️ Establish an assessment/diagnosis center to identify and prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs and support youth who have been exposed to these substances.

❤️ Ensure all youth workers understand trauma and have a healing-informed approach as they support children and families.
By the Numbers

Figure 12 – Percent of Children with Health Insurance

- 2009: 95%
- 2014: 97%

Figure 13 – Percent of Children with a Routine Health Check-up in the previous 12 months

- 2009: 86%
- 2014: 96%

Figure 14 – Ninth Grade Students Meeting All Six Fitness Standards

- Low Income: 32% (29% in 2014), 52% (47% in 2014)
- Not Low Income: 44% (40% in 2014)
- Overall: 40% (36% in 2014)

Figure 15 – Average Number of Developmental Assets

- 7th Grade: 23.2
- 9th Grade: 18.3
- 11th Grade: 17.3

Figure 16 – Number of Developmental Screenings Conducted with children from birth to age five

- 2013: 11,600
- 2016: 17,981
Overview

Health is influenced by many factors including genetic makeup, a healthy birth, routine access to health care, healthy foods, exercise opportunities, and healthy environments that support social-emotional development. When a child experiences positive emotional and physical health, they are able to participate fully in education and activities that will lead to a fulfilling life, making them full participants in society.

Bill of Rights for Every Child Healthy

Children and youth have a right to a healthy mind, body and spirit that enables them to maximize their potential.

Children and youth have a right to develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.

Children and youth have a right to have their essential needs met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care and accessible transportation.

Children and youth have a right to a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

Goals for Every Child Healthy

- All children have health coverage.
- Children have timely visits to the doctor and the dentist.
- Children will have access to care that addresses developmental and behavioral health needs.
- Children pass the state physical fitness test and are meeting the aerobic fitness standard.

- All children receive early developmental screenings.
- All youth report they are in the developmental asset “thriving zone.”
- Health disparities based on socioeconomic differences will be eliminated.

Working Collectively to Make Every Child Healthy

The following collaborative or community efforts are working to make every child healthy in Santa Clara County:

**Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Network**
appnsantaclaracounty@gmail.com

**City of Palo Alto Project Safety Net**
www.pspalalto.com

**City of Santa Clara Challenge Team**
hkidsf.org/our-programs/

**Mountain View – Los Altos Challenge Team**
www.challengeteam.org

**Project Cornerstone**
projectcornerstone.org

**Sunnyvale Challenge Team**
sunnyvale.ca.gov

**Santa Clara County Childhood Feeding Collaborative**
www.sccgov.org
Access to Healthcare

Routine access to health care is one of many factors that influence children’s health and well-being. Optimal health outcomes result when families have:

- Insurance and a regular place to receive care;
- Timely visits to their doctor;
- Access to specialty doctors, behavioral health services, dentists, vision and hearing specialists;
- Education about prevention measures; and,
- Relevant health screening so that health problems can be detected and treated as they emerge.

**What the Data Tell Us:**

- Insurance enrollment rates and those who report having a usual source of care is at 96% or higher for all Santa Clara County children regardless of race or ethnicity.
- Children who had a routine check-up in the past 12 months improved.

**Recommendation:**

Expand and improve the accessibility of high quality medical and dental services for all children in the county. (This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)

In 2001, a collaborative of Santa Clara County agencies and other funding organizations made a commitment to provide health insurance to all children who live here. By expanding federal, state and county funding to provide health insurance coverage for children, expanding Medi-Cal (California’s Medicaid program), increasing outreach, and simplifying the enrollment processes, the county has one of the highest insurance enrollment rates in the state and country.

Hearing and vision screening is important to children’s learning. If a child has hearing issues, it is difficult for them to learn language. If a child cannot see, it will be difficult for them to learn to read and be successful in school. Too often, many children do not have hearing or vision screenings until they enter school. This is too late. It is important that children are screened in their early years for these issues and be referred to appropriate care when problems are identified.

**An Innovative Approach to Vision Screening**

In 2013, the Healthier Kids Foundation (HKF) started screening preschoolers with a photo optic scan camera instead of the Snellen Eye Chart, the main screening tool used since 1862. The camera, first used in Mississippi and Alabama 16 years ago, identifies issues such as astigmatism and lazy eye, and allows for efficient screening.

Vision plays an important role in learning and an estimated 15 percent of school children suffer from some sort of visual impairment. Vision needs to be screened before children start school or they will start behind. HKF has so far conducted screenings for nearly 52,000 children. 13% received a referral for follow-up and HKF made sure they made it to the optometrist. As a result, 2,416 children received glasses.

With the success of the vision screenings, HKF expanded to conduct dental screenings (20,517 since February 2014) and hearing screenings (9,366 since July 2014). Children were referred to services when needed (and supported to get there). For more information go to www.hkidsf.org.
Health and Fitness

In children, good physical fitness and physical activity increases memory, concentration and energy levels that assist in learning. Almost any physical activity is sufficient as long as children are moving. Playing actively or participating in athletic or physical fitness activities during school time is important. Physical activity outside of school time, instead of watching television or playing video games, provides children with the kind of activity they need in order to be healthy. Good nutrition habits also contribute to a child’s overall health and fitness.36

The culmination of having a healthy lifestyle with opportunities to eat well and exercise can be seen in the annual California Physical Fitness tests for fifth, seventh, and ninth grade students. These tests evaluate six categories of physical fitness: aerobic capacity, body composition (based on the body mass index, or BMI) abdominal strength, trunk extension strength, upper body strength, and flexibility.

What the data tell us:
• There was a downtick in fitness levels, overall and for all racial/ethnic groups.

Recommendation:
Make sure children have opportunities to play outside and exercise, and access to healthy food.

To improve fitness levels and achieve a healthy weight, children must have access to safe places to play and healthy food choices. In many communities, crime and unsafe traffic make it difficult to go out and play or take a walk. Young children living in low-income households are more likely to be overweight, in part because families who live on a tight budget often sacrifice healthy food for inexpensive, calorie-dense and nutrition-poor fare such as fast food. This is compounded in low-income neighborhoods by lack of access to grocery stores with fresh food.35 These circumstances can be improved by ensuring that every community has a full-service market where fresh food is available and by expanding the use of CalFresh at farmer’s markets. (Formerly called Food Stamps, CalFresh is California’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also called SNAP).

