

# 2017 - 2024 Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan Brief



The 2017  
Santa Clara County  
Early Learning  
Master Plan is  
sponsored by



Santa Clara County  
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FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

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Local Early Education Planning Council  
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Santa Clara County School Boards Association

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Silicon Valley Council of Non-profits

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The Silicon Valley Organization

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## Introduction

The 2017 Santa Clara County Early Learning Master Plan (ELMP) was designed to move our community towards the vision of a voluntary, universal and comprehensive early care and education (ECE) system that provides each child and family with what they need in order to secure their success. The ELMP report presents both a snapshot of the state of ECE in Santa Clara County in 2017 and a roadmap for the future – with goals, milestones, and actions to address the needs of our community’s children birth to age eight, their families, and the ECE professionals who teach and care for them.

Since the development of the 2010 ELMP, the county has made significant progress towards this vision through the development of the county’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QUALITY MATTERS); the establishment of Educare of California at Silicon Valley, a national model ECE and family support program; and through the rollout of the Transitional Kindergarten program by school districts. However, challenges remain and there is a continuing need for ongoing collaboration and coordination to achieve the community’s vision of a universal and equitable ECE system.

Building on the work of the 2010 ELMP, this plan emphasizes six core principles that will guide the implementation of its recommendations. The principles are:

- embracing ECE as a developmental continuum from birth to age eight,
- creating equitable access to quality ECE opportunities for all children in our community,
- collaborative implementation by all stakeholders in the ECE sector,
- supporting our existing diverse delivery system,
- fostering innovation as a means to achieve our goals, and
- emphasizing program quality as the key ingredient in achieving the outcomes our children deserve.

The ELMP provides a strategic framework to address challenges in six major areas of the ECE system – Access; Articulation, Alignment and Data Systems; Facilities; Family Engagement; Program Quality and Workforce Development. Each focus area has several goals – including one or two “key” goals – which in turn have two-, five-, and seven-year milestones. The two-year milestones include specific actions to achieve that milestone; however, not all of the five- and seven-year milestones have actions, to allow for changing circumstances and flexibility in achieving the goals within that extended timeframe.

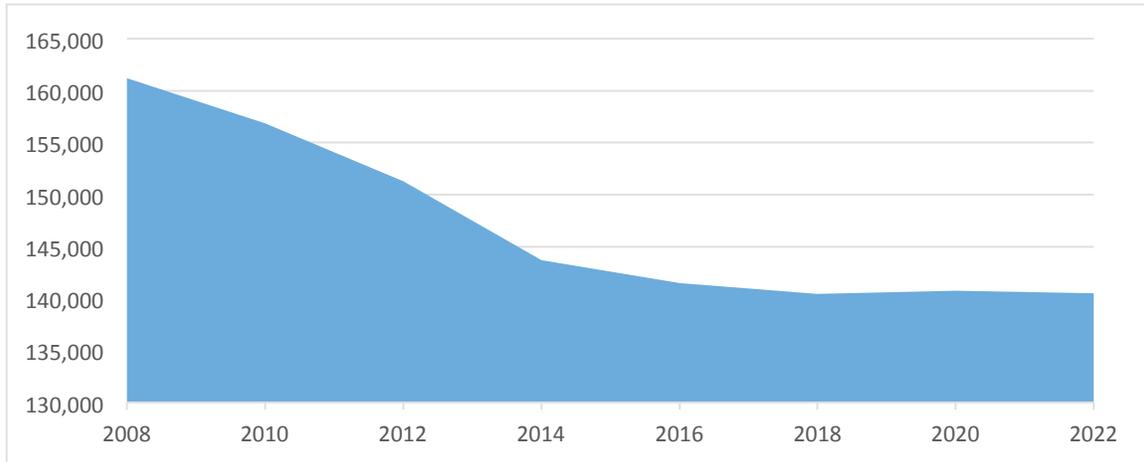
The ELMP is the result of a year-long consultative and collaborative process among almost 100 community stakeholders, led by the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE). Between November 2016 and May 2017, ECE professionals, community members, civic leaders and child development advocates gathered in a series of meetings at the SCCOE to design the planning process, surface and address key issues, provide input and feedback around goals, milestones and actions for the various focus areas, and to revise initial drafts of the ELMP. This plan reflects the passion, wisdom and commitment of these stakeholders and would not have been possible without their efforts. In partnership with SCCOE, American Institutes for Research (AIR) facilitated these meetings and summarized stakeholder feedback into this plan.

