

First 5
Sonoma County

Strategic Plan Update

2021–2026

Updated June 2025

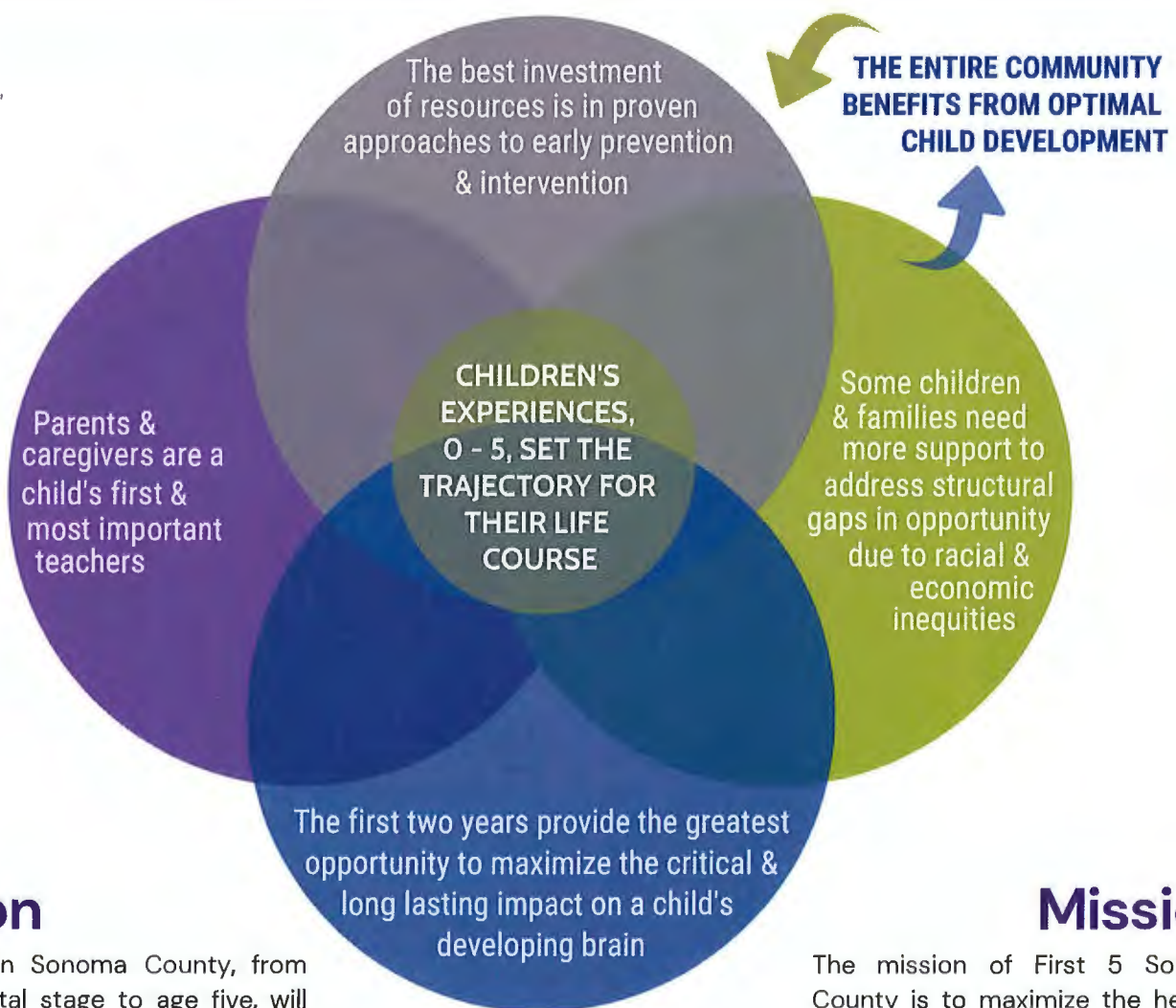


Foundations

In November 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, the California Children and Families First Initiative, which added a 50-cent per pack tax on cigarettes and tobacco products. As per the Act, the intent of Proposition 10 is to **"facilitate the creation and implementation of an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of information and services to enhance optimal early childhood development and to ensure that children are ready to enter school."**

Eighty-percent of the tax revenue is disbursed based on birth rate to the 58 counties in California **to promote the early health, learning, and family support for children from the prenatal stage through five years of age.**

Our **priority strategies** and **foundational principles** are grounded in **current research** and aligned with the statewide First 5 Network Strategy.