Cities can address unsafe traffic issues, build safety-monitored playgrounds and provide family-friendly events in community centers, parks and other public spaces. Preschools and schools can support healthy eating by following guidelines for nutritious, healthy food choices. Afterschool programs can focus on healthy eating and physical activity. School districts can develop shared-use agreements to allow playing fields and playgrounds to be used when schools are closed. As a community, we can sponsor participation on sports teams for low-income youth. Lastly, parents can provide healthy food for their children and give them opportunities to exercise and play outside and decrease time watching television or playing computer games.
Developmental Assets

Developmental assets are the positive relationships, opportunities, values and skills that young people need to grow up to be daring, caring, responsible and ambitious about their future. These assets include dimensions such as whether youth feel supported, have good boundaries, use their time constructively, have positive values, are committed to learning, feel socially competent and have a positive identity. The Search Institute has demonstrated that the more assets youth have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk activities. In Silicon Valley, Project Cornerstone has worked to engage adults and youth to change our schools and communities into environments where all youth develop the skills for social and academic success.38

**What the Data Tell Us:**
- The average number of developmental assets increased between 1999 and 2016. Every year more schools join Project Cornerstone and more adults and students are reached. In SY 2016, 6,092 adults were working with Project Cornerstone in 312 schools reaching 65,207 students.

**Recommendation:**
*Embed Project Cornerstone in every school and youth-serving organization.*

An initiative of the Silicon Valley YMCA, Project Cornerstone’s mission is to engage adults and youth to change our schools and communities into environments where all youth develop the skills for social and academic success. Each year, it provides training and consultation to thousands of adults who regularly touch young people’s lives. Through partnership with more than 300 schools, it empowers young people, parents and staff to improve school climate and create vibrant, caring communities of learners. Over the past 15 years, the number of schools and volunteers with Project Cornerstone has been correlated with an increase of children with the developmental assets needed to thrive, as well as improvements in school climate and academic test results. For more information go to [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).

This data is a preview of the Developmental Assets Survey conducted in Fall 2016. Visit [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org) in April 2017 for the full report.

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ABC and Los Dichos

Two important Project Cornerstone programs bring parents into the classroom to help build assets and meaningful connections with students. These programs also align with the Children’s Health Assessment priority of “Support school and community based efforts to prevent bullying and violence among children.”

**Asset Building Champions (ABC)**
Parents who volunteer for the ABC program read books to students and lead classroom activities on a monthly basis. The program teaches students important life skills such as decision making, peaceful conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills. ABC parents teach students how to be “UPstanders” – to stand up for a schoolmate who is being bullied – instead of being bystanders in situations of conflict. In addition to providing meaningful opportunities for parent engagement and for students to interact with caring adults, the program helps create a common language for behavioral expectations throughout the school.

**Los Dichos de la Casa (Los Dichos)**
This Spanish-language program opens new doors for Spanish-speaking parents, to volunteer at school and be in their child’s classroom. Each month, Los Dichos volunteers read bilingual books and lead activities about Latino heritage, tolerance, family pride, peaceful conflict resolution and other important values. Students develop a sense of positive cultural identity, a greater sense of cultural competence, and respect for one another.
Emotional Health and Well-Being

A variety of factors influence emotional health and well-being. A child’s emotional health is closely linked to his or her physical health. A child’s social-emotional development can be influenced by genes, prenatal exposure to alcohol and drugs or exposure to toxic stress, especially during sensitive periods in the child’s development. Factors that support positive development include early identification and treatment of children who are having emotional problems as well as having caring relationships and positive routines and practices. It is also important for schools to have supports in place that encourage positive development and recognize behavioral challenges as a symptom of a problem instead of a behavior to be punished.

Children who are emotionally healthy have acquired skills that enable them to learn from teachers, make friends, cope with frustration and express thoughts and feelings. Important among these skills is being able to:

• Identify and understand one’s own feelings;
• Accurately read and understand the emotional states of others;
• Manage strong emotions in a constructive manner;
• Have empathy for others; and
• Establish and sustain relationships.

Children with poor social-emotional skills often display difficult or disruptive behavior in day-care programs, preschool and later when they enter school. Teachers may find it harder to teach these children, and they may see them as less socially and academically competent. Consequently, teachers may provide these children with less positive feedback. Peers may reject them, resulting in even less emotional support and fewer opportunities for learning from their classmates.

Faced with rejection by both teachers and peers, children may grow to dislike school, disengage from learning and have poor outcomes. Persistent physical aggression, drop-out rates in high school, juvenile delinquency and other anti-social behaviors are all associated with social-emotional issues.

Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for children ages 15-19. Several risk factors contribute to a youth attempting or committing suicide including substance use, incarceration and a history of mental illness or depression. Between 2005 and 2015, 203 youth in Santa Clara County, ages 10-24, took their own lives. A disturbing data point from the California Healthy Kids Assessment is that 20% of high school students reported they had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months.

There are also startling inadequacies and inequities in the mental health system. A 2014 study conducted by UCLA found that three out of four children with mental-health needs in California do not receive treatment, and a 2015 Pennsylvania State University study found that African American and low-income students were far more likely than white students to be punished instead of being offered behavioral treatment when they misbehaved.

What the Data Tell Us:

• The number of developmental screenings increased by 53% between 2013 and 2016.

Parents/Caregivers who have concerns about their child’s social, emotional, behavioral and/or physical development are encouraged to call 1-800-704-0900 and have their child referred for screening, assessment and intervention services at a nearby location in Santa Clara County.
**Recommendation:**
Adopt universal developmental milestone screenings for all children in Santa Clara County. (This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)

If we want to help young children succeed in school, it is important that we address the significant number of children who are at risk for school difficulties because their social-emotional development is off-track.

Developmental screening at baby and child check-ups, using simple, fast and accurate tools, allows for the early identification and provision of support to children who may be getting off-track. As more children are screened, we can expect them to receive services and supports that will help them stay on track in early social-emotional development. For every dollar spent on early intervention there is an associated savings of $7 to society.43

In his State of the County address in early 2013, Board of Supervisors President Ken Yeager identified the “need for more universal and more frequent developmental screenings for young children during their well-child pediatric visits.” He asked that “VMC and our clinics begin to perform routine developmental screenings for all children.” After a pilot project, where more than 20,000 children received developmental screenings, Santa Clara Valley Medical Health Center has committed to fund eight full-time licensed vocational nurses to conduct developmental screenings at all seven of Valley Health Center’s pediatric clinics.

**Recommendation:**
Establish an assessment/diagnosis center to identify and prevent prenatal exposure to alcohol and other drugs and support youth who have been exposed to these substances.

Exposure to drugs, alcohol and tobacco during pregnancy can have significant health and developmental impacts on the child.

Attention to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) – the umbrella term describing the range of effects that occur in an individual prenatally exposed to alcohol – is particularly important. The National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome estimates that 40,000 infants each year are affected by FASD. Depending on the timing and frequency of maternal alcohol consumption, outcomes from prenatal exposure may include abnormal facial characteristics, growth deficits, brain damage, attention and memory problems, hyperactivity/behavior problems, poor coordination, motor-skill delays, learning disabilities and difficulty with judgement or reasoning. More than 60% of those with FASD over age 12 have been charged with a crime, and 95% also have a mental illness.44

The challenges presented in school for these children include the need for constant supervision, disregard for rules and authority, poor social skills, inability to complete tasks as well as disruptiveness, hyperactivity, impulsivity, and attention/memory deficits.

