

First 5 Sonoma County

2021 - 2025 Strategic Plan Highlights



As we look to the future, we do so in the midst of crisis and complexity. The impacts of a global pandemic, recurring local natural disasters and resulting economic upheaval have left no one untouched, and have deepened pre-existing health, education and economic disparities that are directly linked to centuries of institutionalized, structural racism. Together, these conditions pose a particular threat to the health and well-being of children, especially children of color, with long-term implications for their development, health outcomes and academic achievement.

There is growing evidence to show that the early childhood system of care is a powerful preventive/early intervention strategy for healthy development, prevention of child abuse and neglect, and school readiness. To truly move the needle, we must focus on changing policies and practices that perpetuate disparities and undeniably keep children from reaching their optimal health and wellbeing. We must continue to pivot from a focus on funding direct services to strongly embrace **our role as catalyst, collaborator, capacity builder, and advocate.**

First 5 Sonoma County is pleased to present the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to guide investments for the next four years. We are immensely grateful to our community which has provided the foundation for our understanding of the needs of our youngest residents. Inspired by their resilience, we are committed to approach our work in the coming years with **grit, optimism and hope.**



Sustaining Who We Are & What We Do

First 5 Commissions in every California county have seen tobacco tax revenue drop considerably as tobacco consumption has steadily declined. In 2018, First 5 Sonoma County Commissioners and leadership worked closely with the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to analyze the potential fiscal impact of changing First 5's status as a public entity as a strategy to protect and support First 5's long term sustainability. **The sustainability analysis compelled the Board to use their authority to make First 5 an independent public agency in 2019, separate from the County of Sonoma.**

The Commission's prudent fiscal stewardship, combined with the capacity to attract external funding, and the significant reduction in operational costs by separating from the County, has extended the life of the reserve funds set aside by the Commission in its earliest years. Even so, the remaining unassigned funds in the Commission's fund balance will not suffice to support all of our current activities, as current external funding ends or declines. **This elevates the urgency and importance of First 5's efforts to build strong, sustainable systems of support for young children and their families, in order to maximize the impact of investments.**

Our strategic plan describes First 5 Sonoma County's fiscal landscape, projects the resources the Commission will have available over the next four years and proposes strategies to sustain systems-building efforts, exert influence, and achieve lasting change. Specific efforts related to long term sustainability include:



Collaborative advocacy for a statewide sustainability solution



Partner with Sonoma County agencies to leverage state and local funding



State and federal advocacy for policy and systems/program funding increases



Local advocacy to increase affordable housing, child care and family income



Build local political will for new dedicated local revenues

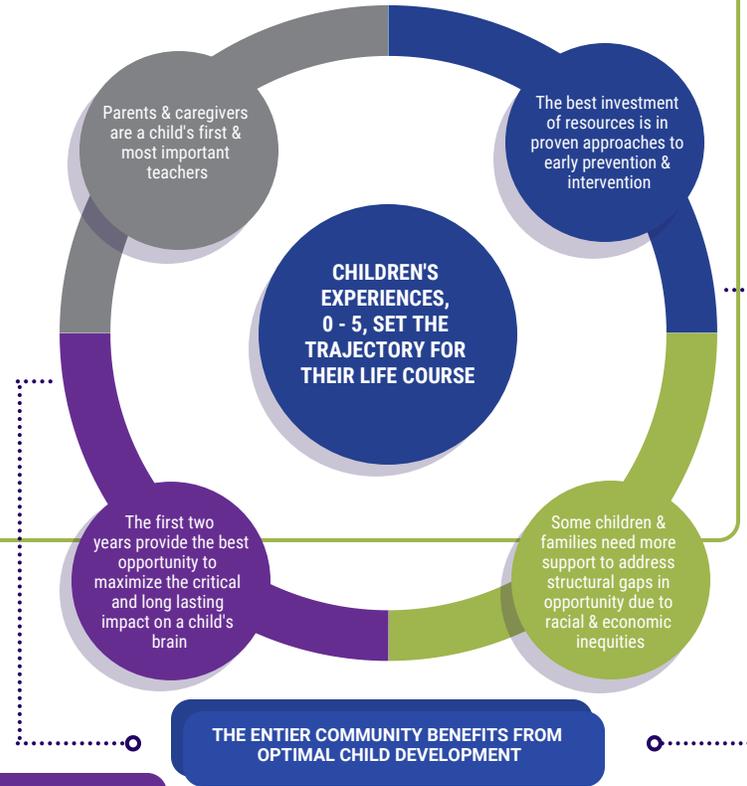
The mission of First 5 Sonoma County is to maximize the healthy development of all Sonoma County children from the prenatal stage through age five through support, education, and advocacy.

