

STRONG START

QUALITY MATTERS ... a STRONG START for kids

IN THIS ISSUE

Strong Start already has a website, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn accounts - why a newsletter?

This quarterly round-up of activities, opportunities, and events is a resource for Strong Start members and friends who don't want to check in every day.

For the rest of us, there's Twitter.

In our second issue, we discuss some findings of the "Santa Clara County Children's Agenda 2017 Data Book," learn more about the child care funding pilot development, review Children's Health Assessment recommendations from the county Public Health Department, and celebrate the Week of the Young Child (April 24-28).

The upcoming events this quarter are all about state budget advocacy, and we will also get to know another Strong Start coalition member.

Thanks for reading, and **thank you for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.**



Highlights from the Children's Agenda 2017 Data Book

The Santa Clara County
Children's Agenda
2017 Data Book



Every child safe, healthy,
successful in learning,
and successful in life



"The Santa Clara County Children's Agenda [2017 Data Book](#)" addresses race and inequity.

According to this year's edition, "Santa Clara County is one of the wealthiest regions in the world. On average, our children are faring well. But these averages mask troubling inequities."

The annual publication is a treasure trove of useful data on the life course of development for children and youth in our communities. The data tracks 13 indicators (including School Readiness), provides recommendations for action, and addresses a specific topic with impacts across all the indicators.

You can view the full data book [here](#).

Santa Clara County's local child care funding pilot: what's the plan?

In September 2016, Governor Brown signed AB 2368 (Gordon) into law, authorizing a local funding care pilot for Santa Clara County. AB 2368 allows local flexibility in the implementation of state-funded child care and preschool programs until January 1, 2022.

The first part of the process is to develop a plan; this plan was submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for approval on April 25.

Key features of the plan include:

- increasing the income eligibility threshold for families from 70 to 85 percent of the state median income,
- authorizing 12-month eligibility for families eligible for these programs because they are seeking work and 24-month eligibility for families eligible for other reasons,
- using unspent funds due to under-enrollment to increase provider reimbursement rates,
- lowering the age of enrollment in State Preschool to 2.9 years to allow for two full years of preschool enrollment before transitional kindergarten eligibility, and
- prioritizing enrollment for children with special needs and the siblings of current enrollees.



More details on the local child care pilot plan can be found [here](#); you can see the full County Board of Supervisors April 25 Agenda Packet [here](#).

Recommendations from the county-wide Children's Health Assessment



In late March, the Santa Clara County Public Health Department published [Volume 2](#) of their "Status of Children's Health" report. This new volume adds data from key informant interviews and public forums to the statistical data presented in [Volume 1](#).

The report states "one of the critical concerns that emerged throughout this assessment is the importance of quality preschool among children in Santa Clara County."

Recommendations include "mak[ing] quality child care programs more affordable and accessible for low-income families [and] universal preschool for children, including summer programming for low-income children and programs for children with development disabilities" as key strategies.

The report concludes with a Call to Action section, detailing seven strategies they recommend to improve children's health, and addressing health disparities in the county.

Efforts towards implementing these recommendations are underway, and we hope to be able to share more good news in future editions of the newsletter.

Santa Clara County Board of Education resolution in support of the Week of the Young Child

As part of an ongoing commitment to early learning and serving the children and families of Santa Clara County, the County Board of Education unanimously adopted a [resolution and proclamation](#) recognizing The Week of the Young Child™ at its April 19 meeting.



The Week of the Young Child, which runs from April 24-28, is an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, and families.

The week, comprising Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday, serves "to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families, and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs."

This resolution encourages Santa Clara County residents to support the needs of young children in the community by calling attention to the need for high-quality early childhood services for all children and families in the county.

The Santa Clara County Office of Education partners with community leaders, early education providers, nonprofit organizations, elected officials, members of the business community, and other key stakeholders through the Strong Start Initiative to increase access to high quality early learning opportunities.

Upcoming Events

Every year, from April through June, the focus is the development of the state budget and its impact on state funded child care, preschool, and the early grades in K-12.



» UPCOMING EVENTS

This year is no exception, with upcoming advocacy days in Sacramento from Strong Start and the California Association for the Education of Young Children (CAEYC), and celebrations around the Week of the Young Child.

You can learn more about the events and register by using the [Strong Start Event Calendar](#).



Meet a Member

Each issue will highlight a member of Strong Start. In this edition, meet Jennifer Weeks, Library Services Manager for the Santa Clara County Library District.

Why are you involved in Strong Start?

I have had the opportunity to work with and for children as a teacher, a mother, a volunteer, a children's librarian, and now as a library manager directing service for youth in the county's public libraries. I truly believe that Strong Start can make a difference for families in Santa Clara County, by informing the community about the importance of high quality and accessible early education. I am excited to be a part of this coalition's diverse membership as we come together around the passion to ensure the best in early learning for all children.

What does your organization do in general, and around early learning in particular?

Public libraries are informal learning centers for people of all ages. Santa Clara County Library District (SCCLD) serves the county with seven community libraries located in the cities of Cupertino, Gilroy, Los Altos, Los Altos Hills, Milpitas, Monte Sereno, Morgan Hill, and Saratoga plus two bookmobiles traveling the unincorporated areas of the county. SCCLD Libraries provide free access to informational, educational, and recreational materials and services, and help people use these diverse resources that are responsive to community needs.

Many of the library district's resources center on early literacy, and supporting children and their families. There are books and music CDs to borrow, spaces to play and learn, plus a variety of free events that foster early learning skills. Parents can bring even the littlest ones to baby lap sit classes filled with rhymes and songs that develop language. Toddlers practice motor skills as they dance in story times, and preschoolers learn new vocabulary from listening to beautiful picture books that build a love of reading. Libraries are often the first stop for new parents as they start on a journey of raising successful, happy and healthy families.

What's the most important thing Strong Start should work on this year?

People are now more aware of the significance of a child's first five years, but there's still work to be done on the importance and impact of early education for all children. Our youth are growing up in a fast paced and competitive world. They need to start learning early, while families need supportive and nurturing environments to help their children learn and grow to be the best they can be.

www.strongstartsantaclara.org

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