



EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEMS CHANGE IN SOLANO COUNTY

2022 ACTION PLAN UPDATE



Helping People Build Better Communities

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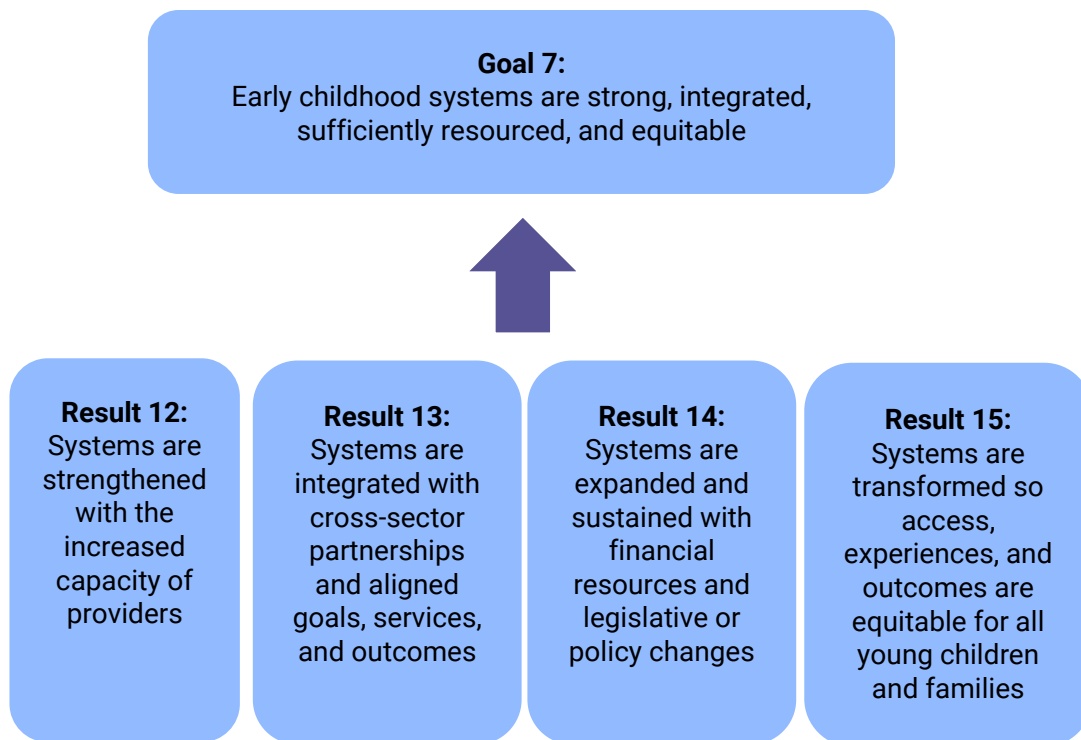
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2015, the First 5 Solano Commission approved a 2016 Strategic Plan Update, which added the priority area of *Systems Change* to First 5 Solano's strategic framework. Under this priority area, First 5 Solano established a goal to strengthen, integrate, expand, and sustain early childhood systems; in 2016, it adopted an ambitious action plan to achieve this goal. Since then, early childhood systems of care have evolved, and COVID-19 and systemic inequities have significantly impacted communities nationwide. In response to the national landscape and the increasing awareness that many systems and structures are not equitable to all populations, First 5 Solano updated its systems change goal and results (see graphic that follows) to underscore its commitment to transform systems to equitably serve all young children and families in Solano County.

First 5 Solano Systems Change Goal and Results



This action plan update outlines specific strategies and activities First 5 Solano can pursue to achieve its systems change goal and results. By engaging in strategies like those that follow, First 5 Solano aims to advance changes to the early childhood system of care that will improve the lives of Solano County's young children and families and achieve more equitable outcomes for the community.

INTRODUCTION

In December 2015, the First 5 Solano Commission approved a 2016 Strategic Plan Update, which included an updated strategic framework. Along with continuing the priority areas of *Health and Well-Being*, *Early Childhood Learning and Development*, and *Family Support and Parent Education*, the Commission adopted a new priority area of *Systems Change*. At that time, First 5 Commissions across the state, including First 5 Solano, were facing a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding. First 5 Solano also operates in a county that has limited sources of funding outside of government. The county ranks last of all Bay Area counties when it comes to foundation funding: just \$6 per capita was given in Solano in 2016, compared to \$93 per Napa resident, the closest comparable county.ⁱ In that context, First 5 Solano found itself needing to find new, more efficient ways to provide the same level of high quality services with fewer resources, and established a goal to strengthen, integrate, expand, and sustain early childhood systems. In 2016, it adopted an ambitious action plan to achieve this goal.

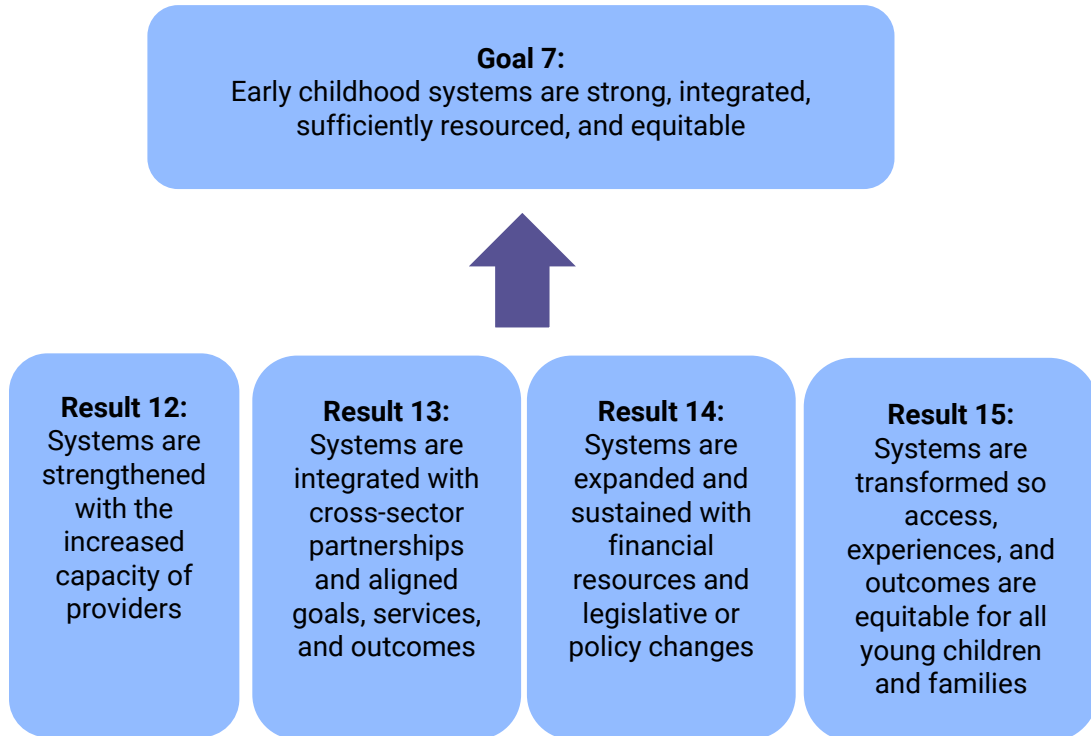
Over the last five years, the urgency to achieve First 5 Solano's systems change goal has only increased. The unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children, families, and service providers, along with deep-seated and ongoing systemic inequities, call for responses that transform how early childhood systems operate and work with one another. The pandemic not only laid bare, but also exacerbated disparities in health, education, and socioeconomic outcomes for young children and families, and the murder of George Floyd in spring 2020 reignited movements for social justice throughout the nation. As one of the most diverse counties in the nation,ⁱⁱ Solano County has been particularly affected by the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic inequities, underscoring the importance of efforts to make systems fair and just for all young children and families in the county. By investing in systems change, First 5 Solano has the potential to more effectively address these complex problems and impact far more children and families than it could through direct services alone.