An assessment/diagnosis center in Santa Clara County would allow health care providers to support women in abstaining from consuming alcohol and other substances during pregnancy and would help in the diagnosis of children who have FASD, allowing the implementation of strategies in school and other settings to support their success in learning and life.

**Recommendation:**
Ensure all youth workers understand trauma and have a healing-informed and families.

Many of our community’s children – especially those who are in our child welfare, juvenile justice, and behavioral health systems – have experienced trauma or chronic stress. Illuminated by the 1995-97 CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study we have begun to understand that the stressors in children’s lives impact their development, their ability to concentrate in school, and their health into adulthood. When we see behavior that is challenging – children unable to sit still or focus in class, teens shutting down or reacting aggressively or violently, young adults engaging in substance or alcohol use – we need to recognize that it may be trauma or chronic stress that is at the root of the behavior. Recognizing this is an important first step so we do not further traumatize youth by blaming, shaming, or punishing them.45

The National Latino Fatherhood and Family Institute (NLFFI) discusses how we must move beyond “trauma-informed care” and generic wraparound services and replace these with a “healing-informed” culturally specific approach that is rooted in indigenous principles and practices. “La Cultura Cura” or Cultural-Based Healing, employs a multigenerational process of learning and remembering one’s true and positive cultural values, principles, customs and traditions. NLFFI’s approach recognizes the path to healing is linked to restoring one’s true cultural identity and recognizing the origins of unhealthy and maladaptive behaviors.46

As we encounter families, children, teens and young adults who have experienced trauma, we should look towards approaches that build resiliency, recognize cultural strengths and focus on healing.
Every Child Successful in Learning

Success in learning happens when children are in good physical and mental health, live in safe and stable families and communities and are on track developmentally. Children must have educational opportunities that develop fundamental language, literacy, cognitive and social-emotional skills that are critical for lifelong learning and success. The skills that children need to grow into successful students – including capacity for reasoning, problem-solving and self-regulation – are largely developed from birth through third grade.47

Recommendations for Action

School Readiness

- Support quality universal preschool and expand quality affordable childcare. *(This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)*
- Institute a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment so we can understand and work to improve children’s readiness to start school.
- Develop coordinated transition plans that support children as they move from preschool to elementary school.

Third and Eighth Grade English Language Arts and Math Skills

- Educate and support parents to talk, sing and read to their young children.
- Promote the development of early math skills in preschool and at home.
- Implement proven strategies to support proficiency in English by students who are English Learners.
- Address chronic absenteeism by putting data and support systems in place that help schools identify and assist children who miss 10% or more days of school.
- Fund evidence-based afterschool programs, academic tutoring and summer programming for children who need additional support to meet academic benchmarks.
- Support investments that increase family engagement and leadership at school.
- Ensure schools have a positive school climate that supports the non-academic needs of students and families.
By the Numbers

Figure 18 – Access to Subsidized, High-Quality Preschool for Low-Income, and Eligible 3- and 4-year-old Children

Estimated Number of Children Living Below Poverty

- # of Head Start or State Preschool Spaces Available
  - 2014: 5,363
  - 2016: 5,435

Figure 19 – Percent of Third and Eighth Graders Meeting or Exceeding English Language Arts Standards (2016)

- 3rd Grade
  - Asian: 86%
  - White: 80%
  - Overall: 64%
- 8th Grade
  - Asian: 86%
  - White: 77%
  - Overall: 69%

Figure 20 – Percent of Third and Eighth Graders Meeting or Exceeding Math Standards (2016)

- 3rd Grade
  - Asian: 84%
  - White: 77%
  - Overall: 63%
- 8th Grade
  - Asian: 84%
  - White: 69%
  - Overall: 55%
When children enter kindergarten ready to learn, they are much more likely to remain in school and stay on track for graduation. They are also more likely to pursue postsecondary education and training, successfully transitioning to adulthood.

In Santa Clara County, student achievement varies significantly by race and ethnicity. This gap threatens the future of a large segment of students and the future well-being of our community. The factors contributing to these academic disparities are complex. To counteract their effects, we need increased learning opportunities for students from cradle to career, as well as sustained support from all sectors. It is not solely our schools’ responsibility to close the achievement gap. Students, parents, civic leaders, businesses and our community at large all have a role to play in children’s success in learning.

Bill of Rights for Every Child Successful in Learning

- Children and youth have a right to have access to a 21st Century education that promotes success in life, in future careers and a love of life-long learning.
- Children and youth have a right to training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient and contribute to their community.

Goals for Every Child Successful in Learning

- All children receive high quality early education.
- All children are ready for school.
- All children are on-track for reading and math in third and eighth grade.
- All children have access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
- Reduced the use of suspensions to manage student behavior.
- Elimination of the opportunity gap that leads to the disparity in achievement for children of color.

Working Collectively to Make Every Child Successful in Learning

The following collaborative or community efforts are working to make every child successful in learning in Santa Clara County:

**Strong Start**
strongstartsantaclara.org

**Santa Clara County Office of Education**
Safe and Healthy Schools Department
www.sccoe.org/depts/schoolhealth

**Santa Clara County School Linked Services**
www.schoollinkedservices.org
School Readiness

Being ready to start Kindergarten is important to later school success. Figure 21 shows the building blocks of school readiness and Figure 22 shows readiness profiles of children from Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties (2004-2009) and their later academic performance in third grade. When children entered kindergarten ready in all domains, they were much more likely to be proficient or advanced in third grade math and English. Those who start kindergarten behind in these readiness skills were less likely to be successful in third grade.48

High-quality early care and education improves school readiness. However, due to the high cost of quality preschool and the shortage of spaces in quality programs many children do not receive the benefits of early education. Because we do not have standardized and readily available kindergarten readiness assessment data, we are using “access to high-quality preschool” as a proxy for school readiness.

What the Data Tell Us:

- In 2016, there were only 5,435 high-quality subsidized, preschool slots to serve the needs of 11,633 eligible 3- and 4-year-olds. A slightly higher percentage of low-income children had access to preschool than in 2014.

48. Additional information and resources can be found in: "Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness," "Kindergarten Readiness Profiles for 100 Children," and "3rd Grade Achievement Profiles for 100 Children."
Recommendations for Action

**Recommendation:** Support quality universal preschool and expand quality affordable childcare. (This is also a priority of the Children’s Health Assessment.)

Nobel Laureate James Heckman wrote, “The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st Century is to invest in early childhood education and to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers.” Figure 23 draws a correlation between school readiness and attending preschool. 43% of the children who attended preschool were ready in all 4 domains of school readiness compared to only 31% who did not attend preschool. This 2013 study included 844 students from 12 schools in four San Jose school districts and was conducted by FIRST 5 and Applied Survey Research.

