The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda
2016 Data Book

Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life
Every child safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life.

Kids in Common advocates for policies, partnerships and investments that will improve lives of the 431,899 children who live 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.

In 2007 Kids in Common launched the Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda, a county-wide initiative that has at its heart the idea that it is our collective responsibility to improve results for all our children. Mobilizing partners from all sectors, we utilize data and research to create better policies, align systems to better serve our children and youth and ensure programs and investments are getting positive results. It has been through strong partnerships and a commitment to continual improvement that we have seen these improved results for our children and youth.

For example, community leaders have recognized that when a youth commits a crime, this is often a symptom of the youth's need for support. As a result, practice has shifted to bring fewer youth into the juvenile justice system and instead providing supportive and educational services.

Another example is how the recognition that many students arrive at school with social and health needs that are barriers to learning has led schools becoming resource hubs for children and their families. This shift has led to better student engagement, improved attendance and fewer suspensions.

The 2016 Children’s Agenda Data Book provides an update to policy-makers, funders and service providers on how Santa Clara County children are faring. The data in this report provides the information to determine areas of need and propose promising practices or activities that will guide decision-making and drive improved results for our children.

Children’s Agenda Milestones

- **2007**
  - Launch of the Children’s Agenda

- **2010**
  - Adoption of the Bill of Rights for Children & Youth

- **2011**
  - Board of Supervisors Adopt Child Impact Statements

- **2014**
  - Opportunity Youth Funding Received

- **2016**
  - Future Focus: Ending Child Homelessness
  - Universal Preschool, Parent Engagement

**Acknowledgements**

We are grateful to the Santa Clara County Office of Education which designed and produced the 2016 Children’s Agenda Data Book. (In particular graphic designer Mike Bromberg, who spent countless hours designing this book.)

Thank you also to the many members of the Children’s Agenda Vision Council and Planned Parenthood Mar Monte staff who contributed to the development and writing of the Data Book. We are grateful to Applied Survey Research, Children Now, and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department for their data support.
Data Dashboard

The dashboard below gives you a snapshot of how Santa Clara County is faring in each of the Children’s Agenda indicators.

- **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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children in Foster Care</strong></td>
<td>Fewer children entering foster care in 2015 vs. 2007.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ethnic/racial disparity still significant.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Placement stability is improving.</td>
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<td><strong>Child &amp; Family Homelessness</strong></td>
<td>The number of homeless families, unaccompanied minors and transition age youth has decreased.</td>
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<td><strong>Child Hunger</strong></td>
<td>Fewer eligible children receiving FRP lunch.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Summer feeding program participation increased.</td>
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<td><strong>Juvenile Justice Engagement</strong></td>
<td>The number of youth engaged in the juvenile justice system at all decision points decreased.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Access to Health Care</strong></td>
<td>97% of Santa Clara County children have health insurance.</td>
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<td>96% of SCC children saw a doctor in the past 12 months.</td>
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<td><strong>Social-Emotional Development</strong></td>
<td>The number of Developmental Screenings increased by 53% between 2013 and 2015.</td>
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<td><strong>Developmental Assets</strong></td>
<td>Assets increased between 1999 and 2011.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Youth reached by Project Cornerstone increased 71% between 2011 and 2015.</td>
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<td><strong>Health and Fitness</strong></td>
<td>Slight downtick in achievement of fitness standards.</td>
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<td><strong>School Readiness</strong></td>
<td>38% of San Jose kindergarten students are ready in all four domains of school readiness.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide school readiness assessment is needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Third Grade Language Arts/Literacy</strong></td>
<td>1st year of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53% of students met or exceeded the standard.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Significant disparity exists between racial/ethnic groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8th Grade Math</strong></td>
<td>1st year of California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40% of students met or exceed the standard.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Significant disparity exists between racial/ethnic groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High School Graduation Rates with a-g requirements</strong></td>
<td>Graduation with a-g increased 4-6 points for all groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Students Able to Speak two or more languages</strong></td>
<td>% leaving school without a diploma decreased.</td>
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<td><strong>Meaningful Adult Connections</strong></td>
<td>Seal of Biliteracy awarded to 208 students in 2012 and increased to 1,378 in 2015.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Opportunity Youth/Youth Disconnection Rate</strong></td>
<td>Students reporting caring adult relationships increased from 35% in 1999 to 57% in 2015.</td>
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<td>There are nearly 14,000 Opportunity Youth in SCC.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>There is financial support and political will to improve pathways to success for these youth.</td>
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The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda

“How are the children?”

Maasai warriors on the distant plains of Africa reflect the high value that members of the extraordinary and storied tribe place on their children’s health and well-being. Maasai warriors hope to hear in response, “All the children are well,” which means the entire tribe is thriving.

The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda reflects a similar philosophy. When we ask how children are faring, we know the answer is the most important measure of the health of our community. However, we cannot rely on intuition or anecdotes to answer this question for us. By coming together to identify the most important outcomes for our children, community leaders, educators, child advocates, funders, policy makers, parents and others have committed to work together to find the best ways to drive improvement in those outcomes. Outcomes that are defined in terms of clear and practical community-level data indicators serve to galvanize partnerships, motivate commitment across agencies and institutions, and create a basis for action, producing powerful strategies for change.

In Santa Clara County, when we ask, “How are the children?” it is our hope and vision that the answer will be, for all 431,899 of them, “Our children are safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life.”

Working collectively, we can accomplish much.

In the past, fragmented services, historical practices and unstable funding kept us from addressing the complexity of the challenges facing our children and families and preventing us from achieving improved results. The Children’s Agenda recognizes that our efforts are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. When we work together to leverage our work, we assure the best possible outcomes for our children.

We understand that we must invest in children early and throughout their lives. There is not one “make or break” point of investment in children’s lives. Investments in high quality preschool usually lead to school readiness, however poor attendance at school or a lack of access to summer learning programs can lead to a child being off-track for third grade reading, eighth grade math or high school graduation. Conversely, just because a child is not ready for kindergarten or is off-track for eighth grade math, does not mean we should give up on him or her. With the proper investment, a youth can graduate from high school, college- and career-ready. It is important to invest early in children’s lives, and the investment needs to continue over the course of their lives if we want to get them to the finish line.
We must address the opportunity gap that is associated with poverty, race and ethnicity.
Santa Clara County is one of the wealthiest regions in the nation, if not the world. On average, and in many areas of child well-being — health, education, success in life — our children are faring well. But averages mask the fact that many of our children are not part of these positive statistics. Children who are low-income, Latino or African American do not fare as well. For example, only 27% of Latino and 35% of African American students are on target for third grade reading compared to 69% of White and 75% of Asian students. If you are socioeconomically disadvantaged you are nearly five times more likely to drop out of high school than your moderate- to high-income counterparts.

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 — sharing responsibility, leadership and power — we are far more likely to see children succeed in learning and life. Moreover, strong families build the next generation of strong families.

We are committed to continual improvement and to holding ourselves accountable to measurable results.
While it is important to celebrate accomplishments, we cannot rest on our laurels. We need to strive to deliver better supports and services to children, youth and families, both in individual programming and in how we work together. If we work with children and families in an integrated manner, then we should see measurable improvement in our individual programs and at the community level. The annual data book helps us to understand whether we are doing better as a community, informs decision-making to guide program improvement and drive results.

Child Impact Statements: Keeping the Needs of Children Front and Center
If you are a parent about to make a major decision — buying a house, switching school districts, changing jobs — one of your first questions is likely to be: “Is it good for our children?” This is a common approach in every healthy family.

What if our public officials asked the same question before making important decisions about our community? This is happening in Santa Clara County, where the Board of Supervisors has agreed to make children’s welfare a top consideration in making budget and policy decisions. On July 1, 2011 the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors implemented “Child Impact Statements,” a systematic approach to evaluating and understanding how government decisions will affect children and families. Child Impact Statements help the board look at policy and program choices through a lens that brings children into focus, making their needs visible and important and not merely incidental to the final decision. When consideration of a policy’s impact on children is a primary concern and occurs early in the decision-making process, any potentially negative effects on children and youth can be mitigated right from the beginning.

