



**Santa Clara County Children's Agenda**  
Indicators of Child Health and Well-Being  
*2013 Data Book*



## About this Data Book

The 2013 Children's Data Book reports on how our children are faring in each of the four goals of the Children's Agenda – safety, health, success in learning, success in life. As new data has become available, we utilize it to help us “tell the story” of how our children are faring and whether we are making progress.

You will find a “dashboard” on the following pages of the data book that will give you an overview of the 13 indicators of the Children's Agenda, including how the indicators support the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth, how they support the vision of the Children's Agenda and how the agenda will track the success of the goals for each indicator.

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## The Santa Clara County Children's Agenda

### “How are the children?”

This traditional greeting exchanged among Maasai warriors on the distant plains of Africa reflects the high value that the extraordinary and storied Maasai tribe places on its children's health and well-being. The warriors hope to hear in response, “All the children are well,” for this means the entire tribe is thriving.

The Santa Clara County Children's Agenda reflects a similar philosophy. When we ask how all our children are faring, we know the answer is the most important measure of the health of our whole community. The Children's Agenda provides 13 explicit goals and data indicators of child well-being that are collected and monitored over time to track and measure our children's progress. The Agenda gives us a rigorous and reliable way to develop and maximize partnerships, attract resources and implement policies that will lead to positive change on behalf of all the community's children and youth. It provides data and research to inform decision-making, guide program improvement and drive results.

The Children's Agenda also establishes a framework and a common language for policy makers, elected officials, funders, nonprofit leaders and business leaders to understand how individual policies and programs contribute to the improvement of each of its indicators. By leveraging our assets and collaborating to solve problems, we can address child development broadly from birth to young adulthood and assure the best possible outcomes for all the children who live here.

**The vision of the Children's Agenda is for every child to be safe, healthy, successful in learning, successful in life. You are part of the Children's Agenda if you care about the well-being of our children and youth, and if you support these principles:**

- **We work together to achieve collectively what we cannot do alone.** It is important for each individual and organization to understand its specific contribution to the success of the Children's Agenda, but the key to success is working together to align resources and responsibilities across organizations.
- **We strive to create integrated systems and supports as well as aligned policies and resources.** Traditional and non-traditional partners work together to identify and address barriers in order to better coordinate effective service delivery. We also identify and work to improve policies and resources that do not result in positive outcomes for children and youth.
- **We hold ourselves accountable to measurable change in child well-being.** This is true at the community level and in our specific programs and services. Well-coordinated, results-driven programs and policies that support children and youth will lead to comprehensive, community-level change.
- **We will not accept “business as usual” and are committed to continuous improvement.** Even in times of diminishing resources, we must focus on doing better for our children because there is too much at stake if we don't. We will concentrate our efforts on achieving better results.

- **We focus on improving the poor results that disproportionately affect our low-income children and children of color.** We must take responsibility for our most vulnerable children falling into the “opportunity gap” that has divided our community. Too often, this opportunity gap results in an academic-achievement gap and the over-representation of children of color in our justice and child welfare institutions.
- **We have high expectations of our children and youth, our parents, our community, our leaders and ourselves.** We must believe that we can improve outcomes and that we have the power to help every child and youth in Santa Clara County become successful adults.

## At A Glance – How Are Santa Clara County Children Faring?

The table below provides an overview of the four areas of the Children's Agenda; the goals and indicators that relate to each area; and the progress we are making on each of the indicators. "Making progress" means that a data indicator has been improving over time and/or that best practices are being put into place that should lead to measurable improvement in the future. "Losing ground" means that the indicator is trending in the wrong direction.

Domain	Goals for Santa Clara County	Bill of Rights Articles
 <p>Every Child Safe</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fewer families report hunger and food insecurity and a larger percentage of eligible children are enrolled in federal food programs.</li> <li>More children remain safely in their own homes or the homes of relatives. Placement changes decrease.</li> <li>Fewer youth are arrested for felony and misdemeanor offenses, there is a decrease in youth detained in "out of home placement" and a smaller percentage of youth recidivate.</li> <li>The racial disparity of children in foster care and youth in juvenile detention facilities is eliminated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to have their essential needs met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care and accessible transportation.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.</li> </ul>
 <p>Every Child Healthy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All children have health coverage.</li> <li>More children have timely visits to the doctor and the dentist.</li> <li>More children pass the state physical fitness test and are meeting the aerobic fitness standard.</li> <li>The number of children receiving early developmental screening increases annually.</li> <li>The percentage of youth and children reporting they are in the developmental "thriving zone" will increase.</li> <li>Health disparities based on socio-economic differences will be eliminated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and youth have a right to a healthy mind, body and spirit that enables them to maximize their potential.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to have their essential needs met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care and accessible transportation.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.</li> </ul>
 <p>Every Child Successful in Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the percentage of children who are ready for school.</li> <li>Increase the percentage of children who are proficient or advanced at reading in third grade.</li> <li>Increase the percentage of youth who complete algebra by 9th grade.</li> <li>Eliminate the "achievement gap" in these three indicators.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
 <p>Every Child Successful In Life</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the percentage of youth who graduate on time, fulfilling the A–G requirements.</li> <li>Eliminate the socio-economic disparity in graduation rates and fulfillment of A–G requirements.</li> <li>Increase the number of youth who take and pass the Advanced Placement Language Exam and receive the Santa Clara County Office of Education Bi-literate Certificate.</li> <li>Increase the percentage of youth who report they feel valued by the community.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to a voice in matters that affect them.</li> <li>Children and youth have a right to a sense of hope for their future.</li> </ul>

Indicator	Results	Notes/Comments
Hunger	Losing Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need has grown by 35% since 2009. Response has also grown 35%. However, unmet need rose to 148.8 million missing meals.</li> <li>• A larger percentage of eligible children participate in and benefit from federal food programs such as Free/Reduced Price Lunch.</li> </ul>
Children in Safe and Stable Families	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entries into foster care have decreased by 45% since 2005.</li> <li>• Ethnic/racial disparities still exist, but the rate of entry for all groups is decreasing.</li> <li>• Placement stability has improved by 11% for children in care less than a year and by 41% for children who are in care for one to two years.</li> </ul>
Juvenile Arrest Rates	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Juvenile arrest rate decreased 38% from 2007 to 2012.</li> <li>• Felony arrests decreased 32% from 2007 to 2012.</li> <li>• Youth spending time in Juvenile Hall decreased 17% since 2007.</li> <li>• Violation of Probation decreased from 43% from high point in 2010.</li> </ul>
Access to Health Care	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97% of children have health insurance.</li> <li>• 85.9% have seen a doctor in the past year.</li> <li>• Measure A funding will support future health insurance needs of children.</li> </ul>
Healthy Lifestyle	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fitness scores for all ethnic groups improved from 2011 to 2012.</li> </ul>
Early Social Emotional Health	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental screening to support early social emotional development has expanded throughout the county due to efforts of FIRST 5, the SCC Mental Health Dept. and Headstart.</li> </ul>
Youth in the Thriving Zone	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of youth in the “thriving zone” increased between 2005 and 2011.</li> <li>• Project Cornerstone continues to grow in reach and scope and this should lead to ongoing improvement in developmental assets.</li> </ul>
School Readiness	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data from 2008 indicates ongoing improvement.</li> <li>• Transitional Kindergarten for younger students and the ongoing emphasis on improving access to high quality pre-school should lead to ongoing improvement of the readiness scores of students entering Kindergarten.</li> </ul>
Third Grade Reading	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• California Standard Test scores continue to improve for all groups. However, ethnic/socio-economic disparity still exists.</li> <li>• Percentage of children attending schools with API of 800+ and meeting improvement goals for all student groups is increasing.</li> </ul>
Middle School Math	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The percentage of eighth grade students passing the Algebra I CST has increased to 35.2% in 2012. This is up from 19% in 2008.</li> </ul>
High School Graduation Rates with A–G Requirements	Losing Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of 12th grade students graduating with A–G requirements decreased for all ethnic groups.</li> <li>• College Day has expanded county-wide to create a college-going culture in Santa Clara County.</li> </ul>
Fluent in 2+ Languages	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2011, Biliteracy Seal given to 123 students. This grew to 356 in 2012.</li> </ul>
Youth Feel Valued by the Community	Making Progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of youth who feel valued by the community grew from 18% in 2005 to 22% in 2010.</li> <li>• Project Cornerstone continues to grow in reach and scope and this should lead to continued progress in the percentage of youth who feel valued by the community.</li> </ul>



## The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth - Taking a Stand for Children and Youth

The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth helps our community stay focused on making the issues that affect children and youth a top priority especially 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, eight cities, twelve school districts and hundreds of individuals and organizations have also endorsed these rights. For more information on how you, your organization, city or school district can endorse the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth, please go to [www.kidsincommon.org](http://www.kidsincommon.org).

### 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 enables 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.

## 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. So, what if our public officials asked the same question before making important decisions about our community? It 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 of Supervisors look at policy and program choices through a

different lens that brings children into focus, making their needs visible, important—and not just 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.

## School-Linked Services — The Promise of Coordinated Support Services for Children and Families

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. There is plenty of evidence to show that 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. Therefore, the Children's Agenda has focused on helping to develop schools as “resource hubs” that can support the health and social needs of students and their families.

An exciting initiative—a new and improved version of School-Linked Services (SLS)—has been launched to help with this transition. The original SLS program, implemented in 1994, had been primarily focused

on creating a safe environment in schools, but, eventually, it became a casualty of budget cuts. When Dave Cortese was president of the county board of supervisors in 2011, he declared it to be “The Year of the Child” and announced his intention to re-establish SLS. There has been a year-long planning process to develop a coordinated system of health and social services on school campuses and in the community. SLS has now launched plans in 55 schools in Santa Clara County that coordinate and leverage \$63 million of investment by districts, governmental agencies and community-based organizations. The seven tenets are:

- School-Linked Services should emerge from and represent the mission of county programs;
- School-Linked Services should be developed from the school's self-identified goals;
- Financing and sustainability should be planned from the beginning of the program;

- Best practices should be identified and used;
- Programs should be results-driven and these outcomes must be jointly designed, measured and reported;
- Programming should be wellness-oriented and focused on prevention;
- Program staffing models should support teaming and effective collaborative processes.

Through joint planning, shared service delivery and effective coordination, School-Linked Services has great promise to meet the needs of Santa Clara County children and families. It will create a seamless service continuum that eliminates redundancies and encourages integration of services between agencies, community providers and education systems. SLS will make schools a place where youth and their families can find a network of preventive services, helping all young people learn the skills to ensure that they become healthy, responsible and successful adults.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “School-Linked Services Strategic Plan.” Santa Clara County Mental Health Dept. December 2011. Web-accessed January 2012 at <http://www.sccgov.org/keyboard/attachments/Committee%20Agenda/2011/December%2019,%202011/203413891/TMPKeyboard203825584.pdf>.

## The Landscape for Children in Santa Clara County

Children under the age of 18 make up 24.3% of Santa Clara County. The total population of the county is 1,777,607, including 431,435 children. There are:

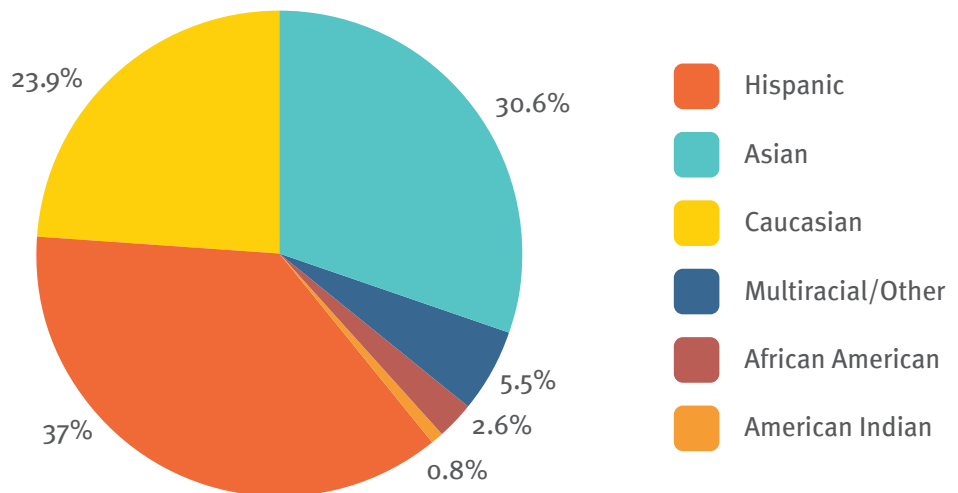
- 150,571 children who are under 6 years old
- 148,414 children who are 6–11 years old
- 132,450 children who are 12–17 years old<sup>2</sup>

Santa Clara County is one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the nation. As can be seen in **Figure 1**, Santa Clara County does not have a “majority” population. 37% of the child population is Hispanic, 30.6% is Asian, 23.9% is Caucasian, 2.6% is African American, 0.8% is American Indian and 5.5% is multiracial or other.<sup>3</sup>

### Children in Immigrant Families

The U.S. Census Bureau indicates that 62.4% of children in Santa Clara County live with one or more parent who was born in another country. The public schools report that 25.4% of enrolled children are English language learners.<sup>4</sup> The county's foreign-born-parent population includes those who are naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants, humanitarian migrants and unauthorized migrants. A

Figure 1 – Ethnicity/Race of Santa Clara County Children, 2010



microcosm of the future of the United States, 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.<sup>5</sup>

Nationwide, 88% of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens. Children of immigrants account for almost all of the nation's growth in child population between 1990 and 2008. In 18 years, today's children living 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.<sup>6</sup>

Multiculturalism is the norm in Santa Clara County, and our neighborhoods, schools and workplaces are deeply influenced by the immigrant experience. In

2009, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation proposed a new model of immigrant integration for Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. The model promotes mutual benefits for immigrants and the communities where they live, allowing for newcomers to enjoy enhanced civic participation and improved economic mobility. The new model not only encourages immigrants to become integrated into the community, but for their new home community to accept the multicultural perspective immigrants bring as everyone works toward becoming a cohesive whole.<sup>7</sup>

In Santa Clara County, as well as the nation, our future depends on how we invest in our children, including those in immigrant families. If all our children develop the skills they need to become productive workers and parents who support their children's learning, the county's future will be bright.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year Estimates. Web-accessed December 2012 at <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> “Santa Clara County: Demographics.” Kidsdata: Data and Resources about the Health of Children. Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health. Web-accessed December 2012 at [www.kidsdata.org](http://www.kidsdata.org).

<sup>5</sup> Santamaria, Manuel J., Palma, Mauricio. “Immigrant Integration in Silicon Valley: Legalization, Language Acquisition and Bridging the Cultural Gap Grantmaking Strategies Research Paper.” Silicon Valley Community Foundation. October, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Hernandez, Donald J., Cervantes, Wendy D. “Children in Immigrant Families: Ensuring Opportunity for Every Child in America.” First Focus and the Foundation for Child Development. March, 2011.

<sup>7</sup> Santamaria, Manuel J., Palma, Mauricio. Immigrant Integration in Silicon Valley: Legalization, Language Acquisition and Bridging the Cultural Gap. Silicon Valley Community Foundation Grantmaking Strategies Research Paper. October, 2008.



### The High Cost of Living in Santa Clara County Challenges Many Families

In 2011, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates 12.4% of Santa Clara County children lived in households whose income fell below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The median family income in Santa Clara County was \$107,765.<sup>8</sup>

The high cost of living in Santa Clara County creates enormous challenges to our community’s desire to make every child safe, healthy, successful in learning, successful in life. Poverty and the cost of living are intertwined with a number of other factors that can put children and their families at risk.

In 2012, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of three—one adult living with one pre-schooler and one school-age child—was \$19,090. Eligibility for many public support

programs are based 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 \$35,316 annually. To be qualified for Medi-Cal, this family can earn no more 200% of the FPL or \$38,180.

The Insight Center for Community Economic Development has estimated that to meet basic needs without public or private assistance, this same family needs a household income of \$77,973. This estimate is known as the Family Economic Self-Sufficiency Standard.<sup>9</sup> The gulf between the Self-Sufficiency Standard and the Federal Poverty Level is sobering. Even more startling, is that it would require this family to work four full-time minimum wage jobs at \$8.00 per hour, or

\$16,640 annual salary, to come close to meeting the Self-Sufficiency Standard. Even these four minimum wage jobs fall short at \$66,560 annually.