With the cost of center-based preschool averaging over $11,000 a year in Santa Clara County, many children are not able to attend. According to Strong Start, Santa Clara County’s early learning initiative, high-quality early learning opportunities help children get ready for kindergarten, be more likely to read by fourth grade, and be more likely to go to college. It is important that we increase the number of affordable preschool spaces so all children have access to this important opportunity.

**Recommendation:** Institute a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment so we can understand and work to improve children’s readiness to start school.

A developmentally appropriate and aligned school readiness assessment can provide useful information to teachers and administrators in order to better address children’s learning and developmental needs over time. This essential strategy can help to close the readiness gap and ensure that all children thrive in their earliest years. When the same assessment tool is used statewide, the community can see if investments in young children are paying off.

![Figure 23 – Percent of Children Strong in all Four Domains of Kindergarten Readiness](image)

**Recommendation:** Develop coordinated transition plans that support children as they move from preschool to elementary school.

Stronger links between preschool, transitional kindergarten and kindergarten help to support children’s successful entry into school. The state should support stronger links by aligning curriculum, using developmentally appropriate assessments and using data to improve instruction, both in the elementary and preschool settings. This type of system can also help parents better support their child’s development.

![Image of children smiling and laughing](image)
The ability of students to read at grade level by the time they are in third grade is a powerful indicator of later academic success. By the end of third grade, children should be able to show evidence of reading comprehension and to read unfamiliar words using various strategies such as identifying word-roots, prefixes and suffixes. Even if children are ready for school when they enter Kindergarten, it takes hard work, attentive parenting, extended learning opportunities, an effective curriculum and skilled teachers to help children become good readers. For some Santa Clara County students, especially low-income and Latino students, initial performance gaps at kindergarten actually widen by third grade.

The skills needed to understand math are key for all problem-solving. Math skills help develop logical thinking, critical reasoning and analytical acuity. They are also an important part of being proficient at playing music and are used in almost every line of work. Doing math helps students analyze complicated situations and organize them into clear, logical structure. Math is the basic language of science, engineering, technology, medicine, biology and even construction. Math skills start developing in preschool and success in math in eighth grade is the most powerful predictor of success in high school. Students who struggle with math in eighth and ninth grade are more likely to not graduate from high school.

What the Data Tell Us:
- All ethnic and racial groups experienced three- to six-point gains for all English Language Arts and Math standardized testing between 2015 and 2016.
- Latino and African American students lag 30 to 40 points behind Asian and white students on the standardized tests.

Recommendation:
Educate and support parents to talk, sing and read to their young children.

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that 90% of a child’s critical brain development happens by age five. A significant impact on the child’s language and vocabulary development occurs when parents and caregivers talk, sing, and read to their child. When infants and toddlers hear and use language – English or the language spoken at home – their brains develop the connections needed to learn how to read.

Recommendation:
Promote the development of early math skills in preschool and at home.

Children who are proficient in early math concepts by the time they enter kindergarten will do better not only in math, but in reading and language skills. Children who have poor math skills often do not catch up and may lag behind their better-prepared peers through eighth grade. Doubling the time spent (from 2% to 4%) on the intentional teaching of mathematical concepts in early education settings can lead to a significant increase in early math skills.

Early math is not about completing timed multiplication drills or using a calculator to do complex equations. The daily routines children participate in help develop early math skills, language skills and social-emotional skills. For example, when Suzie is playing with two dolls and shares one, she realizes she only has one left. Dividing a plate of cookies so that everyone gets an equal amount teaches early division skills as well as a sense of fairness and self-regulation. Playing a game together, such as Chutes ‘n Ladders, teaches counting, shapes and colors, patience, cooperation and language skills.
Recommendation:
Implement proven strategies to support proficiency in English by students who are English Learners.

Proposition 58, approved by over 73% of voters in 2016, repealed the English-only immersion requirement and waiver provisions required by 1998’s Proposition 227. This change allows schools to offer bilingual instruction if it is determined appropriate by community needs and staff capacity.

English Learners (ELs) in Santa Clara County have the lowest success rates on the Math and English Language Arts proficiency tests, with only 12% meeting the standards on the eighth grade math test. ELs also have one of the highest drop-out rates in our schools with 27% leaving school before graduation.

In Santa Clara County, we have an opportunity with the passage of Proposition 58, to improve these results. Studies show that dual immersion models of bilingual education are as effective or are more effective than English-only instruction. High quality dual immersion models offer cognitive and academic gains to both ELs and students who are learning a second language other than English. In 2006, the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE) conducted a narrative review of 200 studies and determined that more instruction in a student’s first language over a longer period of time produces higher levels of achievement and introduces long-term cognitive benefits including an increased working memory and abstract reasoning skills.

The Sobrato Early Academic Language Model (SEAL)

SEAL is a preschool through third grade model that creates the learning conditions that build language and literacy skills necessary for participation in the academic world and the world at large. SEAL is about rich, powerful language and literacy which is woven into all aspects of the school day. SEAL promotes the development of biliteracy, affirming and supporting the child’s home language and developing high levels of proficiency in both Spanish and English. The SEAL classroom brings to life the rigor and richness called for by the Common Core Language Arts Standards and the new California English Language Development standards, as well as Next Generation Science Standards.

The Sobrato Family Foundation has invested $6.6 million in the SEAL program, delivering it in these Santa Clara County districts: Berryessa, Evergreen, Franklin McKinley, Gilroy, Milpitas, Oak Grove and Santa Clara Unified. An independent external evaluation found that SEAL has a statistically significant impact on student growth and development in language, literacy and cognition. SEAL students consistently outperform demographically similar comparison groups in growth and achievement, especially in areas related to language and literacy. SEAL also has a significant impact on parents and literacy activities at home.
**Recommendation:** Address chronic absenteeism by putting data and support systems in place that help schools identify and assist children who miss 10% or more days of school.

School attendance starting in the early grades plays a significant role in student success. A child who is absent more than 10% of the time – for whatever reason – is less likely to be on-target for reading and math skill development as shown in Figure 24.99

Schools should monitor chronic absenteeism, identify and support children who are chronically absent. When students are identified as chronically absent, a few simple actions have been shown to reduce attendance issues:

- Educate parents about the importance of attendance;
- Encourage families to help each other improve their children’s attendance;
- Offer incentives for attendance to all children; and,
- Conduct early outreach to families with poor attendance, and, as appropriate, provide case-management to address social, medical, economic and academic needs.90

**Recommendation:** Fund evidence-based afterschool programs, academic tutoring and summer programming for children who need additional support to meet academic benchmarks. Children from middle- and high-income families have much greater access to extended learning activities than children from low-income families.

Children need meaningful learning and enrichment experiences during the summer months in order to be on track when they return to school in the fall. Figure 25 shows how low-income children without ongoing summer opportunities to reinforce and learn skills can fall behind dramatically.61 While there is no difference in learning rates between low-income and higher-income students during the school year, summer learning loss accounts for two-thirds of the achievement gap by ninth grade.62

![Figure 25 – Summer Learning Loss](image-url)
**Recommendation**

Support investments that increase family engagement and leadership at school.