Commissioners described First 5 Solano as a **systems change leader** in the county, well-positioned to take bold steps to make early childhood systems more **equitable**

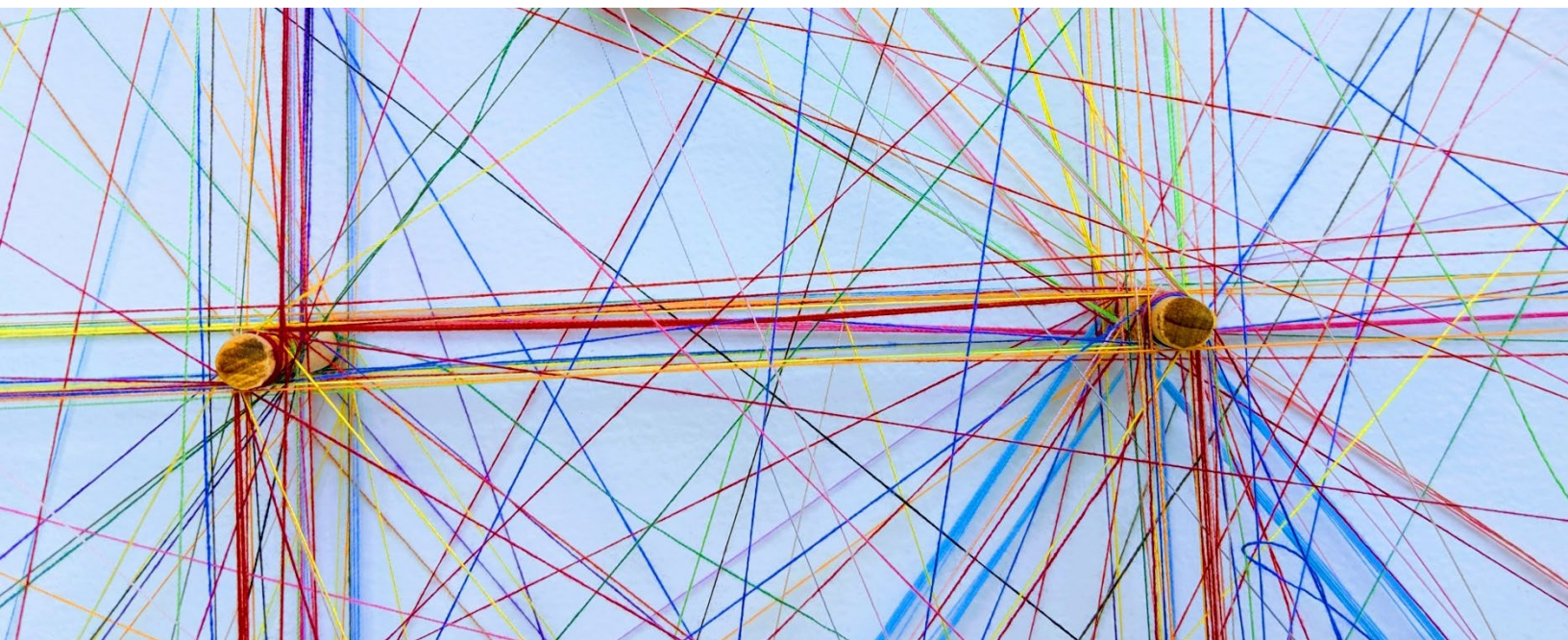
The purpose of this Systems Change Action Plan Update is to outline First 5 Solano's role in responding to current needs through systems change efforts. To inform the update, a review of First 5 Solano's activities and accomplishments was conducted for each of the original result areas under its systems change goal (see Appendix 1). This review helped identify the strategies that have been most successful and should be continued. In addition, First 5 Solano Commissioners were individually interviewed in spring 2021 on the best role for First 5 Solano to play in contributing to improvements within and across early childhood systems (see Appendix 2). Commissioners described First 5 Solano as a systems change leader in the county, well-positioned to take bold steps to make early childhood systems more equitable. Thus, First 5

Solano’s updated goal and results (see graphic that follows) highlight its commitment to help build more equitable systems for young children and families in Solano County.

First 5 Solano Systems Change Goal and Results



The remainder of this update describes some of the strategies and activities that First 5 Solano may pursue to achieve these systems change goal and results.



STRENGTHENED SYSTEMS

Result 12: Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers.

The Need for Strengthened Systems

Solano County already had fewer nonprofits per capita than other Bay Area counties prior to COVID-19, and many of them operated with limited organizational capacity.ⁱⁱⁱ The 2018 *Solano County Nonprofit Capacity Assessment* found the following were the greatest capacity building needs at the time of the assessment: 1) Vision and Impact Model (organizational clarity); 2) Board Governance and Leadership; and 3) Internal Evaluation and Learning.^{iv} The COVID-19 pandemic added to the organizational challenges facing agencies serving young children and families, particularly providers within the early care and education industry. For example, approximately 8,500 child care licenses in California, including nearly 100 in Solano County, that were active and operating in January 2020 had closed by 2021.^v This resulted in a decline of over 500 licensed child care spaces available to working families in Solano County who already faced limited access to licensed spaces prior to the pandemic due to lack of providers and facilities in the county.^{vi} At the same time, COVID-19 revealed how essential child care and family support agencies are for the well-being of the community and health of the economy. To address the organizational challenges of agencies in the county, First 5 Solano can continue to invest in capacity building supports for providers serving children 0-5 and their families, such as trainings, technical solutions, and technical assistance.

First 5 Solano supports the organizational capacity of Solano County nonprofits serving children 0-5, many of which struggled to survive during COVID-19

In addition to organizational capacity, there are common competencies that service providers need, such as the ability to provide trauma-informed care, implement evidence-based models of service with fidelity, and create inclusive environments for children with special needs. In partnership with entities like the Solano County Office of Education, First 5 Solano supports the development of these competencies so that providers offer high-quality services to young children and families.



Potential Strategies and Activities

- Increase the **organizational capacity** of local providers serving young children and families.
 - Sponsor or cosponsor organizational capacity building trainings and technical assistance for local providers serving children 0-5 and their families.
 - Offer technical solutions (e.g., business management systems) to support the organizational capacity of local providers serving children 0-5 and their families.
- Increase the **knowledge and skills of direct service providers** to improve their capacity to offer high-quality services.
 - Sponsor or cosponsor trainings, education, conferences, and ongoing coaching for health, early learning, and family support and parent education providers to increase their capacity to offer high-quality services.
 - Communicate with community-based organizations and other service providers regarding relevant trainings offered by other organizations both within and outside of the county.