**Figure 2: Characteristics of Santa Clara County Families Below and Above the Self-Sufficiency Standard, 2007**

Household Type	Total	Percent of Households	Percent Below Self-Sufficiency Standard	Percent Above Self-Sufficiency Standard
Total Households in the County	460,867	100%	22.2%	77.8%
Asian Households	144,323	31.3%	18.8%	81.2%
Black or African American Households	13,419	2.9%	32.3%	67.7%
Latino Households	93,288	20.2%	45.0%	55.0%
White Households	205,671	44.6%	13.5%	86.5%
Households with one or more children	212,161	46%	29.5%	70.5%
Married Couple with Children	161,567	35.1%	22.8%	77.2%
Single Mother	35,261	7.7%	55.7%	44.3%
Single Father	15,333	3.3%	39.4%	60.6%

Source: Insight Center for Community Economic Development

8 U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 1-year Estimates. Web-accessed December 2012 at <http://factfinder2.census.gov>.

9 “The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Santa Clara County, CA 2008.” Insight Center for Community Economic Development. Web-accessed January 2010 at <http://www.insightcced.org>.



# Every Child Safe



Safety is integral to children'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 in need of government supports as adults. 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 such as 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.<sup>10</sup>

## Indicators

- Food Insecurity and Hunger
- Children Living in Safe and Stable Families
- Juvenile Arrest Rate

## Goals

- Fewer families report hunger and food insecurity and a larger percentage of eligible children are enrolled in federal food programs.
- More children remain safely in their own homes or the homes of relatives.
- Placement changes decrease.
- Fewer youth are arrested for felony and misdemeanor offenses, there is a decrease in youth detained in "out of home placement" and a smaller percentage of youth recidivate.
- The racial disparity of children in foster care and youth in juvenile detention facilities decreases.

<sup>10</sup> Knitzer, Jane. "Promoting Resilience: Helping Young Children and Parents Affected by Substance Abuse, Domestic Violence and Depression in the context of Welfare Reform." National Center for Children in Poverty. February 2000. [http://nccp.org/publications/pub\\_389.html](http://nccp.org/publications/pub_389.html).

# Food Insecurity and Hunger

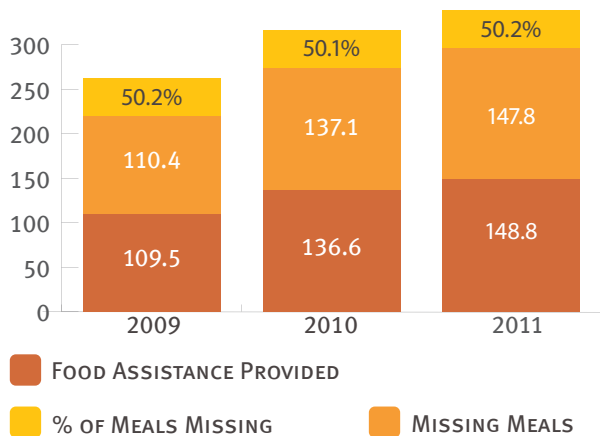
Losing Ground



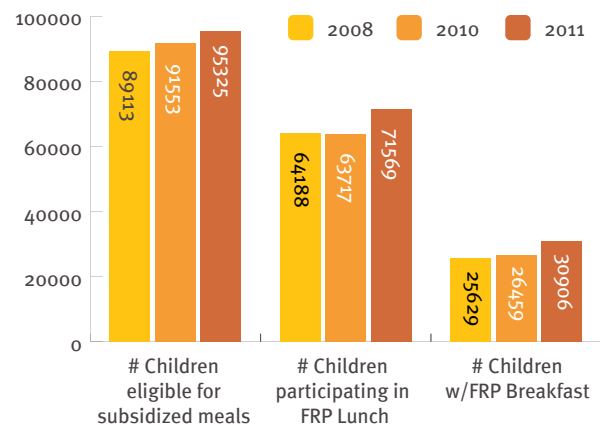
The demand for food assistance in Santa Clara County has outpaced our ability to provide this assistance. **Figure 3** displays the Hunger Index developed by Santa Clara University. An aggregate measure of the need for food among the most vulnerable members of our community, this index provides a means of comparing need and our community’s ability to meet that need annually. From 2009 to 2011, the need for food assistance grew by nearly 35%, from 219.9 million meals in 2009 to 296.6 million meals in 2011. In 2011, federally funded and local food programs provided 147.8 million meals, a 35% increase over the 109.5 million meals provided in 2009. Even with this increased provision of meals, the need grew so much in Santa Clara County that residents experienced 148.8 million “missing” meals in 2011.<sup>11</sup>

Participation in Federal Food programs such as Free and Reduced Price Lunch and Breakfast is an effective strategy to address childhood hunger. **Figure 4** shows the gap in those eligible for the Free/Reduced Price (FRP) federal food programs and those actually receiving this important food support. The number of children in need of this important support has grown, however a greater percentage of children are receiving this support. In 2008, 72% and 29% of those eligible for FRP Lunch and Breakfast received this support. In 2011, 75% received FRP Lunch and 32% received FRP Breakfast.<sup>12</sup>

**Figure 3 – Hunger Index, Food Assistance in Santa Clara County**



**Figure 4 – Utilization of Free/Reduced Price Federal 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, 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 overweight and obesity.<sup>13</sup>

The paradox is that young children living in households that don’t have enough food are more likely to be overweight. Families living on a tight budget often sacrifice healthy food for inexpensive and high-calorie/low-nutrition fare found at fast-food restaurants and convenience stores. Low-income neighborhoods also often lack grocery stores with fresh food and produce.<sup>14</sup>

11 Starbird, Drew, McCown, Cindy, Enos, Michael, Monowitz, Max. “Hunger Index 2011: Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties.” Powerpoint presentation at the 2011 Hunger Forum sponsored by Second Harvest Food Bank. Sept. 2012.  
 12 “CFPA 2010 County Profiles” and “2010-11 School Meal Analysis” California Food Policy Advocates. Web-accessed at <http://www.cfpa.net>. 26 Nov. 2012.  
 13 “The Consequences of Hunger and Food Insecurity for Children – Evidence from Recent Scientific Studies.” Center on Hunger and Poverty, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University. June 2002.  
 14 Bronte-Tinkew, J., M. Zaslow, R. Capps, and A. Horowitz. “Food Insecurity and Overweight among Infants and Toddlers: New Insights into a Troubling Linkage.” ChildTrends. July 2007. [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org).

### What Helps to Improve Childhood Hunger and Food Insecurity

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 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP - formerly called Food Stamps) 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.<sup>15</sup> Other food programs including and Free/Reduced Price

(FRP) school feeding programs can also decrease food insecurity in families. Most of these programs bring federal funding to the county, which not only supports families but also stimulates the local economy by freeing up dollars that program participants are able to spend on other purchases.

### An idea to consider in Santa Clara County

In March 2012, the Los Angeles Unified School District made a commitment to ensure all students have the opportunity to start the school day well-nourished and ready

to learn. In spite of efforts to enroll the more than 553,000 students qualified for Free/Reduced Price breakfast, the district was never able to enroll more than 29% of those eligible. In the "Food for Thought" program, participating elementary schools' breakfast will be delivered directly to the classroom. Teachers and students will eat breakfast together while the teacher takes roll and leads the students through a focused activity. The goal for the first year of the program is for 267 schools and 202,000 students to participate.<sup>16</sup>

## Children Living in Safe and Stable Families

Making Progress



The number of children entering foster care has decreased over the past several years. **Figure 5** shows that the rate of entry into foster care has declined steadily since 2005. The total number of children entering into foster care has decreased from 1295 in 2005 to 699 in 2010. While this is good progress, the disparity in the rate of removals into foster care for African-American and Latino children compared to Caucasian and Asian remains high. From 2010 to 2011, there was an uptick in the rate of African American and Hispanic children entering foster care from 8.7 to 9.6 per thousand African American children and from 2.7 to 2.9 per thousand Hispanic children.

Children in foster care with multiple placement changes have poorer outcomes in education, higher juvenile arrest rates and more incidents of homelessness as young adults. **Figure 6** shows improvement in placement stability since 2008. Children who were in foster care for 8 days to 12 months and had two or less placements increased from 78.8% in 2008 to 89.9% in 2011 (National Goal = 86%). Children who were in foster care for 12 months to 24 months and had two or less placements increased from 45.7% in 2008 to 68.8% in 2011 (National Goal = 65.4%).

Children who are victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to suffer from depression or attempted suicide, substance abuse, 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. Recent neuroscience research reveals that traumatic experiences

such as physical abuse and neglect dramatically affect the structure and chemistry of the developing brain. The biological effects of trauma could be one reason why many children in the child welfare system have behavioral and learning problems. Separation from the primary caregiver can also be traumatic for a child under the age of six. This results in difficult decisions for social

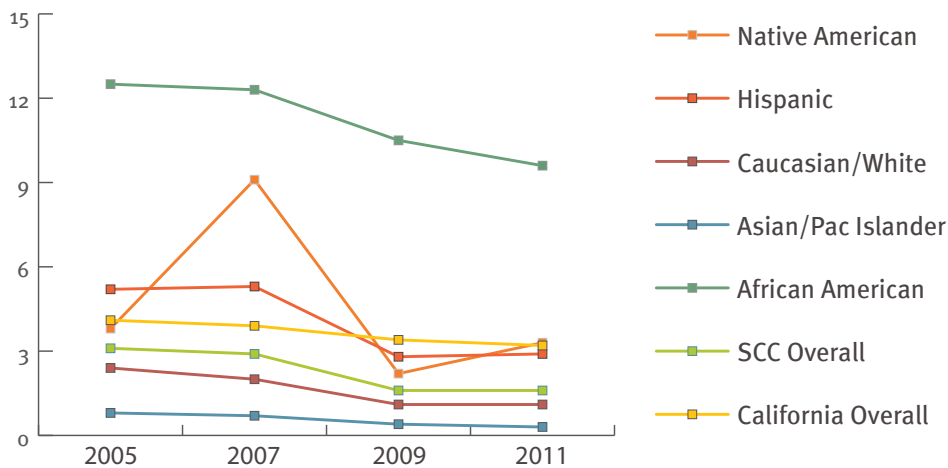
workers and others who have the responsibility to protect children who may be abused or neglected.<sup>17</sup>

15 "The SNAP Vaccine – Boosting Children's Health." Children's HealthWatch. February 2012.

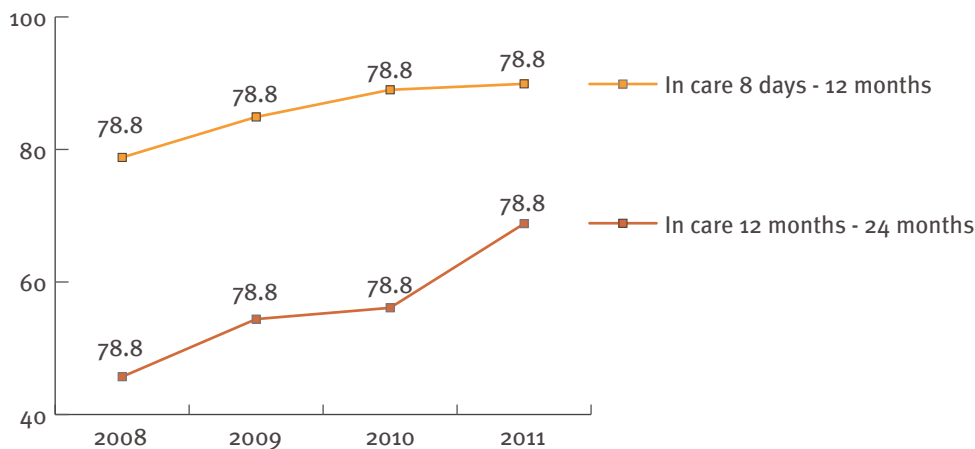
16 Food for Thought." The Los Angeles Fund for Education. Web-accessed at [www.lafund.org](http://www.lafund.org) . 30 November 2012.

17 "Building Young Minds: The Importance of Social and Emotional Development." Inform. Volume 4, Number 3, May 2006. [http://www.ndkidscount.org/publications/inform/4\\_3Inform.pdf](http://www.ndkidscount.org/publications/inform/4_3Inform.pdf).

**Figure 5– Entries into Foster Care per 1,000 Children by Race/Ethnicity, Santa Clara County**



**Figure 6 – Placement Stability: Percent Children in Foster Care with Two or Fewer Placement Settings During the Life of Their Case, Santa Clara County**



### What is Working in Santa Clara County

Over the past few years, several reforms have been implemented in Santa Clara County with the goal of decreasing child abuse and neglect and first entries into the foster care system. These reforms include:

**Joint Response:** Ensuring that law enforcement personnel have decision-making support from social workers on the scene of law enforcement investigations that involve children.

**Differential Response:** By differentiating the level of risk among families that are under stress, community-based services are provided without further involvement by DFCS to families with a low level of risk.

**Santa Clara County Family Wellness Court:** Utilizing a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) approach, parents and their children are given support that ensures the child's healthy development as well as providing an array of services tailored to the family's specific needs, including treatment for substance abuse.

For more information on these reforms, please go to the 2011 Data Book available at [www.kidsincommon.org](http://www.kidsincommon.org)

# Safe, Stable Homes Lead to Healthier Children and Families

## Addressing the Needs of Homeless Children and Youth

A safe and stable home is vital to children's physical and mental health and their capacity to learn. A child who experiences homelessness has a greater likelihood of suffering from hunger as well as poor physical and mental health. They are also more than twice as likely to repeat a grade in school, be expelled or suspended.<sup>18</sup> Families that experience homelessness are most often headed by a young, single woman with limited education. These families are also likely to have experienced domestic violence or mental health issues. Many times these families become homeless due to unforeseen circumstances such as a death in the family, a lost job or an unexpected bill that creates a situation where the family cannot maintain housing. In many cases, families find housing and stabilize quickly. However some require more intensive assistance.<sup>19</sup>

There are segments of the older youth population at greater risk of becoming homeless. These teens are considered "unaccompanied minors" and may leave their home due to breakdown of their relationships with their families. These teens 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 youth<sup>20</sup>

### Homeless children and families in Santa Clara County:

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. Because of a narrow HUD definition of homelessness (for example, this count does not include teens who are couch-surfing or families who are doubling up), this bi-annual count is generally considered to undercount youth and family homelessness. HUD has acknowledged this shortcoming and has begun to promote more in-depth outreach and has formally expanded reporting requirements to include separate reporting on Transition Aged Youth (youth under 18 and

young adults 18 -24 years old) for the 2013 count. Results from the 2013 count, which took place on January 29 and 30 were not available in time for publication in this report. The results of the 2011 count found:

- Between 2009 and 2011, the number of homeless persons in families decreased from 1,008 persons to 833 (a 17% decrease).
- 33% of homeless individuals in families indicated they were White/Caucasian. 27% indicated they were Hispanic/Latino and 18% indicated they were Black/African American.
- 33% of families indicated loss of job was the primary cause of their homelessness. 21% reported eviction because their landlord sold/stopped renting the property. 12% had an argument with a family or friend who asked them to leave.
- 18% of homeless parents with children indicated they were not receiving any government assistance.
- 94% of respondents with school-age children (ages 6 – 17) indicated their children were in school. This represents an increase from 85% in 2009.
- Outreach to homeless youth was increased in 2011 with a youth-focused street count. A total of 762 unaccompanied children and youth were counted, representing 11% of the total homeless population.<sup>21</sup>

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. Homeless youth are defined by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act as "individuals who lack a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence."<sup>22</sup> The McKinney-Vento Act establishes that homeless children and youth have the right to go to school no matter where they live or how long they have lived there and stay in their school of origin the entire time they are homeless. Also, if they find permanent housing, they can finish the school year at their current school. Under McKinney-Vento, children can also get pre-school services, free or reduced meal services, special education, before- and after-school care and many other services.<sup>23</sup>

The California Department of Education (CDE) utilizes the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) to track

students served by the McKinney-Vento Act. This is a year-long count as opposed to the "point in time" count provided by the County's homeless survey and uses an expanded definition of homelessness that includes couch surfing, families doubling up and families living in motels or hotels. In school year 2011-12, sources at the CDE identified 2,535 homeless students were served in Santa Clara County. Social Impact Research, the independent research department of the research and consulting firm Root Cause, recommends the following strategies to support homeless youth:

Strategies that address family homelessness:

- Rapid "re-housing" – The more quickly families are connected with permanent housing, the more quickly their lives can become relatively stable. Federal funding for rapid re-housing was part of the stimulus package that was introduced following the recession. This may account for some of Santa Clara County's decrease in the number of homeless families between 2009 and 2011.
- Prevention strategies – Cash assistance, housing subsidies and other services can avert homelessness before it starts.

Solutions to Address Homeless (Unaccompanied) Youth:

- Proactive Family Reconciliation – Family reconciliation strives to improve family relationships so that youth can return home to more supportive environments.
- Youth-centered Transitional Housing and Supportive Services – these programs aim to help youth experiencing long-term homelessness by providing supportive services and housing to helping develop the life skills necessary to become independent adults. This includes an emphasis on developing supportive social networks that can assist them through the transition to adulthood.