Vision

Children in Sonoma County, from the prenatal stage to age five, will develop to their fullest potential.

Mission

The mission of First 5 Sonoma County is to maximize the healthy development of all Sonoma County children from the prenatal stage through age five through support, education, and advocacy.

Early Relational Health

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Children and their parents/caregivers access preventative and early relational and therapeutic supports to ensure positive birth outcomes, prevent ACEs and promote healthy development in the first two years.

Goal 1 Priority Outcomes



1A

Increase early detection of developmental and behavioral health concerns among infants and toddlers and improve access to early intervention services



1B

Increase community awareness, access to screening and linkage to early intervention for perinatal mood disorders



1C

Increase support for pregnant and new parents to strengthen their parenting capacity, especially those at-risk



Early Relational Health: Strategies and Population

The Early Relational Health Goal Area focuses on scaling, expanding and ensuring the sustainability of critical strategies that promote optimal development in the first two years of life and mitigate adverse childhood experiences, such as child abuse, parental substance abuse and the impacts of poverty.

Goal 1 Priority Strategies	Target Population	Funding Sources to Leverage
Home visiting Evidence-based, evidence-informed approaches that provide intensive support to promote positive birth, early development and longer-term outcomes, prevent child maltreatment	High-risk mothers, history of AOD misuse; child welfare involvement	Prop. 10, TCM, CHVP, Community Benefit
New Parent TLC Gatekeeper training to increase knowledge and skills to identify new parents experiencing PMAD and link to supports	Child care providers, hairstylists, public	MHSA-Innovation
Help Me Grow Through countywide systems improvement efforts, expand access, reduce disparities and improve practice, care coordination and integration of developmental/social emotional screening, early intervention and early relational health	Healthcare providers, early childhood development providers	MHSA-PEI, Prop. 10
Navigation Warmline navigation to assist pregnant and new parents access resources, self-advocate and make decisions related to birth, breastfeeding, parenting and perinatal mental health	Parents at-risk	MHSA-PEI, Prop. 10
Positive Parenting Program Improve early childhood social-emotional health by facilitating systems change in agencies working with Sonoma County's highest-risk families by continuing to coordinate training and accreditation to provide Triple P – Level III & IV	Parents at-risk	Prop. 10, Title IV-E reimbursement via HSD
Maternal Mental Health Promotion of a trauma-informed and integrated relational model that informs a system of care to promote children's optimal development and learning by identifying and addressing maternal mental health issues as early as possible (individual treatment, mother-child dyadic tx, peer support, social support for family, linkage to psychiatry/medication, clinical resources). Address cultural, emotional, and practical barriers to treatment i.e. stigma, child care, transportation, limited time and competing interests.	Mothers at-risk for and experiencing symptoms of perinatal depression and/or anxiety	MHSA-PEI, Prop. 10
Early Relational Health Consortium: Roadmap & Feasibility Study Develop a roadmap for countywide systems improvement efforts to expand access and improve cultural responsiveness in practice, care coordination and integration of developmental/social emotional screening, early intervention and early relational health	Community-Based and Clinical Healthcare providers, early childhood development providers and system leaders	Measure I
Mental Health Workforce Development Support existing efforts to develop a more diverse and culturally responsive workforce pipeline for both clinical behavioral health and community-based, peer-led supports	Philanthropy, Community-Based and Clinical Healthcare providers, parents & children, birth to five	Measure I

Neighborhood-Based Services

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Families in high-opportunity neighborhoods access resources, referrals, linkage and supports to strengthen family literacy, resiliency and financial stability

Goal 2 Priority Outcomes



2A

Increase place-based family resource supports in high-opportunity neighborhoods



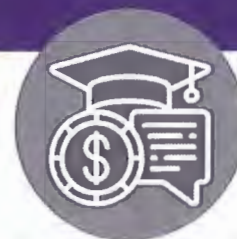
2B

Increase place-based support for parenting education and family literacy



2C

Increase parents' engagement and cultivate leadership in advocating for neighborhood/school improvement and other self-identified community issues



2D

Increase family economic self-sufficiency and reduce the impacts of poverty on children 0-5 through financial supports, coaching, connection to benefits and college savings



Neighborhood-Based Services: Strategies and Population

The Neighborhood-based Services Goal Area focuses on establishing and expanding existing place-based hubs of services that address the needs of the whole child and whole family.

