

TOGETHER

We Raise Monterey County

Early childhood development lays the groundwork for a child's future success. From birth to age five, children grow and learn very quickly. By the time they are five, a child's brain is almost as big as an adult brain. Research shows that high-quality early childhood education provides up to a 14% return on investment. Investing in young children helps families today and builds a better future for everyone. It helps create a stronger and fairer society, and it's something we all play a part in.



OUR VALUES

Equity | Trust | Healing | Connection | Prevention



Community Annual Report
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OUR MISSION

First 5 Monterey County enriches the lives of children, ages prenatal through 5, and their families by elevating early childhood as a priority, strengthening connections and advancing quality within a whole system of care and support.

OUR VISION

The wellbeing of all young children and families is nurtured by responsive services, just and equitable systems, and safe and welcoming environments.



TOGETHER

— We Raise —
Monterey County



Since 1999, First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) has supported young children, families, and early childhood educators. First 5 Monterey County launched a new strategic plan for 2023–2029. This framework further reinforces F5MC’s commitment to prioritizing families with complex needs who have historically been excluded from decision-making and highlights the need for services that address race, equity, diversity and inclusion.

F5MC has been dedicated to supporting children prenatal to age five and their families to achieve these outcomes:



Children receive services that contribute to their overall health and safety



Children have supportive, healthy relationships

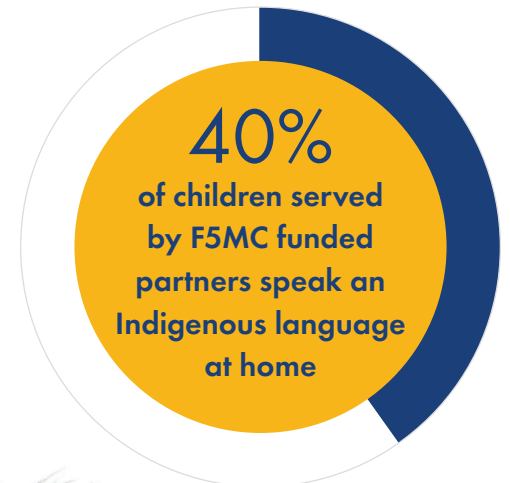


Children are at the center of policies and legislation

OUR PARTNERS

With help from F5MC and partners, children have received:

- **Care they need to grow up healthy**
- **Parents have gained confidence and new skills**
- **Educators have learned how to provide better learning experiences for young children**



AT-A-GLANCE



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9,150

children, parents,
caregivers, providers
and educators supported
during FY 2023–2024



Children receive services that contribute
to their overall health and safety

2,089

Kits for New Parents distributed

1,547

children and parents received **personalized connections to services**, for example, speech therapy, mental health therapy, etc.

481

children were **screened to improve children's health** and prevent learning delays

227

families were provided with **intensive supports around prevention and intervention services** to meet their personalized goals

204

children and parents received **emergency supplies** including diapers, clothes, cribs, and other supplies

The brain grows the
most between ages
0–3, so the earlier a
child gets support, the
better it is for them
and their family.



73% of children served
by F5MC Strong Start
Partnership and Parents
as Teachers Home
Visiting are under
the age of three.



Strong Start Partnership

In 2024, the Strong Start Partnership was launched to provide coordinated care for families with children from the prenatal stage through age five. This unique collaboration brings together organizations and families to help them reach their individual goals.

At the heart of the Strong Start Partnership are Care Coordinators, who work closely with families to build trust and strong relationships. Once trust is established, Care Coordinators and families work together to identify strengths, needs, and goals. Together, they create personalized plans that include parenting information, goal-setting, and connections to additional services.

The Strong Start Partnership is more than a network of support—they become part of a family's team, celebrating families' successes and walking together on their journey. Families working with the partnership feel valued and supported every step of the way.

Partner organizations are led by GoKids and the Door To Hope Collaboratives which includes the Child Advocate Program of the Monterey County Probation Department and Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño. Together, they are making a difference in the lives of Monterey County families.



Children have supportive, healthy relationships

262 children ages 0–5 were supported with **Parents as Teachers Home Visitors** for their positive development

200 early childhood Family, Friend and Neighbor providers **participated in workshops** that focused on connection and collaboration

132 professionals participated in the **Mental Health Training** series from a range of sectors including, legal services, medical/public health, and social services

62 early childhood staff members were supported to **strengthen connections and build professional development** through Quality Matters



99% of children ages 0–5 served by First 5 Monterey County-funded programs are enrolled in **Medi-Cal**, helping to connect them with vital community services and opportunities for a better well-being.



Mental Health

Experiences in early childhood, from pregnancy through age five, shape a person's brain, health, and well-being for life. Working with young children and their families requires special knowledge. First 5 Monterey County's Mental Health training series focuses on supporting babies, toddlers, and their families. This training brings together ideas from psychology and social work, focusing on cultural and racial diversity, inclusion, and healing-based practices for professionals in Monterey County.

The Mental Health trainings help local professionals gain skills specific to early childhood mental health. Participants focus on preventing and treating

mental health challenges, strengthening relationships, and promoting inner strength in young children and their families. They also teach about the specific history and needs of Monterey County families. These trainings bring together people from different fields to learn and collaborate, creating a network of support for young children and families.

Surveys show high satisfaction with the mental health training. Participants apply what they learn to their work, gain new resources, and form connections with colleagues. In FY 2023-24, 98% of participants used new skills in their work and 72% learned about new resources during the training.



..... “

I am a person that did not finish college, and attending these trainings have helped me to learn a variety of different approaches to assist our families...

I learned about how to listen, how to explore, and be curious about a situation. I learned about how culture, racism, inequity, and socio-economic expectations have influenced our community. **I strongly believe I provide better service to the population I serve.**

- Mental Health Training Participant



Children are at the center of policies and legislation

690 **advocates** supported through workshops, information sharing, and meetings with legislators

183 parents trained on **advocacy skills**

117 attendees to focus groups that determined the direction for **statewide programming and funding opportunities** with particular attention on child care

>21 **advocates** were hosted by legislators for state and federal legislative visits

5 **policy areas advocated for by F5MC** were enacted into legislation, including expanding developmental screenings and additional support for navigating domestic violence and need for housing



First 5 Monterey County Financials

\$4,210,957 Programs and Services

\$787,486 Administration

\$427,473 Evaluation

\$5,425,916 Invested



First 5 Monterey County, also known as the Monterey County Children and Families Commission, was established in 1999 following the passage of Proposition 10, a 1998 statewide initiative. Proposition 10 adds a 50-cent tax to tobacco products, providing dedicated funding for programs supporting children from the prenatal stage through age 5 and their families. Funds are distributed to each county based on annual birth rates. First 5 Monterey County manages the funds locally as an independent public agency governed by a board of Commissioners.