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.<sup>24</sup>

18 McCoy-Roth, Marcy, Mackintosh, Bonnie B, Murphey, David. Child Trends Early Childhood Highlights. Volume 3, Issue 1. February 2012. Page 2.

19 Aratani, Yumiko. "Homeless Children and Youth Causes and Consequences." National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University. September 2009.

20 "Improving Outcomes for Homeless Youth Social Issue Report." Root Cause. Septembers 2012. [www.rootcause.org/research](http://www.rootcause.org/research).

21 "2011 Santa Clara County Homeless Census & Survey Comprehensive Report." Applied Survey Research. Web-accessed December 2012 at [www.appliedsurveyresearch.org](http://www.appliedsurveyresearch.org).

22 Improving Outcomes for Homeless Youth Social Issue Report." Root Cause. Septembers 2012. [www.rootcause.org/research](http://www.rootcause.org/research).

23 "The McKinney-Vento Act at a Glance". National Center for Homeless Education at SERVE. Web-accessed January 2013 at <http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/briefs/reauthorization.pdf>.

24 "Improving Outcomes for Homeless Youth Social Issue Report." Root Cause. Septembers 2012. [www.rootcause.org/research](http://www.rootcause.org/research).

# Juvenile Arrests

Making Progress



**Figure 7** shows that total arrests and felony arrests of juveniles in Santa Clara County have decreased from 2008 to 2012 by 38% and 33%, respectively. There have been fewer detentions in Juvenile Hall, decreasing by 17% to 1666 in 2012. Violations of Probation (VOP’s) decreased 43%, from a high of 893 in 2010 to 512 in 2012. While this data shows good progress, little progress has been made on the overrepresentation of Latino and African American youth in the juvenile justice system. Several new initiatives in Santa Clara County have potential to improve juvenile justice outcomes, as well as address the overrepresentation of Latino and African American youth in the system.

Detention in the juvenile justice system is associated with poor education outcomes for youth, recidivism and eventual entry into the adult justice system. A 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 4 times that of the general population.<sup>25</sup> Another study found that, “Youth who had been involved in 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.” The study found that “the more restrictive and

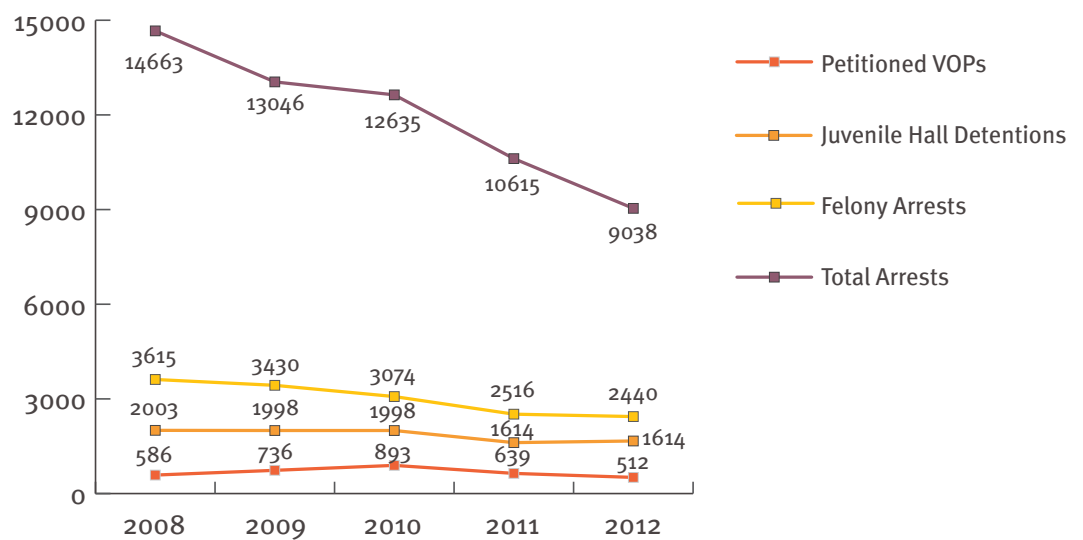
more intense the justice system intervention was, the greater was its negative impact.”<sup>26</sup>

While many youth will have a single arrest and never become re-engaged in the juvenile justice system, many have a very lengthy involvement in the system. These youth will suffer lifetimes of low educational achievement and marginal attachment to the labor force.

Many of the youth in our juvenile justice system have faced significant life challenges. Those living in low-income areas with sub-standard housing that lack quality education and access to meaningful

employment are highly likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.<sup>27</sup> In 2005, nationally known justice expert, Bobbie Huskey, conducted an analysis of youth who were detained in Santa Clara County’s Juvenile Hall. She found that more than 78% of the youth reported high levels of trauma leading to post-traumatic stress. More than 60% of the youth were identified as having a brain disorder identified by the Massachusetts Youth Screening Instrument (MAYSI). Last, a majority of youth in Juvenile Hall were between three and five grades behind in their reading and math competencies.

**Figure 7 – Santa Clara County Juvenile Arrests and Decision-Point Data FY 2007**



25 Linda A Teplin, PhD; Gary M McClelland, PhD; Karen M Abram, PhD; Darinka Mileusnic, MD, PhD. “Early Violent Death Among Delinquent Youth: A Prospective Longitudinal Study.” *Pediatrics*. June 1, 2005.  
 26 Gatti, Uberto, Tremblay, Richard E., Vitaro, Frank. “Iatrogenic Effect of Juvenile Justice.” *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*. 50:8 (2009), pp 991-998.  
 27 “Balancing the Scales of Justice.” *Burns Institute*. Web. 18 Jan. 2011. <http://www.burnsinstitute.org/article.php?id=248>.

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

In the past few years, several initiatives have been introduced to focus on preventing first entry and recidivism. These include:

- Direct Referral Program** – This is an early diversion program for first time offenders who are age 15 or younger. The program provides early screening, assessment, prevention and intervention services to youth and their families. In lieu of a formal arrest (no arrest record is created), a referral is made to the Probation Dept., which in turn makes a referral to Community Solutions, Alum Rock Counseling Center or the Bill Wilson Center. Participation in the Direct Referral Program is voluntary, and a much greater number of families chose to participate in the program than was expected. According to the Probation Department, from June 2011 until October 2012, 521 youth ages 9–15 have participated in the Direct Referral program. Because more than half of the youth served by this program are Latino, this early provision of prevention services to youth and their families has the potential to decrease the overrepresentation of Latino youth in the justice system.
- Wrap-around Services for Youth and Families as an Alternative to Placement in Group Homes or Foster Care** – It is best practice to keep youth in their own community in the least restrictive environment, focused on reunification with their families. With this goal in mind, there has been a focus on developing more local, quality placements and increased use of “wrap-around services” that are family-centered, strength-based, needs-driven and focused on individualized case planning. The number of youth in placement has decreased from 71 individuals in January 2011 (with 59 being placed out of the county or state) to 41 in September 2012 (with 25 being placed out of the county or state). In January 2011, only 11 youth were participating with their families in wrap-around services. By September 2012, this number had increased to 40.
- Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System (JAIS)** – JAIS is a risk- and needs assessment tool that has proven to improve juvenile justice outcomes. The tool helps ensure that case plans are objectively developed and that interventions are appropriate to the young person's risk and need.
- Seven Challenges** – Seven Challenges is an evidenced-based program designed to address teens' use of drugs and alcohol. In Fall 2011, six agencies responsible for delivering substance abuse and treatment programs to justice-engaged youth were trained in the delivery of this program. The alignment of these six agencies in the delivery of the evidenced-based Seven Challenges program should result in decreased recidivism. Additional agencies will be trained in the delivery of this program in the coming year.
- Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration Project** – Child abuse and neglect increase the risk of arrest as a juvenile by 55%.<sup>28</sup> In some cases, the abuse or neglect may not be identified until the time of a youth's arrest. Also, an arrest may occur when a youth is actively engaged in the child welfare system or after a case has been closed for a few years. With support from the Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the MacArthur Foundation, leaders from the Department of Family and Children's Services, the county probation department, the juvenile court system, mental health and community-based organizations are working to address the complex challenges presented by youth engaged in these systems. The goal of this work for the remainder of the year will be to provide greater safety, fairness and stability to these youth so they can grow into responsible and productive adults.
- Court-Appointed Friend and Advocate (CAFA) Pilot Project** – Modeled on the court-appointed advocate program for youth in child welfare, the CAFA program will provide advocates for youth in the juvenile justice court. CAFA volunteers receive 32 hours of training, can provide advocacy for the youth in the court setting and will have a primary focus on the education needs of the youth.
- Eliminating the “school to detention” pipeline** – In school year 2011, there were 19,770 suspensions in Santa Clara County public schools and 48% of these suspensions were for drugs or violence—meaning that the remaining 52% were discretion-

<sup>28</sup> Bilchik, Shay, Nash, Michael. “Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice: Two Sides of the Same Coin.” Juvenile and Family Justice Today. Fall 2008.



ary and may have been for issues such as “willful defiance”, cutting class and smoking cigarettes on campus. This is a decrease from 2010 when there were 21,417 suspensions, with 57% in the discretionary category. In California, it has been shown that suspensions disproportionately affect African-American and Latino students.<sup>29</sup> While there may not be a precise correlation between students being suspended from school and being enmeshed in the juvenile justice system, it is reasonable to assume that there is a relationship between these two issues. The Santa Clara County Public Defender's Office is investing in a strategy to provide education and technical support on the topic of “alternatives to suspension” in order to address the relationship between school suspensions and eventual entry into the juvenile justice system. More than 100 school representatives attended a four-hour workshop on this topic. Four of the schools that had representatives in attendance are receiving technical support from the Center for School Engagement for the remainder of the school year, with the goal of decreasing the suspension rate at their schools.

- **Decreased use of County juvenile detention facilities.** On March 31, 2009, there were 304 youth in Juvenile Hall and 98 youth in the James Ranch and the Muriel Wright Center. On December 30, 2012 the number of youth in Juvenile Hall was 145, and there were only 62 youth in the James Ranch. The Muriel Wright Center has been closed for an indeterminate time due to lower numbers of detention. The decrease in the use of these facilities is a testament to the work of the courts, the probation department and many community partners committed to addressing the criminal behavior of youth in the least restrictive environment.

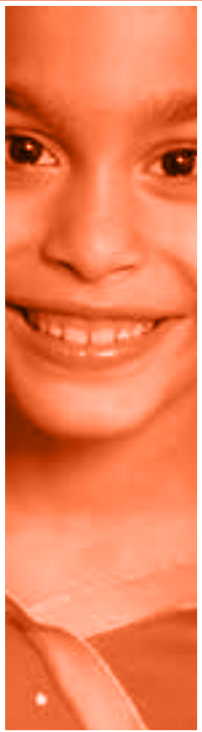
### Next Steps to Improve the Juvenile Justice System:

Decreasing the juvenile arrest rate involves both decreasing the number of youth who enter the system and decreasing the number of youth who re-enter the system or become more deeply involved with the system (either through violation of probation or by committing another crime.) For several years, this effort has been the focus of the Juvenile Justice Systems Collaborative (JJSC), an appointed Santa Clara County commission with representatives from probation, mental health, drug and alcohol services, education, community-based organizations and child advocates. Two committees of the JJSC meet monthly to focus on prevention and programs, court and case processes.

They also develop strategies that will improve the juvenile arrest rate. The Children's Agenda recommends these two important actions to achieve continued improvement of juvenile justice outcomes:

- **Address the over-representation of youth who are Hispanic or African American in Santa Clara County's Juvenile Justice System.** In 2012, 61% of the youth who were arrested were Hispanic and 9% were African American. Of the youth in Juvenile Hall on September 30, 2012, 77% were Hispanic. Of the 62 youth at the James Ranch, 73% were Hispanic and 18% were African American. Some of the new initiatives may affect this over-representation. However, in the coming year, the work of the juvenile justice partners must be conducted with an eye on the disproportional representation of children of color. As a community we need to dig deeper and look at policy, practice and procedures that may lead to a biased response based on race. All data about key decision points and practices in the juvenile justice system should be presented with breakdowns related to race and ethnicity.
- **Institute a data-collection system that will support on-going improvement.** It would be valuable in Santa Clara County to have a juvenile justice data system that can provide “big picture” information as well as more detailed information to help us decide in a timely manner which strategies are having a positive impact. For example, our current system can tell us the average length of a youth's stay in Juvenile Hall, but it does not easily tell us the cumulative time the youth spends incarcerated. We do not have data about how many youth who are engaged in the juvenile system later become engaged in the adult system. Also, we are not able to link specific juvenile justice interventions with incidence of youths committing another crime. Without good and timely data that shows us which strategies are working and which are not, it is difficult to make decisions about which strategies should be “scaled up” and which strategies should be redesigned or discontinued.

<sup>29</sup> Freedberg, Louis, Chavez, Lisa. “Understanding School Discipline in California: Perceptions and Practice – Results of a Statewide Survey of California School Districts.” EdSource. 10 September 2012.



# Every Child Healthy



Physical health sets the stage for healthy development in childhood and later years. Health is influenced by many factors including routine access to health care, having healthy foods and exercise and having healthy environments that support social/emotional development.

## Indicators

- Routine Access to Health Care
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Early Social Emotional Development
- Developmental Assets

## Goals

- All children have health coverage
- More children have timely visits to the doctor and the dentist.
- More children pass the state physical fitness test and are meeting the aerobic fitness standard.
- The number of children receiving early developmental screening increases annually.
- The percentage of youth and children reporting they are in the developmental "thriving zone" will increase.
- Health disparities based on socio-economic differences will be eliminated.

# Routine Access to Health Care

Making Progress



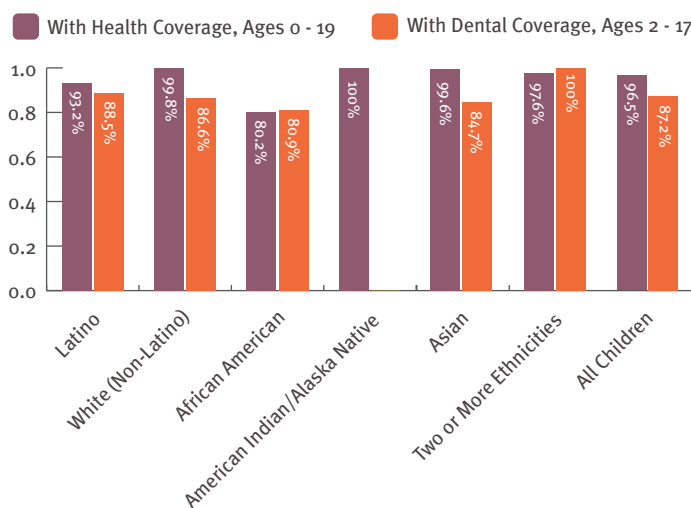
Thanks to the Children’s Health Initiative (CHI), Santa Clara County continues to provide health insurance to almost all of Santa Clara County’s children. Until recently, a stable, on-going funding source for CHI was uncertain. However in Fall 2012, Santa Clara County residents passed Measure A which increases the sales tax to provide financial support for county health and welfare programs. A portion of this sales tax will provide an on-going source of funding to sustain the success of the Children’s Health Initiative.

The most recent data available for Routine Access to Health Care is from the 2009 California Health Interview Survey. **Figure 8** shows the percentage of children with health and dental insurance coverage. 96.5% of all children have health insurance and 87.2% of all children have dental insurance. Nearly 100% of White and Asian children have health insurance. 93.2% of Latino children have health insurance. A little over 80% of African American children have health insurance. **Figure 9** shows the increasing numbers of youth enrolled in Healthy Kids, Healthy Families and Medi-Cal. This increasing enrollment in Healthy Families, Healthy Kids and Medi-Cal are the result of outreach efforts of the Children’s Health Initiative. There has been a decrease between 2007 and 2009 in the percentage of children who have had a health check-up (from 89.1% to 85.8%) and an increase in children who have visited a dentist (from 81.9% to 83.5%) in the past 12 months.

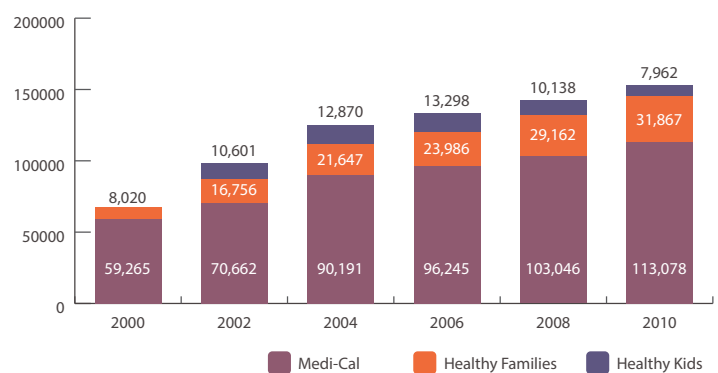
Routine access to health care is one of many factors that influence children’s health and well-being. Lack of access has a negative impact on children, families and the community. Through routine access, families are educated about prevention measures and receive screening so that health problems can be detected and treated as they emerge.

