IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue, we'll discuss the first ever Santa Clara County Children's Budget and look at early childhood items in the Governor's January Budget Proposal. We've included links to online public service announcements on the importance of early care and education from three different perspectives for you to watch, share and use (you might have already seen them at the library, your doctor's office, or on community access television). With the March primary election on the horizon, we've linked to a couple of advocacy efforts you should be aware of, and, finally, are you ready for the Census on April 1st? Children 0-5 are an official "hard to count" population, which means we all need to be thinking about how to ensure Everyone Counts!

If you think someone you know would, or should, be interested in this newsletter, please forward it to them. Santa Clara County's youngest children need their adults to be their advocates and the better informed we all are, the better advocates we can be. Thanks for reading.

The County of Santa Clara's First Ever Children's Budget

In November, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors approved the first ever Santa Clara County Children's Budget – a comprehensive accounting of the funds flowing through and from the County of Santa Clara that supports programs for children and their families.

Altogether, the County spends almost $860 million per year across 180 programs addressing children's health, safety, welfare, education and quality of life. Approximately 80 percent of those funds are Federal or State money that pays for programs operated by the County while 20 percent – or $168 million – are the County's own dollars.

Six of the top ten programs, in total spending, are operated by the County's Social Service Agency and include child welfare services, foster care, Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid safety net health insurance program), CalFresh (California's safety net supplemental food program), adoption programs and CalWORKS (public assistance for eligible families with children). The remainder of the top ten programs are outpatient and intensive behavioral health services, child support services and pediatric medical staff costs.

The report illustrates both the breadth and complexity of the County's programs with many supported by braided funding streams from multiple sources. Despite the complexity, the report is surprisingly clear and easy to understand and represents a fantastic resource for those interested in understanding the County's role in the landscape of children's supports. The full report can be viewed here, the County's accompanying press release can be found here and a report on the budget release can be found here. (picture credit – Santa Clara County Office of Education)

Early Care and Education Highlights from Governor Newsom's January Budget Proposal

On January 10th Governor Newsom presented his Budget Proposal. The summary document is over 350 pages and his presentation lasted almost three hours. Compared with last year's record-setting reinvestment in early care and education (ECE), the proposed funding increases for child care and preschool are relatively modest.
The largest increase is $32M in 2020-21, and $137M thereafter, for 10,000 more State Preschool slots for non-school district providers beginning in April 2021. The proposal also suggests using an additional $10.3M from the Cannabis Fund to support an additional 621 child care slots and switching funding for an additional 3,000 slots from the General Fund to the Cannabis Fund. Anticipated changes in the CalWORKS caseload will require an additional $54M to maintain services for eligible families in that program and the Governor has also proposed additional funding of $34M to increase the amount of money that flows directly to CalWORKS families.

Following on from last year’s facilities investments, the Governor suggested providing an additional $75M in funding for inclusive early education projects, and to take a portion of unused full-day kindergarten expansion funds for school districts to build preschool facilities. The proposal also included $250M in one-time special education funding to school districts based on the number of children ages 3-5 with disabilities to increase or improve services, $10M for an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) cross-sector training program, and expanded job protections for parents using paid family leave.

Perhaps the most significant change was the proposal to create a Department of Early Childhood Development, in the California Health Human Services Agency, that would include most of the state’s array of early childhood programs. This would consolidate the Early Childhood Policy Council created in last year’s budget, CalWORKS, voucher-based and direct contract childcare programs, Head Start and Early Head Start coordination, the developing ECE data system, the state’s county-based Local ECE Planning Councils, the emergency Child Care Bridge for foster children, and ECE quality programs in a single department. The California Department of Education would continue to operate the State Preschool Program.

Additional details on these proposals will be included in the various budget trailer bills that will be introduced beginning next month. A revised Budget proposal will be released in mid-May before negotiations with the legislature and final passage of the State Budget in June.

Public Service Announcement Videos To Share

Strong Start's objectives include increasing public understanding of the importance, economic impact, and community benefits of high quality early learning programs. As part of that effort we have produced public service announcements, in English and Spanish, highlighting the importance of quality ECE from three different perspectives - a parent, a teacher, and a pediatrician. These videos are currently showing in libraries and pediatricians offices in the county, and on community access television - but the more people who see them, the more our message spreads. The videos are available at the Strong Start web site or at the links below. Please consider sharing them in your social media, as part of your outreach efforts, or by embedding them on your website.

Strong Start Public Service Announcements in English

Strong Start Public Service Announcements in Spanish

Local Advocacy Opportunities Before the March Primary Election

The March 3rd primary election provides an opportunity to advocate for children and expanded access to high quality early care and education and there are at least two opportunities sponsored by Strong Start members and friends.

Strong Start partners, the Community Equity Collaborative and Congregation Beth Am (along with a number of co-sponsors including the Santa Clara County Office of Education) are holding an Early Childhood Education Candidate Forum with the seven candidates to replace Sen. Jerry Hill in California’s 13th Senate District. The forum will be held at Hillview Middle School in Menlo Park on February 9th and registration is available here. Please consider attending to ask your questions of the candidates and to demonstrate the importance of ECE to the community.

There’s also a primary election for Supervisor for Santa Clara County District 3. Choose Children, the nonpartisan advocacy effort launched by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation in 2016 to engage candidates in the Governor's race on issues of early care, health and education, has launched Choose Children Santa Clara County, "a campaign dedicated to ensuring that the next Santa Clara County Supervisor from District 3 is a champion for young children." You can read more about their effort and register for updates from them here.
Are You Thinking About The 2020 Census?

In the last Census, approximately five percent of children under the age of five weren't counted - almost one million children nationwide - and California has the highest rate of undercount for young children in the entire country. The undercount rate for children of color, the majority of children in the state, is roughly double the rate for white children. This undercount has serious consequences. California receives almost $75 billion per year in Federal funding that is based, in part, on Census data. The 2020 Census may prove to be especially challenging as it will be the first Census that will be conducted primarily online.

To learn more about the Census and how to ensure Everyone Counts!, visit the following resource links from the state government, the First 5 Association, and the County of Santa Clara. We have also been posting about the Census on Twitter and Facebook (@StrongStartSCC) including information on upcoming family events and training opportunities for non-profit organizations. Look for much more on the Census as we ramp up to April 1.

http://www.strongstartsantaclara.org