

Enter email address to view a sample of field merge: [Test Merge](#)[View in browser](#)

July 2019



IN THIS ISSUE

Strong Start already has a website, Twitter and Facebook accounts (@StrongStartSCC) - why a newsletter? This quarterly round-up is a resource for Strong Start members and friends who don't want to check in every day.

In this issue, we'll look at the state's new budget and how it affects early care, health and education (ECE) programs, review recent research reports on preschool, children's health and well-being, and examine the alignment between Santa Clara County's Early Learning Master Plan and the recently released report from the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education. Finally, at the end of this newsletter is a **two question survey** on whether you would like to continue receiving this newsletter and other email from Strong Start. Please complete the survey so that we can continue providing you with news and updates about the field and the achievements of the Strong Start initiative.

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 and for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.

What's in the California 2019-20 Budget?

Governor Gavin Newsom's first budget has passed the legislature, and includes many – but not all – of the pieces of the May Budget Reviser proposal. The record \$215 billion budget expands the state's Medicaid program – MediCal – to cover undocumented young adults, makes supplemental payments into the state's public employee pension systems, spends \$2 billion on tackling homelessness, and triples the size of California's earned-income tax credit program putting more money into the hands of low-income families.



The budget also addresses many of the promises on early care and education (ECE) that the Governor made during last year's election campaign. Starting in July 2021, families will receive eight weeks of paid family leave to care for new babies. ECE programs will be expanded with funding for 10,000 additional full-day preschool spaces and more than 11,000 additional childcare spaces. The budget also includes \$245 million for childcare facilities, \$239 million to build preschool facilities on California State University campuses, and \$300 million to provide facilities so that schools can provide full-day kindergarten programs. The Governor's proposals for \$165 million in additional funds for developmental and adverse childhood experiences screenings also made it through the budget development process. Finally, the budget contains \$25 million in funds for ECE strategic planning and data systems development and implementation. Overall, this budget represents a significant re-investment in California's underfunded ECE programs. You can read additional reporting on the state budget and its implications for ECE at <https://calmatters.org/articles/california-state-budget-gavin-newsom/> and <https://edsource.org/2019/californias-budget-deal-takes-a-step-toward-universal-preschool/613726> and visit the California Department of Finance budget web site at <http://www.ebudget.ca.gov/home.php>

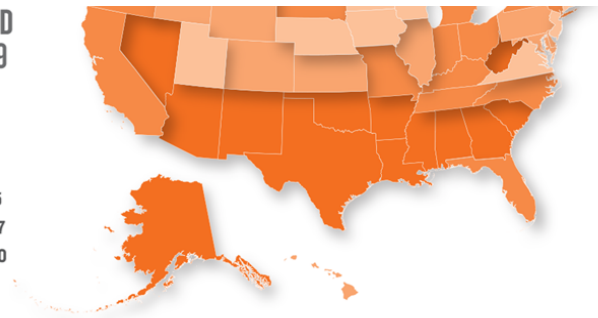
The 2019 Kids Count Data Book - Still Disappointing for California's Children

A STATE-TO-STATE
COMPARISON



OF OVERALL CHILD WELL-BEING: 2019

- States Ranked 1-13
- States Ranked 14-25
- States Ranked 26-37
- States Ranked 38-50



Every year the Annie E. Casey Foundation produces their Kids Count data book assessing children's well-being across the United States. The 2019 version has just been released (<https://www.aecf.org/resources/2019-kids-count-data-book/>) and, just like last year, it paints a mixed picture for California's children. The state has made essentially no progress – moving from 36th to 35th overall – and ranking 46th for economic well-being, 36th for education, 41st for family and community and, more positively, 7th for health. Across the 16 indicators in the four categories, the state has made improvements in 12 and has regressed in only one – with a slight increase in the number of low birth weight babies (although the state performs dramatically better than the national average on this measure). However, the state continues to have more than 1.6 million children living in poverty, more than 500,000 three- and four-year old children who do not attend a formal preschool program, and above average rates of 4th graders not reading proficiently, 8th graders not proficient in math, and high schoolers not graduating on time. It continues to have the highest rate of children living in households with a high housing cost burden in the country, affecting more than 3.9 million children, and above average rates of parents without secure employment and heads of households who lack a high school diploma. The California data profile is available at https://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2019KC_profile_CA.pdf.

