

January 2017

# 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 this, our first issue, we'll be showcasing the status of the county-wide Early Learning Master Plan and the roll-out of the county's Quality Rating and Improvement System "QUALITY MATTERS ... a STRONG START for kids", highlighting the upcoming Early Math Forum co-sponsored by Strong Start and the Silicon Valley Education Foundation, and discussing the early learning implications of Governor Brown's January budget proposal. We'll also introduce two regular features: a short list of upcoming events of interest and a brief profile of a coalition member. Thanks for reading and **thank you for everything you do for the children and families of Santa Clara County.**



## Developing the new, county-wide, Early Learning Master Plan

In 2010, the Santa Clara County Office of Education published [a county-wide Early Learning Master Plan](#) (ELMP). Developed through an extensive process of community outreach and stakeholder input, the plan outlined two, five and seven-year goals in a number of key areas to help align the efforts of all the providers and agencies in the county with an interest in early learning. It's now 2017 and Strong Start and the County Office of Education have begun the process of updating the ELMP. Through an initial key stakeholder's meeting, six areas of focus have been identified: (i) Access, (ii) Articulation, Alignment and Data Systems, (iii) Facilities, (iv) Family Engagement, (v) Program Quality, and (vi) Workforce Development. Through the spring, work groups of community leaders, experts and providers will meet to develop goals, timelines and implementation plans to align current and future early learning initiatives in a coordinated effort. The final plan will be presented to the community in the fall.





## Santa Clara County's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Strong Start is proud to be working with FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and the other members of the Santa Clara County Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Consortium on the development and roll-out of the county-wide QRIS for early learning providers, called QUALITY MATTERS ... a STRONG START for kids. The system defines a common understanding of quality for early care and education programs, measures programs against standards and gives programs a quality rating, and provides educators with training and support to achieve higher

levels of quality. As of October 2016, well over 100 providers around the county had been rated as part of the pilot implementation. You can learn more at [the Santa Clara County QRIS web page](#).

### Strong Start / SVEF Early Math Forum

The **Early Math Adds Up** forum will present research findings and practical solutions to raise awareness of the importance of building the STEM education pipeline early and giving all students an early start for later success.

The forum will feature a keynote from Greg Duncan, Distinguished Professor, UC Irvine School of Education and two expert panels

#### Research Panel

Greg Duncan, UC Irvine School of Education  
Yvonne Kao, WestEd  
Ted Lempert, Children Now  
Peter Mangione, WestEd

#### Practitioners Panel

Kathy Gomez, Evergreen School District  
Mary Hoshiko Haughey, YMCA of Silicon Valley  
Sandy McKeithan, Head Start  
Marwa Yousofzoy, Oak Grove School District

For more information and to register, visit [Eventbrite](#).



### Early Learning in the Governor's January Budget proposal

Governor Jerry Brown's austere January budget proposal eliminates approximately \$226 million earmarked for early childhood expansion as promised in the 2016 state budget. The elimination of these dollars will make it extremely difficult for low-income families to provide high quality preschool for their children.

For early education supporters, the 2017-18 fiscal year was supposed to be the year funding for preschool got back on track. But in his early projections for 2017, Governor Brown proposed freezing funding that would have increased new preschool seats.

Also frozen in the governor's budget proposal was the small rate increase for childcare providers who are reimbursed by the state for serving low-income families. The governor did propose that children who come from families who earn more than the income guidelines for free preschool but who have "exceptional needs" be allowed service.

Additionally, Brown's proposal would give more flexibility to programs to meet minimum adult to child ratios, and ease some building licensing requirements.

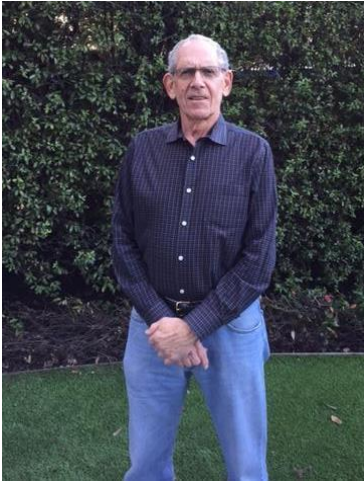
### Upcoming Events

There are always opportunities to learn more about early learning, and related topics, and to raise your voice in support of our community's children and families. Upcoming events include the Strong Start / Silicon Valley Education Foundation Early Math Forum on 2/10 and the Kids In Common Santa Clara County Children's Summit on 2/24.



## Mark Your Calendar

» UPCOMING EVENTS



## Meet a Member

*Each issue we'll be highlighting a member of Strong Start. We begin with Harvey Schloss of Congregation Beth Am's Equal Start initiative:*

### **Why are you involved in Strong Start?**

I feel strongly that every child in Santa Clara County should be able to attend affordable, high quality early care and learning from birth to five years of age. I am troubled by the fact that access to this opportunity is inequitable, resulting in too many kids not receiving the tools they need to realize their potential.

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

I am a member of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. We are fully committed to a social justice initiative called Equal Start. We believe that equal access to high quality early care and learning is a moral and ethical imperative and is the most effective way to break the cycle of poverty in our society. We engage in policy advocacy, professional development for early

learning teachers, and direct volunteer services at preschools and reading programs in underserved communities. We are working to build a faith-based coalition with the same goals.

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

In my opinion, the most important thing is to participate with the larger early learning community in building a common early learning policy agenda for our state elected officials.

[www.strongstartsantaclara.org](http://www.strongstartsantaclara.org)

*Connect with Strong Start*