Photo courtesy of Healthier Kids Foundation
The Life Course Framework provides a structured way to understand key benchmarks of child development – how children think and grow from birth through young adulthood. This model provides the opportunity to better understand what leads to a child’s success along each stage of the life cycle. There is not one “make or break” point of investment in children’s lives. Children who are on-track in early stages of their lives have a greater chance of being successful at subsequent stages, but their odds of remaining on-track are enhanced with ongoing and sustained investment. Children who get off-track at an early stage of their lives can do well later if the adults in their lives – family and caregivers, teachers, community members – focus on and invest in their success. The key factor is for the community to invest early in children’s lives and continue that support if we want to get them to the finish line.
This model of the Life Course Framework is based on *A Life Course Framework for Improving the Lives of Boys and Men of Color* developed by Arnold Chandler of Forward Change Consulting. Chandler’s framework emphasizes the crucial points in life where boys and men of color fare far worse than their peers.

For more on this framework go to: www.forwardchangeconsulting.com
Focusing on Equity

Addressing the Opportunity Gap that leads to Poor Outcomes for Low-Income, Latino or African American Children and Youth

Equity – The New Model for Growth

“This new growth model must be driven by equity – just and fair inclusion into a society in which everyone can participate and prosper. Achieving equity requires erasing racial disparities in opportunities and outcomes. Equity is not only a matter of social justice or morality: It is an economic necessity. By building the capabilities of those who are the furthest behind, America not only begins to solve its most serious challenges, but also creates the conditions that allow all to flourish. This is not a zero-sum game. It is a win-win proposition: The more we invest in each other, the better off we will all be. Equity matters to our economic recovery and our economic future. Equity is the superior growth model.” – PolicyLink

Santa Clara County is one of the wealthiest regions in the nation, if not the world. On average, our children are faring well in many areas of child well-being: health, education, success in life. But averages mask the fact that many of our children are not part of these positive statistics. Children who are low-income, Latino, and African American fare poorly on most indicators of child health and well-being. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have identified social determinants of health which are the conditions of the places where people live, learn, work and play and affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes.

Neighborhoods of greater poverty often have limited access to healthy foods and safe places to play. Too often, the schools in these neighborhoods have fewer resources to support students who often have greater needs. Investments in safe and affordable housing, more education supports, public safety, safe places to play and healthy food can have a significant influence on positive outcomes for children and youth.

Utilizing the Human Development Index (HDI) methodology (promoted by Measure of America), Applied Survey Research developed the table to the right. It shows neighborhoods in Santa Clara County and their varying levels of opportunity. The best score possible is 10, and scores range from a low of 4.9 in East Side/East Valley San Jose to a high of 9.3 in northern Santa Clara County.

Neighborhoods of greater poverty often have limited access to healthy foods and safe places to play. Too often, the schools in these neighborhoods have fewer resources to support students who often have greater needs. Investments to increase safe and affordable housing, more education supports, public safety, safe places to play and healthy food can have a significant influence on positive results for children and youth.

Figure 1 – Ethnicity of Children in Santa Clara County
By the Numbers

**Figure 2 – Income Distribution in Santa Clara County**

- $31,005: Free School Lunch Eligibility (130% of FPL)
- $23,850: Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a Family of 4
- $110,613: Median Income for Families with Children Under 18
- $44,123: Reduced Cost Lunch Eligibility (185% of FPL)
- $81,774: Self-Sufficiency Standard for a Family of 4
- $20,800: Full-time Salary at $10 per hour (minimum wage)

**Figure 3 – Human Development Index**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HD Index</th>
<th>Less than High School</th>
<th>At Least Bachelor's</th>
<th>Median Earnings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cupertino, Saratoga Cities &amp; Los Gatos Town</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain View, Palo Alto &amp; Los Altos</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyvale &amp; San Jose (North)</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Southwest/Almaden Valley)</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose (Northwest) &amp; Santa Clara</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose (West Central) &amp; Campbell</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (South Central/Branham) &amp; Cambrian Park</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milpitas &amp; San Jose (Northeast)</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Southeast/Evergreen)</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Central)</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilroy, Morgan Hill &amp; San Jose (South)</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (East Central) &amp; Alum Rock</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (Northwest)</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Jose City (East Central/East Valley)</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 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 $23,850 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 $44,123 annually.

The Insight Center for Community Economic Development has estimated that to meet basic needs without public or private assistance, this same family 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 it would require this family to work almost four full-time minimum wage jobs at $10.00 per hour or $20,800 annually (the City of San Jose’s minimum wage) to come close to meeting the Self-Sufficiency Standard.

**Figure 4 – Percent of Children living in Poverty by Race/Ethnicity**

- **Santa Clara County Overall**: 9%
- **African American**: 17%
- **Asian**: 4%
- **Latino**: 16%
- **White**: 4%
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. A microcosm of our nation in the future, Silicon Valley’s immigrant population is represented by five of the top six countries whose citizens come to the United States: Mexico, the Philippines, India, Vietnam and China.  

Nationwide, 88% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens. Children of immigrants account for almost all of the nation’s growth in the child population between 1990 and 2008. In 18 years, today’s children in immigrant families will be a large proportion of those working to support baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) through their retirement. They will also be one of the largest groups of new voters.

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.

- 62% live with one or more parent who was born in another country
- 13% of children live in linguistic isolation
- 24% of children enrolled in Santa Clara County schools are English Language learners
Families are Critical to Success in Learning and Life
The Power of Two-Generation Approaches

“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

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, and 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:

**Education** for both families and children can build long-term economic security. Parents on a pathway to complete postsecondary education and workplace skills can earn increased income – a parent with a college degree will earn twice as much as one without. Children enrolled in high quality early education programs are more likely to arrive to kindergarten ready to learn, which puts them on a trajectory to reading success at third grade and eventually graduation from high school, college and career readiness.

Parents earning their high school certificate, learning English, or engaging in postsecondary education, better understand what will help their children succeed academically, and model the value of education for their children.

**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 in 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. One way to build financial security is to support college savings accounts for young children.

**Social capital** is the formal and informal networks of families, friends, neighbors and institutions that help families 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 mental health supports, preventing toxic stress, access to health insurance and a place to receive routine health care, as well as 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.

Many times fragmented funding streams may prevent one organization from delivering all the necessary components of a two-generation approach and this is okay. When organizations have a common interest in seeing families succeed, it is a powerful driver to effectively knit services together and build a system of two-generation supports.
The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth 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. The Bill of Rights was endorsed by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors on February 9, 2010 to ensure that leaders keep the needs of young people at the forefront of decisions about budgets and government policies. Since then, hundreds of others have signed them, including cities, school districts, community organizations and individuals. If you or your organization would like to endorse the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth go to www.kidsincommon.org.

The data in this report reflects how we are progressing in achieving a community that fulfills the promise of the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth.

The Santa Clara County Bill of Rights for Children and Youth

All children and youth have a right to be safe, healthy, successful in learning, and successful in life regardless of their language, culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or 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.
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 food insecurity, family violence and parents who have mental health or substance abuse issues are more likely to drop out of school, become engaged in the juvenile justice system and be in need of government supports as adults.10

Indicators
- Children in Foster Care
- Child and Family Homelessness
- Child Hunger
- Juvenile Justice Engagement

Recommendations for Action
- Make systemic changes through the Title IV-E Waiver 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.
- Increase the investment in homelessness-prevention and “rapid re-housing” to keep families housed. These programs ensure that a family does not become homeless because they cannot make a rent payment.
- Build permanent supportive housing and create new housing opportunities for families and young adults.
- Utilize a coordinated assessment system in order to make the best fit when helping homeless families and youth, ensuring that limited resources can be used most efficiently and with the greatest impact.
- Make sure every eligible child is enrolled in federal food programs such as Free/Reduced Price (FRP) Lunch and Breakfast program and CalFresh by providing enrollment-assistance in schools, early care and community settings.
- Provide universal breakfast to children after school starts, in the classroom, to ensure all children have a healthy start to their day.
- Bring the Summer EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) demonstration project to California so families with children can receive healthy food during the summer.
- Divert youth who have been cited or arrested from detention by providing extensive comprehensive supports in the community.
- Ensure all youth workers understand trauma and have a healing-informed approach as they support children and families.
By the Numbers

Figure 5 – Children in Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity (per 1,000)