This Plan Brief provides selected content from the full ELMP including a Background section of key statistics, which provides context for the ELMP, and a Goals section that lists the 2017 ELMP goals in the six focal areas. The full ELMP is available online available online at [www.sccoe.org/elmp2017](http://www.sccoe.org/elmp2017).

## Background

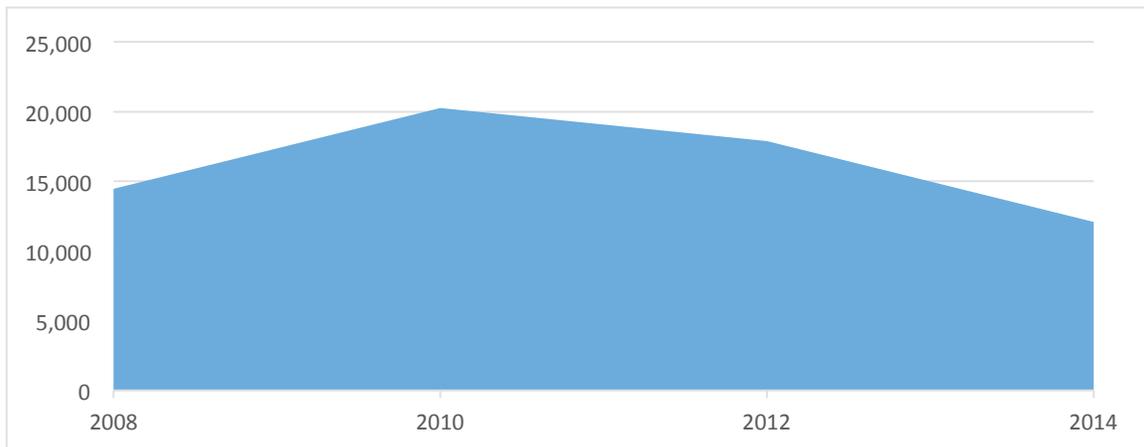
As of 2016, more than 141,000 children, ages zero through five, lived in Santa Clara County. However, the number of children decreased by 11 percent between 2008 and 2014. Given the continued high cost of living in the county, this trend is expected to continue, though at a reduced pace, between 2016 and 2022.

### Number of Children 0-5 in Santa Clara County



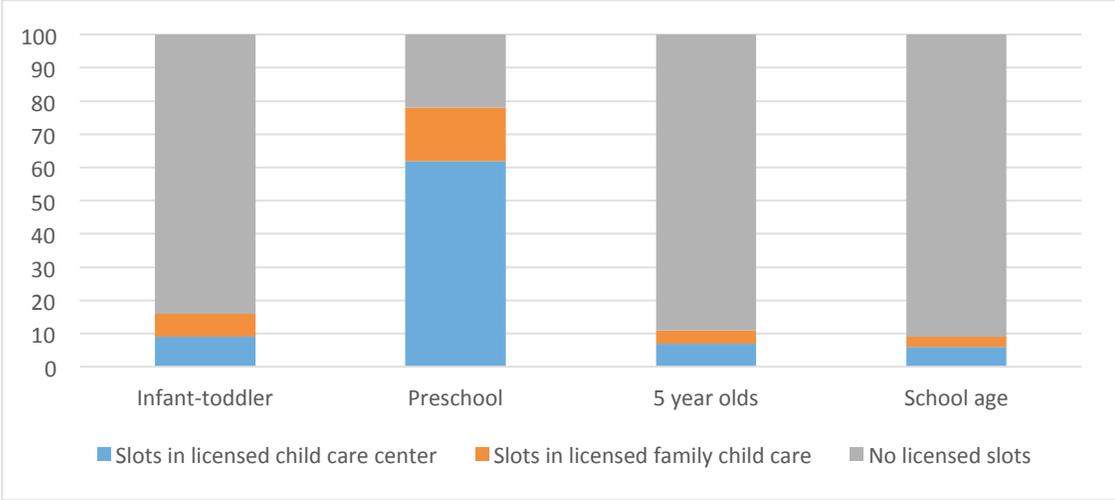
Santa Clara County has experienced a substantial decrease in the number of birth to five-year-olds living in poverty – from a high of over 20,000 in 2010 to a total of 12,070 in 2014. This represents a decline of over 40%, compared with a state-wide decline of just 2% in the same period, which has significant implications for subsidized ECE programs.