In the Children’s Agenda, we evaluate routine access to health care by measuring facilitators and barriers to health care, including the percentage of children with health and dental insurance. We also measure health care utilization, including how much time has passed since the last visit to a health care practitioner or dentist.<sup>30</sup>

**Figure 8 – Percent of Children with Health and Dental Coverage by Ethnicity, 2009**



**Figure 9 – Enrollment in Medi-Cal, Healthy Families and Healthy Kids**



<sup>30</sup> “2005 National Health Disparities Report.” U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. Dec. 2005. Web-accessed July 2009 at <http://www.ahrq.gov/qual/Nhd05/nhd05.pdf>.

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

### The Children's Health Initiative:

In 2001, a collaborative of Santa Clara County agencies and other funding organizations established the Children's Health Initiative (CHI), committed to the goal of enrolling all Santa Clara County children in health insurance. The initiative has two parts:

- A new insurance product, Healthy Kids, covers children ineligible for the two major state health insurance programs (Medi-Cal and Healthy Families).
- A comprehensive outreach campaign finds uninsured children and enrolls them in the public insurance program for which they are eligible.

This outreach and the simplification of bureaucratic processes have been significant in eliminating barriers that often prevent children from receiving health care. CHI enrolled more than 171,000 children in Medi-Cal, Healthy Families or Healthy Kids. The initiative has not only insured more children, it has improved children's health. With enrollment in Healthy Kids, more children are able to see a doctor, more children have well-child visits and there was a 50% decrease in school days missed due to illness.<sup>31</sup> In Fall 2012, Santa Clara County residents passed Measure A which increases the sales tax to provide financial support for county health and welfare programs. This funding will provide an on-going source of funding to sustain the success of the Children's Health Initiative.

### Increased Access to Dental Care:

The Health Trust, in partnership with Children's Dental Group has opened two children's dental centers, significantly improving access to high quality dental care for the children of Silicon Valley. The Children's Dental Center in east San Jose opened in June of 2008 in the Tropicana Shopping Center. It has been so successful that it was expanded in 2011. The Children's Dental Center of Sunnyvale, designed to provide much needed affordable dental care to children in northern Santa Clara County, opened in June 2011. The Sunnyvale center, 897 West El Camino Real, was made possible by a \$1.1 million grant from FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and a \$300,000 grant from El Camino Hospital. More than 13,000 children have been served at these two pediatric dental centers.

**The Silicon Valley Medical-Legal Partnership:** Unmet legal needs can impact a child's health in several ways. These include:

- The denial of benefits and services the child is legally entitled to
- Inappropriate school services leading to school failure
- Exposure to violence that leads to homelessness, stress and developmental problems
- Disregard of regulations intended to protect against unhealthy environments.

In 2009, the Santa Clara Health and Hospital System and the Law Foundation of Silicon Valley partnered to create the Silicon Valley Medical-Legal Partnership to address these legal needs at no cost to families. The legal clinic is the first to be offered at a public hospital in Northern California and works to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable children by integrating legal assistance into the medical setting. Funded by the Valley Medical Center Foundation, FIRST 5 of Santa Clara County, the California Bar Foundation and individual donors, the clinic served 690 families between January 2009 and September 2012. When health care providers were surveyed, 81% believe that this program improves the health of patients and 80% believe that it is an important tool for improving health outcomes of children who are at greater risk of poor health outcomes due to chronic stress and trauma.<sup>32</sup>

31 Trenholm, Christopher, Howell, Embrey M., Hughes, Dana, Orzol, Sean. "The Santa Clara County Healthy Kids Program: Impacts on Children's Medical, Dental and Vision Care, Final Report." Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Submitted to the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. July 2005.

32 "The Silicon Valley Medical-Legal Partnership Impact Summary January 2009 - September 2012." Report provided by Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, Legal Advocates for Children & Youth, the VMC Foundation.

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

### School Nurses Make a Difference:

Until the late 1970s there was a school nurse on almost every campus in California. Nurses did a lot more than merely provide TLC and band-aids; they monitored and supported the health of the school community. School nurses made sure children were up to date on their immunizations, brought other health and social service resources to the school campus and acted as a resource for parents who were uncertain about how to deal with their child's nasty cold or head lice.

In 2007, the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford and the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health launched a school nurse-demonstration project. Putting Healthcare Back Into Schools, began providing four full-time credentialed nurses to four under-served elementary and middle schools in the San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD). The project also began providing a nurse practitioner who is based at the School Health Clinics of Santa Clara County. This project had the following goals:

- Improve access to primary health care and prevention services for students, with an emphasis on asthma and other chronic conditions.
- Facilitate the establishment of a "medical home" for students who do not have their own pediatrician or health care provider.

Schools with a school nurse were compared to schools with similar demographics that did not have a school nurse. The following data points demonstrate the success of this investment

- Parents of children in schools without a school nurse reported twice as many visits to the emergency room for asthma episodes as those whose children attended schools staffed with a school nurse.
- Absences due to illness decreased from a mean of 3.17 days in School Year (SY) 2007 to 3.03 days in SY 2009 in schools with a nurse. Absences in schools without a nurse increased from 3.19 days in SY 2007 to 3.23 days in SY 2009.
- In schools without a nurse, there is an academic achievement gap between children without chronic health conditions and those that have chronic health conditions such as asthma. Between SY 2009 and SY 2010 this gap was reduced in schools with a school nurse. This reduction was sustained in SY 2011.
- In SY 2008, before school nurses were placed in the schools, 59% of students had hearing screenings and 69% had vision screenings. In SY 2011, 100% of students had both hearing and vision screenings in schools with school nurses.

The improvements in student screenings, referrals, follow-up, absenteeism and academic scores in the four schools with school nurses have helped the San Jose Unified School District attract funding to hire full-time nurses at five additional schools through Title A funds and individual donors.<sup>33</sup> El Camino Hospital has also funded a similar project in the Campbell Union School District.

<sup>33</sup> Rodriguez, Eunice, Austria, Diana. "SJUSD School Nurse Demonstration Project Year 5 Evaluation Report. Dept. of Pediatrics and Center for Education in Family and Community Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine. 18 June 2012.

## Healthy Lifestyle

Making Progress

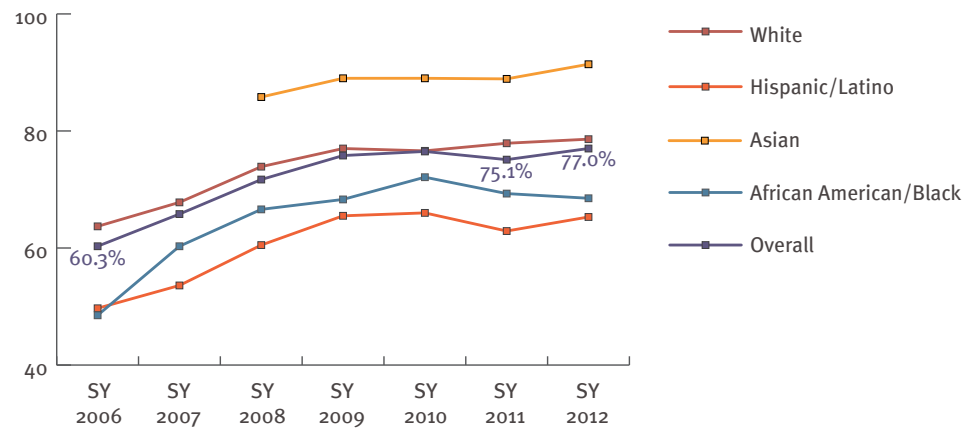


Although some recent data give the impression that Santa Clara County children have lost ground in achieving Healthy Lifestyle goals, there may have actually been some progress in this area. In the 2011 school year, there was a change in the formula for calculating acceptable body mass index (BMI) and what is considered a healthy weight. This recalculation led to a drop in the number of children across the state who met the new healthy weight standard. BMI also became part of the calculation to determine the new “aerobic capacity” standard.

Between the 2011 and 2012 school year, all ethnic groups demonstrated improvement in the fitness standards, confirming the trend we were seeing before the change in BMI formula. (See Figures 10 and 11). For that reason, we have given this Healthy Lifestyle goal a “Making Progress” rating, and the Children's Agenda will continue to monitor it closely.

For the purpose of this data report, we are focusing on physical fitness and body composition when we discuss healthy lifestyle. In children, good physical fitness and physical activity increases memory, concentration and energy levels that assist in learning. For children, almost any physical activity is sufficient as long as they are moving. Playing actively or participating in athletic or physical fitness activities instead of watching television or playing video games provide children with the kind of activity they need.<sup>34</sup>

Figure 10 – Ninth Grade Students Meeting Aerobic Fitness Standard



### What Helps Children and Youth Have a Healthy Lifestyle?

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, violence, crime and unsafe traffic issues makes 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 and calorie-dense, nutrition-poor fare such as fast

food and food from convenience stores. This is compounded in low-income neighborhoods by lack of access to grocery stores with fresh food.<sup>35</sup> Figure 12 demonstrates the disparity that exists between “economically disadvantaged” and “not economically disadvantaged” students who achieved the six fitness standards in SY 2012.

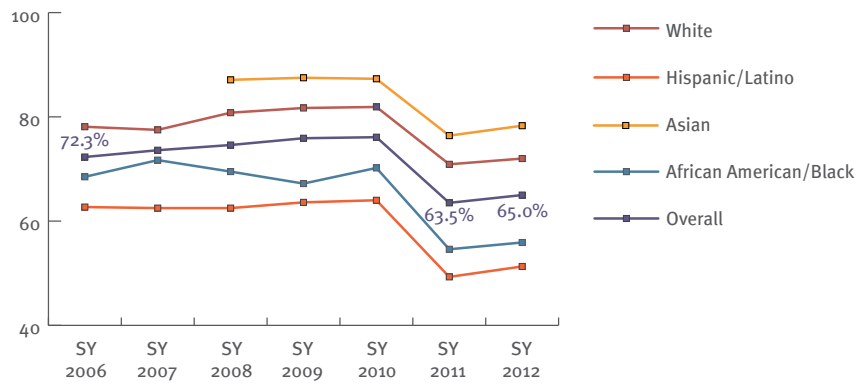
### Steps Parents Can Take to Support Good Nutrition and Physical Activity in Children & Youth

- Breast-feed
- Eliminate or limit sugar-sweetened beverages
- Consume 5–9 fruits and vegetables a day
- Eat breakfast every day
- Limit fast food
- Pay attention to portion size
- Eat meals together as a family
- Limit television and screen time and keep televisions out of children's bedrooms
- Encourage moderately vigorous physical activity of 60 minutes a day or more

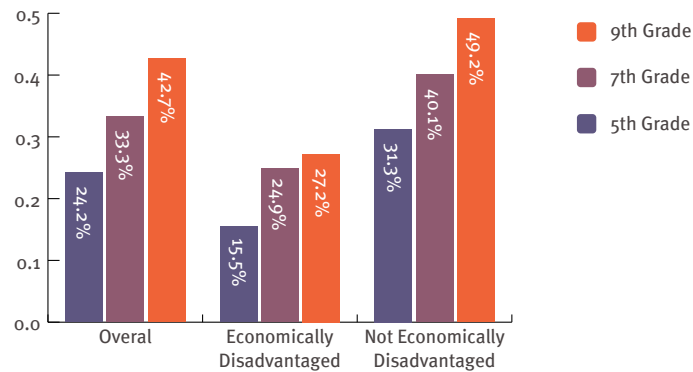
34 “The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity: Overweight in Children and Adolescents.” US Department of Health and Human Services. 2001.

35 Padalkar, Padmaja, “Presentation on Childhood Obesity.” California Medical Association Foundation. Web. 17 Jan. 2011. Web-accessed December 2012 at: [http://www.thecmafoundation.org/projects/TrainingMaterials/San%20Jose%202008%20Training\\_Padalkar%20Presentation.pdf](http://www.thecmafoundation.org/projects/TrainingMaterials/San%20Jose%202008%20Training_Padalkar%20Presentation.pdf).

**Figure 11 – Ninth Grade Students at a Healthy Weight (Healthy Body Mass Index), by Race and Ethnicity, Santa Clara County**



**Figure 12 – Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Grade Students Achieving all Six Physical Fitness Standards, 2012**



## Early Social Emotional Development

Making Progress



In past years, the Children’s Agenda utilized data from Kindergarten Readiness Assessment study conducted by the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness (PSR) and Applied Survey Research. The underlying assumption was that if children arrived at school with self-regulation and social expression skills, then their early social emotional development was on track. This data was last collected in 2008.

Developmental screening has proven to be a key strategy in identifying and providing support to children who may be getting off-track socially and emotionally. In the past few years, there has been a significant effort in Santa Clara County to increase developmental screening of children ages 0–5. As child care and education settings, community organizations, public health nurses and health care providers scale up their use of developmental screening tools, we can expect more children will receive the services and supports that will help them stay on track in early social emotional development. The Children’s Agenda will monitor early social emotional development by counting the number of developmental screenings conducted each year for children ages 0–5. We will supplement this information with school readiness assessment data as it becomes available. In the past year, more than 11,000 developmental screenings were conducted with children ages 0–5. This number will serve as a baseline for tracking data in the future.

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
- Establish and sustain relationships <sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> “Helping Young Children Succeed Strategies to Promote Early Childhood Social and Emotional Development, Research and Policy Report,” National Conference of State Legislatures. September 2005.

In contrast, when social emotional development goes off-track, serious problems can result. For example, children with poor social emotional skills often display difficult or disruptive behavior in day-care programs, pre-school and 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 school outcomes. Persistent physical aggression, high school drop-out rates, juvenile delinquency and other anti-social behaviors all are associated with early childhood conduct problems.<sup>37</sup>

### The Importance of Early Developmental Screening

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 social emotional development challenges as early as possible and provide effective interventions. When children receive formal screenings, developmental concerns or problems are identified earlier, and this 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 early on to identify children with a developmental issue, we are missing an opportunity to provide support and intervention and 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 seven dollars to society.<sup>38</sup> This is seen as such a powerful strategy, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that health care providers administer a standardized developmental screening tool for all children at the 9-, 18-, 24- and/or 30-month visits.<sup>39</sup>

Developmental screening in the pediatric health care setting could be a particularly powerful strategy for Santa Clara County. After all, most children in the county are evaluated in a health care setting on a regular basis. The California Health Interview Survey reports that nearly 97% of children have health insurance and 86% had a routine health check-up within the past 12 months. However, fewer than half of Santa Clara County parents/caregivers report being asked by their child's doctor, health provider or counselor if they have any concerns about their child's learning, development or behavior. And only 24% report having ever filled out a questionnaire regarding their child's learning, development or behavior.<sup>40</sup>

In September 2011, Kids in Common, the Partnership for School Readiness (PSR) and Applied Survey

Research (ASR) released a report titled Approaches to Developmental Screening in Santa Clara County. This study surveyed 87 physicians and health care providers from private and public health care settings. Of those who responded to the survey:

- 92% agreed with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations on developmental screening practices.
- 94% believed using a developmental checklist was effective in detecting developmental issues.
- Only 40% reported following the guidelines.

Respondents felt that the following would be helpful in conducting developmental screenings:

- 82% said they would like to have more information regarding referral resources in the area.
- 79% said they would like to have simple education materials on developmental screening to give to parents.
- 74% said they would like greater availability of education and screening materials in multiple languages.
- 69% said they would like assistance in improving collaboration and information-sharing across the different systems of care for young children.
- 67% said they would like an easy-to-implement process for having parents fill out screening tools before visits.
- 67% said they would like more information about recommended screening tools.

37 Boyd, Judi, S., Barnett, W. Steven, Bodrova, Elena, Leong, Deborah J., Gomby, Deanna, Robin, Kenneth B., Hustedt, Jason T., "Promoting Children's Social and Emotional Development Through Preschool." NIEER Policy Report 2005. Web-accessed Jan. 2011 at <http://nieer.org/resources/policyreports/report7.pdf>.

38 Hills, Janet. "Preparing Our Children to Learn. Earlier the Better!" California Public Health Department. Lecture. 8 Oct. 2009. [www.cphd.gov](http://www.cphd.gov).

39 "Identifying Infants and Young Children with Developmental Disorders in the Medical Home; an Algorithm for Developmental Surveillance and Screening." American Academy of Pediatrics. July 2006.

40 "CHIS Health Interview Survey. CHIS 2007 Public Use File." UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Web-accessed Sep. 2011 at [www.chis.ucla.edu](http://www.chis.ucla.edu).