Figure 6 – Foster Youth with Two or Fewer Placement Changes

Figure 7 – Number of Homeless Children, Youth and Families

Figure 8 – Children Eligible and Participating in Free/Reduced Price Meal Programs (FRP) in 2014

Figure 9 – Number of Juvenile Citations/Arrests

- Asian: 0.8 (2007) and 4 (2015)
- White: 3 (2007) and 1 (2015)

- 2007: 349
- 2014: 745

- 2013: 183
- 2015: 41

- 2007: 3,430
- 2014: 1,998

- Total Arrests: 13,046
- Felony Arrests: 4,628
- Juvenile Hall Detentions: 1,998
- Probation Violations: 736

Figure 10 – Children Eligible and Participating in Free/Reduced Price Meal Programs (FRP) in 2014

- Children Eligible for Subsidized Meals: 91,737
- Participating in FRP Lunch: 79,269
- Participating in FRP Breakfast: 31,836
- Participating in Summer Feeding Programs: 12,221

- Unaccompanied Minors: 2007, 1,392; 2015, 266
- Homeless Families: 2007, 3,430; 2015, 1,998
- Unaccompanied Transition Age Youth: 2007, 736; 2015, 260
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 we look at the data and strategies for change through a lens that considers how to end this disparity.

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 abuse and domestic violence in low-income families. NCCP recommends promising strategies that include integrating family support systems, early childhood education, substance abuse prevention and mental health services. 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.

Bill of Rights for Every Child Safe

• 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.
• Children and youth have a right to freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.

Goals for Every Child Safe

• 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.
• All children and families have safe and healthy housing.
• Eligible children and families are enrolled in federal food programs.
• Fewer youth are arrested for felony and misdemeanor offenses, fewer are detained and recidivism decreases.
• The racial disparity of children in foster care and youth in juvenile detention facilities is eliminated.
How we Measure Child Safety

Children in Foster Care
The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda (TCA) tracks the rate of children (per 1,000) in foster care and placement stability (one or two placements while in care).

Children who are victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to suffer from depression, attempt suicide, abuse 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.

Child and Family Homelessness
TCA tracks the number of homeless children, families, and transition age youth (TAY) from the biannual Homeless Point in Time Count.

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, or be expelled or suspended.12

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.

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
- Pregnant or parenting youth13

Child Hunger
TCA tracks the percent of eligible students who receive Free/Reduced Price lunch, breakfast and summer feeding programs.

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 overweight14

Juvenile Justice Engagement
TCA tracks the number of youth who are arrested, felony arrests, juvenile hall detentions and have a violation of probation.

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. They 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.15

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).
Recommendations for Action

Recommendation: Make systemic changes through the Title IV-E Waiver 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, drug/alcohol addiction 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 the next placement as stable as possible so that there is no risk of school disruption or a sense of uncertainty for the child.

Recommendation: Increase the investment in homelessness prevention and “rapid re-housing” to keep families housed. These programs ensure that a family does not become homeless because they cannot make a rent payment.

Cash assistance, housing subsidies and other services can avert homelessness before it starts. We can expand “rapid re-housing” programs by investing in short-term housing rental subsidies so families do not become chronically homeless. The more quickly families are connected with permanent housing, the more quickly their lives can stabilize. Federal funding for rapid re-housing was part of the stimulus package that was introduced following the recession and was successful in reducing family homelessness.16

Recommendation: Build permanent supportive housing and create new housing opportunities for families and young adults.

The rental availability in Santa Clara County is at an all-time low, and this is particularly true for low-cost rentals. While many families qualify for subsidized rent, there is shortage of these rentals available. Similarly, there is not enough supportive housing to help those families who not only need housing but need social supports to stabilize. Cities and the county must continue to focus on this issue and create new housing options.

Title IV-E Waiver and Strengthening Families

Santa Clara County is participating in the Title IV-E 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 child and family well-being. These include:

- Strong social connections;
- Knowledge of parenting and child development;
- Social and emotional competence of children;
- Nurturing and attachment;
- Parental resilience and child; and
- Concrete support for parents.27

Implementation of the Title IV-E waiver 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.29)
Recommendation: Utilize a coordinated assessment system in order to make the best fit when helping homeless families and youth, ensuring that limited resources can be used most efficiently and with the greatest impact.

We need to be sure that we are efficiently utilizing resources when supporting homeless youth and young adults. For example, youth who have been involved in the foster care system should be directed to housing resources that are exclusively for foster youth so that this resource is maximized.

There are also other strategies that have proven effective with youth and young adults, such as Proactive Family Reconciliation where agencies focus on family reconciliation through counseling and support services. This improves family relationships so that youth can return home to more supportive environments.  

Another effective strategy for youth and young adults is Youth-centered Transitional Housing and Supportive Services which helps youth who have been homeless for a long period of time by providing them with housing, supportive services and the life-skill development necessary to become independent adults.

To be successful, these approaches must be built on the principles of positive youth development. They must be flexible, relationship-focused, culturally-competent and grounded in trauma-informed care.

Recommendation: Make sure every eligible child is enrolled in federal food programs such as Free/Reduced Price (FRP) lunch and breakfast program and CalFresh (the California program formerly called Food Stamps, known at the federal level as SNAP – the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) by providing enrollment-assistance in schools, early care and community settings.

When children are removed from the home, it is important to make the next placement as stable as possible.

An adequate amount of healthy food protects children from poor health and poor developmental outcomes. In a study conducted in 2012 by Children’s Health Watch, young children in families receiving SNAP assistance were less likely to be overweight or at risk for developmental delays than young children in families eligible for but not receiving this form of assistance.

With only 67% of eligible children receiving FRP lunch, and 48% of eligible families receiving CalFresh, Santa Clara County could have a significant impact on child and family hunger by increasing these rates of enrollment. These food programs also represent a significant contribution to the economic well-being of the community. Full participation in federal food programs would bring the county an additional $160 million in economic activity.

Recommendation: Provide universal breakfast to children after school starts, in the classroom, to ensure all children have a healthy start to their day.

School breakfast programs, when provided to all children and not just some, can have a positive impact on school attendance as well as improved academic performance, reduced tardiness and decreased disruptive behavior. Schools that provide FRP breakfast often do so in the cafeteria and only before school starts, sometimes as early as 7 a.m. Bus schedules, parents’ work schedules and other issues make early arrival at school difficult for many students. Also, many children are embarrassed to be in the FRP breakfast program and will skip a meal rather than feel stigmatized by participating.

A powerful strategy that is having success in Los Angeles and Healdsburg is serving breakfast after the school day starts. Students eat breakfast together in their classroom while the teacher is performing administrative tasks such as taking attendance. This universal approach takes 10-15 minutes each morning and helps children start the school day well-nourished and ready to learn.
Recommendation: Bring the Summer EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) demonstration project to California so families with children can receive healthy food during the summer.

Hunger does not take a vacation just because it is summer break. Only 20% of students who participate in FRP lunch during the school year receive this support in the summer. Summer EBT is a demonstration project administered by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and provides families with nutrition assistance benefits (on an EBT card) to purchase groceries from supermarkets and other food stores. Summer EBT has been tested in select areas across the country. Rigorous evaluation of the program shows that with Summer EBT fewer children and adults experience food insecurity, children eat more fruits and vegetables and whole grains and consume fewer sweets from sugar-sweetened beverages. Families are less dependent on food pantries and emergency food kitchens. Summer EBT should be brought to Santa Clara County so our kids can be well-nourished and healthy during the summer months.22

Improving Outcomes 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.29 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.30 Another study indicated that roughly half of all youth in out-of-home placements experience at least one juvenile arrest, approximately one-third experienced detention, and one-fifth were adjudicated delinquent.31

The increased risk of delinquency can be explained by a multitude of complex factors. Some are circumstantial. For example, 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 will 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.

A key understanding, however, is that this increased risk does not mean a traumatized youth will inevitably be involved with the juvenile justice system. In fact, with appropriate identification, coordination and intervention, this population can completely avoid entering the juvenile justice system, or at the very least, minimize their contact.32

In June 2014, the Dually Involved Youth (DIY) Unit was officially launched, comprised of two social workers, two probation officers and a youth advocate.