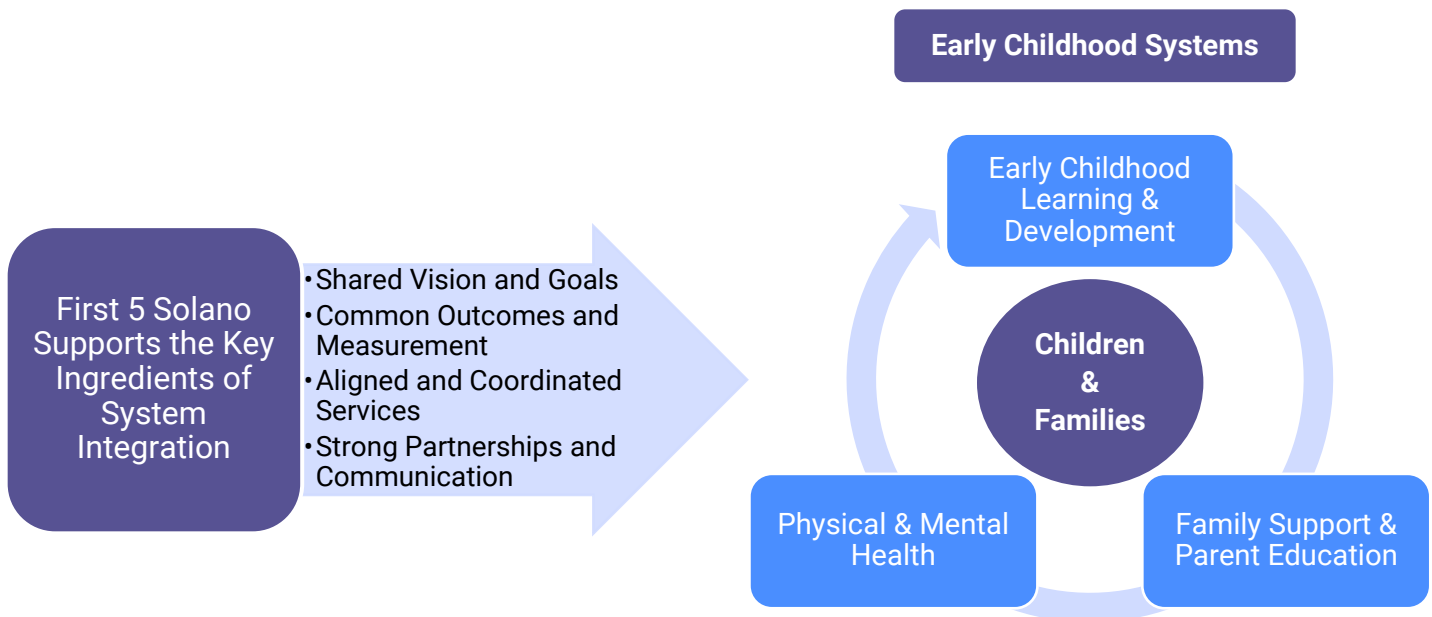


INTEGRATED SYSTEMS

Result 13: Systems are integrated with cross-sector partnerships and aligned goals, services, and outcomes.

The Need for Integrated Systems

In a county with significant needs and a shortage of financial and organizational resources, the integration of service delivery is essential to avoid duplication of efforts and make the best use of scarce resources. Too often, programs and systems of care are siloed, and families are unable to access the support they need. Efforts to connect and integrate siloed systems improve service access and service quality by bringing together providers to share best practices and align their efforts. First 5 Solano can support the key ingredients of system integration by using a Collective Impact framework^{vii} to promote the following within and across systems: 1) shared vision and goals, 2) commitment to common outcomes and collection of data on those outcomes, 3) aligned and coordinated service provision – including cross-referrals and information sharing – and 4) regular convenings to build strong partnerships and improve communication and collaboration (see diagram below).



Centralized, integrated service hubs are also essential to assist families who may be unaware of resources available to them or who face barriers in accessing services. Centralized resource and referral access points like Help Me Grow Solano and integrated service models like the Vallejo First 5 Center can address system fragmentation and facilitate families' connection to the various services they need. First 5 Solano may enhance its current service integration efforts by investing in one-stop hubs like the Vallejo First 5 Center in other neighborhoods with high levels of need. In its efforts to increase the availability of centralized

services, First 5 Solano can also tap into existing networks of support for children and families in neighborhoods, such as schools and the faith-based community.

Strategies and Activities

- Utilize First 5 Solano’s unique position as a **multi-sector convener** to increase systems integration.
 - Use Solano Kids Thrive (SKT), a collective impact initiative, to promote a shared vision for young children and families and to implement the countywide Resilient Solano Strategic Plan, including efforts to build trauma-informed systems.
 - Sponsor or cosponsor other collaboratives of providers and agency leaders to increase alignment and coordination across agencies serving young children and families.
 - Actively participate in other countywide collaboratives to ensure the needs of children 0-5 and their families are discussed and addressed.
- Address system fragmentation with **service integration and centralization**.
 - Invest in centralized service integration models like Help Me Grow Solano, which provide information and seamless connections to community resources to meet families’ needs.
 - Invest in centralized, one-stop hubs where families can connect to multiple services in one place (e.g., the Vallejo First 5 Center) in high-need communities.
 - Participate in the First 5 Association Network’s efforts to elevate the role of First 5’s in systems integration.



EXPANDED & SUSTAINED SYSTEMS

Result 14: Systems are expanded and sustained with financial resources and legislative or policy changes.

The Need for Expanded & Sustained Systems

First 5 Commissions across the state, including First 5 Solano, continue to face declining revenue from Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding, and yet there are limited alternative sources of funding in Solano County. The 2016 study *Foundation Giving in the Bay Area: Who Wins and Who's Left Behind?* and its 2018 update found that the rate of foundation giving per capita in Solano was the lowest among all Bay Area counties.^{viii} To expand and sustain early childhood systems, First 5 Solano must build or strengthen relationships with potential funders and leaders at the state, region, county, and city levels, and communicate to them the value of investing in early childhood (e.g., by sharing research demonstrating the high return on investment [ROI] for comprehensive early childhood programs);^{ix} share data on community needs and the impact First 5 Solano and its partners have in the county; and advocate for funding and legislative or policy changes that support the well-being of young children and families. It should also track and apply for public and private funding opportunities, including those that have arisen to respond to the effects of COVID-19.

First 5 Solano promotes the sustainability of early childhood systems by using research and data to communicate to funders and policymakers the value of investing in early childhood

At the grassroots level, First 5 Solano can encourage community members and organizations (e.g., businesses, the faith-based community, and service clubs) to support local agencies and the children and families they serve. It can also amplify its own outreach and advocacy efforts by supporting and encouraging families and other local agencies to advocate for funding and policies that benefit young children and families (e.g., by giving families a platform to share their voice with leaders, sharing advocacy messages, or asking partners to sign on to letters to legislators).

First 5 Solano may also take a regional approach to advocacy and funding. For example, it can collaborate with First 5's and other agencies in neighboring counties on regional funding initiatives and cultivating champions for First 5 among state leaders. Doing so may position First 5 agencies to better advocate for funding and policies that benefit children 0-5 and their families. Similarly, First 5 Solano can influence policy by actively participating in the First 5 Association Network's state and federal advocacy efforts, such as attending advocacy days at the State Capitol and monitoring and responding to legislation via the Association's legislation tracker.