### Number of Children 0-5 Living in Poverty in Santa Clara County



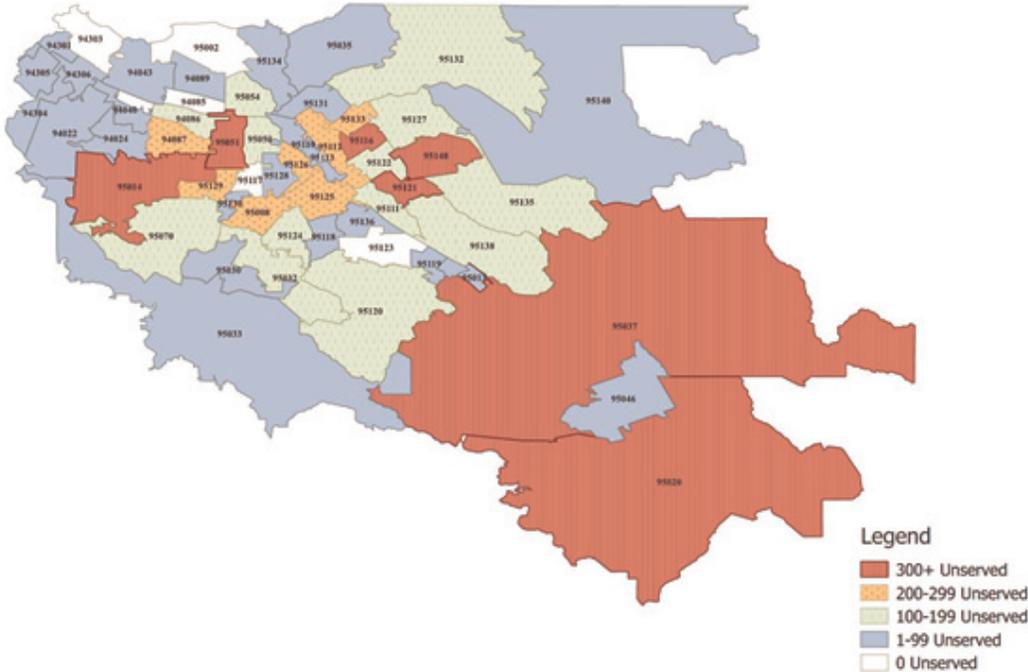
There are substantial estimated gaps between the number of licensed child care slots in each age range and the number of children in each age range anticipated to need ECE services. Additionally, licensed capacity (which is based on physical space) may not reflect a program’s operational capacity, which is also affected by staffing, program design and other economic factors, suggesting that these gaps may be underestimates. These gaps also do not take into account the number of unlicensed child care slots.

**Licensed Capacity as a Percentage of Child Population**



An additional complication when considering access to ECE is that the programs might not be in the locations in which they are most needed. The map below, showing the geography of the estimated access gap for the California State Preschool program under the new income eligibility thresholds, illustrates this point.