This staff has extensive training and provides holistic, specialized services. In fall 2015, the program expanded in order to meet the growing need by youth who are touched by both systems. While it is too early to have quantitative measures of the success of the DIY Unit, there are promising results. One youth said this was the first time she “felt the probation officer and social worker really understood” and were responding to her complex history.33

Recommendation: Whenever possible, divert youth who have been cited or arrested from detention by providing extensive 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 youths that 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.23 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.”24

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. These efforts should continue and our efforts redoubled with the goal of preventing recidivism or deeper engagement in the system.
The Direct Referral Program is an early diversion program for first-time offenders who are age 15 or younger. It provides early screening, assessment, prevention and intervention services to youth and their families. Instead of a formal arrest and an arrest record being created—a referral is made to the Probation department which in turn makes a referral 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 Santa Clara County community-based program Fresh Lifelines for Youth, CAFA is modeled on the court-appointed advocate program for youth in the child welfare system. CAFA volunteers, who receive 32 hours of training, provide advocacy for the youth in the court setting and address their education needs to help the youth get back on-track.

**Recommendation: Ensure all youth workers understand trauma and have a healing-informed approach as they support children 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 abuse—we need to recognize that it may be trauma or chronic stress that is at the root of the behavior. The behavior is the symptom. Recognizing this is an important first step so we do not further traumatize already traumatized kids by blaming, shaming, or punishing them.

However, recognizing trauma is only the first step. 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. Their program “La Cultura Cura” or Cultural-Based Healing, employs a multigenerational process of learning and/or remembering one’s true and positive cultural values, principles, customs and traditions to support Latino and Native boys and men. NLFFI’s approach recognizes the path to healing is linked to restoring one’s true cultural identity and recognizing the origins of unhealthy and maladapted behaviors.

As we encounter families, children, teens and young adults who have experienced trauma, we should look towards NLFFI’s model and other approaches that build resiliency, recognize cultural strengths and focus on healing.

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**Santa Clara County Homeless 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 most recent survey was conducted January 27-28, 2015.

The results of the survey found:

- 528 children under the age of 18 were living in 266 homeless families.
- There were 41 unaccompanied minors and 745 homeless youth between the ages of 18 and 24 also referred to as Transition Age Youth (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.

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 school in their school of origin no matter where they live or how long they have lived there. They can remain in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless and if they find permanent housing, they can finish the school year there.

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. Data from the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) shows that during the 2011 school year, 2,538 children and youth were served with McKinney-Vento funds. This number increased to 4,549 in the 2014 school year. This increase may be an indicator of better outreach and service delivery to homeless students, rather than a true increase of homeless students.
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.

**Indicators**

- Health Access
- Social-Emotional Development
- Developmental assets
- Health and Fitness

**Recommendations for Action**

- Provide health insurance coverage for all children.
- Ensure young children receive dental, vision and hearing screenings and follow-up care.
- Provide universal developmental screening for children at regular baby and child check-ups.
- Make sure children have opportunities to play outside, get exercise and have access to healthy food.
- Embed Project Cornerstone in every school and youth-serving organization.
By the Numbers

Figure 11 – Percent of Children with a Routine Health Check-up in the previous 12 months

- 2009: 86%
- 2014: 96%

Figure 12 – Percent of Children with Health Insurance

- 2009: 94.5%
- 2014: 97%

Figure 13 – Number of Developmental Screenings Conducted with children ages Birth to 5 years

- 2013: 11,600
- 2015: 20,243

Figure 14 Average Number of Developmental Assets

- 7th Grade: 20.9
- 9th Grade: 20.7
- 11th Grade: 19.6

Figure 15 – People reached by Project Cornerstone

- Youth Reached: 36,000 (2013), 61,000 (2014)

Figure 16 – 9th Grade Students Meeting All Six Fitness Standards

- Low Income: 32
- Not Low Income: 52
- Overall: 44

- % 2014: 49%
- % 2015: 41%
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 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 “thriving zone.”
- Health disparities based on socio-economic differences will be eliminated.
How We Measure Child Health

Access to Healthcare
The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda (TCA) tracks the percentage of children with health insurance and who visited the doctor in the past 12 months.

Routine access to health care is one of many factors that influence children’s health and well-being. With insurance and a regular place to receive care and timely visits to their doctor, specialty doctors and dentists, families are educated about prevention measures and receive relevant health screening so that health problems can be detected and treated as they emerge.

Social-Emotional Development
Because developmental screening has proven to be a key strategy in identifying and providing support to children who may be getting off-track, TCA tracks the number of developmental screenings conducted in a year.

Social-emotional development involves the acquisition of skills that enable children 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 in 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 the children receiving 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 and learning, disengage from school and have poorer outcomes.

Persistent physical aggression, drop-out rates in high school, juvenile delinquency and other anti-social behaviors all are associated with early childhood behavior problems.

Developmental screening at baby and child check-ups 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.

Developmental Assets
TCA tracks the average number of developmental assets Santa Clara County youth have. This report also tracks the number of youth and adult volunteers who participate in Project Cornerstone’s asset-building initiatives.

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.

Physical Fitness
TCA tracks the percentage of students who meet the six standards of the California Physical Fitness test.

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 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 fitness.

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.
Recommendations for Action

Recommendation: Provide health insurance coverage for all children.
In 2001, a collaborative of Santa Clara County agencies and other funding organizations made a commitment to ensure that all children who live here have health insurance. 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.

Recommendation: Ensure young children receive dental, vision and hearing screenings and follow-up care.
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. And if a child’s teeth hurt, this will make it difficult for her to focus and pay attention in preschool and kindergarten. Too often, many children do not have hearing, vision or dental screenings until they start school. However, 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.

Recommendation: Provide universal developmental screening for children at regular baby and child check-ups.
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. To do this, we must identify children and families with these needs as early as possible and provide effective interventions. When children receive formal screenings, developmental concerns or problems are identified earlier, which results in more effective intervention and treatment. Developmental screenings are conducted using simple, fast and accurate tools to identify children who have developmental concerns or delays.

When we fail to identify children with developmental issues, we are missing an opportunity to provide support and intervention that can improve life-long outcomes. The cost savings of these improved outcomes are estimated to be between $30,000 and $100,000 per child. For every dollar spent on early intervention there is an associated savings of $7 to society.

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

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

Developmental Screening in Santa Clara County

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.”

In response to this directive, the Santa Clara County Health and Hospital System, the Behavioral Health Services Department and First 5 came together to establish the tools, staffing and procedures needed to implement developmental screening at all well-baby and well-child checks in Valley Health Center clinics throughout the county. As a result of the county’s Universal Developmental Screening (pilot) project, more than 17,500 screenings were conducted in FY 2015 (up from 11,600 in FY 2013) and over 2,000 children were referred to intervention services. This combined with the 2,554 screenings conducted at the Santa Clara County Office of Education Head Start and Early Head Start programs mean we had significant increase in developmental screenings for children in Santa Clara County.

Funding for the project is scheduled to end in June 2016. It is important that we identify a stable source of funding to sustain this work into the future.

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.

More than 20,000 developmental screenings were conducted in FY 2015 – up from 11,600 in FY 2013.
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. After-school 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 screen time (time watching television, or playing computer or video games).

**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 200 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.

**Project Cornerstone**

Two important Project Cornerstone programs bring parents into the classroom to help build assets and meaningful connections with students:

**Asset Building Champions (ABC)**

Parents who volunteer for the ABC program read books to students and lead classroom activities on a monthly basis. The curriculum focuses on building developmental assets in the areas of support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. It teaches students important life skills such as decision making, peaceful conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills. It covers all areas of peer-abuse, and gives students the skills to avoid being the target of bullying behavior from other students. 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 is a Spanish-language program that opens new doors for Spanish-speaking parents, supporting education and development for their own children as well as for other children in their community. Each month, Los Dichos volunteers read specially selected bilingual books in the classroom. They also lead activities and discussions about topics including 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.

For more information go to www.projectcornerstone.org.

**An Innovative Approach to Vision Screening**

In 2013, the Healthier Kids Foundation (HKF) started screening preschoolers with a photo optic scan camera replacing the Snellen Eye Chart which has been the main screening tool used since 1862. This tool, first used in Mississippi and Alabama 15 years ago, identifies vision issues such as astigmatism and lazy eye. Vision plays an important role in learning, and if a child experiences problems with visual processing, he or she may also experience delays in learning that interfere with their success. 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. This screening technology allows many children to be screened efficiently.