Goal 2 Priority Strategies	Target Population	Funding Sources to Leverage
Place-Based Hubs <i>Establish and/or expand existing neighborhood-based services at school sites, FQHCs, WIC and other centrally located service sites where integrated programs and services can be offered.</i>	Families with children 0-5, particularly LatinX and indigenous communities impacted by poverty. Geographic targets: School attendance areas with high concentration of poverty, low broadband adoption rate, high number of dual language learners as per First 5 Equity Index score.	Prop. 10, LCFF, private philanthropy
Parenting Education & Promotion of Family Literacy <i>Proven strategies such as Pasitos, AVANCE, Reach Out and Read to ensure that parents have the tools and knowledge to engage as their child's first and most important teacher. Training for parents to have the skills to support optimal child development, literacy, and school readiness, with special attention to the importance of reading, nutrition and effective discipline.</i>		
Financial Supports <i>"Mobility" coaching, financial education, case management, linkage to community college, college savings account programs</i>		
Outreach & Linkage <i>Outreach and linkage to health insurance, WIC and other benefits enrollment and medical/dental homes, resource and referral for child care, screening for SE and developmental concerns, perinatal mood disorders and dental health</i>		
Parent Engagement & Organizing <i>Parent Voices, Abriendo Puertas, Parent Cafes, CBI organizing and advocacy</i>		

Equity & Quality in Early Learning:

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Ensure that Sonoma County's early care and education sector has access to tools, resources and supports to build, sustain and enhance a diverse, culturally responsive mixed-delivery system that meets the need of working families.

Goal 3 Priority Outcomes



3A

Expand Quality Counts participation to increase provider knowledge, improve adult child interactions, improve children's social emotional competence and improve integration and connection of community supports for optimal child development



3B

Integrate learning and expertise from TALLK into Quality Counts to prioritize the needs of dual language learners and address persistent racial disparities in school readiness



3C

Expand access to grants and scholarships to improve the quality of ECE facilities, environments and incentivize ECE professionals to continue professional development



Equity & Quality in Early Learning: Strategies and Population

The Equity & Quality in Early Learning Goal Area focuses on ensuring that the ECE sector has the supports needed to build capacity in trauma-informed interactions, social emotional learning strategies and strategies that support dual language learners.

Goal 3 Priority Strategies	Target Population	Funding Sources to Leverage
Quality Counts Sonoma County Professional development, coaching, technical assistance, recognition program and other resources to increase quality across multiple domains, including curriculum and teaching strategies, social emotional learning and trauma-informed strategies, family partnerships, health and safety.	ECE providers, including licensed family child care homes, private and subsidized center-based care, alternative settings (i.e. playgroups) and "family friend and neighbor" care	Prop. 10, First 5 CA IMPACT, CDE (QCC)
Integrate TALLK (Teachers Acquiring Language Learner Knowledge) program The TALLK project provides preschool teachers with training and coaching in specific strategies for interacting with English Learner (EL) children—especially those whose home language is Spanish—to best support their language acquisition.	Providers working with dual language learners in ECE settings in First 5 Equity Index school attendance areas	Prop. 10, First 5 CA IMPACT, CDE (QCC)
Minigrants for Child Care Providers Small grants of up to \$5,000 to new and existing child care providers to establish and/or improve learning environments Financial incentives available to ECE providers who demonstrate progress toward a research-based academic standard of quality.	Providers in First 5 Equity Index school attendance areas	Prop. 10, private philanthropy
Behavioral Consultation Effective behavioral consultation models provide technical assistance to childcare providers and preschool teachers seeking help to manage difficult behaviors and temperaments of children in their care. Early childhood mental health and education specialists work with providers to strengthen their understanding, willingness to persevere, and ability to intervene effectively with a challenging child.	Providers working with children exhibiting behavioral health challenges in the learning environment	MHSA-PEI, Prop. 10, First 5 CA IMPACT, CDE (QCC)
Child Care Facilities Grants and loans to establish new child care centers and home-based Family Child Care and improve quality and safety and increase access to care especially for infants and toddlers.	Providers in high-need areas of Sonoma County or as restricted by funding source.	American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
ECE Workforce: Paid Apprenticeships & Incentives Provide support for paid ECE apprenticeship program to build up and strengthen ECE workforce. Provide financial incentives to providers to expand hours, availability and access to child care.	ECE students & trainees, ECE providers	Measure I
Systems Improvement through Data & Planning Support the engagement of the field, subject matter experts, and necessary data and research in planning to develop, pilot and establish robust and transformational investments in ECE facilities, ECE provider wage boost and other compensation increases.	Local ECE providers and operators	Measure I