First 5 Solano also seeks to sustain early childhood systems by maximizing the existing resources in the county. For instance, First 5 Solano can continue to seek alternative sources of funding for services (e.g., Mental Health Services Act [MHSA]), utilize blended funding models, and implement cost-effective, prevention-focused, and evidence-based models of service that have a high ROI, such as Triple P, which has an ROI of \$7.78 for every dollar invested,^x and Help Me Grow (HMG), a model that can result in a net savings of \$175 or more per child served.^{xi}



Potential Strategies and Activities

- **Increase funders and policymakers' awareness** of issues facing young children and families in Solano County and **pursue funding and policy or legislative changes** that achieve positive outcomes for this population.
 - Build relationships with funders and policymakers to keep them informed on issues affecting young children and families, using research and data to advocate for funding, policies, and legislation that benefit young children and families and promote more equitable outcomes.

- Convene regular meetings with funders about issues affecting children and families in Solano County.
- Participate in the First 5 Association Network's advocacy efforts and partner with other First 5's in the state to cultivate champions for First 5 among state leaders and advocate for funding and policies that support children 0-5 and their families.
- Convene a policy summit to inform leaders of community needs and policies that can benefit children 0-5 and their families.
- Update and implement First 5 Solano's Legislative Platform by writing to and meeting with policymakers and track the success of First 5 Solano's advocacy efforts.
- Provide input on the Solano County State and Federal Legislative Platform and bring relevant bills or policies to the attention of the Solano County Legislative Committee as appropriate for further discussion and action.
- Track and strategically apply for funding opportunities from local, state, federal, and private funders; partner with agencies in other counties on regional funding opportunities. Report on success of grant-seeking activities for which First 5 Solano has a direct role.
- Encourage community members and local businesses, faith-based organizations, and service organizations to support local agencies serving young children and families.
- Encourage and support partner agencies and families of children 0-5 to advocate for funding and policies that benefit young children and families.
- **Maximize resources** to fund services for children and families (e.g., through alternative funding, leveraged funding, and greater efficiency).
 - Continue to find alternative funding sources to support direct services like Mental Health Services Act funding.
 - Implement blended funding models and / or co-located staff to sustain services for young children and families.
 - Implement prevention-focused, evidence-based models that have a high return on investment (ROI).

EQUITABLE SYSTEMS

Result 15: Systems are transformed so access, experiences, and outcomes are equitable for all young children and families.

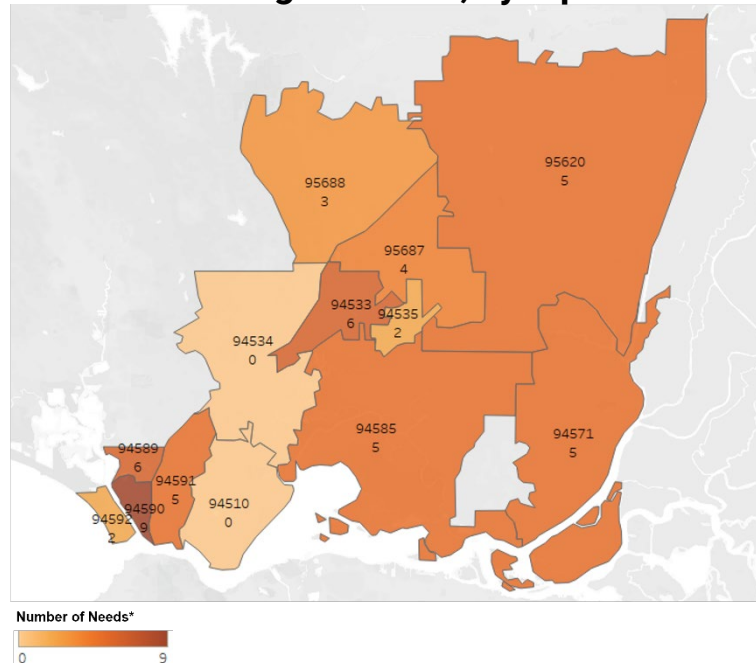
The Need for Equitable Systems

As in other communities in the state and nation, children and families in Solano County face different experiences, opportunities, and outcomes based on factors like socioeconomic status, race, sexual orientation, disability, and where they live. For example, in Solano County:

- Black women and infants experience worse perinatal outcomes;^{xii}
- students in poverty experience poorer educational outcomes;^{xiii} and
- children with disabilities are more likely to be suspended or expelled from school.^{xiv}

A geographic analysis of needs among young children and families in Solano County also reveals concentrations of need in certain Zip Codes in Solano County, particularly 94590 in Vallejo (see map).^{xv} COVID-19 only revealed and exacerbated these and other long-standing disparities in the social determinants of health and well-being for young children and families.^{xvi}

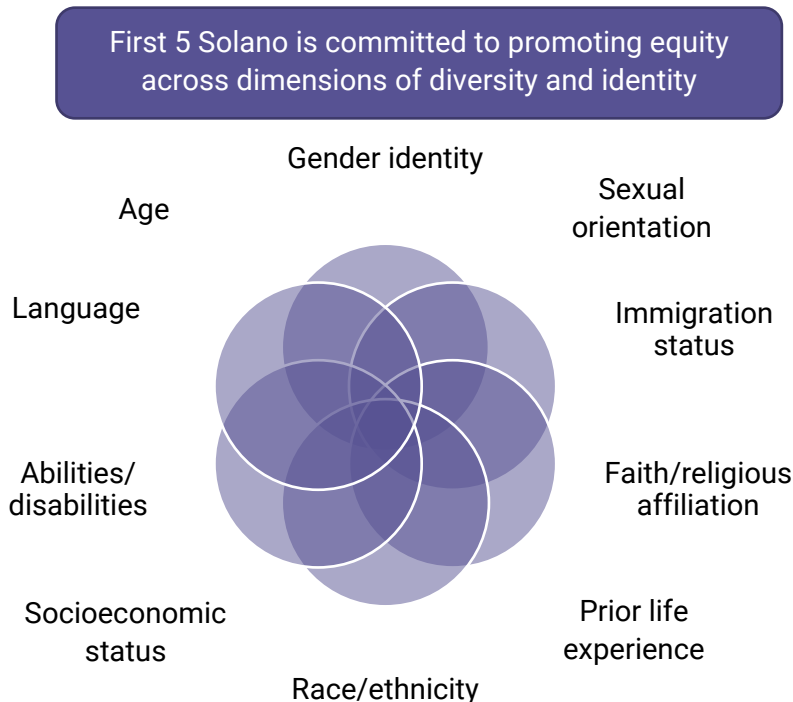
Disparities in Child and Family Well-Being in Solano, by Zip Code



*Refers to the number of child and family well-being indicators for which outcome data in the Zip Code are worse than the county median. Indicators include: maltreatment allegation, foster care entry, child poverty, unemployment, educational attainment, math and reading proficiency, preschool enrollment, and child health insurance.

These long-standing disparities are the result of systems – including education, health, housing, and employment – that were not created to produce equitable outcomes or experiences and in fact can perpetuate inequity in their design.^{xvii} To eliminate disparities, policymakers, providers, and system leaders must understand the need for and benefits of social equity,^{xviii} and prioritize equity in decision-making around investments, policies, and practices.