Since 2013, HKF used this tool to conduct screenings for nearly 30,000 children and made sure that children who had a problem were referred to an optometrist for a full exam and receive glasses if needed. With the success of the vision screening, HKF has expanded to conduct dental screenings (February 2014) and hearing screenings (July 2014). As of December 15, 2015 nearly 12,000 children received dental screenings and over 2,000 received hearing screenings and were referred to services when an issue was identified. For more information go to www.hkidsf.org.
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.43

Indicators

Kindergarten Readiness
Third Grade Language Arts
Eighth Grade Math

Recommendations for Action

- Be vigilant about identifying disparities in student performance data as it relates to student’s race, socio-economic status or disability. Design and test programs and policies that will improve outcomes for these groups.
- Build well-coordinated safety-net services at school.
- Focus on student engagement, attachment and social-emotional learning in addition to academics.
- Leverage local, state and federal funding to ensure universal access to preschool.
- 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.
- Institute a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment, so that 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, linking teachers and administration from both settings and identifying those students who are likely to need additional support.
- Ensure all early care and elementary teachers have strong foundations in child development, dual-language learning, curriculum-based methods of teaching and the Common Core State Standards.
- Put data systems in place that help schools identify children who miss 10% or more days of school and have a plan to improve student attendance.
- Establish early warning systems and solutions for students who are disengaging from school.
- Have systems in place to address the underlying issues that lead to challenging student behavior.
- Develop alternatives to suspension as a means to discipline students with challenging behaviors.
- Budget for strategies that increase family engagement at school. These should start in preschool and kindergarten and continue through high school graduation.
- Fund evidence-based afterschool programs, academic tutoring and summer programming for children who need additional support to meet academic benchmarks.
- Increase California’s investment in education from preschool through college in order to develop students ready to contribute to the state’s economy and be civically engaged.
- Ensure authentic parent and community engagement in developing districts’ Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs). The LCAP provides an opportunity to focus on student outcomes as the primary driver for how districts and communities invest their scarce resources.
By the Numbers

Figure 17 – Percent of Children Strong in all Four Domains of Kindergarten Readiness

Overall | Not Low Income | Did Not Attend Preschool
---|---|---
Overall | 38% | 43% | 31%
Not Low Income | 32% | 46% | 31%
Low Income | 27% | 46% | 43%

Figure 18 – Third Grade English Language Arts/Literacy, Students At or Exceeding Standard (2015)

Low Income | Not Low Income | African American | Asian | Latino | White
---|---|---|---|---|---
Low Income | 27% | 35% | 75% | 27% | 69%
Not Low Income | 70% | 65% | 75% | 21% | 66%

Figure 19 – Eighth Grade Math Skills, Students At or Exceeding Standard (2015)

Low Income | Not Low Income | African American | Asian | Latino | White
---|---|---|---|---|---
Low Income | 22% | 26% | 81% | 21% | 65%
Not Low Income | 68% | 81% | 81% | 21% | 65%
Overview

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 between ethnic subgroups. 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 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 in 3rd grade.
- All children are on-track for 8th grade math.
- All children have access to afterschool and summer learning opportunities.
- Reduced use of suspension to manage student behavior.
- Elimination of the opportunity gap that leads to the disparity in achievement in these indicators.

Figure 20 – Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>K Academics</th>
<th>Social Expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes letters</td>
<td>Expresses empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes shapes</td>
<td>Tells about story/experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes colors</td>
<td>Is curious and eager to learn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts 20 objects</td>
<td>Expresses needs and wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands book structures</td>
<td>Health and well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writes own first name</td>
<td>Fine motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes rhyming words</td>
<td>Gross motor skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers questions about literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How We Measure Success in Learning

Kindergarten Readiness
For the purposes of this report, we utilized data from the 2013 School Readiness Assessment funded by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and conducted by Applied Survey Research and looked at the percentage of children who were ready in all four areas of kindergarten readiness. This assessment was conducted in four San Jose school districts, representing 12 schools and 844 kindergarten students. It identified four basic building blocks of school readiness, as shown in figure 20.44

Kindergarten readiness is important to later school success. Studies show that children whose parents participate in kindergarten readiness activities and who attend high quality preschool have higher levels of readiness. The figure below reflects the combined results of school readiness profiles of children from both Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties from 2004-2009 and their later academic performance in third grade. The figure looks at children who entered kindergarten prepared in the areas of self-care and motor skills, self-regulation, social expression and kindergarten academics. It shows those who were ready in some of these areas, and those who were not ready in any of the areas. When children entered kindergarten ready in all domains, they were much more likely to enter kindergarten ready in some of these areas, and those who were not ready in any of the areas. When children entered kindergarten ready in all domains, they were more likely to be proficient or advanced in math and English in third grade. Those who start kindergarten behind in these readiness skills were less likely to be successful in 3rd grade.45

3rd Grade English Language Arts/Literacy Standards
The Santa Clara County Children’s Agenda (TCA) tracks the percent of 3rd grade students who met or exceeded standards on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). (See figure 21) The CAASPP was administered statewide for the first time in Spring 2015.

The ability of students to read at grade level by the time they are in 3rd 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. Children who start kindergarten with strong skills are on-track for third grade reading more quickly. But even if children are ready when they start, it takes hard work, attentive parenting, extended learning opportunities, an effective curriculum and skilled teachers to help children meet this important milestone. For some Santa Clara County students, especially low-income and Latino students, initial performance gaps at kindergarten actually widen by 3rd grade.46

8th Grade Math Standards
TCA tracks the percent of 8th grade students who met or exceeded math standards on the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP). (See figure 19 on page 29)

The skills needed to understand math are key for all problem-solving. These skills help develop logical thinking, critical reasoning and analytical acuity. Math skills also are 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.47 Success in math through 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.48

Figure 21 – How Kindergarten Readiness Translates into 3rd Grade School Success
Recommendations for Action

**Recommendation:** Be vigilant about identifying disparities in student performance data as it relates to students’ race, socio-economic status or disability. Design programs and policies that will improve outcomes for these groups.

In Santa Clara County, there is a 40-60 point difference in English and math proficiency between students who are white or Asian and students who are Latino or African American. A similar difference is seen between those students who are socio-economically disadvantaged, and those who are not. This disparity appears not only in schools that have fewer resources and higher concentrations of low-income students, but also in districts with greater resources and higher concentrations of middle- to high-income students.

There is a great cost, financially and otherwise, to students and our society if they are not able to achieve their full academic potential. Students who do not graduate from high school earn on average $9,245 less annually than someone with a high school diploma. Each young person who stays disconnected from education and is not working, costs our county nearly $14,000 in direct costs annually. To reduce these costs we must identify and test strategies to get these students back on track and on the pathway to college and career.

**Recommendation:** Build well-coordinated safety-net services at schools.

Research has demonstrated that second only to family, school is the most important and stabilizing force in the lives of young people. However too many children in Santa Clara County 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.

School Linked Services (SLS) is one model being implemented across Santa Clara County in 12 districts and 54 schools. SLS has led to increased supports for food, school supplies, health care, counseling, academic assistance and caring adult role models. 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. For more information go to www.schoollinkedservices.org.

**Recommendation:** Focus on student engagement, attachment and social-emotional learning in addition to academics.

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. Resources available to help schools improve school engagement include Project Cornerstone, the National Center for School Engagement and the Santa Clara County Office of Education’s Safe and Healthy Schools Department.

Education leaders are currently considering what performance measures should be used when assessing school performance statewide. Measures of school engagement, school climate and parent engagement should be included in the overall accountability system. As we all know, “what gets measured gets done.” If the school accountability system only measures academic performance, schools will focus on academics alone. The accountability system also needs to include school engagement, school climate and parent engagement which lead to higher long term student success.

**Recommendation:** Leverage local, state and federal funding to ensure universal access to quality preschool.

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.” High-quality early care and education not only improves school readiness, but also later school achievement. 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.

Figure 22 shows a significant difference in kindergarten readiness (on a four-point scale) for Latino children who did and did not attend preschool.