## Developmental Screening in Santa Clara County

Increased Use of Developmental screening tools in Santa Clara County means that more children with developmental and social emotional issues will be identified early and will get back on track. Since 2006, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County has partnered with the Santa Clara County Mental Health Department (SCCMHD) the County Office of Education (COE) and a wide variety of community-based organizations to implement a county-wide coordinated, community "Screening to Assessment, Referral and Treatment, System" (STARTS) for children birth through age 5. At the core of this system is the investment FIRST 5 has made to train and administer the Ages and Stages Questionnaire® (ASQ) and the Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional® (ASQ:SE) within multiple settings throughout Santa Clara County. These evidenced-based, developmental screening tools for families with young children, are used by trained staff in the Santa Clara County Superior Court system, FIRST 5 early learning classrooms, Santa Clara County Office of Education Head Start, the Department of Family and Children's Services, and FIRST 5's Family Resource Centers operated by local community-based organizations. In addition, screening occurs through community-based regional assessment Centers contracted through FIRST 5 and SCCMHD. Parents/Caregivers who have concerns about their child's social, emotional, behavioral and/or physical development are welcome to call 1-800-704-0900 and be provided the opportunity for their child to be referred for screening, assessment and intervention services at a nearby location within Santa Clara County.

In the past year, almost 9,000 developmental screenings have been conducted through this community investment. We expect this number to grow in 2013. Board of supervisors president Ken Yeager announced, in his State of the County address, his goal to have the Santa Clara County Health and Hospital System perform routine developmental screenings for all children as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. In November 2011, Kaiser Permanente introduced an early developmental screening program for children ages 4 months to 5 years of age. If a parent or physician has any concern about a child's development or if there is a history of prematurity or other problems at birth, an ASQ is administered. Recommendations for Early Start, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, hearing tests, etc. are then made to the parents by the child development social worker who scores it. In the future, Kaiser Permanente has plans to conduct universal developmental screening at the 18-month well-baby examination using the Parents' Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS), an evidenced-based tool that meets the American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines. Available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages, PEDS is a simple 10-item questionnaire that is completed by the parent in the waiting room.

Head Start is required to administer the ASQ and ASQ:SE within 45 days of a child starting the Head Start program. When a developmental issue is identified, Head Start staff will provide an intervention and will refer to other services if they do not see improvement after this intervention. In the most recent school year, 2,356 children in Head Start received this screening.

## Developmental Assets

Making Progress



Project Cornerstone has focused for the past several years on growing the developmental assets of Santa Clara County children and youth and this investment has led to improved results. **Figure 13** shows that the average number of assets for youth in 7th, 9th and 11th grade has grown from 2005 to 2011 and that Santa Clara County youth have more assets than the national average.<sup>41</sup> In 2006, the community of Los Gatos made a concentrated effort to create a community where youth felt valued. Over 17,000 adults signed a pledge to support youth development. The Youth Commission created a "Youth Friendly Business" campaign and parents coordinated community "read-ins" to promote the importance of valuing children and youth. When the asset survey was conducted in a Los Gatos middle school, the percentage of students reporting optimal asset levels rose from 19% in 2005 to 35% in 2011. Today, the cities of Mountain View, Palo Alto, Morgan Hill, Los Altos and Los Altos Hills have community projects similarly focused on building youth assets. With these efforts, it is expected that these cities will achieve similar results and the overall assets of youth in these cities will increase.

Developmental assets are a measurable set of values and experiences that help young people become healthy, caring and responsible adults. Research has shown that the more developmental assets that young people have, the more likely they are going to avoid risky behavior. Building assets in young people promotes positive behaviors, prevents negative behaviors and helps young people bounce back from hard times.

Project Cornerstone ([www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org)) is building a community where all adults support children and teenagers so that they thrive. Each year, Project Cornerstone provides training and consultation to thousands of adults

who regularly touch young people's lives. Through partnership with more than 200 schools, Project Cornerstone empowers young people, parents and staff to improve school climate and create vibrant, caring communities of learners.

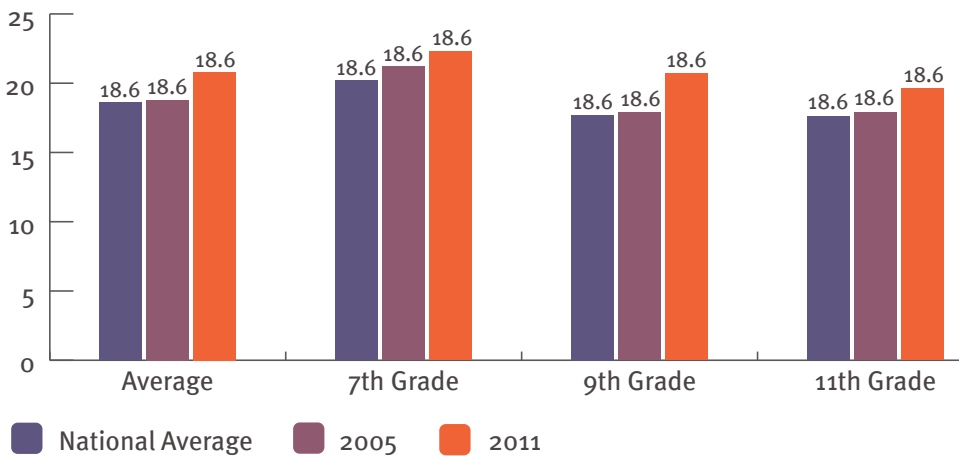
In 2011, Project Cornerstone released a report where over 36,000 students in more than 200 elementary middle and high schools and 25 school districts throughout Santa Clara County were surveyed about developmental assets. The survey measured the developmental assets that young people need in order to thrive. As seen in the **Figure 13**, the average asset level for Santa Clara County youth grew between 2005 and 2011.<sup>41</sup>

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

**Project Cornerstone's School Partnership Program** offers a comprehensive range of programs and services that help schools strengthen the three critical elements of school climate. These programs engage the three segments of the school community; faculty and staff, parents and caregivers and students. Recently an evaluation was conducted at Trace Elementary School, which has a diverse population: 57% of students are economically disadvantaged and 38% are English-language learners. This evaluation took a look at Project Cornerstone over three years. The findings revealed:

- A significant improvement in student perceptions of school climate;
- Consistent upward trends in school-level performance on California State Tests (CST);
- Students who participated in the Expect Respect bullying prevention and leadership workshop showed greater gains in both English Language Arts and Math CST's than the general population;
- Trace's API score rose 25 points between 2008 and 2010, and its "caring school climate index" rose by 10%;
- 99% of students now agree that Trace teachers care about their students.<sup>42</sup>

**Figure 13 – Average Number of Assets in 7th, 9th and 11th Grade, 2005 and 2011**



<sup>41</sup> "Helping Youth Thrive: A Profile of Santa Clara County Elementary, Middle and High School Students." Project Cornerstone. Web-accessed Oct. 2011 at [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).

<sup>42</sup> "Project Cornerstone: Evaluation of School Partnership Programs." Applied Survey Research. 2011.

FIGURE 14

**2011 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET SURVEY – THE PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH AT ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL WITH EACH DEVELOPMENTAL ASSET**

 High School  
 Middle School  
 Elementary School

	High School	Middle School	Elementary School
1. Family Support – Family life provides high levels of love and support.	88	77	65
2. Positive Family Communication – Young person and parents communicate positively and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.	63	39	30
3. Other Adult Relationships – Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.	53	46	46
4. Caring Neighborhood – Young person has caring neighbors.	52	43	33
5. Caring School Climate – School provides a caring, encouraging, environment.	65	42	32
6. Parent Involvement in Schooling – Parents are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	52	44	30
<b>Empowerment</b>			
7. Community Values Children & Youth – Young person perceives that adults in the community value children and youth.	33	29	19
8. Youth as Resources – Young people are given useful roles in the community.	53	38	33
9. Service to others – Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	32	46	48
10. Safety – Young person feels safe at home, school and in the neighborhood.	62	39	52
<b>Boundaries and Expectations</b>			
11. Family Boundaries – Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	60	47	42
12. School Boundaries – School provides clear rules and consequences.	87	73	54
13. Neighborhood Boundaries – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	49	54	39
14. Adult Role Models – Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	52	35	28
15. Positive Peer Influence – Young person's closest friend's model responsible behavior.	91	85	69
16. High Expectations – Both parents and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	92	66	51
<b>Constructive Use of Time</b>			
17. Creative Activities – Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater or other arts.	66	23	25
18. Youth Programs – Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in the community.	56	55	63
19. Religious Community – Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	50	51	41
20. Time at Home – For elementary school students: Young person spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games. For middle and high school students: Young person is out with friends with nothing special to do two or fewer nights per week.	31	74	72
<b>Commitment to Learning</b>			
21. Achievement Motivation – Young person is motivated to do well in school.	78	77	77
22. School Engagement – Young person is actively engaged in learning.	62	71	66
23. Homework – Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	84	69	81
24. Bonding to School – Young person cares about her or his school.	83	74	66
25. Reading for Pleasure – Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	63	29	23
<b>Positive Values</b>			
26. Caring – Young person places high value on helping other people.	87	61	55
27. Equality and Social Justice – Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	71	66	59
28. Integrity – Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.	83	67	72
29. Honesty – Young person "tells the truth, even when it is not easy."	89	72	67
30. Responsibility – Young person believes, accepts and takes personal responsibility.	84	69	68
31. Healthy Lifestyles – Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs (elementary school students), Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits. OR Restraint – (middle and high school students) Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	84	70	46
<b>Social Competencies</b>			
32. Planning and Decision-making - Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	54	35	34
33. Interpersonal Competence – Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.	54	52	47
34. Cultural Competence – Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds.	69	50	50
35. Resistance Skills – Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	79	54	47
36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution – Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	85	58	52
<b>Positive Identity</b>			
37. Personal Power – Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me"	63	37	43
38. Self – Esteem – Young person reports having high self-esteem	66	48	44
39. Sense of Purpose – Young person reports that "my life has a purpose"	48	60	57
40. Positive View of Personal Future – Young person is optimistic about his/her personal future	61	76	70



# 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, are on track developmentally and have educational opportunities that develop the 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.<sup>43</sup>

In Santa Clara County, a significant difference in student achievement exists between the ethnic subgroups in our community. This gap threatens the future of a large segment of students and the future well-being of our community. San Jose/Silicon Valley 2020 (SJ/SV 2020), led by the Santa Clara County Office of Education and the City of San Jose, was established to address the achievement gap and eliminate it by the year 2020. The factors contributing to these academic disparities are complicated and will require increased learning opportunities for students from cradle to career as well as sustained support from all sectors. It is not only up to our schools to close the achievement gap. Every member of our community — students, parents, civic leaders, businesses, philanthropy, community partners — play a role children's success in learning and making the vision of SJ/SV 2020 a reality.

## Indicators

- School Readiness
- Third Grade Reading Proficiency
- Middle School Math Proficiency

## Goals

- Increase the percentage of children who are ready for school.
- Increase the percentage of children who are proficient or advanced at reading in third grade.
- Increase the percentage of youth who complete algebra by 9th grade.
- Eliminate the “achievement gap” in these three indicators.

<sup>43</sup> Copple, Carol and Bredekamp, Sue, editors. “Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, 3rd edition.” National Association for the Education of Young Children. 2009.

## A Path to Success in Learning: The Early Learning Master Plan

Early learning for children 0 – age 8 is important. It is during the pre-school and early elementary school years that the neural pathways for cognitive processes are refined. It is important for children to be ready for school and it is equally important for schools to be ready for the children they serve.

The **Early Learning Master Plan** is a county-wide plan that also serves as the early learning strategy for the SJ/SV 2020 commitment to close the achievement gap. Early learning, from birth through third grade, sets the foundation for the educational continuum. This is critical to student achievement and long term success. Studies by economists and social scientists demonstrate the economic return on investing in early learning. The earlier the investment is made in children, the bigger the “payoff.”

The Early Learning Master Plan has identified five questions that will help our community understand whether our efforts to improve early learning are effective. These questions are:

1. Are young children, birth to age 8 on track to succeed when they enter school and beyond?
2. Which children have access to high-quality early care and early elementary education programs?
3. How prepared is the early education, elementary and out-of-school-time workforce to provide effective early education and care for all children?
4. How effectively do settings engage families in their children's education?
5. How do families support the growth and development of their children?

The Early Learning Master Plan is developing data to answer these questions and some of these answers are provided in the following sections on School Readiness and Third Grade Reading Scores.

## The Path to Ready Schools

The Early Learning Master Plan has created the “Building Early Success with Ready Schools” resource guide and self-assessment tool for schools available at <http://www.sccoe.org/depts/preschool/docs/Building-Early-Success.pdf>. This guide outlines how schools can support the success of their students by:

1. Planning strategically for children's achievement from birth through third grade. The school's Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) should have explicit early learning goals including:
  - Identifying approaches for improving the quality and alignment of early learning and elementary school experiences
  - Ensuring neighborhood children have access to high-quality learning experiences
  - Knowledge of child development that drives strategic investments in pre-school through third grade and local access to developmental screening and early intervention programs
  - Continuous improvement strategies that consider the quality of the classroom environment, the quality of instruction and the progress children are making relative to standards-based benchmarks

- Engagement of the local pre-school community when developing plans for improving early learning outcomes
2. Integrating planning with community partners and families, including:
    - The school working actively to include pre-schools, social service providers, community-based organizations, after-school and summer programs and community volunteers
    - Transitions are managed actively between services and across grades to maintain momentum and help children stay on track
  3. Supporting every student:
    - Families and staff are partners in decisions that affect the children and the school. Teachers and families share the responsibility for interventions that ensure the success of every child
    - Curriculum is evidenced-based, developmentally appropriate and addresses the unique aspects of how young children from birth through third-grade learn
    - High-quality teaching skills and professional development ensures effective instruction in every classroom
    - Assessment practices consider each child's growth along the developmental continuum and relative to standards, and the school demonstrates a commitment to early intervention.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Burns, Lori, editor. “Building Early Success with Ready Schools.” Santa Clara County Office of Education. 2012. Web-accessed Jan. 2013 at <http://www.sccoe.org/depts/preschool/docs/Building-Early-Success.pdf>.

## School Readiness

Making Progress



Since 2004, the Santa Clara County Partnership for School Readiness (PSR) and Applied Survey Research (ASR) have surveyed the skills of children entering Kindergarten. The skills surveyed are from the following areas: Self-Care and Motor Skills, Self-Regulation, Social Expression and Kindergarten Academics. From 2004 to 2008, the percentage of children beginning Kindergarten who met teachers' expectations in all four areas increased from 48% to 53%. These surveys also demonstrated that efforts to improve readiness in low-income children have been effective. The percentage of low-income children who were ready for school from 29% to 38% from 2004 to 2008. The percent of middle-income children ready for school increased from 42% to 51% for the same time frame.<sup>45</sup>

This data was last collected in 2008. In 2012, Kids in Common along with others, recommended that Santa Clara County schools begin collecting school readiness data using a new tool developed by the California Dept. of Education, the Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness (DRDP-SR). Utilization of this tool began in September 2012 and was utilized by 13 schools in nine Santa Clara County school districts. There was not a large enough sample to determine if more children are arriving at Kindergarten ready for school.

There is an on-going focus on ensuring more children have access to high quality pre-school. This plus the introduction of transitional Kindergarten for children who are not 5 years old when school starts, should lead to continued improvement of children's school readiness.

Each year in Santa Clara County, more than 20,000 Kindergarten students enter public schools. The likelihood that these children will be reading at grade level in third grade is closely correlated with the skills that they develop during their first five years. Children's readiness for school encompasses a range of physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills that they need to be successful in learning. Children with strong skills across all the developmental areas when they enter Kindergarten do better as they progress through elementary school and are more likely to graduate from high school. They are also less likely to be involved in crime and drugs. They are more likely to have success in their careers. Key factors that lead to better school readiness included (listed in order of impact):

- The child does not have special needs

- The child is a girl
- The child is older (for example, the child is at least 5 years old when he starts Kindergarten)
- The child has pre-school experience
- The mother has higher education levels
- The child has a "medical home" —consistent medical services located in one place
- The child is read to more frequently
- The parent received information on school readiness
- The parent perceives that they have fewer life concerns/stressors<sup>46</sup>

### How School Readiness Translates into 3rd Grade School Success

**Figure 16** reflects the combined results of school readiness profiles of children from both San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties from 2004 – 2009 and their later

school performance in third grade. (Determined by whether they were proficient or advanced when taking the third grade English and Math STAR achievement tests.)