First 5 Solano's efforts to promote equitable systems began in 2017, when it changed its funding structure to strategically invest equitably based on community needs. This change led



to the development of the Vallejo First 5 Center, which provides comprehensive services to children and families in Solano County's highest need Zip Code, and a commensurate investment in Rio Vista, the second highest need area at the time. First 5 Solano's work to advance racial equity in the county began when it joined with other Solano County departments to create the Solano County "Community Action for Racial Equity" (CARE) team. The urgency and intensity of the CARE team's work increased in spring 2020 following the murder of George Floyd and the reinvigorated movements for social justice across the country. First 5 Solano recognizes race is just one dimension of diversity and identity and intends to expand upon its efforts with the CARE team by addressing discrimination, disparities, and marginalization across all dimensions (see graphic). It can do so by: 1) prioritizing equity in its own policies, practices, and investments, and 2) utilizing its unique position at the intersection of multiple systems to increase the capacity of policymakers, providers, and system leaders to achieve equitable:

- **access** to services, resources, and power;
- **experiences** when engaged with early childhood systems; and
- **outcomes** for children and families in Solano County, across all dimensions of diversity and identity.

For a glossary of key equity terms and concepts, see Appendix 3.

Strategies and Activities

- **Prioritize equity in the policies, practices, and investments of First 5 Solano.**

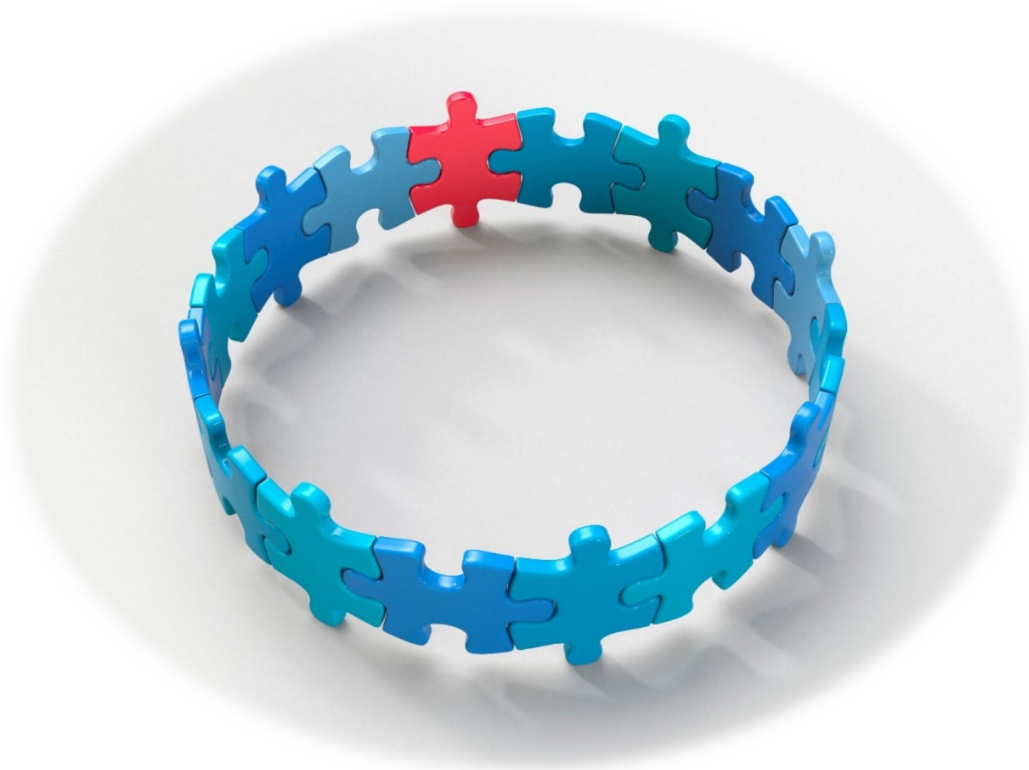
- Develop an equity plan for First 5 Solano that articulates its commitment to addressing systemic inequities and operationalizes this commitment with specific action steps.
 - Require diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for all First 5 Solano grantees, Commissioners, staff.
 - Capture and elevate the voices of families and communities with lived experience in decisions made around First 5 Solano policies, practices, and investments.
 - Invest in comprehensive and prevention-focused initiatives (e.g., the Vallejo First 5 Center) that hold promise in closing opportunity gaps and improving outcomes for children and families with the greatest needs.
 - Participate in the First 5 Association Network’s Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) activities.
- **Increase the capacity of policymakers, providers, and system leaders to achieve equitable access, experiences, and outcomes** for children and families in Solano County, across all dimensions of diversity and identity.
 - Partner with families, communities of color, and other organizations and groups, like the Solano County CARE team and the Solano County Equity Collaborative, on equity efforts throughout the county.
 - Sponsor or cosponsor diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings and events that promote attendees’ awareness of and commitment to social justice.
 - Communicate with community-based organizations and other service providers, Solano County staff, policymakers, and community members to keep them informed of relevant trainings offered by other organizations both within and outside of the county.
 - Raise local and state leaders’ awareness of inequities (e.g., by collecting and sharing data on disparities in outcomes for young children and families) and advocate for policies that promote equity, such as paid family leave, a living minimum wage, and universal access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) and healthcare.
 - Utilize First 5 Solano’s unique position at the intersection of multiple systems to convene meetings with key partners to discuss systemic inequities and identify policies and practices that capitalize on the advantages of Solano County’s diversity and advance equity in the community.
 - Actively participate in other multi-sector collaborative meetings in the county to ensure issues of equity are discussed and addressed.

NEXT STEPS

In 2016, First 5 Solano adopted an ambitious action plan to change early childhood systems in Solano County, and since then, has made significant progress in achieving its goal to strengthen, integrate, expand, and sustain systems. As the service system has evolved over the last five years and the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted needs and services in the community, the original action plan was updated to reflect strategies that are currently most needed, feasible, and impactful. Additionally, in response to the national landscape and the increasing awareness that many systems and structures are not equitable to all populations, First 5 Solano added a new result to its systems change framework, underscoring its commitment to transform systems so access, experiences and outcomes are equitable for all young children and families in Solano County.