![Figure 22 – Kindergarten Readiness for Latino Children (On a scale from 0 to 4)](image)
In Santa Clara County, 5,425 three- and four-year-olds live below the poverty level and qualify for Head Start, but there are only 2,146 Head Start slots. An estimated 11,915 children are eligible for California State Preschool Program. (Income cannot exceed $46,896 for a family of four.) However, there are only 3,217 slots available. There are an estimated 8,101 children under the age of 3 living below the poverty level and only 88 slots of subsidized child care available. With the cost of center-based preschool averaging over $11,000 a year in Santa Clara County, many children are not able to attend. These children enter school at a significant disadvantage compared to children who were able to participate in high-quality preschool.

**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 5. 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, 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 8th 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.

**Partners in Education**

My vision for family engagement is ambitious. I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children’s teachers from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected – and teachers should feel supported. When parents demand change and better options for their children, they become the real accountability backstop for the educational system.

– Arne Duncan, former U.S. Secretary of Education, May 3, 2010

Is your school or organization engaging families? Some questions to consider:

- Is family input used to help set goals for children, the classroom, the school and programs?
- Are there effective communications from school to home and from home to school?
- Are there people on staff who are able to communicate in the language of students’ families?
- Are families provided with assistance, education and opportunities to support their children’s success?
- Do materials, curriculum, services and interactions generated by the school reflect the school’s appreciation of the home language and the culture of the children and families as positive assets?
- Are parents provided with meaningful opportunities to volunteer to support the school and its programs during the school day and during times that accommodate their schedules?
- Are parents included in developing plans when children have challenging behavior?
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.

Recommendation: Develop coordinated transition plans that support children as they move from preschool to elementary school, linking teachers and administration from both settings and identifying those students who are likely to need additional support.

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.56

More than 90% of the young people who arrive at Juvenile Hall are two to eight years behind in reading and math.

Recommendation: Ensure all early care and elementary teachers have strong foundations in child development, dual-language learning, curriculum-based methods of teaching and the Common Core State Standards.

Children perform better when taught by teachers who receive quality training and professional development. One study found that novice teachers who had graduated from a strong education training program contributed the equivalent of 2.5 more months of learning in the school year than teachers who had graduated from a weaker program. Quality training in teacher education programs, as well as ongoing professional development, provides teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to be effective educators. Teachers must continue to receive support as they transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). California should also update the standards for existing teacher credentialing programs to reflect CCSS. The state needs to fund ongoing professional development.57

Recommendation: Put data systems in place that help schools identify children who miss 10% or more days of school and have a plan to improve student attendance.

School attendance starting in the early grades plays a significant role in student success.58 Several simple strategies have been demonstrated to improve kindergarten and first grade attendance. First, schools should monitor chronic absenteeism and regularly report on the number of children who are chronically absent. Currently, data systems in California schools tend to track “truancy” which
focuses on “unexcused” absences and has legal consequences to the student and family. However, 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.

Schools can support improved attendance by creating a positive school climate and high quality education that responds to students’ diverse learning styles/needs and engages parents in their children’s education. A few simple actions can help 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, case-management to address social, medical, economic and academic needs.

**Recommendation: Establish early warning systems and solutions for students who are disengaging from school.**

According to the Santa Clara County Office of Education, more than 90% of the young people who arrive at Juvenile Hall are two to eight years behind in reading and math. More often than not, a student’s disengagement from education and academic skills occurs over a period of time, with many early warning signs that a child is getting off-track. Some of these 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 early warning signs occur, it should be a call to action to do whatever it takes 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 may be facing at home. It also may mean taking steps to see that the student receives additional academic supports, such as tutoring, summer programming or after-school learning opportunities to help them get back on track.

**The Sobrato Early Academic Language Program (SEAL)**

The Sobrato Early Academic Language Program (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 home language for English-learner children and families 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 65 schools from 11 districts throughout the state. Districts participating in Santa Clara County include the Berryessa, Evergreen, Franklin McKinley, Gilroy, Milpitas, Oak Grove and Santa Clara Unified school districts. An independent external evaluation found:

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 has a significant impact on parents and literacy activities at home.
The Common Core State Standards and State Standardized Testing

The goal of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), adopted by the California legislature in 2010, is to encourage students to solve problems and articulate how they solved them, explaining their ideas and connecting their education to real-world situations. In these ways, students become engaged as active learners, and teachers are charged with fostering creativity and innovation. The CCSS is transforming how teachers teach and how students learn. Characteristics of the CCSS include:

- An emphasis on developing literacy skills in history, science and technical subjects because college students are often required to read and analyze non-fiction materials in school and the workplace;
- A focus on applying mathematical ways of thinking to real world problems so that students will develop a level of understanding that allows them to apply mathematics to new situations;
- A focus on student collaboration;
- Developing fluency with multimedia and technology; and
- The development of strong complex reasoning, problem-solving and communication skills.66

In Spring 2015, all California public school students participated in the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) designed to measure achievement of the Common Core State Standards. Because these exams are based on more challenging academic standards, the results cannot be compared to old scores. Instead, these scores are a starting point or a baseline for the progress students will make over time. While it is not appropriate to compare test scores, one concern surfaced by this past year’s testing, is that the “achievement” gap between White and Asian students compared to Latino and African American students has grown. In 2011, the last time the state standardized testing took place, there was a 30 to 40 point difference in the percentage of third grade students meeting or exceeding standards who are white or Asian (74% and 77% respectively) compared to those who were Latino or African American (31% and 41% respectively). In the 2015 this difference grew to 40-60 points for these four groups.

Recommendation: Have systems in place to address the underlying issues that lead to challenging student behavior.

Teachers and schools need a set of tools in order to deal with challenging behavior. Positive Behaviors, Interventions and Support (PBIS) is a systematic approach for establishing a supportive school culture and individualized behavioral supports. These are needed for schools to achieve both social and academic success for all students. PBIS, which has been proven effective and implemented in nearly 8,000 schools across the country, eliminates students’ challenging behaviors and replaces them with constructive social skills. PBIS also decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions.60

As little as one suspension triples the likelihood of a student’s involvement with the juvenile justice system within the school year. The underlying theme of PBIS is that behavioral expectations should be consistent throughout the school. These expectations need to be taught in the same manner as any core curriculum subject. Rather than assuming that all students enter school with the knowledge and skills needed to function appropriately in the classroom, educators are teaching the behavioral expectations that lead to school success. Another important aspect of PBIS is the collection of data about where and when 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. For example, if a cluster of referrals occurs at the end
of the lunch period for a specific group of students, an alternative activity can be offered for that time of day. A recreation room with chess and checkers and other board games can be opened for those students who become bored on the playground. Many schools choose to use the School-Wide Information System (SWIS) to design school-wide and individual student interventions. SWIS is a web-based information system used by school personnel.61 For more information on SWIS, please visit www.swis.org.

**Recommendation:** Develop alternatives to suspension as a means to discipline students with challenging behaviors.

Too often schools punish students’ bad behavior rather than reward positive behavior. This trend is evident in our school suspension rates. When children and youth are suspended from school, they are not in the classroom learning. The extensive paperwork required when students are suspended robs teachers of valuable time that could be spent on teaching activities. Harsh punishment and “zero tolerance” policies have not been effective at improving school climate or making students feel safe. Unsafe behavior – such as bringing weapons or drugs to school – is the single most common reason students are removed from classes. Twenty percent of students account for more than 50% of all behavioral incidents.

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.62

**Recommendation:** Budget for strategies that increase family engagement at school. These should start in preschool and kindergarten and continue through high school graduation.

Parents and caregivers are a child’s first teachers and can continue in this role as children enter early education and elementary school by providing learning activities at home. Families can also become involved in their children’s education at school by advocating for change in district policy and decision-making. Family engagement is a shared responsibility with schools and other community organizations committing to involve families in meaningful ways. 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.

Across the county, there is new recognition about the importance of family engagement. The Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan’s Family Engagement and Leadership Committee – comprising early care and education agencies, institutions of higher education and community-based organizations – has created a set of family engagement principles. Adapted from principles developed by the Harvard Family Research Project, Parent Services Project, and the National PTA, they are as follows:

- **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 themselves, 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 children and families. Together, they create and influence policies and programs.