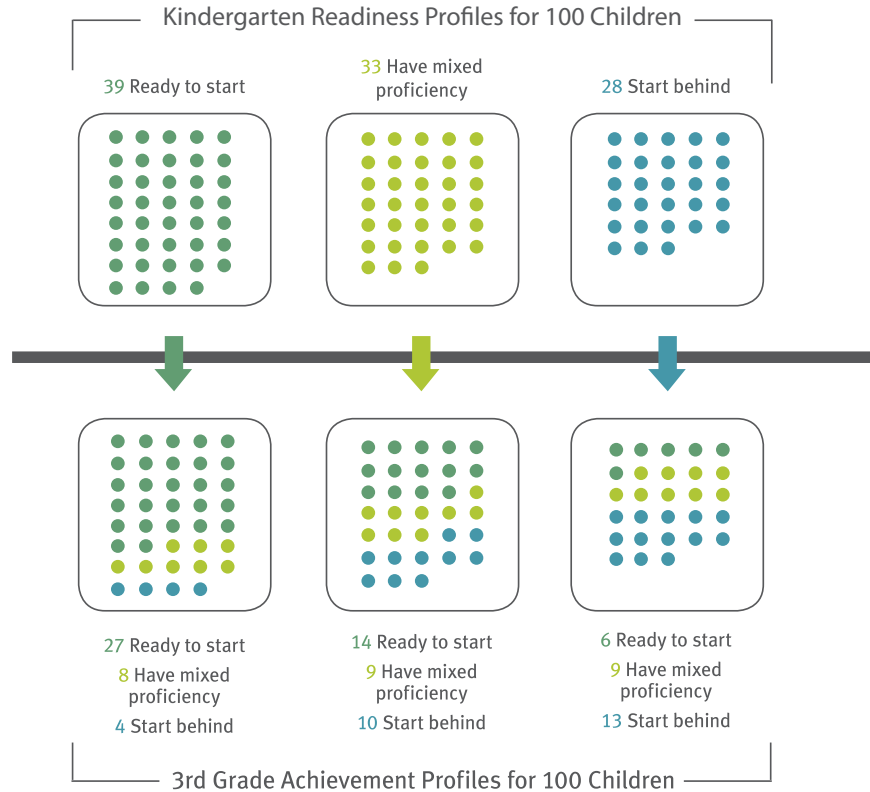
When children enter Kindergarten "ready" in all areas, they are much more likely to be successful in third grade. When children start Kindergarten behind in these readiness skills, they are less likely to be successful in third grade. The figure also illustrates that readiness is not a guarantee of later school success. About one-third of "ready" children were struggling academically by the end of third grade.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> "School Readiness in Santa Clara County Results of the 2008 Assessment. Applied Survey Research. Sept. 2009.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> "School Readiness and Student Achievement, A Longitudinal Analysis of Santa Clara and San Mateo County Students." Applied Survey Research and Partnership for School Readiness. 2010.

Figure 15 – How Kindergarten Readiness Translates Into 3rd Grade School Success



## New School Readiness Measurement Tool for California

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. It is an essential strategy to close the readiness gap and ensure all children thrive in their earliest years. When the same assessment tool is utilized county-wide, the community is also able to understand if our investments in young children are paying off. Thanks to the Partnership for School Readiness (PSR), Santa Clara County has been a leader in assessing school-readiness since 2004.

The California Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with the WestEd Center for Child and

Family Studies and UC Berkeley-BEAR center, recently released the Desired Results Developmental Profile-School Readiness (DRDP-SR<sup>®</sup>) assessment instrument. The primary purpose of the DRDP-SR<sup>®</sup> is to provide transitional and traditional Kindergarten teachers with a valid, reliable measurement tool that will assist them to observe, document and reflect on the learning, development and progress of their students.

The DRDP-SR<sup>®</sup> is aligned to the California Pre-school Learning Foundations, the California Kindergarten Content Standards and the Common Core Standards. The instrument includes 30 measures across five developmental domains, including:

- English Language Development
- Self and Social Development
- Self-regulation
- Language and Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development

Here in Santa Clara County, thirteen schools from nine school districts utilized the DRDP-SR<sup>®</sup> to assess school-readiness of entering Kindergarten students in fall 2012. This is the first year the tool has been available. Kids in Common applauds these districts and schools for using this new assessment tool and supports the goal of having full utilization throughout the county of the tool next year. For more information, see [www.drdpsr.org](http://www.drdpsr.org).

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

### Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

The age of the child when she or he enters Kindergarten is one of the factors that has a significant impact on school-readiness. Older children are more ready to begin and thrive in school. The Kindergarten Readiness Act (California Senate Bill 1381), which was passed in 2010, changed the entry date for incoming Kindergartners. The legislation also established a "Transitional Kindergarten" program beginning in the 2012–2013 school year. Transitional Kindergarten is designed to provide an opportunity for the youngest five-year-olds to be successful in school and serve as a bridge between pre-school and traditional Kindergarten. The Santa Clara County Office of Education has taken a leadership role in supporting districts as they adopt transitional Kindergarten. All districts in Santa Clara County provided Transitional Kindergarten to some of their students in 2012.

### Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in Santa Clara County

High-quality pre-school has been shown to help improve children's school-readiness. Santa Clara County is one of 16 counties taking

part in California's Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-EC) grant. The grant is funded by the US Dept. of Education to increase the number of high-quality early learning programs in California through the development of Quality Rating Improvement Systems (QRIS). It is focused on improving early learning and development programs for young children by supporting states' efforts to:

- Increase the number and percentage of low-income and disadvantaged children who are enrolled in high-quality early learning programs
- Design and implement an integrated system of high-quality early learning programs and services
- Ensure that any use of assessments conforms with the recommendations of the National Research Council's reports on early childhood.

Aligning our Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) with a common "Quality Continuum Framework" based on research-based elements and related assessment and improvement tools will allow educators to assess and

improve their quality. It will also allow the community to evaluate standardized ratings of program quality. In Santa Clara County, FIRST 5 is administering the Race to the Top grant, and WestEd's E3 Institute has been contracted to implement the QRIS. QRIS is based on the Child Signature Program quality system and is the next step in continuing to improve the quality of early care and education. Race to the Top provides Santa Clara County with an opportunity to launch a core component of the Early Learning Master Plan that set a target for developing a quality-rating system by 2017.

### Learning Together Initiative

Children are more ready for school when parents have received information on school readiness. FIRST 5 Santa Clara County provides county-wide outreach and education programs to parents covering topics such as school-readiness, oral language development, early literacy and health through their Learning Together Initiative. Last year, FIRST 5 reached more than 16,000 families through this initiative. Additionally, distributed 20,400 Kindergarten Readiness handbooks in four languages to local pre-schoolers.



# Third Grade Reading Proficiency

Making Progress



Third Grade Reading Proficiency continues to improve overall and for all ethnic groups. **Figure 16** shows steady improvement since 2007 in third grade English Language Arts California Star Testing (CST). While each ethnic group shows similar progress, the “achievement gap” between the different groups has not narrowed substantially. The achievement gap between the highest and lowest performing third-grade student ethnic subgroups is 45 percentage points in English Language Arts.

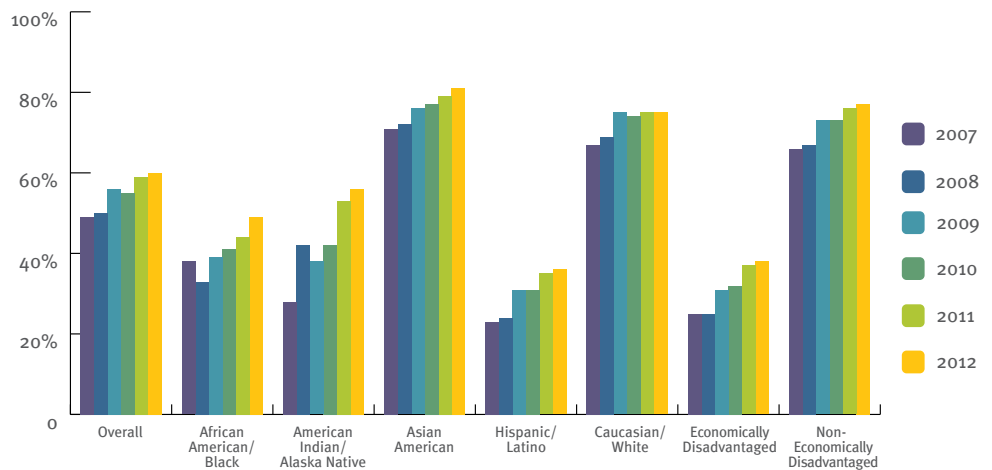
**Figure 17** shows which children have access to high-quality elementary education programs. In California, we measure school quality through the API (Annual Progress Instrument). Schools that receive 800 points on the API are considered in the proficient range. This figure looks at the percentage of students by ethnic group who attended elementary schools with an 800+ API that also met growth targets for all student groups attending the school. This provides an indicator of schools that are proficient overall and are also meeting the needs of all student groups. In 2005, 35% of all students attended a school with an 800+ API and that also met its growth targets. By 2012, this had increased to 61%. The percentage of each ethnic group who attended schools that met this criteria also grew. In 2012, 40% of Latino students, 51% of African American students, 55% of Native American students, 76% of White students and 80% of Asian students, attended schools that met this criteria.

Third grade reading proficiency is considered to be a powerful indicator of later academic success. At that grade level, it is expected that children will show evidence of reading comprehension and be able to read unfamiliar words through various strategies such as roots, prefixes and suffixes. Reading proficiency at this point prepares the student for fourth grade where the focus of reading instruction changes from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

According to the Pathway Mapping Initiative, “Literacy is a prerequisite to the acquisition of new information of new ideas. Almost everything kids learn from the fourth grade on they have to learn by reading and writing. Kids who struggle with the task of reading or writing – through which they must convey what they’ve learned – are unable to show their teachers that they understand.”<sup>48</sup>

The national “No Child Left Behind Act of 2002” requires that each state must set performance standards annually, for grades three through eight, and

**Figure 16 – Santa Clara County Third Grade Students Scoring Proficient or Higher on the English Language Arts CST by Race/Ethnicity**



measure student proficiency in multiple subjects, including reading. In California, when we talk about “third grade reading scores,” we are actually referring to the English Language Arts section of the California Standards Test. This standardized test measures word analysis, reading comprehension, literacy response and analysis, writing strategies and written conventions.

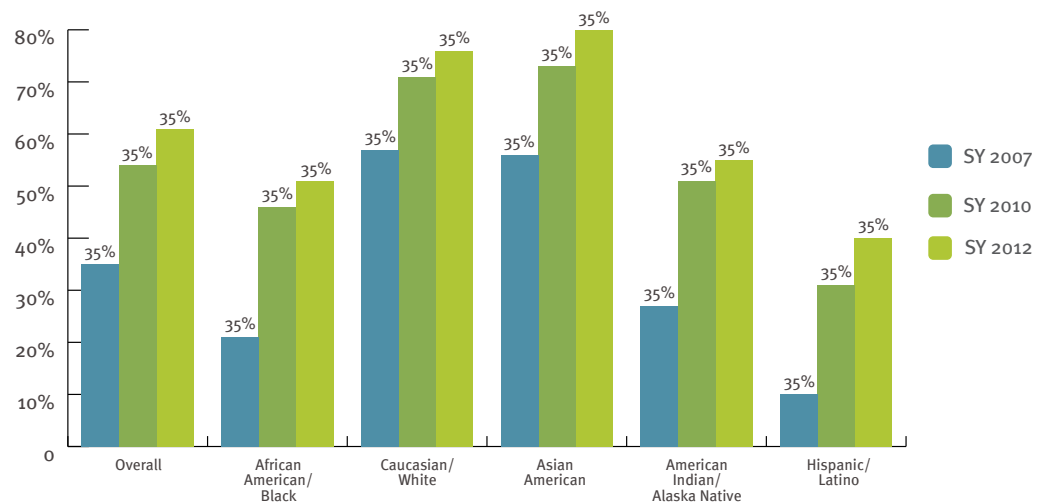
Five performance levels are used to report student achievement:

- Advanced
- Proficient
- Basic
- Below Basic
- Far Below Basic

When we look at third grade reading scores, we are looking for the percentage of students who are “proficient” or “advanced.”

<sup>48</sup> Schorr, Lisbeth B., Marchand, Vicky. “Pathway to Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade.” Pathway Mapping Initiative . June 2007.

**Figure 17 – Percent Students Attending Schools with 800+ API and Meeting Growth Targets for All Student Groups, by Race/Ethnicity, 2012**



### What Helps Improve Third Grade Reading Scores:

Starting Kindergarten with strong skills definitely helps children get on track for third grade reading. But even when children start school ready to learn, it takes hard work, attentive parents, 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 widened by 3rd grade.<sup>49</sup> Recommendations to improve third grade reading include:

- Align pre-school to third grade expectations and curriculum. Increase collaboration between the early care and elementary school systems
- Improve instructional practice of teachers: Ensure that all early-care and elementary teachers have strong foundations in child development, dual-language learning and curriculum-based methods of teaching
- Cultivate mentoring and peer support networks among early childhood professionals and elementary teachers<sup>50</sup>
- Provide effective screening and assessment for all children from birth to age 8 that is combined with improved “early response” interventions for children who are falling behind<sup>51</sup>
- Expand and improve summer-learning opportunities for low income children
- Monitor absenteeism in Kindergarten and first grade and working with children who are “chronically absent” (absent 10% or more)<sup>52</sup>

### Expand and improve summer-learning opportunities for low income children

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. Whether children have access to these opportunities may boil down to their neighborhood or family income level.<sup>53</sup> According to the Campaign for Grade Level Reading, low income children can fall behind by nearly two years largely due to this summer

learning loss. In fact, there is no difference in learning rates between low-income and higher income students during the school year. During the summer, low income students' learning falls far below that of higher income peers.<sup>54</sup>

49 “School Readiness and Student Achievement, A Longitudinal Analysis of Santa Clara and San Mateo County Students.” Applied Survey Research and the Partnership for School Readiness. 2010.

50 “Ready Schools.” National Education Goals Panel. Web-accessed Jan. 2011. <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/negp/reports/readysch.pdf>.

51 “Early Learning Master Plan.” Santa Clara County Office of Education. 2010.

52 Chang, Hedy N., Romero, Mariajose. “Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades.” National Center for Children in Poverty. September 2008. [www.nccp.org](http://www.nccp.org).

53 “Lazy Days of Summer: A National Security Threat?” Summer Matters. Web-accessed on 13 Jan. 2013 at [www.summermatters2you.net](http://www.summermatters2you.net).

54 “Summer Learning Loss.” Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. Web-accessed on 13 Jan. 2013 at <http://gradelevelreading.net/our-work/summer-learning-loss>.

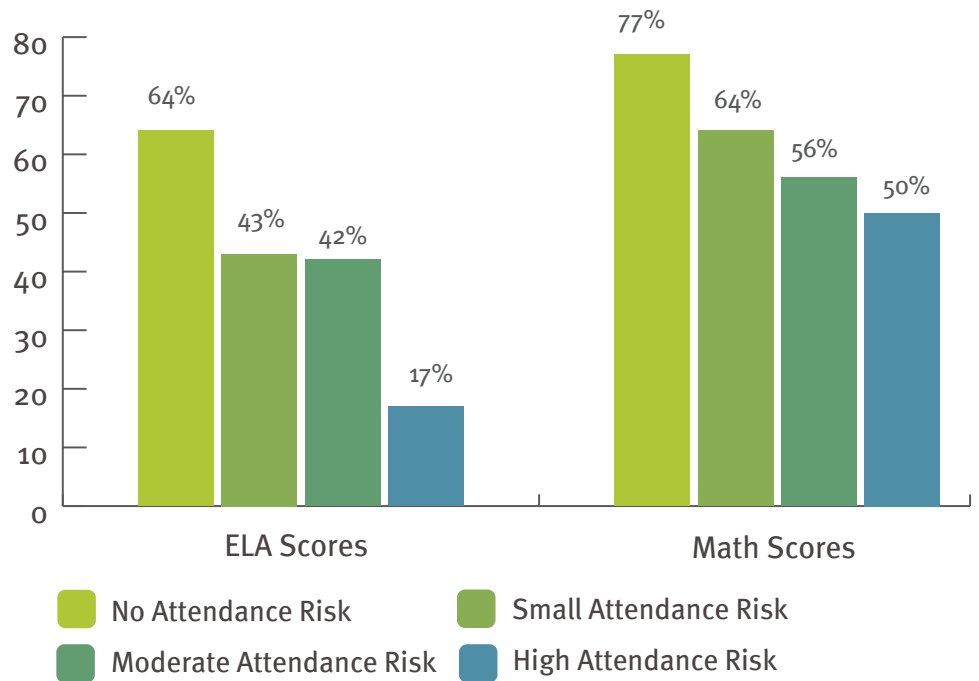
### Attendance in Kindergarten and First Grade and Third Grade Outcomes

In February 2011, Applied Survey Research and Attendance Works collaborated to “mine” the longitudinal data from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment to get a more comprehensive look at the role that school attendance may play as an indicator of student success. Linking the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment of 640 students in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties with attendance data from Kindergarten and first grade, researchers found that there was a correlation between “No Attendance Risk” and the percentage of students achieving at grade level for English Language Arts and Math tests.<sup>55</sup>

There are many simple strategies that have been demonstrated to improve Kindergarten and first grade attendance. Hedy N. Chang and Mariajose Romero outline some of these strategies in: Present, Engaged and Accounted For:

1. Monitor chronic absenteeism – Regularly calculate and report on the number and which children are chronically absent.
2. Prepare children for entry into school through high quality early care and education experience.
3. Ensure access to preventive health care, especially as children enter school.
4. Offer a high quality education that responds to diverse learning styles and needs of students.
5. Engage families of all backgrounds in their children’s education.
6. Educate parents about the importance of attendance.
7. Encourage families to help each other to attend school.