Parents and caregivers are a child’s first teachers and can continue in this role as children enter early education and elementary school reinforcing learning at home. Family engagement should include a welcoming school environment, effective school-family communications, and meaningful resources for families such as offering parent workshops on how to support their student’s learning. Other family engagement investments include professional development for teachers and staff, a family center on campus, and family outreach workers.

**Recommendation:**

Ensure schools have a positive school climate that supports the non-academic needs of students and families.

Research has demonstrated that second only to family, school is the most important and stabilizing force in the lives of young people. In Santa Clara County, many students arrive at school with social and health needs that can become barriers to learning. When academic and support services are coordinated around school communities, students thrive, parents are more engaged in their children’s education, families have greater access to community services and students have higher levels of academic achievement.

**Principles of Family Engagement**

The following principles of family engagement were developed by the Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan’s Family Engagement and Leadership Committee:

- **Partnership**
  The reciprocal relationship between families and staff is one of equality and respect, resulting in the creation of a mutually beneficial partnership. Success comes from promoting the excellence of all partners.

- **Family Strengths**
  Families are assets, not obstacles to overcome or work around. They are vital resources to their students, to one another, and to programs.

- **Social Support**
  Social support networks create connections and build relationships, promoting the overall well-being of the child, the family and the community.

- **Cultural Competence**
  Each family’s culture is recognized, valued, respected and reflected in practice.

- **Shared Leadership and Power**
  Families and school staff are partners in decisions that affect their children. Families can also advocate for change in district policy and decision-making.

- **Shared Responsibility**
  All community members recognize that learning begins at birth and occurs in multiple settings. All take responsibility for expanding learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

- **Child Success**
  Families, staff, and community members collaborate so children have access to opportunities that equitably support their success and health.
Santa Clara County Initiatives Supporting Students’ Non-Academic Needs

Santa Clara County Office of Education's Safe and Healthy Schools Department (SHSD)

Strong academic skills alone are not enough to lead a child to a productive, fulfilling adulthood and create a lifelong love of learning. When students are engaged, feel safe and are connected to the adults in their school, the elements needed for learning are present.

SHSD provides a variety of services, supports and training opportunities to help create a positive school culture that supports learning. Trainings include topics such as bullying prevention, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS – see below), Restorative Practices, and tobacco use prevention. The department is also leading the county’s work to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data is used to ensure every student receives the appropriate level of support to be successful. In MTSS, School Linked Services and PBIS become part of a web of supports that meet children and families where they are and help teachers be able to work for the success of every child. Santa Clara County is piloting MTSS in the East Side Union High School District and the Morgan Hill Unified School District.63

For more information about SCCOE’s Safe and Healthy Schools Department and its programs visit www.sccoe.org/depts/schoolhealth.

School Linked Services (SLS)

Funded by Santa Clara County and school districts, the SLS program is designed to support students in 11 elementary, middle and high school districts across Santa Clara County. Thirty-one SLS coordinators, some at the individual school level and others at the district level, provide coordinated services on school campuses with the goal of improving the overall health and well-being of the student. Specifically, SLS targets young people and their families who experience economic, social and other inequities that directly affect learning and success in school.

SLS strategies for success include:

- Provide culturally competent, coordinated services that meet the students’ needs with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention;
- Build stronger relationships between parents or caregivers and the teachers and schools;
- Foster a positive school climate and culture;
- Make schools into community hubs and build local services and supports; and
- Use data to facilitate and inform services, track results and improve interventions.

SLS helps schools become a place where youth and their families can find a network of preventive services. This enables all young people to become healthy, responsible and successful adults.64

For more information visit www.schoollinkedservices.org.

Positive Behaviors, Interventions and Support (PBIS)

Supported in Santa Clara County by SHSD and SLS, PBIS is a systematic approach for establishing a supportive school culture and individualized behavioral supports and provides a set of tools to teachers to prevent and deal with challenging student behaviors.65 The underlying theme of PBIS is that behavioral expectations should be focused on the positive, consistent throughout the school, and taught. Another important aspect of PBIS is the collection of data about where, when and with whom, the most problematic behaviors occur. With this information, schools are able to identify and address problems in specific school areas or times during the day. Many schools choose to use the web-based, School-Wide Information System (www.swis.org) to design school-wide and individual student interventions.67
Decreasing the Use of Suspensions as a Disciplinary Tool

When children and youth are suspended from school, they are not in the classroom learning. And often, the behavior that leads to a school suspension, is indicative of an underlying issue that if left unaddressed will continue. As little as one suspension triples the likelihood of a student’s involvement with the juvenile justice system within the school year. Almost 70% of youth who are excluded from school are arrested. Students who are suspended or expelled are at a higher risk of repeating a grade or dropping out of school.65

The Good News about Suspensions in Santa Clara County

Between SY 2011 and SY 2014 suspensions decreased 42% from 19,970 to 11,562. This decrease is largely due to local education initiatives sponsored by the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative and the Santa Clara County Office of Education. Additionally, new state laws have reduced suspensions for younger students for willful defiance.

While this is good news, there are still significant racial and ethnic disparities in who receives suspensions.

In Santa Clara County:

- 73% of all suspensions are given to Latino or African American students, who make up only 41% of the student population.
- Socio-economically disadvantaged students, 40% of the population, receive 73% of all suspensions.
- In 2013, Students in special education, 9.4% of the population, received 25% of all suspensions.

This last data point is especially troubling because special education students have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that is designed to address any area of the student’s education that can interfere with learning, including behavior issues. Federal law requires students with an IEP to receive a “Manifest Determination,” which determines whether the problem behavior is related to the student’s disability and to plan a course of intervention to decrease the behavior and avoid suspending the student.

The Santa Clara County Office of Cultural Competency and the Probation Department are leading a “school to prison pipeline” project, supported by Impact Justice and designed to look at data from elementary, middle and high with the goal of identifying how we can interrupt the entrance of children of color into the juvenile justice system.
Every Child Safe

Every Child Healthy

Every Child Successful in Learning

Every Child Successful in Life
Every Child Successful in Life

Being successful in life is the cumulative result when children grow up safe, healthy and successful in learning. They are more likely to be successful in life when they have meaningful adult connections and graduate from high school ready for college and career. Young adults will also be “global citizens” if they are fluent in at least two languages.

Recommendations for Action

**High School Graduation with a-g Requirements**
- Create a college-going culture at school from kindergarten through high school graduation.
- Provide college enrollment support services including affordable SAT/ACT preparation programs and financial support for college application fees.

**Students Able to Speak Two or More Languages**
- Promote the Seal of Biliteracy to students at all high schools in order to encourage students to become proficient in more than one language.