• **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 to advocate that children have access to opportunities that equitably support their success and health.

**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. Of particular concern is summer learning loss. 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. Without ongoing summer opportunities to reinforce and learn skills, children, especially those in low-income communities, can fall behind dramatically.\(^5^3\)

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.\(^5^4\)

**Recommendation:** Increase California’s investment in education from preschool through college in order to develop students ready to contribute to the state’s economy and be civically engaged.

The recently implemented Local Control Funding Formula has created a more equitable funding system. Annual funding has been increasing since the 2012 school year. At the same time, schools in California still do not have enough money to provide a high quality education for all our students. Many schools are at pre-2008 funding levels, when cuts were made due to the recession. According to Children Now, California ranks forty-second in the nation in terms of per student spending. California spends $10,120 per pupil compared to the national average of $12,434 per pupil. This represents a $2,314 per pupil spending gap.\(^6^5\)
Recommendation: Ensure authentic parent and community engagement in developing districts’ Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs). The LCAP provides an opportunity to focus on student outcomes as the primary driver for how districts and communities invest their scarce resources.

The Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) is closely tied to the Local Control Funding Formula. The LCAP has the potential, if implemented fully, to change the culture and dynamics of how districts work with the community in making decisions about annual goals and ways to implement those goals. The LCAP is a three-year plan that is updated annually. A large group of parents and community members should be engaged in its development. With authentic parent and community engagement, districts would set goals that take into account the unique needs of individual school sites, as well as the student populations that may include English-learners, low-income and foster youth.

During the LCAP process districts need to work hard to bring diverse voices to the table. Parents and community members need to educate themselves about the LCAP process and attend board meetings to speak out about what they believe will improve education outcomes for their district’s students.

Alternatives to School Suspensions as a Disciplinary Approach

In California, suspensions disproportionately affect African-American and Latino students.\(^9\)

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 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. The IEP should be designed with the prevention of suspensions in mind. 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.

Thanks to local education initiatives sponsored by the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative and the promotion of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) by the Santa Clara County Office of Education, suspensions in Santa Clara County have decreased significantly over the past several years. The drop in suspensions is also a result of several programs that provide teachers with new tools to use when faced with challenging behaviors. New state laws reduce suspensions for younger students for willful defiance. Between SY 2011 and SY 2014 suspensions decreased 42% from 19,970 to 11,562.

Every Child Successful in Life

Children have the tools to be successful in life when they are safe, have access to health care, exercise and healthy food and live in families and communities where they can grow and play. They will be successful in life when they have meaningful adult connections and graduate from high school ready for college and career. Children have even more likelihood of being successful in life as “global citizens” if they are fluent in at least two languages.

Indicators

- High School Graduation with a-g Requirements
- Students Able to Speak two or More Languages
- Youth with Meaningful Adult Connections
- Opportunity Youth – Youth Disconnected from Education and Employment

Recommendations for Action

- Create a college-going culture at school from kindergarten through high school graduation.
- Support parents in establishing college savings accounts starting in kindergarten.
- 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.
- Expose students to careers and college including offering internships and job experience.
- Provide college enrollment support services including affordable SAT/ACT preparation programs and financial support for college application fees.
- Increase the capacity of the University of California and the California State University systems to accommodate qualified students, including providing scholarships and affordable financial aid so that all young people can go to college.
- Promote the Seal of Biliteracy at all high schools in order to encourage students to become proficient in more than one language.
- Create and integrate education and training pathways to efficiently move youth who are disconnected from school towards a high school credential and into postsecondary education that will yield industry-valued credentials and lead to career-potential employment.
- Provide an array of services for housing, childcare, transportation and behavioral health available to young adults ready to get back on-track for education and career.
- Ensure that students have opportunities to connect with caring adults in their schools and communities.
- Identify and address legal issues such as loss of driver’s license or outstanding fines that prevent young adults from being able to be employed.
- Establish a “young adult court” that takes into account principles of adolescent brain development and seeks to provide supports and services when appropriate.
By the Numbers

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.)

Figure 29 – Percent of Students who Left School Before Graduation (2014)

Figure 30 – Number of Students Awarded the Seal of Biliteracy

Figure 31 – Percent of Youth Who Report Having Caring Adults in Their Life
Overview

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, have substantial prospects for work that lead to self-sufficiency and increased prospects to be civically engaged. 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 intervene for adolescents who are not on track to graduate on time, ready for college and career. Brain development science tells us that the adolescent brain continues to develop, 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 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 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.
- 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 to career-potential employment.
How we Measure Success in Life

High School Graduation Rate with a-g Requirements
This report looks at the youth who graduate from high school completing the a-g requirements (courses needed to be admitted to the UC or CSU system) as a percentage of the cohort of students who both graduated and did not graduate on time. (The California Department of Education reports only the percentage of those who graduated.)

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 later life, it is important that they complete the a-g requirements—even if they don’t intend to go to college.

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.

Students Able to Speak Two or More Languages
This report counts the annual number of students who earn the state-designated Seal of Biliteracy from the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE). 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.

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, 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.

Youth with Meaningful Adult Connections
The percentage of students who say they have “three or more meaningful adult connections” or “having a teacher or another adult at school who really cares about me” on a survey is how we measure this indicator.

Research has demonstrated that youth with one or more caring adults in their life increases the probability that they will grow into a flourishing, productive adulthood.

These caring adults include the child’s parents, relatives, neighbors, friends of their parents, teachers, coaches, religious leaders and others. ChildTrends analyzed data from the National Survey of Children’s Health (2011/12) and found that children and adolescents who had a formal and informal “mentor-like” relationship outside their home were more likely to complete tasks they start, show interest in learning new things, volunteer in the community, engage in physical activities, participate in out-of-school activities and be engaged in school.

Opportunity Youth – Youth Disconnected from Education and Employment
Opportunity youth are those youth ages 16-24 who are disconnected from school and employment. Utilizing a methodology developed by Measure of America, we can identify countywide, as well as by specific neighborhoods, the percentage of youth who are not employed and not pursuing their education. 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.
Recommendations for Action

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

The importance of college is clear. By 2025, two out of every five jobs will require a college degree and 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 graduate with only a high school degree.\(^7^2\)

Professor Patricia McDonough of UCLA has 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.\(^7^3\)

Recommendation: Support parents in establishing college savings accounts starting in kindergarten.

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 a college account. When we help families understand the value of college savings account and provide them with a simple and easy means to save, it creates the aspiration for the child to go to college. Across the country, matched savings programs provide additional encouragement to save.\(^7^4\)

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) is launching a pilot Savings Circle program within the East Side Alliance. (The East Side Alliance is a collaborative of East Side Union High School District, its seven feeder school districts, SJSU and Evergreen College focused on creating a seamless preschool to college pathway for students. Together these districts serve 85,000 students.)

By 2018, 63% of all jobs will require some postsecondary education. Children who have as little as $500 in a college savings account are five times more likely to go to college.\(^7^5\)

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. 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.

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.

We can predict with 66% accuracy whether a student in elementary school will later get off-track for graduation. Disengaging from school is a slow process for most students. 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.

Working with community and governmental organizations, schools can offer a wide range of supplemental services and intensive assistance strategies for struggling students such as school and peer counseling, mentoring, tutoring, double class periods, internships, service learning and summer and after-school programs.
Recommendaion: Expose students to careers and college including offering internships and job experience.

Young adults were hit particularly hard during the recession that began in 2008. Many of the youth who found employment were those who had work experience during high school. When youth have an opportunity to work and participate in internships during high school, often they will find their “spark” (as well as learning which jobs they don’t want to do). Identifying a potential career early motivates students to explore college options that will help them get there.

We have many universities and colleges here in Santa Clara County, however many local children never visit them. Class field trips or after-school and summer trips to these colleges open up the world of possibility to these children.

Recommendaion: 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 SAT/ACT preparation courses. If we want a fair and equitable college-application and acceptance system, all students should have access to these programs. Recently the Kahn 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 Kahn 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 go to https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat.

Recommendaion: Increase the capacity of the University of California and the California State University systems to accommodate qualified students, including providing scholarships and affordable financial aid so that all young people can go to college.