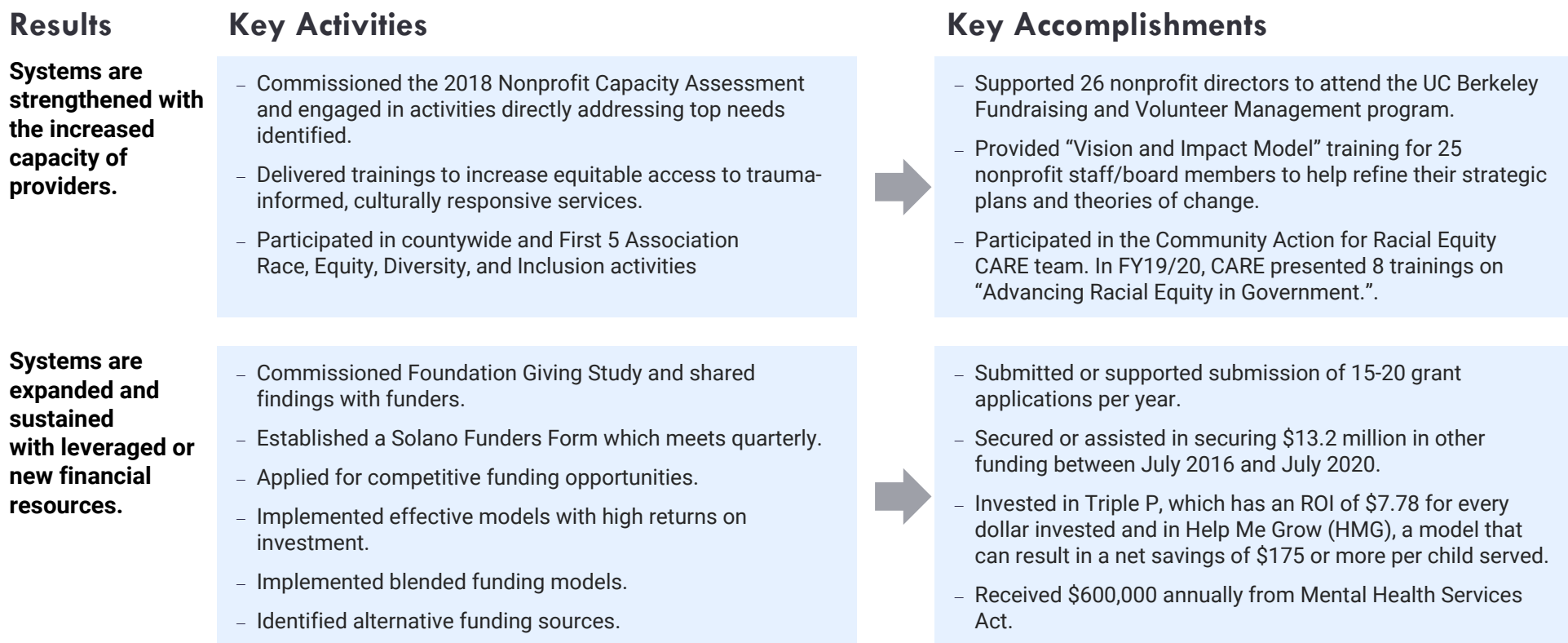
First 5 Solano will review the strategies in this plan and engage stakeholders to begin implementing those that are of highest priority. As this plan is implemented, activities and outcomes will be tracked using an implementation plan and an evaluation plan (see Appendices 4 and 5 for sample plans) and progress will be reported annually.

By pursuing strategies like those outlined in this plan, First 5 Solano aims to advance changes to the early childhood system of care that will improve the lives of young children and families in Solano County.



APPENDIX 1: SYSTEMS CHANGE REVIEW FY2016/17- FY2020/21

The following diagram illustrates key activities pursued to address each of First 5 Solano’s 2016-2020 systems change results and highlights some of the most significant outcomes achieved by First 5 Solano and its partners between FY2016/17 and FY2020/21.



Results

Systems are integrated with increased cross-system understanding, resource sharing, referral, and collaboration.

Sustained Systems are sustained with legislative and policy changes.

Key Activities

- Supported Solano Kids Thrive to develop the Resilient Solano Strategic Plan and website and engage in activities to implement the plan.
- Sponsored and participated in other multi-sector collaboratives.
- Developed, funded, and launched Vallejo First 5 Center.
- Connected families to services via Help Me Grow Solano.

- Developed and updated First 5 Solano Legislative Platform.
- Commissioned reports to inform policymakers of local needs.
- Visited policymakers and submitted or signed on to letters to state leaders.
- Provided input on Solano County State and Federal Legislative Platform updates.
- Participated in First 5 Association Network advocacy activities.

Key Accomplishments

- Reached over 82,000 radio listeners with ACEs ads.
- Enrolled 110 families at First 5 Center in month following grand opening.
- 97% of callers to Help Me Grow Solano were successfully connected to services in FY2019/20.

- In 2019 and 2020, commissioned and presented reports to policymakers on early learning needs and barriers to expansion in Solano County and in the city of Vallejo.
- Met with legislators and attended First 5 Advocacy Day at State Capitol each year.
- Submitted or signed on to ~6 letters to legislators per year.
- Successfully advocated for a bill to require Medi-Cal coverage for developmental screenings.
- Successfully advocated for continuation of First 5 California Diaper Program.



APPENDIX 2: SYSTEMS CHANGE KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW SUMMARY

First 5 Solano Commissioners were interviewed in spring 2021 on the systems change efforts taking place in the community and the best role for First 5 Solano to play in contributing to improvements to early childhood systems. Interview participants included 6 Commissioners, representing Solano County Health & Social Services, Solano County Board of Supervisors, Retired Chief of Staff of Office of California Assemblymember Jim Frazier, Solano County Office of Education, and Solano County Resource Family Association. The participants' diverse roles in the county give them expertise and insights into the systems in the county and how they can be improved.

Commissioners described First 5 Solano as a systems change leader in the county and one of the only local agencies engaging in strategies to change the early childhood system of care. As a result, they said First 5 Solano was largely not duplicating any other systems change work in the county, but instead was filling important gaps. Some Commissioners also noted that there are long-standing, deeply entrenched inequities in the county's systems that have produced disparities in outcomes for young children and families; they see First 5 Solano as being well-positioned to take bold steps to make early childhood systems more equitable. In addition, Commissioners argued that to effectively change systems, First 5 Solano should build and strengthen its relationships and collaboration with other agencies, funders, and local and state leaders.

Commissioners' description of the systems change efforts of agencies other than First 5 Solano and their recommended systems change strategies for First 5 Solano are summarized below. It should be noted that 1) the listed efforts of other agencies is comprehensive, but not exhaustive, and 2) many of the recommended strategies for First 5 Solano are currently being implemented or have been implemented in the past. Commissioners recommended First 5 Solano continue and expand upon its current efforts to ensure early childhood systems are strengthened, integrated, expanded, sustained, and equitable.

Strengthened Systems

Efforts of Other Agencies

- Solano Community Foundation supports the organizational capacity of nonprofits with training and technical assistance through its Nonprofit Partnership Program.
- Solano Workforce Development Board provides employment-related services for job seekers and businesses in Solano County.
- Solano County Health & Social Services has partnered with First 5 Solano to provide capacity building to its nonprofit contractors.

- Solano County Office of Education, Solano Family & Children’s Services, and Solano Community College educate, train, and support early care and education providers.
- Children’s Network of Solano County supports family resource center providers and engages in capacity building efforts related to child abuse prevention in the county.

Recommendations for First 5 Solano

- Partner and coordinate with others involved in organizational capacity building, including those listed in “Efforts of Other Agencies,” to avoid any duplication of efforts and allow First 5 Solano to focus on supporting agencies serving its target population (children 0-5 and their families).
- Continue being a leader and coordinator of efforts to build the capacity of nonprofits serving young children and families.
 - Nonprofits particularly need support in grant seeking, marketing, organizational leadership, and business management to financially sustain themselves.
 - Capacity building support should be provided proactively, rather than in response to crises.
 - First 5 Solano’s recent activities, including providing prospective grantees technical assistance in applying for grants and training nonprofits in topics like fundraising, developing theories of change, and evaluation, should be continued. The one-on-one grant development consultations it offered to its FY2021/22 Annual Grant applicants yielded significantly more successful applications compared to prior years.^{xix}
 - Sonoma’s Upstream Investments initiative can be a model for supporting the capacity of providers to implement effective programs. Staffed by Sonoma County Human Services, it offers training and coaching to support the selection, implementation, and evaluation of prevention-focused, evidence-based programming in the county.
- Continue to sponsor and cosponsor trainings and coaching to improve the service quality of providers.
 - Support the education, training, and certification of early care and education providers to address the early learning industry’s workforce shortage.
 - Trainings that support providers’ ability to effectively care for children with high levels of need (e.g., those exposed to trauma or who have developmental challenges) are particularly important.
 - Trainings should be accessible to providers across the county.
- Ensure there is wide and comprehensive outreach of competitive bid solicitations, including to agencies outside of Solano County.