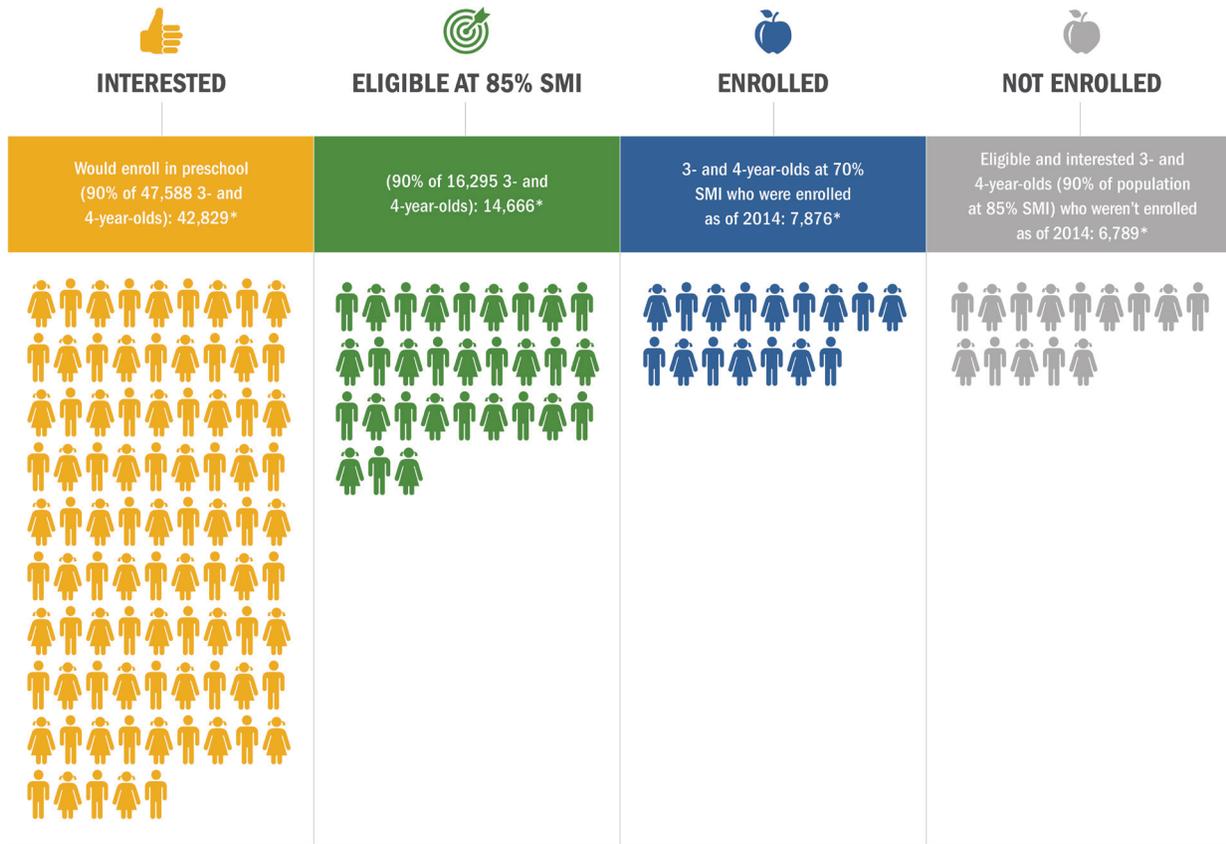
**Unmet Need of Preschoolers Who Are Subsidy Eligible at 85 Percent of the State Median Income (SMI)**



Real access to ECE requires not only an adequate supply of spaces but also the ability to pay for the service. In 2015, the average cost of full-time care in a licensed child care center in Santa Clara County was \$16,375 for an infant and \$11,991 for a preschool aged child – or 14% and 10% of the median family income (\$120,125), respectively. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, child care is affordable when a family pays no more than seven percent of its income for child care.