According to a recent report from Campaign for College Opportunity, California ranks 49th nationally in the percentage of high school graduates who go on to enroll at four-year university. One reason for this is that California’s two university systems are too small to serve the state’s growing population, forcing these systems to turn away a large number of applicants. The CSU system turned away nearly 140,000 students between 2009 and 2014. In 2014, students needed near perfect SAT or ACT scores to be admitted to the UC system and freshman admitted to six of the nine UC campuses had an average GPA of 4.0. Also, as state funding has decreased for the state’s university system, tuition has increased by almost 200 percent in the UC and over 175 percent in the CSU since 2000.

Tuition has increased by almost 200 percent in the UC and over 175 percent in the CSU since 2000.

College Day – October 21, 2016

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 and begin planning for higher education. Spearheaded by the First Generation College Attainment 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.

Some schools have college rallies and celebrations. 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.
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 (Brownley) 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.

While the growth in the number of districts awarding the Seal of Biliteracy has grown over the past 5 years, there are still 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.

Recommendation: Create and integrate education and training pathways to efficiently move youth who are disconnected from school towards a high school credential and into postsecondary education that will yield industry-valued credentials and lead to career-potential employment.

Across the country, there is increased recognition that there should be improved efforts to address the needs of young adults, ages 16-24, who are disengaged from education and work. These youth have economic and social value in our community and the term “opportunity youth” recognizes this value as well as the desire of youth themselves to succeed in education and obtain gainful employment. However, facing a myriad of disconnected social service programs and confusing “on-ramps” to education, these youth are unable to get onto that pathway to success. It is estimated that each young person who has become disengaged from the education system costs the nation $37,000 annually in lost revenue and earnings and increased social services. In Santa Clara County, there are about 14,000 opportunity youth. At a cost of $37,000 per youth, this lost potential costs our local economy $518 million a year.

By bolstering their pathways to education and 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, too many will end up engaged in the justice system, become homeless or live in poverty.

Recommendation: Ensure that students have opportunities to connect with caring adults in their schools and communities. Support efforts to improve school climate, social-emotional learning, and resilience.

Project Cornerstone has identified as a critical developmental asset for youth that they have a strong relationship with at least three or more non-parent adults. These strong “non-parent/adult” relationships are even more important for encouraging the
It is critical to the youths’ success that they have adults in their lives who are able to identify academic and personal challenges early on and get them the support they need. These adults can serve as an anchor for the young person and provide linkages to tangible supports such as housing and health services as well as provide emotional support by listening and providing acceptance and encouragement.

**Recommendation:** Identify and address legal issues such as loss of driver’s license or outstanding fines that prevent young adults from being able to be employed.

An impulsive or financially driven decision to take the light rail without buying a ticket can result in a fine or even the loss of a driver’s license that has an impact on a young person’s ability to get to school or work. Many youth do not realize that their juvenile records can be sealed. Not knowing this may prevent them from applying for work because they have a felony on their record. A former foster youth who was engaged in the criminal justice system, even with her records sealed, may find a notation in his or her child welfare file that could have later implications when she becomes a parent. Many of these issues create a barrier to work and education that are difficult for low-income youth to navigate. A thorough review of these obstacles to employment should be conducted and strategies should be developed and implemented to eliminate them. Organizations that serve opportunity youth should be aware of actions they can take to help the youth navigate these stumbling blocks.

**Recommendation:** Establish a “young adult court” that takes into account principles of adolescent brain development and seeks to provide supports and services when appropriate.

There is not a significant developmental difference between a young person who is 17 years, 364 days old and one who is 18 years old. However, the justice process is significantly different for these two young adults. Brain science tells us that the rapid development that takes place beginning in adolescence continues well into a young adult’s early- to mid-twenties. The juvenile justice system recognizes that adolescents are not “little adults” and takes into account the potential, with the correct investment of services and support, for getting him or her back on track and onto a successful pathway to success in life. The rehabilitative approach of juvenile justice should be extended to young adults into their mid-twenties, particularly for crimes that are not violent.

San Francisco, with leadership from the district attorney’s office is piloting a young adult court. This approach, which focuses on supports and services rather than punishment and detention, (particularly for young adults with lower-level offenses) has great potential to decrease recidivism and help young adults get connected to education and employment that is satisfying and supports self-sufficiency. A similar pilot should be conducted in Santa Clara County.

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

In April 2014, the Santa Clara County Board of Education approved a plan to create a high school where opportunity youth without high school credentials can earn a diploma and enter a career pathway. In Fall 2015, two specialized classrooms in San Jose and one in Gilroy opened to serve youth who have disengaged from school. The classrooms provide these students, aged 16-24, a personalized education that will lead to entry into a postsecondary program in preparation for career-potential employment. Components of the program include a flexible schedule, support to secure resources that will lead to student success, internships and project-based learning. At the OYA, students are able to work at their own pace, earn a high school diploma, and receive support for college and career readiness.

If you know a 16- to 24-year old who would benefit from the Opportunity youth Academy program, please call 1-844-OYA-4U4U (1-844-692-4888) or email oya@sccoe.org.
Opportunity Youth in Santa Clara County

Utilizing methodology developed by Measure of America, Applied Survey Research created the Opportunity Youth Rate table below based on U.S. Census data. The table to the right shows 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.

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 these 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 juvenile 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. The goals of this work are to:

- Create a movement to increase awareness about the value of opportunity youth and develop a sense of urgency about changing outcomes;
- Improve practice and build capacity so youth develop the skills that will lead to academic and career success;
- Align and integrate programs and systems so youth can get on track for academic and career success regardless of where they enter a pathway;
- Understand the needs of employers in order to ensure youth receive the training and skills development that will best meet employer needs.

If you are interested in becoming involved with this work, please contact Joe Herrity at jherrity@kidsincommon.org.
End Notes


3. Ibid.


11. Ibid.


17. Ibid.


Many thanks to these organizations for providing data and graphic support to this data book:

1. Ethnicity of Children in Santa Clara County Source: Kidsdata.org
2. Income Distribution in Santa Clara County Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Microdata Files
3. Human Development Index Source: Applied Survey Research using the methodology developed by Measure of America
5. Children in Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity Source: California Dept. of Social Services, Child Welfare Dynamic Report System
6. Foster Youth with Two or Fewer Placement Changes Source: California Dept. of Social Services, Child Welfare Dynamic Report System
7. Number of Homeless Children, Youth & Families Source: Santa Clara County Homeless Point-In-Time Census & Survey 2015 Comprehensive Report
8. Children Eligible and Participating in Nutrition Programs Source: California Food Policy Advocates
11. 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
12. Percent of Children with Health Insurance Source: California Healthy Kids Survey and Santa Clara County Public Health Department
13. Number of Developmental Screenings Conducted with children ages Birth to 5 years FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and Santa Clara County Office of Education
14. Average Number of Developmental Assets Source: Project Cornerstone
15. People reached by Project Cornerstone Source: Project Cornerstone
16. 9th Grade Students Meeting All Six Fitness Standards Source: California Dept. of Education
18. Third Grade English Language Arts/Literacy, Students At or Exceeding Standard Source: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
19. Eighth Grade Math Skills, Students At or Exceeding Standard Source: California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress
20. Building Blocks of Kindergarten Readiness Source: Applied Survey Research
23. Number of Children Eligible for HeadStart or State Subsidized Childcare compared to Slots Available Source: Santa Clara County Office of Education
24. Attendance Risk and Students who are Proficient or Advanced in English and Math in Third Grade Source: Attendance Works and Applied Survey Research
25. Summer Learning Loss Source: SummerMatters.org
26. School Suspensions by Year Source: California Department of Education
27. School Suspensions by Race/Ethnicity Source: California Department of Education
28. Percent of All High School Students who Graduate with a-g Requirements Source: California Department of Education (CDE) (Note the CDE reports on % of graduates with a-g Requirements, this figure includes both students who did and did not graduate on time.)
29. Percent of Students who Left School Before Graduation Source: California Department of Education
30. Number of Students Awarded the Seal of Biliteracy Source: California Department of Education
31. Percent of Youth Who Report Having Caring Adults in Their Life Source: Project Cornerstone and California Healthy Kids Survey
32. Opportunity Youth by Ethnicity Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Microdata Files 2015
33. Opportunity Youth by Geographic Area Source: Applied Survey Research using the methodology developed by Measure of America
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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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
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