Figure 18 – Percentage at Grade Level on the Third Grade English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Tests by K/1st Combined Attendance



8. Offer incentives for attendance to all children.
9. Conduct early outreach to families with poor attendance, and, as appropriate, provide support to address social, medical, economic and academic needs.<sup>56</sup>

school in both years. Moderate risk is defined as missing 5–9% in one year and 10% in the other year. High risk is defined as missing 10% or more of school in both years.)

Figure 22 shows the association between attendance and third grade English Language Arts (ELA) and math outcomes. More children are proficient or advanced in both subjects when there is no attendance risk. A lower percentage of children with any attendance risk (small, moderate or high) are proficient or advanced in ELA and math. (Satisfactory attendance is defined as missing less than 5% of school in Kindergarten and first grade. Small risk is defined as missing 5–9% of

<sup>55</sup> “Attendance in Early Elementary Grades.” Attendance Works and Applied Survey Research.” July 2011.

<sup>56</sup> Chang, Hedy N., Romero, Mariajose. “Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades.” National Center for Children in Poverty. September 2008. www.nccp.org.

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

### Applied Materials Education Initiative

– In 2001, Applied Materials and the Applied Materials Foundation shifted to a strategic and targeted approach to serve high-needs children in two communities – downtown San Jose and San Jose's Alum Rock neighborhood. These areas were targeted in order to maximize the impact of Applied Materials' investments and to measure the results of the investments accurately. The Applied Materials model included:

- Engaging deeply and investing over a sustained period of time.
- Supporting the entire education pathway: pre-school to college acceptance.
- Supporting recruitment, development and retention of highly effective teachers.
- Encouraging partners to collaborate.
- Measuring results over time.

The results of this investment were positive:

- In 10 downtown schools in San Jose Unified School District, the API (Academic Performance Index) score increased from an average of 572 in 2002 to an average of 768 in 2011.
- In 2009 - 2010, the Applied Materials Foundation launched a new partnership with the Alum Rock Union School District (ARUSD) in the low-income community of East San Jose. Overall ARUSD showed steady growth at all district schools. The focus school, Cesar Chavez, achieved the highest point gain, moving from an API of 626 in 2008 to 713 in 2011. In 2008 the district had one school scoring 800 or above on the API test. Ten schools met this state standard in 2011.
- In 2011, the Applied Materials Foundation concluded a three year partnership with the Franklin McKinley School District (FMSD) that supported improved classroom instruction. FMSD had an API score of 722 in 2008. This increased to 770 in 2011. In 2008, the district had no schools scoring 800 or above on the API, and by 2011, seven schools scored at least 800 on the API.

**READY to SOAR**, Silicon Valley's Campaign for Third-Grade Achievement, has emerged as a promising effort to address the achievement gap between the highest performing and lowest performing third-grade ethnic subgroups in English Language Arts. Fitting with the framework of SJ/SV 2020 and the Early Learning Master Plan, **READY to SOAR** brings together education and community partners to develop and implement solutions that will improve school readiness, provide summer learning opportunities to prevent summer learning loss, and reduce chronic absenteeism. **READY to SOAR** partners include: City of San Jose, Santa Clara County Office of Education, United Way Silicon Valley, Partnership for School Readiness, YMCA of Silicon Valley and Kids in Common. To learn more about **READY to SOAR** go to: <http://www.sccoe.org/sj2020/3rdGradeReading.asp>.

# Middle School Math Proficiency

Making Progress



Students do not all take the same California State Test (CST) for math in seventh and eighth grade. Requiring all 8th graders to take Algebra I in middle school is often recommended, but not universally accepted. Even so, tracking this data point provides the best means of understanding if we are making progress in middle school math proficiency. This report highlights progress in middle school math, looking at the number of students passing Algebra I as a percentage of total enrollment in seventh and eighth grade.

**Figure 19** shows that seventh grade students who took the Algebra I CST and scored Proficient or Advanced increased from 9.5% in 2008 to 12.8% in 2011. In 2012, there was a slight dip in the percentage of seventh grade students (down to 12.4%) who scored Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I CST. However, the percentage of eighth grade students who scored Proficient or Advanced rose to 35.2% in 2012. This is up from 24.2% in 2011 and 18.9% in 2008.

**Figure 20** shows the percentage of students in 2012 who scored Proficient or Advanced on the Algebra I CST and also shows the substantial ethnic disparity in these scores.

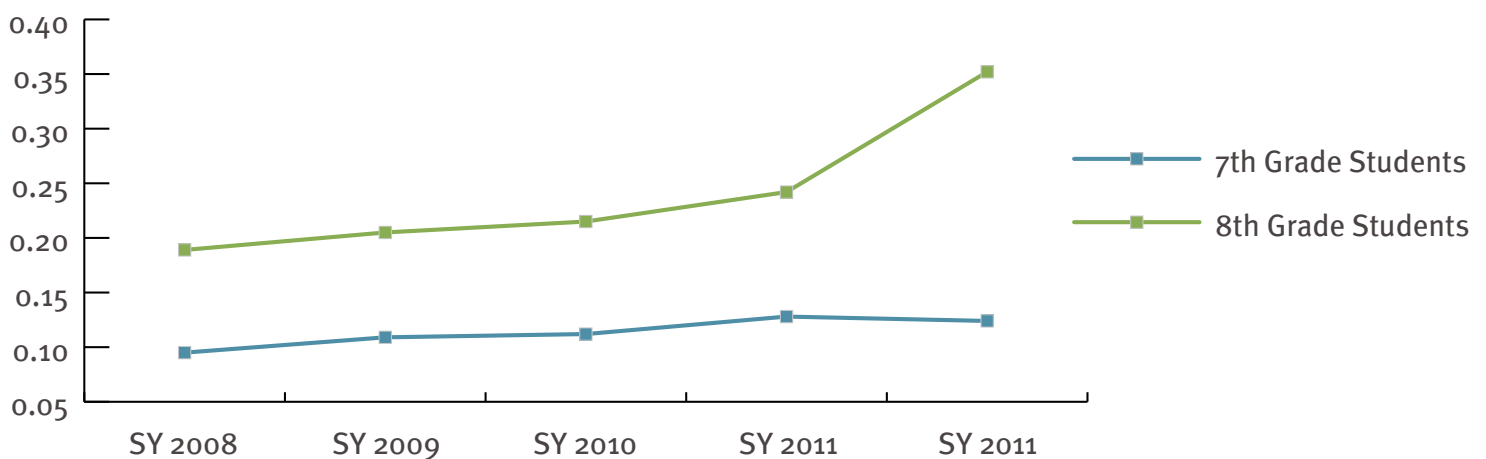
Mathematics is one of the most widely practiced disciplines in the world. Math skills help develop logical thinking, critical reasoning and analytical acuity. These skills also are an important part of being proficient at playing music and playing sports. Math is used in almost every line of work. Doing

math helps students to analyze complicated situations and organize them into clear, logical steps. Math is the basic language of science, engineering, technology, medicine, biology and even construction.<sup>57</sup>

In California, many policy makers and educators believe that students need

to take and master algebra as early as possible in their school careers. Studies show that understanding and being successful in mathematics through sixth grade is the most powerful predictor of success in algebra/college prep math.<sup>58</sup>

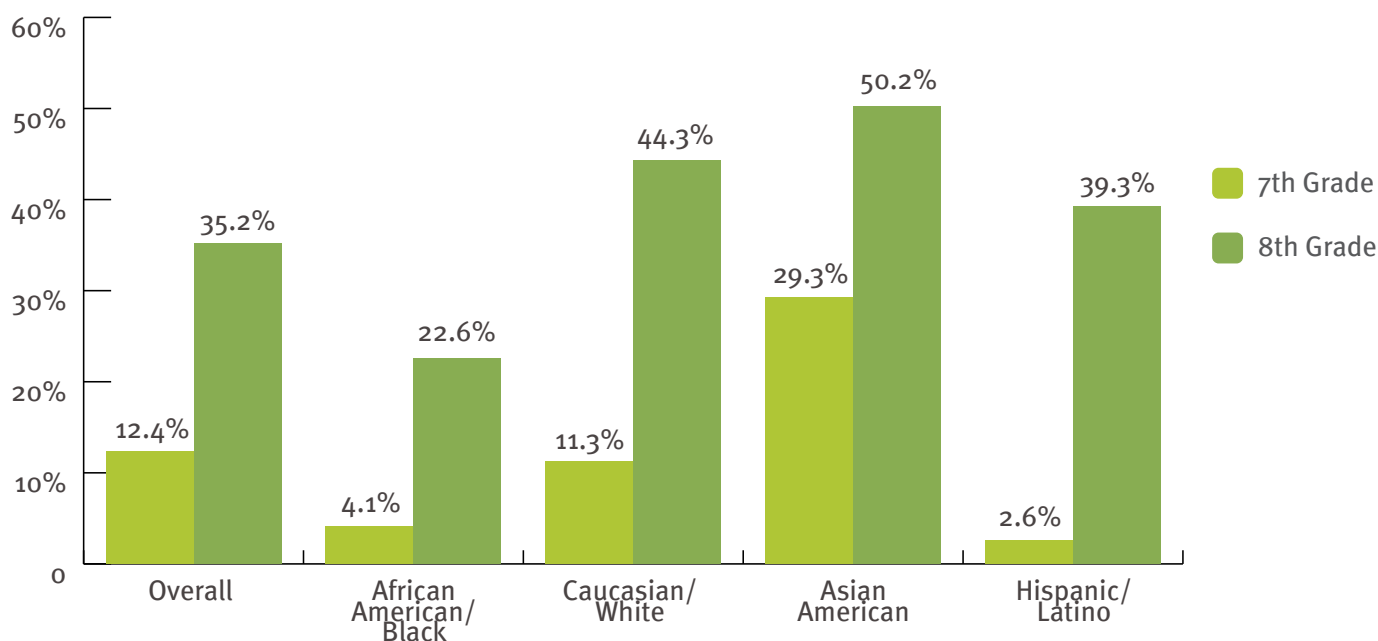
**Figure 19 – Percentage of 7th and 8th grade Students Passing the Algebra I CST with a Proficient/Advanced Score**



<sup>57</sup> "Why is Mathematics Important?" School of Mathematics- Math.umn.edu. Web-accessed Jan. 2011 at <http://www.umn.edu/newsletter/2004/mathimportance.html>.

<sup>58</sup> "Algebra Policy in California – Great Expectations and Serious Challenges."EdSource. May 2009. [www.edsource.org](http://www.edsource.org).

**Figure 20 – Percentage of 7th and 8th grade Students Passing the Algebra I CST with a Proficient/Advanced Score by Ethnicity, 2012**



### What is Working in Santa Clara County

**ALearn** helps under-represented students from low-income families receive the academic support and motivation they need to succeed in college. Most students in ALearn's programs will be the first in their family to attend college.

ALearn's Math Acceleration Program (MAP) helps sixth- and seventh- grade students succeed in pre-Algebra by providing an intensive summer intervention and a school-year program focused on improving math skills and encouraging college

preparatory coursework. MAP students' gains in math skills exceeded national norms. In 2012, average student post-test score improvement on math involving fractions increased by 100%, and there was a 40% improvement in scores involving math word problems. Nearly 95% of students reported feeling more confident and motivated as a result of the program.

ALearn's Catalyst program helps incoming ninth-grade students

complete a rigorous summer Algebra class, which is key to ensuring that they are on track to begin college-prep work in the fall. The class focuses on work habits, attitudes toward academics and preparing for college. As a result, 75% of students placed into Geometry their freshman year and were ready to begin college prep work. More than 95% of students reported at the end of the program that they plan on studying for a college or advanced degree.

# Parents are Critical to Success in Learning

## Principles of Family Engagement and Leadership

Parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers. Families are able to continue in this role as children enter early education and elementary school by providing learning activities at home. They can also become involved in their children's education at school or in learning programs by connecting to community resources and by advocating for change in district policy and decision-making. Family engagement is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community organizations are committed to involving families in meaningful ways, and families are committed to actively supporting their children's learning and development.

The Early Learning Master Plan's Family Engagement and Leadership Committee, consisting of early care and education agencies, institutions of higher education and community-based organizations has created a set of family engagement principles that can be adopted by any agency that serves children and youth. Adapted from principles developed by the Harvard Family Research Project, Parent Services Project, and the National PTA, these principles 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 barriers to overcome or work around. They are vital resources to themselves, to one another and to programs.
- **Social Support:** Support is important to all families. 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 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, and 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 healthy

To learn more about the work of the Family Engagement and Leadership Committee or to endorse the principles of Family Engagement, call (408) 453-3605 or go to [www.sccoe.org](http://www.sccoe.org).



# Every Child Successful in Life



Children have the tools to be successful in life when they are safe, when they have access to health care and healthy food and when they live in communities where they can grow and play. They will be successful in life when they feel valued by the community and when they 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 Rates with A–G Requirements
- Fluent in 2+ languages
- Community Values Youth

## Goals

- Increase the percentage of youth who graduate on time, fulfilling the A–G requirements.
- Eliminate the socio-economic disparity in graduation rates and fulfillment of A–G requirements.
- Increase the number of youth who the Santa Clara County Office of Education Bi-literacy Certificate.
- Increase the percentage of youth who report they feel valued by the community.



# High School Graduation Rate

Losing Ground



The graduation rate has been calculated as the percentage of students enrolled in 12th grade in 2011–2012 (SY 2012) who also graduated. Similarly, the graduation rate with students fulfilling the A–G requirements (indicating college readiness) has been calculated as a percentage of those who were enrolled in 12th grade in 2012 and who graduated fulfilling this requirement.

**Figure 21** shows the percentage of those enrolled in 12th grade who graduated by ethnicity. **Figure 22** shows the percentage of those who enrolled in 12th grade who graduated fulfilling coursework that meets the A–G requirements for SY 2009, SY 2010 and SY 2011. There was a slight increase in the graduation rate between 2009 and 2010. However, the overall graduation rate went down to 81% in 2011 and the percentage of those who graduated with A–G dropped to 38% in 2011. Every ethnic group either saw no growth or a decrease in high school graduation rates and A–G fulfillment rates in 2011. Only 15% of Latino and 17% of African American students enrolled in 12th grade graduated fulfilling the A–G requirements.

The Children’s Agenda Vision Council views the high school graduation rate as not only an indicator of success in learning, but also an indicator of whether a youth will be successful in life. 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 to \$500,000 less over a working lifetime than those who graduate.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup>

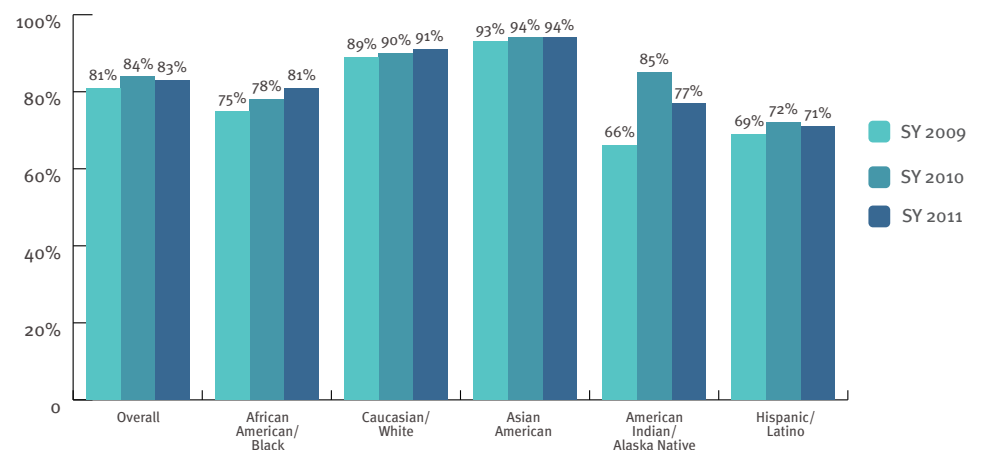
Many local education leaders feel that in order for students to be successful in later life, it is important that they complete the coursework required to attend the Cal Sate University or University of California systems — known as the A–G requirements — even if they don’t intend to go to college. The importance of college is clear. By

2025, two out of every five jobs will require a college degree. College-educated adults have higher incomes, greater productivity and are able to earn nearly \$1 million more over a lifetime than those who graduate with only a high school degree.<sup>61</sup>

Graduating from high school doesn’t happen in a vacuum. Other desired results for children — such as school readiness, reading at grade level

in third grade and being successful in algebra in eighth grade — are associated with whether or not a youth will graduate from high school. Not being on track for graduation can be the result of several risk factors such as child abuse, substance abuse, family disorganization, health issues, teen pregnancy, poverty, homelessness or learning issues that have not been addressed.