**Opportunity Youth – Youth Disconnected from Education and Employment**
- Establish early warning systems to identify youth who are off-track for graduation and develop individualized learning plans to help them get back on track.
- Make those students who are ready to re-engage in education or employment, “first in line” to receive services for housing, child care, transportation and behavioral health.
- Ensure youth have meaningful adult relationships that support their education and employment journey to adulthood and success in life.
- Change policies related to juvenile court record-sealing in order to support youth and young adults’ access to employment.
Figure 28 – Percent of All High School Students who Graduate with a-g Requirements, necessary to qualify for admittance to UC or CSU schools

Note: The CDE reports on % of graduates with a-g Requirements. This figure includes both students who did and did not graduate on time.

Overall

African American

Latino

Asian

White

% 2013

% 2014

% 2015

44

22

19

11%

21%

5%

15%

11%

23

31

22

26

22

31

23

26

Overall

Latino

African American

White

Asian

2012

2014

2016

208

2,027

Figure 29 – Number of Students Awarded the Seal of Biliteracy

Figure 30 – Percent of Students who Left School Before Graduation (2014)

Figure 31 – Disconnected Youth, Ages 16-24, Not Working and Not in School
Youth make a successful transition to adulthood when they are prepared for employment and higher education with technical and language skills to prepare them for the global workplace and when they have substantial prospects for work that lead to self-sufficiency. If all children and youth are to be successful in life, we need to have effective services and supports to aid those with the greatest challenges and barriers. While investment in early childhood makes it easier to see success at subsequent stages, we must also provide children with extended learning opportunities through elementary, middle, and high school and make investments to help adolescents stay on track for graduation and employment.

Brain development science tells us that the adolescent brain develops at a rapid rate, providing a window of opportunity similar to that in early childhood. What the young person experiences during this period plays a critical role in shaping their future as an adult. We can help young people by ensuring they have meaningful adult connections, a chance to practice and build resiliency, and to develop the academic and work-related skills that will serve them well as they enter adulthood.

Bill of Rights for Every Child Successful in Life

- Children and youth have a right to access to a 21st century education that promotes success in life, in future careers and a love of life-long learning.
- Children and youth have a right to training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient and contribute to their community.
- Children and youth have a right to employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.
- Children and youth have a right to a voice in matters that affect them.
- Children and youth have a right to a sense of hope for their future.

Goals for Every Child Successful in Life

- All students graduate on time, fulfilling the a-g requirements.
- Eliminate the socio-economic disparity in graduation rates and fulfillment of a-g requirements.
- All students receive the Seal of Biliteracy, preparing them for the global economy.
- All youth report having meaningful adult connections.
- Increased opportunities for youth to be connected or reconnected to career-potential employment.

Overview

Working Collectively to Make Every Child Successful in Life

The following collaborative or community efforts are working to make every child successful in Santa Clara County:

**College Day Collaborative**
www.collegeday.org

**Opportunity Youth Partnership**
www.sccoyp.org
Students taking a rigorous core curriculum in high school are better prepared to succeed in college and in the workforce. Many local education leaders suggest that for students to be successful in life, it is important that they complete the a-g requirements – coursework required for entry into California’s university system – even if they don’t intend to go to college. Even jobs that don’t require a college degree, such as construction, require algebra and other “a-g” skills.

**What the Data Tell Us:**
- The percentage of students graduating with a-g requirements has increased between 2013 and 2015.
- 77% of Asian and 64% of White students graduated with a-g requirements. Only 31% of African American and 30% of Latino students did so.

Note: The California Department of Education calculates this as a percentage of graduating students who are graduating with the a-g requirements. This data book shows it as a percentage of the cohort of students who entered ninth grade (students who graduated and those who left school without graduating) with a-g requirements.

**Recommendation:**
Create a college-going culture at school from kindergarten through high school graduation.

The importance of college is clear. By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require some postsecondary education. College-educated adults tend to have higher incomes, greater productivity and on average, earn nearly $1 million more over a lifetime than those who only have a high school degree.68

Professor Patricia McDonough of UCLA identified nine critical interrelated elements that together help schools build and strengthen a college-going culture. These include:
- Being intentional about college talk;
- Having clear expectations;
- Providing information and resources;
- Comprehensive counseling, testing and curriculum;
- Faculty involvement;
- Family involvement;
- College partnerships;
- Articulation between elementary, middle and high school; and
- Tracking college attendance data.69

**Recommendation:**
Provide college enrollment support services including affordable SAT/ACT preparation programs and financial support for college application fees.

For students who will be the first in their family to go to college, applying to college can be overwhelming. Counseling and planning support should begin in middle school and continue as students transition to high school to ensure students are completing the coursework that will help them successfully apply to college.

Scores on the SAT/ACT College Entrance Exams are closely tied to family income with students from higher income families doing better than those from lower income families. Because these tests impact college acceptance and entry, families who can afford to do so, pay for expensive test preparation courses. If we want a fair and equitable college-application and acceptance system, all students should have access to these programs.

Recently the Khan Academy, in partnership with the Scholastic Testing Service, began offering an on-line SAT preparation program that is free to all students. Considering the success the online Khan Academy has had with teaching students math skills, this could be a game-changer by providing a free and easy-to-use preparation program available to all students. Low-income students who will be the first in their family to attend college could benefit the most from access to a free, effective preparation program. For more information visit www.khanacademy.org/sat.

“If you attend college you can have more opportunities and you can follow your dreams”- 8th grade College Day Participant
One of the big differences between students who go to college and those who don’t is whether or not their families, schools and communities communicate college-going expectations from an early age.

College Day is an effort to create a community where every child believes, from a very early age, that he or she can go to college. Spearheaded by the College Day Coalition – a collaboration of schools, city and county agencies, nonprofit organizations, colleges and universities – College Day is celebrated at elementary, middle and high schools with students learning about the benefits of going to college, how to get there and how to pay for it. In 2016, 149 schools with almost 100,000 students – about half on Free/Reduced Lunch – participated in College Day.

Some schools have college rallies and celebrations. At others, teachers decorate their doors with college-going messages. Teachers access lesson plans from the College Day website on a wide variety of topics including planning for college and finding financial aid. Parents, teachers, librarians, youth leaders and other family members, talk with children and youth about their own college experience and their expectation that the young person will go to college. Many schools use College Day to launch a year-long conversation about going to college.

Visit www.CollegeDay.org for ideas, lesson plans and other resources that will build a college-going culture at your school or youth program.

College Savings Accounts

Research shows that children who have as little as $500 in a college savings account are five times more likely to go to college than those who don’t have college savings. When we help families understand the value of saving for college and provide them with a simple way to do so, we support college aspirations. Across the country, matched savings programs have been shown to provide additional encouragement to save.70

The Silicon Valley Education Foundation (SVEF) in partnership with Step Up Silicon Valley (the campaign to end poverty) and EARN (a national nonprofit that gives working families the tools to achieve life-changing financial goals) has launched a pilot Savings Circle program within the East Side Alliance. The purpose of this pilot project is to support the goal of going to college for the mostly lower income, marginalized and immigrant communities of east San Jose. A Savings Circle is an easy and self-empowering platform where parents and kids take charge and set their own goals in terms of timeframe and the amount they can afford to save for college.