## A family must earn \$171,300 to make full-time licensed care for one preschooler affordable in Santa Clara County.

In 2010, the unmet need for preschool among children income-eligible for California’s publicly subsidized programs in the county (i.e. a family income below 70 percent of SMI) was estimated to be 5,900 slots. The county is in the initial phase of implementing a child care subsidy pilot program, which includes raising the income eligibility threshold for these programs from 70 percent of to 85 percent of SMI (\$71,065 for a family of four in 2017). Assuming 90% of eligible children enroll, the projected unmet need for preschool-age children eligible for these programs is 6,789 slots.



Note: One figure represents 500 children.

2025\_09/17

## Goals

### Summary Table of Goals

The following table provides the complete list of 28 ELMP goals developed through the workgroup process. Each goal has one or more two-year milestones with associated actions, presented in the full report at [www.sccoe.org/elmp2017](http://www.sccoe.org/elmp2017). Goals may also have five- and seven-year milestones, although these later milestones do not have accompanying actions, to allow for changing circumstances and flexibility in achieving the goals within that extended timeframe. Key goals (defined below) are presented in blue text.

#### Access

##### Goal 1: Expand Local Funding for ECE Services

Goal 2: Enroll All Eligible Children In Transitional Kindergarten (TK)

Goal 3: Increase Access to State Preschool Programs

Goal 4: Increase Access to Infant-Toddler Care and Paid Family Leave

#### Articulation, Alignment And Data Systems

##### Goal 1: Expand School - Provider Networks

##### Goal 2: Assign Unique Student Identification Numbers to 0-5 Year Old Children

Goal 3: Provide Parents With School Readiness and Enrollment Information

Goal 4: Include ECE Data in the Developing County-Wide Integrated Data System

Goal 5: Promote the Use of Validated School Readiness Assessments

#### Facilities

##### Goal 1: Offer Facilities Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) to Providers

##### Goal 2: Create a County-Wide ECE Facilities Development Plan

Goal 3: Advocate for Sustainable Sources of Funding for ECE Facilities

Goal 4: Enhance Facilities Licensing to Improve the Quality of ECE Facilities

Goal 5: Engage Cities as Partners in ECE Facilities Development

#### Family Engagement

##### Goal 1: Implement a County-Wide Family Engagement Framework

Goal 2: Create and Sustain a Joint Schools-ECE Family Engagement Collaborative

Goal 3: Launch a Family Engagement Public Education Campaign

#### Program Quality

##### Goal 1: Expand Participation in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QUALITY MATTERS) and Other Quality Accreditation Programs

Goal 2: Advocate for Improved Quality in Transitional Kindergarten Programs

Goal 3: Support ECE Programs in Implementing Quality Improvement Strategies

Goal 4: Provide a Common ECE Program Quality Data System

Goal 5: Assess the Quality Of Out-Of-School-Time (OST) Programs

#### Workforce Development

##### Goal 1: Support Re-Opening ECE Lab Schools at Community Colleges

##### Goal 2: Advocate for Worthy Wages for ECE Professionals

Goal 3: Increase Enrollment in the ECE Workforce Registry

Goal 4: Include ECE Content in Pre- and In-Service Elementary School Administrator Training

Goal 5: Create a Talent Pipeline Management Strategy for the ECE Workforce

Goal 6: Build Public Understanding And Esteem for the ECE Profession

## Defining Key Goals and the Key Goals Matrix

Key goals are those that either (i) substantially affect multiple focus areas, or (ii) are necessary first steps to achieving other goals within or across focus areas. We anticipate that these goals will be the focus of initial implementation efforts, and, in some cases, are already being acted upon. The figure below represents the cross-cutting nature of these key goals by highlighting whether each key goal is expected to impact each of the six ELMP focus areas. Reflecting program quality as the key ingredient in achieving the outcomes our children deserve, each is expected to have a positive effect on Program Quality.