Community Resiliency & Engagement:

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: *Engage the entire community to support the achievement of First 5 Sonoma County's goals*

Goal 4 Priority Outcomes



2A

Increase parent and community awareness of the needs of children 0-5, their parents and caregivers through universal approaches



2B

Ensure parents and caregivers have access to information about child development and resources across the county that are specific to the needs of families with children 0-5 through universal approaches



2C

Promote and enhance community resiliency by providing discretionary grants that address emergent needs



2D

Inform and engage the private sector to understand and value the high return on investment in early childhood and to create a unified voice to elevate social determinants that impact children and families



Community Resiliency & Engagement: Strategies and Population

Engage the entire community to support the achievement of First 5 Sonoma County's goals.

Goal 4 Priority Strategies

Target Population

New Parent Kits & Parent Resource Guides

The Kit for New Parents (KNP) is a comprehensive set of resources filled with advice and useful tips for first-time parents provided by First 5 California. First 5 Sonoma County augments the KNP with a Parent Resource Guide. Community-based providers countywide distribute and utilize the Parent Resource Guide to support clients and help them navigate community resources and services.

Parents and Caregivers

Communications

Expand and maintain the First 5 Sonoma County website and social media presence to inform our community about child development, advocacy opportunities, programs and services and First 5's impact. Promote parent engagement in all aspects of children's lives from the prenatal stage through age five, prevent child abuse, improve children's readiness for school, promote early childhood mental health, and raise the level of concern among community decision makers about the effect their decisions have on children.

Radio, digital and television communication campaign leverages First 5 CA's Talk.Read.Sing message to promote optimal development.

Community at-large

Responsive Grants Program

Recurring disasters, political upheaval, pandemic and unexpected economic downturn have contributed to an environment in which unexpected, emergent and urgent needs emerge that may not be reflected in the strategic plan. Responsive grants address emergent needs, while also addressing the goals of First 5 Sonoma County to improve the development and support of young children and their families in Sonoma County.

Community-based service providers

Sponsorships

By supporting community convenings, events, conferences and supporting professional development and academic training through scholarships, First 5 Sonoma County is able to elevate the voices of community members and groups, promote cross-sector pollination and increase diverse representation in the early childhood development sector and influence decision-making. Examples include Los Cien, Latino Leadership, Early Learning Conference, ECE Provider Annual Celebration, scholarships to offset the cost of the Infant Mental Health Training Program.

Community groups and organizations

Intersectional Strategies: Employer Engagement

Leveraging trusted messengers to the business community such as Chambers of Commerce to engage employers around the return on investment of family friendly workplace policies like flexible scheduling and paid family leave, as well as engagement of employers to invest in supporting child care solutions, including subsidies and onsite or near site facilities.

Business sector, employers, Chambers of Commerce

Intersectional Strategies: Engagement of the Housing Sector

Leveraging advocacy and public will building to increase affordable housing opportunities to increase family self-sufficiency, as well as promote inclusion of child care facilities in new housing development when there is a geographic unmet need.

Housing developers, housing advocates, Cities and Towns, Economic Development Board

Guaranteed Basic Income PILOT

Address disparate health and economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on families with young children, especially Black, Indigenous and other people of color and conduct evaluation activities to understand impact of increased economic stability and influence anti-poverty policy.

Low-income families with young children, especially BIPOC