October 20, 2017

Nearly 100,000 students at 149 schools participated in College Day 2016. About half were on Free/Reduced price lunch.

“The best part of College Day was when the students were thinking about which college they might want to attend in the future, and which career they would choose. We heard students saying that they would like to be teachers, doctors, veterinarians, etc.” – College Day School Site Coordinator

October 20, 2017
The ability to speak a language in addition to English can be a valuable asset to young people as they enter the workplace. Employees who are fluent in more than one language are able to converse with and serve customers and clients more effectively. When a person understands a second language, he or she is likely to have insight into important cultural mores. In today’s global economy, being multilingual is a clear advantage. Speaking a second language is also associated with more flexible and creative thinking.

The Seal of Biliteracy is issued to students who demonstrate, through standardized testing, that they are proficient in English and at least one other language.

What the Data Tell Us:
- The number of students receiving the Seal of Biliteracy increased from 208 awarded in 2012 to 2,027 in 2016.

Recommendation:
Promote the Seal of Biliteracy to students at all high schools in order to encourage students to become proficient in more than one language.

In 2011, Governor Brown signed AB 815 which authorizes the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to issue the Seal of Biliteracy to graduating seniors. Consisting of a certificate, a seal on the diploma, and a transcript notation, it is awarded to eligible graduating high school seniors who demonstrate that they have mastered English and any other language.

The goal of this award is to:
- Encourage students to develop and maintain biliteracy and multilingual skills;
- Recognize and honor our rich and diverse language assets;
- Promote world language instruction in our schools;
- Promote the development of language and cultural appreciation and cross-cultural understanding;
- Encourage the development of dual language immersion programs and foreign, native and heritage language programs in schools; and,
- Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills.71

While the growth in the number of districts awarding the Seal of Biliteracy has grown over the past 4 years, there are districts that do not actively promote it. In the global economy, all students should be encouraged to learn a second language and earn this award.
Opportunity Youth – YouthDisconnected from Education and Employment

Opportunity youth are those youth, ages 16-24, who are disconnected from school and employment. Youth who leave high school prior to graduation are more likely to end up in the juvenile justice system, be homeless, have lower earnings and have higher rates of unemployment. In fact, students who do not graduate from high school earn $400,000-$500,000 less over a working lifetime than those who graduate. Those who do not complete high school also have poorer health, higher rates of mortality, higher rates of criminal behavior and incarceration and increased dependence on public assistance.

By bolstering pathways to education and gainful employment, we can provide a skilled workforce to local business and industry, strengthening our economy and community. If we don’t address the needs of these youth, many will end up engaged in the justice system, become homeless or live in poverty.

What the Data Tell Us:

• Between 2013 and 2015, the number of youth who did not graduate from high school on time decreased slightly for African American and Latino youth decreased slightly. In 2015, 3% of Asian students and 5% of White students did not graduate on time. In contrast, 15% of African American students, 21% of Latino students, and 27% of English Learners did not graduate on time.

• According to the Measure of America, the percentage of Santa Clara County youth, ages 16-24, disconnected from education and employment (Opportunity Youth), decreased from 10.8% in 2014 to 9.8% in 2016.

Recommendation: Establish early warning systems to identify youth who are off-track for graduation and develop individualized learning plans to help them get back on track.

Disengaging from school is a slow process for most students and may be missed by parents and teachers. However, research shows we can predict with 66% accuracy whether a student in elementary school will later get off-track for graduation. Some of the early warning signs include poor school attendance – absent more than 10% of the time – not reading at grade-level in third grade, and a suspension or an “F” in middle school. When these and other early warning signs occur, it should be a call to action to help that student get back on-track.

Sometimes all it takes is an adult at the school to form a connection with the student. In other cases, it may mean addressing social service and out-of-school needs the student has. It also may mean taking steps to see that the student receives additional academic supports, such as tutoring, summer programming, or afterschool learning opportunities.

If we learn to identify the students who are in need of academic or other supports early, we can ensure they get the help they need to stay in school.

Recommendation: Make those students who are ready to re-engage in education or employment, “first in line” to receive services for housing, child care, transportation and behavioral health.

While there are many governmental and community-based organizations that serve youth and young adults, these services can be difficult to navigate with long waiting lists and exclusive criteria that prevent access, particularly for youth older than 18. However, when a youth articulates that they want to get back on track for education and employment, it is important that we see this as a crucial opportunity to link these young people to programs that will help stabilize their lives and lead to success in learning.

Despite the hardship that many of these youth have experienced, they are optimistic about their futures. In fact, according to a study conducted by the America’s Promise Alliance, 73% are very confident they will achieve their goals in life and 53% percent saw themselves graduating from college.

Figure 32 – Opportunity Youth by Ethnicity
Recommendation:
Ensure youth have meaningful adult relationships that support their education and employment journey to adulthood and success in life.

In the September 2015 report, “Don’t Quit on Me,” the America’s Promise Alliance firmly identified relationships as a key driver of education outcomes and dropout prevention and recovery. Through survey and interviews, the report found that relationships buffer the effects of adversity and that young people are more likely to graduate with a strong “anchor and web of support.” The University of Minnesota’s Institute on Community Integration has implemented the Check & Connect model of student engagement and mentoring for 27 years. Empirical evidence from this program demonstrated improved outcomes related to persistence, enrollment, attendance, progress toward graduation, and even progress among students with emotional or behavioral disabilities.

Programs whose primary focus is to work with youth to stabilize their lives should recognize that they can play a role in supporting a young person’s reconnection with education and employment and eventual self-sufficiency. These stabilization programs – so often built on a case-manager or youth-worker developing a trusting relationship with the youth – have a unique opportunity to help them see education and employment as a pathway to having a positive life. Youth are future-focused, and when they see a pathway to success for themselves, illuminated by the adults in their lives, that vision can become a supportive factor in their stabilization and success.

Recommendation:
Change policies related to juvenile court record-sealing in order to support youth and young adults’ access to employment.