**Figure 21 – Percent Santa Clara County Students Enrolled in 12th Grade who Graduated**

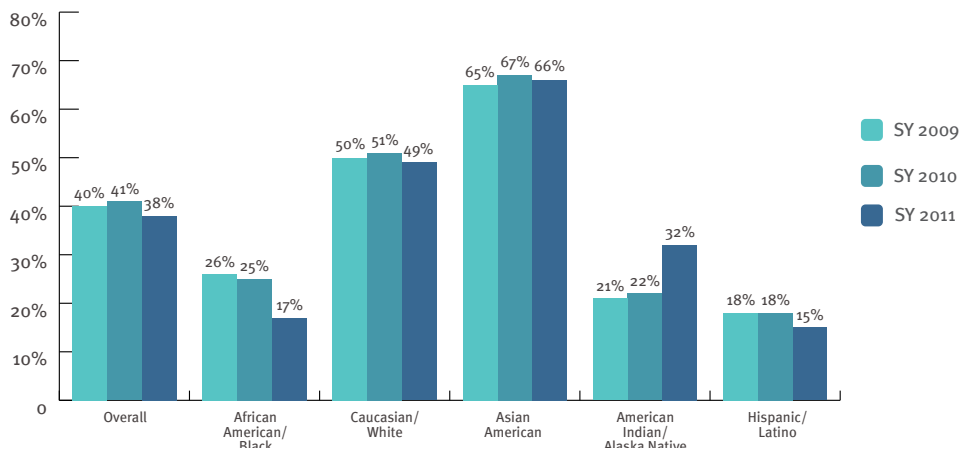


59 “Left Behind in America: The Nation’s Drop-Out Crisis.” Center for Labor Market Studies. May 2009. <http://www.clms.neu.edu>.

60 Belfied, C.R., Levin, H.M. “The Economic Losses from High School Dropouts in California.” California Dropout Research Project. August 2007. [http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs\\_reports.htm](http://cdrp.ucsb.edu/dropouts/pubs_reports.htm).

61 Johnson, Hans. “Educating California Choices for the Future.” Public Policy Institute of California. June 2009. [www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org).

**Figure 22 – Percentage Santa Clara County 12th Grade Students who Graduated and Completed College Preparatory Courses by Race/Ethnicity**



**Below are some actions that can be taken to increase the number of students graduating from high school on time:**

- 1. Establish Early Warning Systems to Support Struggling Students:** Research shows you can predict with 66% accuracy a student in elementary school who 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.
- 2. Focus on School Engagement, Absenteeism, Truancy and Suspensions and Expulsions:** As discussed in the School Readiness section, absenteeism, even in the early grades, is an indicator for getting off track for graduation. Last year, the Mental Health Department funded the School Engagement Improvement Project in four middle schools in Santa Clara County. In one middle school, chronic absenteeism was decreased from 60% to 15% over

the course of the year. Here are some of the simple strategies they implemented:

- Teachers were assigned a student who had been absent the week before to welcome him or her back to school, discuss the reasons for the absence and help the student catch up on missed work.
  - A “buddy system” was created in which students were encouraged to contact absent friends.
  - Returning students were assisted in making up missed homework and tests by being provided with a specific time and place to do so.
  - Mentoring was provided to those youth who were most at-risk of not successfully graduating from middle school.<sup>62</sup>
- 3. Focus on addressing high suspension rates in schools – particularly suspensions that are not related to serious incidents involving violence or drugs.** In 2011, about half of the 19,000 suspensions in Santa Clara County public schools were not for serious incidents involving violence or drugs. Those suspensions translated to thousands of hours that students

missed being in school, learning. Educators are under enormous pressure to keep schools safe and classrooms productive, so how do they accomplish that without suspending disruptive students? In a recent report, ChildTrends describes many effective alternatives. The Reconnecting Youth program uses weekly exercises for at-risk youth to foster better listening skills and ways to resolve conflicts constructively. Character education programs, such as Connect with Kids, also have proven results. Initiatives such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) provide a multi-tiered approach to school discipline, including utilizing data about student behavior – where and when challenging behavior happens, and who is involved. Analysis of this data allows schools to identify patterns in problem behavior and develop effective strategies to improve it.<sup>63</sup>

In Santa Clara County there are low-cost resources to implement PBIS. Many districts and schools have begun implementing these programs.

- 4. Provide Adult Advocates and Student Supports:** Students need adult advocates who can identify academic and personal challenges early and get students the support they need. 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

<sup>62</sup> “School Engagement Improvement Project Final Report.” Santa Clara County Dept. of Mental Health. Web-accessed Oct. 2011 at <http://www.sccgov.org/keyboard/attachments/Committee%20Agenda/2011/September%2021,%202011/203413753/TMPKeyboard203668373.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Boccanfuso, Christopher, Kuhfeld, Megan. “Multiple Responses, Promising Results: Evidence-Based Nonpunitive Alternatives to Zero Tolerance.” ChildTrends. March 2011. [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org).

periods, internships, service learning, summer programs and after-school programs. The help of strong adult advocates can help to identify academic and personal crises early and get students the supports they need.

- 5. Support Parent Engagement and Individualized Graduation Plans:** Parental involvement has benefits to the students and the schools such as improved school attendance and educational performance, improved classroom behavior, emotional well-being, support of the school's mission, a better understanding among parents of their roles and more overall support for schools among parents. Schools and parents need to improve their interactions around student performance. Schools should also develop an individualized graduation plan for each student and regularly communicate with parents about their students' progress towards completing the plan.

- 6. Establish a Rigorous College and Work Preparatory Curriculum for High School Graduation:** Students taking a rigorous core curriculum in high school are better prepared to succeed in college and in the workforce. There must be high standards, and students need to be encouraged to complete California's A–G standards to prepare them for college and work.

- 7. Provide Supportive Options for Struggling Students to Meet Rigorous Expectations:** Because students' learning needs and styles differ widely, options should be developed that allow all students to graduate from high school prepared for college and the workplace. This includes ninth-grade academies to support the transition to high school, "second chance" schools where students who are off track can continue earning course credit, and new school models that combine personalized

learning environments with high expectations.

- 8. Expand College Learning Opportunities in High School:** Dual enrollment, early college programs and Advanced Placement (AP) programs allow high school students to earn credit toward high school and college simultaneously.<sup>64</sup>
- 9. Create a College-Going Culture:** 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 expectations from an early age that their children are college-bound. Parents can talk with their children about going to college and establish a "college-fund" for their children. Teachers can talk about their own college experience, how they got there and what was wonderful and challenging about college. Schools can have college rallies and celebrations.

## An Idea Worth Considering in Santa Clara County

The Kindergarten to College (K2C) children's savings accounts program began in 2010 in San Francisco. San Francisco's K2C initiative opens a college savings account and provides an opening deposit of \$50 for children entering Kindergarten in the city's public schools. Research shows that children with college savings accounts are seven times more likely to go to college than those who don't have a college account, regardless of the specific

amount of money saved. Matched savings accounts change people's perceptions and expectations about higher education.

With this small investment, San Francisco parents understand that their children are on the path to college. Kindergarten to College is an initiative of the San Francisco Mayor's Office, Office of the Treasurer, the Department of Children, Youth, & Their Families

and the San Francisco Unified School District. The micro-savings nonprofit EARN, and the Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) are the city's key non-profit partners for this project. Partnerships with financial institutions, local and national nonprofits, and philanthropic individuals and organizations will be critical to the initiative's success.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> "10-Point Plan for Graduation Success." America's Promise Alliance. Web-accessed March 2009 at <http://www.americaspromis.org/APAPage.aspx?id+9176>.

<sup>65</sup> "EARN Partners with City of San Francisco on Kindergarten to College Program." Press Release. EARN. Web-accessed Jan. 2013 at [http://www.earn.org/news/press\\_releases/earn\\_partners\\_with\\_city\\_of\\_san\\_francisco\\_on\\_kindergarten\\_to\\_college\\_program/](http://www.earn.org/news/press_releases/earn_partners_with_city_of_san_francisco_on_kindergarten_to_college_program/).

## What is Working in Santa Clara County

### Teaching the Growth Mindset

Many of the youth who are in Juvenile Hall or one of the county's detention facilities are three to five years behind academically. Conversations with these youth have shown that they feel sad and ashamed about not being successful in school. Many of these youth attribute their lack of success to being stupid or unable to learn. Many convey a sense of hopelessness.

The difference between a "Growth Mindset" and a "Fixed Mindset" is spelled out in ground-breaking work by Stanford University professor, Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D. Mindsets are the beliefs that individuals hold about their most basic abilities and qualities. Many of the youth at Juvenile Hall or those who are disengaging from high school because, for example, "Algebra I is too difficult," have a fixed mindset. This means that these students believe their basic skills and abilities cannot be changed. They also believe that it is talent that will make them successful and that effort is a sign of weakness rather than a part of life.

When youth are taught a "Growth Mindset" – the belief that their brain, abilities and talent can be developed and that learning is a continual process – they begin

succeeding. Students with a growth mindset believe they can accomplish anything they set their minds to. Understanding the growth mindset helps students understand that learning is developmental and builds on what has already been learned. For example, you cannot expect to do algebra if you haven't learned how fractions work. Instead of believing that they are stupid because they don't understand a concept, they believe they haven't learned it YET. Studies have demonstrated that when students are taught this mindset that their academic performance improves.<sup>66</sup>

If you'd like to learn more or participate in a training session about the Growth Mindset, contact Anne Ehresman, executive director of Project Cornerstone at [anne@projectcornerstone.org](mailto:anne@projectcornerstone.org).

**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, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities – the College Day theme is celebrated throughout one day at participating elementary, middle and high schools. There are

a variety of special in-class lessons for students as well as school programs for students and parents on topics ranging from finding the right college to planning for financial aid. College Day creates a college-going culture in Santa Clara County and helps our children and youth plan and design their path to college. When adults – 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, they demystify college and inspire students to help design their own way to get there.

The first College Day was in 2011, and more than 30,000 students participated. In 2012, at least 100,000 children learned about pathways to college in their schools and after-school programs. Students received stickers, and every public school in Santa Clara County received an "I'm going to college" poster to display on their campus and in their classrooms.

**This year, College Day will take place on October 11, 2013. Go to [www.collegeday.org](http://www.collegeday.org) for lesson plans, worksheets and other resources that will help plan your College Day event at your school or youth program.**

<sup>66</sup> "Krakovsky, Marina. "The Effort Effect." Stanford Magazine. March/April 2007. Web-accessed Jan. 2012 at <http://stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2007/marapr/features>.

## Children Fluent in 2+ Languages

Making Progress



In 2011, 123 students from the San Jose Unified School District received the Seal of Bi-literacy, indicating these students had achieved a high level of proficiency in at least one language in addition to English. In 2012, a total of 356 students from San Jose Unified School District, Eastside Union High School District, and Latino College Preparatory received this seal. It is expected that this number will continue to rise as more districts participate in the Seal of Bi-literacy program and more students learn about it. In 2013, Santa Clara Unified School District, Gilroy Unified School District will begin presenting the Seal of Bi-Literacy.

“Preparing all students with 21st century language and communication skills is critical for being college- and career-ready. These students will be equipped to be leaders in the areas of international trade, the global economy and public services vital to our diverse communities.”

– Jack O’Connell, Former state Superintendent of Public Instruction

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 usually is likely to have deeper insights into important cultural mores. In today’s global economy, being multi-lingual is definitely an advantage. Speaking a second language is also associated with more flexible and creative thinking.

Being fluent in two or more languages is an important life tool and opportunity for our students, and it should be encouraged if youth are to be as successful as possible in the modern global economy. The Children’s Agenda Vision Council selected bi-literacy as a new indicator in 2009, but, even with our commitment to this selection, it wasn’t clear to the members how this indicator should be measured.

### Seal of Bi-literacy

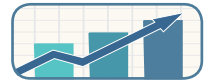
In September 2010, the Santa Clara County Office of Education adopted the Seal of Bi-literacy Award. This certificate, seal on the diploma and transcript notation will be awarded to eligible graduating high school seniors who are able to demonstrate that they have mastered standard English and any other language. The goal of this award is to:

- Encourage students to develop and maintain bi-literacy 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
- Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and bi-literacy skills

In May 2011, 123 graduating seniors from San Jose Unified School District (SJUSD) became the first group of students from that district to be awarded the Seal of Biliteracy. In 2012, 356 graduating seniors from SJUSD, Eastside Union High School District and Latino College Preparatory received the seal. This number should continue to grow as more districts adopt the Seal of Bi-literacy.

## Community Values Youth

Making Progress



Project Cornerstone has focused for the past several years on growing the developmental assets of Santa Clara County children and youth. In 2005, 18% of 7th – 12th grade students felt valued by the community. In 2011, 33% of 5th grade students felt valued by the community. Twenty-nine percent of 7th grade students, nineteen percent of 9th grade students and 22 % of 11th grade students felt valued by the community in 2011.<sup>67</sup>

Project Cornerstone also continues to expand its reach in Santa Clara County. In FY 2012, the number of adults participating in Project Cornerstone programs increased by 28%. The number of students touched by Project Cornerstone school partnership programs increased by 14% from 35,809 students in FY 2011 to 40,852 in FY 2012.<sup>68</sup> As Project Cornerstone continues to grow, the percentage of youth who feel valued by the community will also grow.

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, possess positive values, are committed to learning, feel socially competent and have a positive identity. The Search Institute ([www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org)) has demonstrated that the more of these assets youth have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk activities.

**One of the most important assets is “Community Values Youth” — Do young people perceive that adults in the community value children and youth?**

Many factors influence this perception: How do adults treat young people? Do youth have a voice in decisions that affect their lives? Are there opportunities for children and youth to make the community better?

How we invest in our youth also makes a difference. Youth notice whether they have clean, safe schools and up-to-date textbooks; whether they're treated respectfully by merchants and police officers; whether there are recreational opportunities and safe public spaces where they can meet with friends. They notice whether the community supports their activities, such as playing basketball, volunteering or whether the community supports their development of life skills. And they pay attention to how the media reflects their lives.

Simply put, youth know when their community values and invests in them. By working to ensure that youth feel valued, respected and appreciated, we can create a community where all young people are best able to thrive.

### Helping Children and Youth Feel Valued by the Community

All adults can help children and youth feel valued in the community by:

- Talking with young people about the places they feel valued and the places they don't.
- Encouraging youth involvement in neighborhood and community organizations.
- Giving positive feedback to youth you encounter in stores and public places (for example, baristas, store clerks, sales help, etc.) when you notice they are doing a good job.
- Publicizing and celebrating the ways young people contribute to the community.
- Challenging negative stereotypes in the community.
- Displaying artwork and projects at local stores, community centers and other locations where community members are likely to see them.
- Thanking people who work with children and youth and showing them that you value them, too.<sup>69</sup>

67 “Helping Youth Thrive: A Profile of Santa Clara County Elementary, Middle and High School Students.” Project Cornerstone. Web-accessed Oct. 2011 at [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).

68 “Helping Youth Thrive: A Profile of Santa Clara County Elementary, Middle and High School Students.” Project Cornerstone. Web-accessed Oct. 2011 at [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).

69 Benson, Peter, Galbraith, Judy, Espeland, Pamela. “What Kids Need to Succeed”. Search Institute and Free Spirit Publishing, Inc. 1994.

## Figure Sources

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#### Ethnicity of Children in Santa Clara County 2010

Source: American Communities Survey, US Census Bureau

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Source: Insight Center for Community Economic Development

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Source: California Dept. of Education - DataQuest

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Source: California Dept of Education - DataQuest

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Source: California Dept of Education - DataQuest

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Source: California Dept. of Education - DataQuest

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Source: California Dept. of Education - DataQuest

## Hero



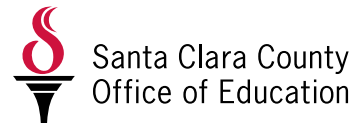
Planned Parenthood Mar Monte

## Champions

**Jamie and Joe Wang**



## Advocates



## Leaders



**Dana Bunnett  
Lori and Bob Burns**

**Ellyn Corey and Tom Sartor  
Bob and Edie Kirkwood**

**Colleen and Geoff Tate  
Linda and John Williams**

## Community Supporters

Teresa Barnea  
Dr. Lee Anna Botkin  
Laurie Cammon  
Nancy Cannon-O'Connell  
Linda Cochran  
Len Edwards  
Ella Gayle Hamlin Foundation  
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Transaccess  
Pam Von Wiegand



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.