Our Commitment

Our vision is that the children in Sonoma County, from the prenatal stage to age five, will develop to their fullest potential.

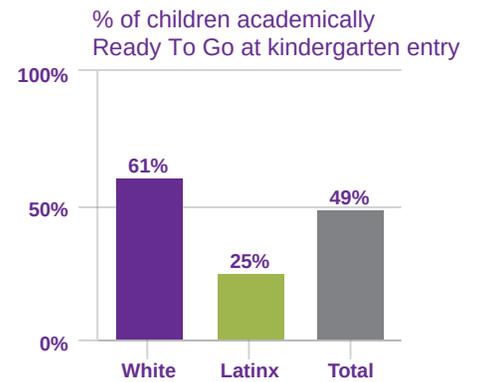
Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Belonging & Anti Racism

First 5 Sonoma County envisions and contributes to a community and society where children 0-5, families and everyone in our communities can fully and safely participate, regardless of their race or ethnicity, the languages they speak, the makeup of their family, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, where they live, immigration status, their family's economic status or any other defining characteristic. We will work to dismantle racism in our own operations, transform our systems, and partner with organizations that demonstrate commitment to anti-racism.



Local Context

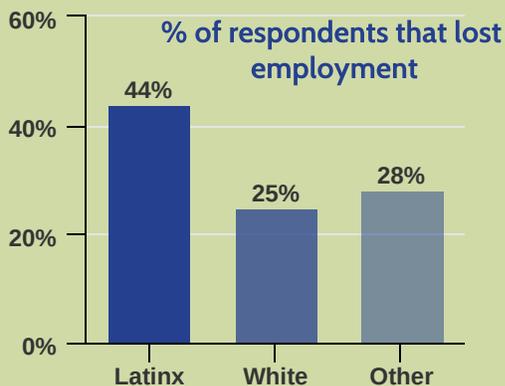
The cost of living in Sonoma County is **78%** higher than the national average



From 2013 - 15, **47%** of births were covered by Medi-Cal



COVID-19 survey of Sonoma County Parents



% of households with increased risk to COVID from at least one parent working outside the home

A BOLD Strategy

Our strategic planning process identified five Strategic Goal Areas and associated Priority Outcomes where the needs, resource gaps and racial disparities for early childhood development are the greatest, and therefore present the greatest opportunity for impact.

Goals	Priority Outcomes	4 Year Funding
<p>1</p>  <p>Early Relational Health</p>	<p>Priority Outcome 1A: Increase early detection of developmental and behavioral health concerns among infants and toddlers and improve access to early intervention services</p> <p>Priority Outcome 1B: Increase community awareness, access to screening and linkage to early intervention for perinatal mood disorders</p> <p>Priority Outcome 1C: Increase support for pregnant and new parents to strengthen their parenting capacity, especially those at-risk.</p>	<p>\$3,500,000</p>
<p>2</p>  <p>Neighborhood Based Services</p>	<p>Priority Outcome 2A: Increase place-based family resource supports in high-opportunity neighborhoods</p> <p>Priority Outcome 2B: Increase place-based support for parenting education and family literacy</p> <p>Priority Outcome 2C: Increase parents' engagement and cultivate leadership in advocating for neighborhood/school improvement and other self-identified community issues.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 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 accounts.</p>	<p>\$3,000,000</p>
<p>3</p>  <p>Equity & Quality in Early Learning</p>	<p>Priority Outcome 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.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 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</p> <p>Priority Outcome 3C: Expand access to mini grants & scholarships to improve the quality of ECE environments and incentivize ECE professionals to continue professional development</p>	<p>\$2,800,000</p>
<p>4</p>  <p>Community Resilience & Engagement</p>	<p>Priority Outcome 4A: Increase parent and community awareness of the needs of children 0-5, their parents and caregivers through universal approaches.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 4B: 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.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 4C: Promote and enhance community resiliency by providing discretionary grants that address emergent needs.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 4D: 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.</p>	<p>\$3,500,000</p>
<p>5</p>  <p>Cross-Cutting Strategies</p>	<p>Priority Outcome 5A: Co-create a framework for increasing diversity, equity, belonging and anti-racism in the work of First 5 Sonoma County and its partners and stakeholders.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 5B: Convene learning communities embedded with strategic initiatives to advance and build organizational and provider capacity around diversity, equity, belonging and anti-racism, trauma-informed organizations and services and other critical topics.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 5C: Advocate for policies and funding streams that support children's ability to develop to their fullest potential and that address disparities in the social determinants of health and school readiness, especially poverty.</p> <p>Priority Outcome 5D: Measure and monitor trends in school readiness and align measurement efforts with investments.</p>	<p>\$1,200,000</p>

Total 4 Year Funding

\$14,000,000