Integrated Systems

Efforts of Other Agencies

- Solano County Health & Social Services is involved in numerous service integration efforts, including:
 - Leading multi-sector collaboratives on issues like health, perinatal care, oral health, home visiting, mental health, and integrating the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.
 - Integrating services and data systems of the divisions within H&SS to better coordinate care (e.g., child welfare and CalWORKs, so that families who come to the attention of child welfare system for neglect due to poverty are provided safety net supports).
 - Maintaining a database of services and resources that is publicly available for families to access and “self-refer” (Solano Network of Care).
- Solano County Office of Education oversees several collaboratives, including Solano Kids Thrive and Quality Counts (in partnership with First 5 Solano) and the Local Child Care Planning Council.
- Children’s Network runs the Solano Child Abuse Prevention Council.

Recommendations for First 5 Solano

- Continue to support and participate in the coordination and integration efforts of other entities in the county (e.g., by sitting on other collaboratives).
- Continue to serve as a convener and coordinator for agencies that provide similar services or that serve the same families so they can align their goals and efforts and avoid duplication of services and supports.
 - Use a Collective Impact model to create shared goals and outcomes across agencies, track and share data on those outcomes, and promote service alignment and communication across agencies. First 5 Solano can be the backbone agency that supports these efforts.
 - Ensure all systems are included in system integration efforts, including the medical system.
- Continue to invest in centralized, one-stop hubs (such as the Vallejo First 5 Center) where families can get multiple services in one place in their neighborhood.
 - Tap into existing networks of support for children and families in Solano County neighborhoods (e.g., faith-based communities and schools).
 - Target services in neighborhoods with the greatest need to promote equity.

Expanded & Sustained Systems

Efforts of Other Agencies

- Solano County Health & Social Services financially supports agencies serving young children and families through its contracts with these organizations.
- Solano County Health & Social Services applies for private, state, and federal grants to fund a variety of services for the county, including young children and families.
- Solano County Office of Education applies for private, state, and federal early learning and K-12 grants.
- The Solano Community Foundation awards child and youth development, social service, and nonprofit capacity building grants to agencies in Solano County.
- Faith-based organizations and service clubs often raise funds for services in their own local Solano communities.
- Solano County Office of Education and Solano Family & Children’s Services engage in advocacy efforts to expand and support early learning and child care in the county.
- Solano County Health & Social Services advocates for policies that support the health and well-being of children and families (e.g., through its participation in the County Welfare Directors Association [CWDA], an advocacy organization for counties that makes recommendations on state funding).

Recommendations for First 5 Solano

- Develop relationships with funders and city, county, and state leaders to inform them about the needs in the community and the impact and value of First 5 Solano’s efforts in order to advocate for policies and funding that improve outcomes for young children and families. Continue to use research and data to raise awareness of the needs in Solano County and the impact of First 5 Solano and its partners in addressing those needs.
 - Significant funds are available currently to help the community recover from COVID-19, and First 5 Solano should position itself to draw down these dollars to address current needs in the community (e.g., to shore up the child care industry).
 - With some funding – including American Rescue Plan Act funding and funding for housing – going directly to cities, First 5 Solano should reach out to local officials to advocate for investment in services and supports for children 0 to 5 and their families (e.g., outreach to city leaders in Fairfield to ask them to invest in a First 5 Center in that city).
 - Track the success of advocacy activities (e.g., by monitoring and sharing the First 5 Association Legislation tracker).
 - Convene a policy summit to inform leaders of community needs and policies that can benefit children 0-5 and their families.

- Continue to bring relevant legislation to the attention of the Solano County Legislative Committee.
 - Continue to meet with and write to legislators regularly; given the amount of legislation introduced in California (over 2,000 bills each year^{xx}), First 5 Solano may be more effective in its advocacy if it selects priority issues to address each year depending on the needs that are most prevalent.
 - Continue actively participating in the First 5 Association Network advocacy activities, including seeking leadership roles within the Network.
 - Include the voices of families with young children to be more effective in advocating with leaders. Support and encourage families to engage directly in advocacy efforts.
 - Partner and coordinate with other agencies in advocacy efforts (e.g., by sharing advocacy messages, asking partners to sign on to letters to legislators, or providing sample letters for agencies to submit).
 - Continue to coordinate with agencies in neighboring counties and other First 5's on funding opportunities. In particular, First 5 Solano should collaborate with other First 5's to advocate for funding alternatives to Proposition 10 dollars.
 - Continue to build relationships with prospective private funders like foundations, individual donors, businesses, faith-based organizations, and service organizations, and make it easy for individual community members to donate (e.g., through a donor's page and/or social media).
 - Continue to apply for large foundation grants, which can open doors to additional funding opportunities.
- Continue to invest in prevention-focused interventions that are more cost-effective in the long run.
 - Continue to implement blended funding models for service sustainability.
 - Continue to seek Mental Health Services Act funding, which has been able to pay for Early Childhood Mental Health trainings, Triple P, Help Me Grow Solano, and the Vallejo First 5 Center.

Equitable Systems

Efforts of Other Agencies

- Groups involved in promoting the diversity, equity, and inclusion of systems and agencies in the county, through training, advocacy, and service provision, include:
 - Solano Black Infant Health and Solano HEALS
 - Solano County Office of Education and school districts
 - Solano County's "Community Action for Racial Equity" (CARE) team
 - Solano County Equity Collaborative
 - Solano County Health & Social Services

- Tri-City NAACP
- Solano Pride
- Hispanic and Black Chambers of Commerce
- Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs (APAPA)

Recommendations for First 5 Solano

- Continue to partner with others in the county engaged in efforts to advance equity in the county (see Efforts of Other Agencies).
- Sponsor or cosponsor diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for providers and leaders in the county.
 - Multiple types of trainings and messages may need to be developed to effectively reach all stakeholders.
 - Racial equity trainings should be required for First 5 Solano Commissioners, staff, and grantees.
- Continue to collect and share data on disparities in outcomes for young children and families to raise awareness and prompt discussions with providers, policymakers, and the broader community on strategies to achieve equity.
 - Share disparity data with local and state leaders and advocate for policies that promote equity.
 - Convene meetings with county partners to review disparity data and discuss strategies that capitalize on the advantages Solano County’s diversity and advance equity in the community.
- Continue to target comprehensive, evidence-based investments in the county’s highest need neighborhoods (e.g., through initiatives like the Vallejo First 5 Center).

APPENDIX 3: KEY EQUITY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Term	Definition
Discrimination	The unequal treatment of individuals or groups based on any dimension of diversity or identity.
Disparity	An unequal outcome for one social group as compared to the outcome for another group.
Diversity	The various ways in which people differ, encompassing all characteristics that make one individual or group different from another.
Equality	The effort to treat everyone the same or to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities regardless of their starting place or needs.
Equity	The state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. Includes efforts to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs, acknowledging unequal starting places or needs.
Identity	The various ways in which an individual characterizes oneself.
Inclusion	A state of belonging, when persons of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably.
Marginalization	The process that occurs when members of a dominant group relegate another group to the edge of society by not allowing them an active voice, identity, or place.
Power	The ability to define, set, or change situations and influence others' beliefs, behaviors, and values.
Social Justice	Efforts to achieve fair and equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for all people.
Systemic Inequities	The laws, policies, and practices of systems that perpetuate disparities.
Systems Change	Efforts to address the root causes of social problems and fundamentally alter the components and structures that perpetuate them in systems (i.e., education system, child welfare system, etc.).