California law has a provision for sealing youths’ juvenile records, with the aim of giving young offenders a fresh start in life. Sealing records is critical to providing the young adult with an equal opportunity to move ahead in the world by continuing schooling, gaining employment and securing a position of trust. However, in "Juvenile Record Sealing Doesn’t Work: Here’s How to Fix," retired Juvenile Court Judge Leonard Edwards discusses the complicated nature of record-sealing and proposes solutions to several aspects of record-sealing that don’t achieve the intended goals. These remedies include:

- Automatically sealing the record when the minor reaches 18 and destroy the record one year later. This will shift the burden of record-sealing and destruction from the young person to the system.
- Providing a written description of the court record and how to seal it whenever the youth comes into court or meets with a probation officer. This will ensure the youth understands his or her right to record-sealing.
- Grant authority to the juvenile court to destroy records when this is in the interest of justice. This would insure a record for a dismissed case would not be accessible to future employers.
- Make it illegal for employers and others to question applicants about his or her juvenile court record, arrests as a juvenile, or about efforts to have a juvenile record sealed.
- Conduct widespread publicity about juvenile court record-sealing.
Santa Clara County Opportunity Youth Partnership

In July 2014, Santa Clara County was selected by the Aspen Institute for Community Solutions as one of 21 communities nationwide to focus on improving results for opportunity youth. The Santa Clara County Opportunity Youth Partnership (OYP) is a collaborative with more than 35 community partners, all committed to creating and implementing engagement strategies for our county’s opportunity youth. The OYP is focusing on opportunity youth who have been engaged in the child welfare or justice system, have experienced homelessness, or are pregnant or parenting.

The OYP uses a collective impact approach and recognizes that reengaging youth is a complex issue and requires cross-sector collaboration between county and city government, community-based organizations, workforce development organizations, education, occupational training programs, businesses, and youth themselves.

For more information visit www.sccoyp.org.

Opportunity Youth in Santa Clara County

Utilizing methodology developed by Measure of America, Applied Survey Research created this Opportunity Youth Rate table based on U.S. Census data. It shows the different neighborhoods in Santa Clara County and the percentage of youth ages 16-24 who are not engaged in school or work (opportunity youth).

It is interesting to note that even in neighborhoods where the overall rate of opportunity youth is fairly low (Mountain View, Palo Alto & Los Altos with a 7% disconnection rate) some subpopulations such as Latinos have a high rate of disconnection (15%) from school and work.

Note: Due to low population numbers, the percentages for African American youth are not stable enough to be included on this table. Countywide, African American youth make up 4% of the opportunity youth population and only 2% of the general youth population.
Re-engaging Opportunity Youth in Santa Clara County

Opportunity Youth Academy (OYA): Removing Barriers to Obtaining a High School Diploma

Opportunity Youth Academy is county-wide benefit and dependent charter of the Santa Clara County Office of Education designed to support Opportunity Youth to earn a diploma and enter a career pathway. OYA has a blended learning program with a personalized approach to diploma recovery and operates at five classroom sites across Santa Clara County, with more to come. OYA students, aged 16-24, are taught by Specialized Academic Instructors who provide them with a personalized education leading to a postsecondary program and career-potential employment. OYA students also receive Education Navigators who support them to re-engage in school and may help with access to housing, transportation, child care, medical and/or employment services. OYA students have a flexible class schedule, participate in online and classroom-based learning, and can access free workforce training and opportunities for employment.

At Opportunity Youth Academy, students earn their high school diploma and prepare for a career on their own time, at their own pace, and in a personalized and caring environment.

If you know a 16- to 24-year old who would benefit from Opportunity Youth Academy, please call 1-844-OYA-4UUU (1-844-692-4888) or email oya@sccoe.org.

www.sccoe.org/oya.

San Jose Conservation Corps & Charter School

Since 1987, the San Jose Conservation Corps & Charter School (SJCC&CS) has provided San Jose’s most disadvantaged youth, ages 18-27, with the education, job training, and life skills they need to become responsible, productive, and caring citizens. SJCC&CS invests in a theory of change that enables disconnected youth to move from poverty to prosperity through its holistic combination of education and job training emphasizing the interdependence of work ethic, education, and civic responsibility. SJCC&CS offers a full high school curriculum at its Charter School, giving students the opportunity to complete their high school diploma. Career technical education and paid job training is offered through the Environmental Conservation Department and Recycling Department, which provides zero-waste services at special events as well as for individual clients across Santa Clara County. Entry-level job training through the Environmental Conservation Department includes projects across Santa Clara County maintaining parks and trails; clearing creeks, streets, and vacant lots; eradicating graffiti; restoring native habitats; and protecting the local watershed. Their Green Energy Program offers advanced job-training in solar photovoltaic installation, turf conversion (water conservation), and weatherization/energy efficiency. Beyond direct services to youth, SJCC&CS also has a very real impact on the broader communities it serves by improving the natural environment, bringing energy and cost savings to people who otherwise could not afford them, and helping to create sustainable, revitalized communities for all. For more information visit www.sjcccs.org.
End Notes


4. Santa Clara County Children’s Health Assessment Vol. 2 DRAFT. Released for review by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department, November 2016.


Every Child Safe


15. Ibid.


Every Child Healthy


40. “Epi-Aid on Youth Suicide in Santa Clara County.” A PowerPoint presentation created by the Santa Clara County Public Health Department. 2/2/16.


Every Child Successful in Learning


Every Child Successful in Life

Figure Sources and Methodology


4. Human Development Index. Source: Applied Survey Research using the methodology developed by Measure of America.

Every Child Safe


Every Child Healthy


13. Percent of Children with a Routine Health Check-up in the previous 12 months. Source: California Healthy Kids Survey and Santa Clara County Public Health Department.

14. 9th Grade Students Meeting All Six Fitness Standards. Source: California Dept. of Education.

15. Average Number of Developmental Assets. Source: Project Cornerstone.

16. Number of Developmental Screenings Conducted with Children From Birth to Age 5. Source: FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and Santa Clara County Office of Education.

17. 9th Grade Students with Healthy Aerobic Heart Rates. Source: California Dept. of Education.

Every Child Successful in Learning


23. Percent of Children Strong in all Four Domains of Kindergarten Readiness (2014). Source: 2013 School Readiness in Santa Clara County a Report from FIRST 5 and Applied Survey Research. (Note: This assessment was conducted in 12 schools in four San Jose school districts. 844 students participated in the assessment.)

24. Attendance Risk and Students who are Proficient or Advanced in English and Math in Third Grade Source: Attendance Works and Applied Survey Research.


26. School Suspensions by Year. Source: California Department of Education.

27. School Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity. Source: California Department of Education.

Every Child Successful in Life

28. Percent of All High School Students who Graduate with a-g Requirements. Source: California Department of Education (CDE).

29. Number of Students Awarded the Seal of Biliteracy 2016. Source: Santa Clara County Office of Education.


Many thanks to these organizations for providing data and graphic support to this data book:
Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda Vision Council

The Vision Council is a coalition of community leaders, elected officials and funders who provide guidance and oversight to the Children’s Agenda.

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Former Presiding Judge, Santa Clara County Juvenile Dependency Court  
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Community Advocate

Kids in Common advocates for policies, partnerships and investments that improve children’s lives in Santa Clara County. Children need a strong public voice that promotes and protects their best interests. Kids in Common is that voice and challenges leaders in our community to act on behalf of children. Our Vision: Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, successful in life.

[www.kidsincommon.org](http://www.kidsincommon.org)
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