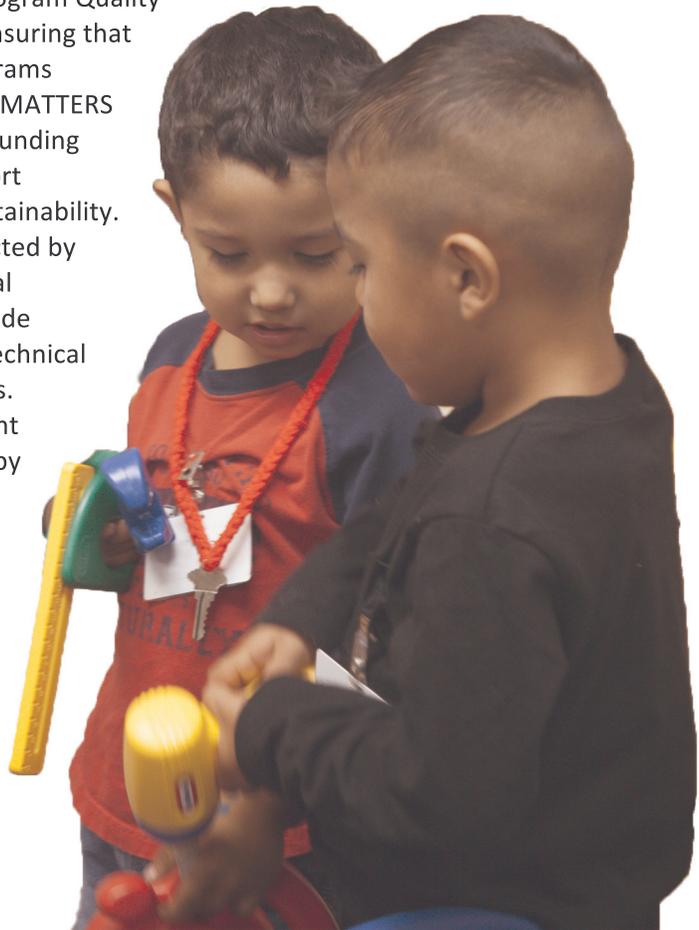
	Access	Articulation, Alignment & Data Systems	Facilities	Family Engagement	Program Quality	Workforce Development
Expand local funding for ECE services						
Expand school –ECE provider networks						
Assign unique student identification numbers to 0-5 age children						
Offer facilities training and technical assistance (TTA) to providers						
Create a county-wide ECE facilities development plan						
Implement a county-wide family engagement framework						
Expand participation in QUALITY MATTERS and other quality accreditation programs						
Support re-opening ECE lab schools at community colleges						
Advocate for worthy wages for ECE professionals						

## Access Key Goal: Expand Local Funding for ECE Services

Expanding local funding for ECE services is a Key Goal for the county-wide Early Learning Master Plan (ELMP) because it addresses a major barrier to access – inadequate funding. Existing state and federal funds for ECE programs are not sufficient to make them available to all the low- and middle-income children who need it, as evidenced by the existing gaps in access. The ELMP proposes an “all of the above” strategy for expanding local funding including:

- developing and passing a local funding initiative to create a sustainable stream of local public funds to expand access to quality ECE programs.
- advocating for school districts to use the state’s Local Control Accountability Plan / Local Control Funding Formula (LCAP/LCFF) process to provide or expand their existing ECE programs.
- advocating for school districts to use Federal Every Student Succeeding Act (ESSA) funds to support direct ECE service provision, professional development, and ECE to K-12 transition.
- examining the feasibility of using Pay For Success (PFS) outcomes-based contracting models to provide ECE services.
- working with cities and library districts to expand access to, and improve the quality of, existing recreational preschool, child care, early literacy and other ECE programs.

Expanding local funding for ECE services could also affect other aspects of the ELMP. For example, Program Quality could be affected by ensuring that new or expanded programs participate in QUALITY MATTERS and a set aside of this funding could be used to support QUALITY MATTERS sustainability. Facilities could be affected by using a set aside of local initiative funds to provide facilities training and technical assistance for providers. Workforce Development could also be affected by requiring programs to meet certain staff qualification standards or enroll in California’s statewide ECE staff registry, and through increased demand for trained and culturally competent staff as programs expand.



