

A Bit Better

News From First 5 of Santa Cruz County

Reflections and Remarks from Executive Director, David Brody

It gives me great pleasure to share the inaugural release of First 5 Santa Cruz County's e-newsletter, "*A Bit Better*". A quarterly e-newsletter that will provide updates on First 5's various programs and initiatives, as well as the collaborative work we are engaged in with community partners to ensure the well-being of all children in Santa Cruz County.



Our vision at First 5 Santa Cruz County is that all children enter school ready to achieve to their greatest potential, and that ultimately they are able to thrive and become caring, competent and productive adults. To achieve that vision, we need to help our children develop a set of skills and capacities or core capabilities that scientists call executive function and self-regulation. Capabilities that will serve them into adulthood like planning, focus, self-control, awareness, and flexibility (for more on these concepts see [these](#) resources at the Center for the Developing Child). How do we help children develop these capabilities? First, they need access to well-coordinated health care that begins before birth. Second, their basic needs like food and housing have to be met. Third, they need strong, positive and responsive relationships in their lives, from their earliest experiences with parents and caregivers, to their teachers and other caring adults as they grow. And lastly, they need access to high-quality education from their earliest years, to and throughout adulthood. That is our work. To put the conditions in place that allow children to develop the capabilities they need to thrive and realize their fullest potential.

So we know what do to, but why do we do it? That answer might seem obvious but it deserves some reflection. We do it of course because we love our children. We do it because we are rational, and understand that our children are by definition our future. I think ultimately we do it because deep in our hearts we

understand that it is our responsibility and our legacy to leave this world a better place than we found it. Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “*To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived – that is to have succeeded*”. And so our success is defined not by fame, fortune or power, but by lives made better, by the well-being of our children, by our ability to leave this place a bit better than we found it.

Program Highlight: Baby Gateway Newborn Enrollment Program

Santa Cruz County’s newborns are getting connected to medical care.

First 5 Santa Cruz County's **Baby Gateway Newborn Enrollment Program** aims to ensure that babies leave the hospital with health insurance enrollment and that families have the resources they need to keep their children healthy.

Newborn Enrollment Coordinators are on site at local birthing hospitals (Dominican, Sutter and Watsonville Hospitals) 5 days per week to help enroll eligible infants into Medi-Cal. During 2017–18, the Baby Gateway Newborn Enrollment Program provided 85% of all mothers with a newborn visit while in the hospital. During these visits, 99% of all mothers who had Medi-Cal births completed a Medi-Cal application for their new babies, and 98% of these mothers identified a preferred primary care provider (PCP) or clinic for their child before discharge from the hospital.

“As a new mom you are going to come across new challenges and things that are overwhelming. However, thanks to the Baby Gateway Newborn Enrollment Program, obtaining health coverage for your newborn will not be one of these things. Our program makes obtaining Medi-Cal and finding a PCP a smooth process. Newborn Enrollment Coordinators are at hospitals to assist with completing appropriate paperwork and connecting you with all the key resources you need to be successful.”

– Alicia F. Health Outreach Supervisor, First 5 Santa Cruz County

In addition to helping new moms make their baby’s first well visit appointment, the Newborn Enrollment Coordinator gives each family the First 5 Kit for New Parents. Each kit provides the book, “What To Do When Your Baby Gets Sick” and Informational flyers about: lead safety, Paid Family Leave, immunizations, Triple P, 211, Text 4 Baby, health insurance, oral health and Talk. Read. Sing.



Community Announcements

Help Design Your Park

Santa Cruz County Parks and Design Team are hosting community pop-up meetings to provide information, answer questions, and receive community input for your "New Farm Park"!

[Community Meetings Happening in June and July](#)

The Santa Cruz Reading Corps

Our Santa Cruz Reading Corps program is looking for Preschool Literacy Tutors to join our team this fall and support children to become successful readers.

[Santa Cruz Reading Corps flyer](#)

Do you know someone who is passionate about sharing their love of reading with young children or who is looking for an opportunity to give back to their community?

Serving as AmeriCorps Volunteers, Preschool Literacy Tutors engage with young children, ages 3 to 5, directly in their classroom by using research-based, early literacy strategies in a fun and meaningful ways to guide these children along the road to reading readiness!



Census 2020 Jobs Available

Supervisory and Non-Supervisory positions available in Santa Cruz County.

Apply online 2020census.gov/jobs

DataShare Santa Cruz County is Live!

DataShare Santa Cruz County is the new interactive data platform with local, state, and national data that allows you to explore and understand information about our community.

Loaded with tons of data, and with easy to use report and dashboard building tools, DataShare SCC offers you access to hundreds of data points to deepen and inform your knowledge of many aspects of life in our county. Please use the platform for your advocacy efforts, grant application, program planning, presentation preparation, or any other way it is useful.

New Tool to Ensure California's Babies and Young Children Get the Services They Need

In March, the First 5 Association of California and the Children's Data Network (CDN) launched a new tool to help service providers, policymakers, and government agencies more effectively support children and families and direct resources where they are needed most.

The California Strong Start Index uses information collected at birth to understand the conditions into which California's babies are born in a given neighborhood, county, or region. The index focuses on resources that promote resilience and shows wide variability in access to these resources among the half a million babies born in California each year.

Visit strongstartindex.org to see how babies are faring in your community and how you can use the Strong Start Index to advocate for children and families across California.

Triple P Positive Parenting Program Offers Classes and Support for Families

The Triple P - Positive Parenting Program is a world-renowned program available to families in Santa Cruz County who have children ages birth to 16,

including children with special needs.

Backed by more than 30 years of international research, Triple P provides families with a tool kit of proven strategies for strengthening relationships with their children, promoting children's development, and preventing or managing common parenting challenges - tantrums, sibling rivalry, homework, bullying, bedtime, communicating with teens, and more.



[Learn more about Triple P](#)



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