Definitions adapted from the following sources:

Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2021). *Equity vs. equality and other racial justice definitions*. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/racial-justice-definitions>

Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2019). *Key equity terms and concepts: A glossary for shared understanding*. <https://cssp.org/resource/key-equity-terms-concepts>

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APPENDIX 4: SAMPLE SYSTEMS CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Below is a sample implementation plan, to be completed following the adoption of the action plan and selection of strategies and activities.

Desired Result / Strategy	Activity	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
Strengthened Systems			
– Increase the organizational capacity of local providers serving young children and families.			
– Increase the knowledge and skills of direct service providers to improve their capacity to offer high-quality services.			
Integrated Systems			
– Utilize First 5 Solano’s unique position as a multi-sector convener to increase systems integration.			
– Address system fragmentation with service integration and centralization.			
Expanded & Sustained Systems			
– Increase funders and policymakers’ awareness of issues facing young children and families in Solano County and pursue funding and policy or legislative changes that achieve positive outcomes for this population.			

Desired Result / Strategy	Activity	Timeline	Person(s) Responsible
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maximize resources to fund services for children and families (e.g., through alternative funding, leveraged funding, and greater efficiency). 			
Equitable Systems			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prioritize equity in the policies, practices, and investments of First 5 Solano. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase the capacity of policymakers, providers, and system leaders to achieve equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for children and families in Solano County, across all dimensions of diversity and identity. 			

APPENDIX 5: SAMPLE SYSTEMS CHANGE EVALUATION PLAN

Below is a sample evaluation plan, to be completed following the adoption of the action plan and selection of strategies and activities.

Desired Result / Strategy	Activity	Performance Measure	Data Source	Progress
Strengthened Systems				
– Increase the organizational capacity of local providers serving young children and families.				
– Increase the knowledge and skills of direct service providers to improve their capacity to offer high-quality services.				
Integrated Systems				
– Utilize First 5 Solano’s unique position as a multi-sector convener to increase systems integration.				
– Address system fragmentation with service integration and centralization.				
Expanded & Sustained Systems				
– Increase funders and policymakers’ awareness of issues facing young children and families in Solano County and pursue funding and policy or legislative changes that achieve positive outcomes for this population.				

Desired Result / Strategy	Activity	Performance Measure	Data Source	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maximize resources to fund services for children and families (e.g., through alternative funding, leveraged funding, and greater efficiency). 				
Equitable Systems				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Prioritize equity in the policies, practices, and investments of First 5 Solano. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increase the capacity of policymakers, providers, and system leaders to achieve equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for children and families in Solano County, across all dimensions of diversity and identity. 				

ⁱ Applied Survey Research. (2018). *Foundation giving in Solano County and the Bay Area: 2018 Update*. <https://www.solanocounty.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=30278>

ⁱⁱ Frey, W. H. (2019). *Six maps that reveal America's expanding racial diversity*. Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/research/americas-racial-diversity-in-six-maps/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Applied Survey Research. (2018). *Foundation giving in Solano County and the Bay Area: 2018 Update*. <https://www.solanocounty.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=30278>

^{iv} Learning for Action. (2018). *Solano County nonprofit capacity diagnostic findings: Final report*. <https://www.solanocounty.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?BlobID=28757>

^v California Resource and Referral Network. (2021). *How the pandemic has impacted California child care supply*. <https://rrnetwork.org/research/covid-19-child-care-supply-graphs>

^{vi} Applied Survey Research. (2019). *Expanding early learning opportunities in Solano County*. San Jose, CA: Author.

^{vii} Kania, J., & Kramer, M. (2011). *Collective impact*. Stanford Social Innovation Review. https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

^{viii} Applied Survey Research. (2018). *Foundation giving in Solano County and the Bay Area: 2018 Update*. <https://www.solanocounty.com/civicax/filebank/blobdload.aspx?blobid=30278>

^{ix} García, J. L., Heckman, J. J., Leaf, D. E., & Prados, M. J. (2019). *Quantifying the life-cycle benefits of a prototypical early childhood program* (No. w23479). National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w23479/w23479.pdf

^x Washington State Institute for Public Policy. (2020). *Triple P – Positive Parenting Program (System)*. <https://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/79>

^{xi} Help Me Grow National. (2012). *Cost benefits of “de-medicalizing” childhood developmental and behavioral concerns: National replication of Help Me Grow*. https://helpmegrownational.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/PolicyBrief_FINAL_31MAY2012.pdf

^{xii} For example, 21% of Black women report symptoms of postpartum depression, compared to 12% of Asian American, 15% of white, and 16% of Latina women in Solano County. Likewise, the infant mortality rate for Black infants in Solano County (7 per 1,000 live births) is 1.4 times the rate for infants of white, Asian, and Latino/a races/ethnicities (5 per 1,000 live births).

Sources: California Department of Public Health. (2018). *2013-15 Maternal and Infant Health Assessment*. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/MIHA/Pages/Data-and-Reports.aspx>

National Center for Health Statistics. (2020). *Mortality Files: 2013-2019*. As cited in Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings. <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/california/2021/measure/outcomes/129/data>

^{xiii} For example, 31% of economically disadvantaged Solano County third grade students (i.e., whose parents do not have a high school diploma or who participate in the free or reduced price meal program) demonstrated proficiency in English Language Arts in 2019, compared to 59% of third grade students who are not economically disadvantaged.

Source: California Department of Education. (2020). *2019 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress*. <https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/>

^{xiv} In Solano County, 8% of K-12 students with disabilities were suspended in 2019-20, compared to 4% of students without disabilities. In that same year, 0.13% of students with disabilities were expelled,

compared to 0.07% of students without disabilities. Nationwide, research shows young children with disabilities, especially attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or behavioral or conduct problems, are also more likely to be suspended or expelled from preschool.

Sources: California Department of Education. (2020). DataQuest. <https://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

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^{xv} Applied Survey Research. (2020). Solano Zip Code Equity Index analysis.

^{xvi} Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. (2021). *Tracking the COVID-19 recession's effects on food, housing, and employment hardships*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/tracking-the-covid-19-recessions-effects-on-food-housing-and>

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^{xviii} In addition to ethical arguments for advancing equity, reducing disparities in housing, education, health, criminal justice, and employment systems can lead to reduced healthcare and social service spending, increased consumer spending, and increased federal and state and local tax revenue. For an overview of the evidence, see Turner, A. (2018). *The business case for racial equity: A strategy for growth*. W. K. Kellogg Foundation & Altarum. https://altarum.org/sites/default/files/uploaded-publication-files/WKKellogg_Business-Case-Racial-Equity_National-Report_2018.pdf

^{xix} For FY2021/22, Annual Grant applicants were required to attend a 30-minute mandatory grant development session facilitated by First 5 Solano staff. This resulted in a significant increase in the number of applications over previous years (27 in 2021 compared to 17 in 2020 and 24 in 2019), the proportion that met the grant qualifications (96% in 2021, compared to 59% in 2020 and 79% in 2019), and the total amount of funding recommended or awarded (\$199,782 recommended in 2021, compared to \$140,000 awarded in 2020 and \$152,200 awarded in 2019).

^{xx} LegiScan. (2021). *California Legislature*. <https://legiscan.com/CA>