### **Articulation, Alignment, and Data Systems Key Goal: Expand School-ECE Provider Networks**

Articulation and alignment between the ECE and K-12 sectors is made more difficult by the lack of formal structures that support communication across this transition. However, examples of how these structures can be created exist in communities across the country and within Santa Clara County. This Key Goal proposes identifying promising models of collaboration between school administrators and their local ECE providers, supporting their dissemination, initially to districts that house ECE programs on their school campuses, and moving towards an inter-district network of networks supporting “bottom-up” collaboration, coordination and alignment.

### **Articulation, Alignment, and Data Systems Key Goal: Assign Unique Student Identification Numbers to 0-5 Year Old Children**

California’s Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) is the state’s K-12 education database and is used to maintain individual-level data including student demographics, course data, discipline, assessments, staff assignments, and other data for state and federal reporting on each student in the K-12 public education systems. CALPADS relies on assigning each student a unique, non-personally identifiable, student identifier (SSID) to organize its data. Assigning SSIDs prior to school entry, for example, at entry into a public ECE program, will support the sharing of data already generated by ECE and K-12 education programs to stakeholders who need it. Additionally, longitudinal analysis of this data could support continuous improvement of ECE programs based on school outcomes. Finally, integration of ECE and K-12 education data with the broader universe of administrative data created by human services agencies and healthcare providers - subject to legal data privacy protections – will provide the kind of integrated data that allows seamless coordination of public services with associated improvements in efficiency and efficacy. A pilot study assigning SSIDs to children in the California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and Head Start programs in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties supported by SCCOE, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and First 5 San Mateo County (“Bridge to Quality”) has already demonstrated the viability of this approach.

### **Facilities Key Goal: Offer Facilities Training and Technical Assistance (TTA) to Providers**

ECE providers report that facilities constraints are a significant barrier to delivering and expanding access to quality programs. In part, these perceived barriers may be due to a lack of knowledge and support around facilities issues such as licensing, permitting, maintenance and real estate. Currently, there is no coordinated delivery of training and technical assistance (TTA) to providers on these issues. The plan addresses this need by developing a single point of contact for ECE programs – a facilities TTA provider – to provide this support, facilitate the implementation of a county-wide ECE facilities development plan and, ultimately, manage an envisioned fund dedicated to expanding the inventory of quality facilities for ECE programs.

## **Facilities Key Goal: Create a County-Wide ECE Facilities Development Plan**

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) has initiated an ECE facilities study, due to be completed in the fall of 2017. This study will provide the basis for the creation of a county-wide facilities development plan that will include location-based understanding of the unmet need for infant-toddler and preschool facilities by mapping the location of 666 centers and 1,867 family child care homes by zip code and proximity to elementary schools and transportation, and to identify neighborhoods where new spaces may be most needed. The facilities development plan will use this data to develop a prioritized plan for new, expanded or renovated facilities, estimate the costs associated with meeting these needs, and begin the process of advocating for the required funds. The primary focus of the current facilities study has been on preschool and infant-toddler facilities. A separate study may be needed to inform investments in school-age facilities.

## **Family Engagement Key Goal: Implement a County-Wide Family Engagement Framework**

The key goal identified by the Family Engagement workgroup was to implement a county-wide family engagement framework – specifically the Strengthening Families Approach: Five Protective Factors framework (Strengthening Families Approach). This effort will be led by FIRST 5 Santa Clara County as part of a statewide family engagement initiative. Comprehensive partnering among school, family, and community members is critical to supporting healthy child development and maximizing the benefit of quality ECE. A common framework can provide guidance to school district staff, families, and communities to support, plan, implement, and evaluate strategies across multiple programs for effective family engagement. The ECE sector will support this effort by leveraging and aligning existing resources such as FIRST 5 Santa Clara County’s existing Family Resource Centers (FRCs), the library systems’ early literacy programs, ECE provider’s parent outreach and communication, school district public information efforts, and QUALITY MATTERS.