The 2018 State of Preschool Yearbook - Ongoing Quality Concerns in California

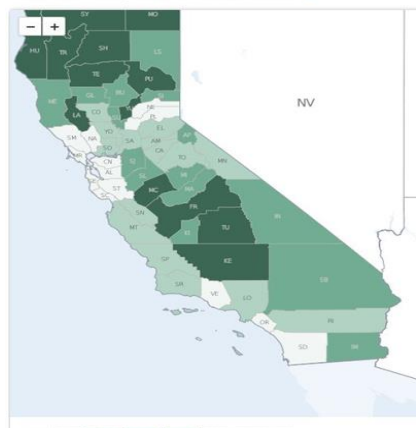
In April, the National Institute for Early Education Research's (NIEER) released [the NIEER State of Preschool 2018 yearbook](#). The report provides a comprehensive overview of the state preschool landscape across the country, and also includes state-by-state breakdowns of funding, enrollment and quality metrics. Overall, the picture presented in the report – which describes the 2017-2018 school year – is one of stasis. Enrollment in state preschool programs across the country was virtually flat and state average funding per child showed a small decline, when adjusted for inflation. The report also noted that an important source of funds for state preschool programs – the federal Preschool Development Grant program – that contributed almost \$250 million in funding to 18 state preschool programs across the country is due to expire in 2019.



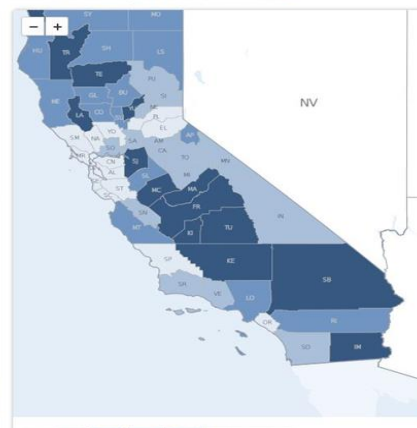
[The section on California](#) describes both the state preschool programs (California State Preschool Program, CSPP) and our unique Transitional Kindergarten program (TK). The report calls out California among its "States on the Move", citing the growth of TK enrollment to almost 100,000 students, and the significant increase in per child funding as a result of last year's budget. The combined enrollment in TK and CSPP means that "more than 15% of all children in state-funded preschool nationwide are in California". However, the report is less positive about the quality of these state funded programs. CSPP meets six of the ten suggested quality benchmarks for the program but TK meets only two; the leading programs in the country meet all ten.

Santa Clara County Health rankings - Dig a Little Deeper

Overall Rankings in Health Outcomes 1



Overall Rankings in Health Factors 1



The annual [County Health Rankings](#) were published in March, and, as is typical for these kinds of reports, Santa Clara County looks great – ranked third in California behind Marin and San Mateo counties. Overall, the county scores well in length of life, quality of life, health behaviors, clinical care and social economic factors, but lags behind 34 other California counties on the physical environment measures. Surprisingly, the county scores well below the state average in the “Severe housing problems” metric. However, a number of the measures allow you to see the data broken down by race (categorized as “Black”, “Hispanic” or “White” but unfortunately not “Asian”) and when you do that, its clear that there are significant, race-based, disparities in health outcomes in our county. Focusing on just the metrics directly affecting young children and their families, the data shows 50% higher rates of low birth weight among African-American than White newborns, ten-fold higher rates of teen births among Hispanic women than White women, rates of childhood poverty among African-American and Hispanic children that are five times the rate for White children, and incomes for White households close to double those for African-American and Hispanic households. For those of us interested in improving ECE, this is another indication that we can't be satisfied with a color blind, averages-based approach to data and policy making. Without digging deeper to unearth and recognize race-based disparities in the data, we stand little chance of addressing the systemic inequities that lead to them.

The recommendations of the Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education

In mid-March, the California Assembly Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Early Childhood Education published its [recommendations](#) after a two year process of hearings and feedback. The report makes a lengthy list of recommendations in nine key areas: Governance and Administration, Family Engagement, Access for Children and Families, Workforce, Quality Improvement, Systems and Infrastructure, Facilities and Supply, Coordination and Alignment, and Financing, and also includes a section on recommendations from parent focus groups. While the recommendations vary from detailed to aspirational, there are a number that are closely aligned to Santa Clara County's 2017 Early Learning Master Plan (ELMP). This suggests that many of the issues we identified are present across the state, and that the solutions we identified, and are implementing, may serve as models moving forward.



Just as with our county's ELMP, the most difficult and important steps for the BRC's recommendations lie in their implementation. A number of these recommendations are very similar to either recently introduced bills or to items in the recently passed state budget, suggesting that this may already have started. Currently, the state's executive, legislative and financial climate are receptive to making improvements to our ECE system. This strategic plan may result in strategic actions.

Strong Start Mailing List Survey

To ensure the best possible service and value to the members of the Strong Start coalition, we are asking you to complete a two question survey at the link below. The survey verifies your continued interest in receiving this newsletter and other email from the initiative. Thank you for your continued interest in Strong Start and for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JR5XZWP>

<http://www.strongstartsantaclara.org>

To learn why you received this and how to remove yourself from the list, see [Privacy Policy](#)
[Review / edit information about you](#) | [Unsubscribe](#)

Generated by  [Learn more](#)