## **Program Quality Key Goal: Expand Participation in the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QUALITY MATTERS) and Other Quality Accreditation Programs**

Emphasizing program quality is a core principle of the ELMP, and is closely aligned with the Strong Start mission of expanding access to quality ECE opportunities for all children in the county, and with the work of the ELMP sponsors and the ECE community in Santa Clara County. While every key goal of the ELMP is expected to improve program quality, this core principle is most directly expressed in the Key Goal of expanding participation in QUALITY MATTERS, the county’s ECE Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Expanding QUALITY MATTERS establishes a common definition of quality and a progression of standards leading to high quality for ECE settings across the county and builds upon existing QUALITY MATTERS development and implementation efforts. Assessments of program quality help guide investments to improve program quality and can also ensure families are better informed consumers of ECE. Including other approaches to assessing program quality, such as NAEYC accreditation, expands the range of programs that can be recognized for working to improve their quality, may increase participation rates in quality improvement efforts, and may limit expenses for duplicative assessments and thereby help control the costs associated with QUALITY MATTERS.

**Workforce Development Key Goal: Support Re-Opening ECE Lab Schools at Community Colleges**

Re-opening ECE lab schools at community colleges is a workforce development Key Goal for the ELMP to address the fact that not all entering ECE professionals have the necessary levels of training and skills needed to support quality ECE programs. Providing access to practicum opportunities at community colleges – the primary source of training for new entrants into the ECE workforce – supports higher quality and consistency of students’ initial hands-on training and experience. Many of these programs closed because operations costs exceeded the reimbursement rates provided by the state, which made them financially unviable. Changes in state funding and the county’s local child care funding pilot have changed funding conditions and may allow these programs to re-open.

Reinstating ECE lab schools could affect other aspects of the ELMP. For example, Facilities would be impacted, as opening lab schools would increase the capacity of, and slots in, quality facilities. Program Quality would be improved as a result of better pre-service training – especially since implementation of the ELMP will require a larger ECE workforce.

**Workforce Development Key Goal: Advocate for Worthy Wages for ECE Professionals**

Low salaries in the field of ECE pose a significant barrier to providing the quality of ECE programs necessary to support children and families. Low salaries make the profession less attractive to new entrants and increase staff turnover. The cost of increased qualifications is often unaffordable for staff. At the same time, substantial increases in ECE workforce compensation can only be financed by higher parent fees, by increasing the public expenditure per child and serving fewer children, or by significantly increasing public expenditures on ECE. Given that quality ECE is currently unaffordable for most families in Santa Clara County, and that there are already substantial access gaps, improving compensation for the ECE workforce requires this final option.

Compelling advocacy for worthy wages for ECE professionals requires understanding both the cost and benefits of providing these wages, and the costs and consequences of maintaining the status quo. Improving the current situation will require a substantial and ongoing advocacy effort at the state level and will require coordination with other advocates and key stakeholders.



## Early Learning Master Plan Acknowledgements

The Early Learning Master Plan would not have been possible without the dedicated input from members of the Planning Group, who met in December 2016 and January 2017, and the members of the six Workgroups, who each met three times between March and May 2017. The list below includes the names of individuals who helped shape this plan.

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QUALITY MATTERS ... a STRONG START for kids

### Who We Are

Strong Start is a coalition of community leaders, early education providers, nonprofit organizations, elected officials, members of the business community, and other key stakeholders who are committed to expanding access to high quality early learning opportunities for all children age 0 to 8 in Santa Clara County.

The coalition looks for local, state, and national solutions to help increase access to high quality early education and conducts advocacy efforts at the state level to encourage increased investments in early learning.

Strong Start is an initiative of the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) and builds upon the strong leadership of its many partners in the field of early education.

Santa Clara County  Office of Education

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