



Executive Summary



First 5 Sacramento

EVALUATION REPORT

FY2020-2021



FIRST 5 SACRAMENTO: WHO ARE WE? WHAT DO WE DO?

Did you know that 90% of a child’s brain is developed by the time they reach five years of age? Children’s early experiences shape how their brains grow and develop. Through these experiences, parents and caregivers have a significant impact on the rest of their children’s lives. In 1998, voters approved the California Children and Families Act, adding a tax on tobacco products to support programs for children 0 to 5 and their families. In FY 2020-21, First 5 Sacramento invested \$20.6 million to support strategies and results that promote our mission and vision for children and families in Sacramento County. The following report summarizes results from the FY 2020-21 evaluation of First 5 Sacramento’s three priority areas: Health, Early Care and Development, and Empowered Families. More details about service delivery, data analysis, and success stories can be found in the full evaluation report.



MISSION

In partnership with the community, we support a prevention and early intervention system that promotes optimal health and development, narrows disparities, and improves the lives of children 0 to 5 and their families.



VISION

Sacramento County will have strong communities where children are safe, healthy, and reach their full potential.



PRIORITY AREA	FUNDED STRATEGY	RESULT
HEALTH	Reduction of African American Child Death (RAACD) campaign: pregnancy peer support, Safe Sleep Baby education, home visiting and parent education, and a public media campaign	Reduce Infant Death
	Breastfeeding support in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program	Increase Breastfeeding
	Center for Oral Health: Dental screenings and connections to dentists for routine check-ups	Decrease Dental Disease
	Systems/policy efforts to help children get routine check-ups	Increase Utilization of Medical Homes
EARLY CARE AND DEVELOPMENT	Systems/policy efforts to increase access to affordable child care	Increase Access to Child Care
	Assessments and coaching for Preschool Bridging Model Plus and Quality Child Care Consortium	Increase Preschool Quality
	Support to nine school districts for parent education, playgroups, developmental screenings, and transition summer camp	Increase School Readiness
EMPOWERED FAMILIES	2-1-1 call line for resources; Small community groups	Increase Family Connections
	Birth & Beyond Family Resource Centers: Referrals, parent education, home visitation, and crisis intervention	Increase Effective Parenting
	Crisis Nursery: Emergency care and overnight stays for children whose parents are in crisis	Decrease Child Maltreatment and Death

COVID-19: The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic heavily impacted all First 5 programming throughout 2020-2021. Most programs remained open but employed various adaptations to adhere to safety guidelines (e.g., transitioning to virtual spaces, reducing program capacity). The impact of the pandemic should be kept in mind throughout this report.



Priority Area: HEALTH

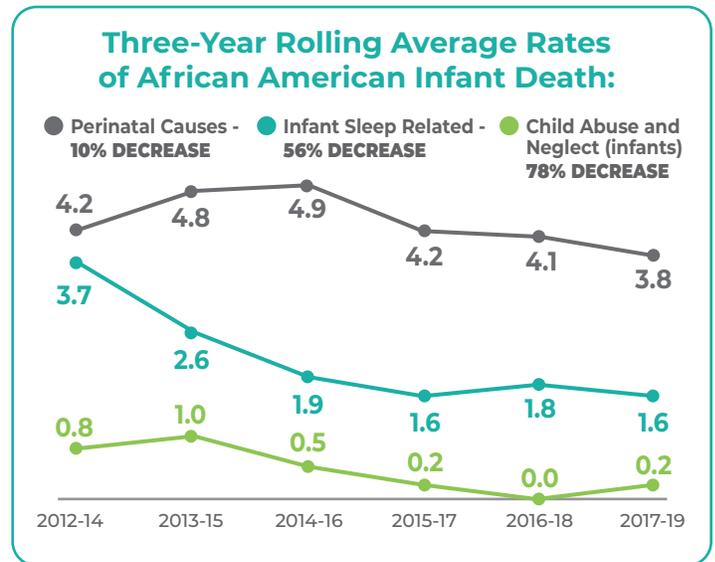
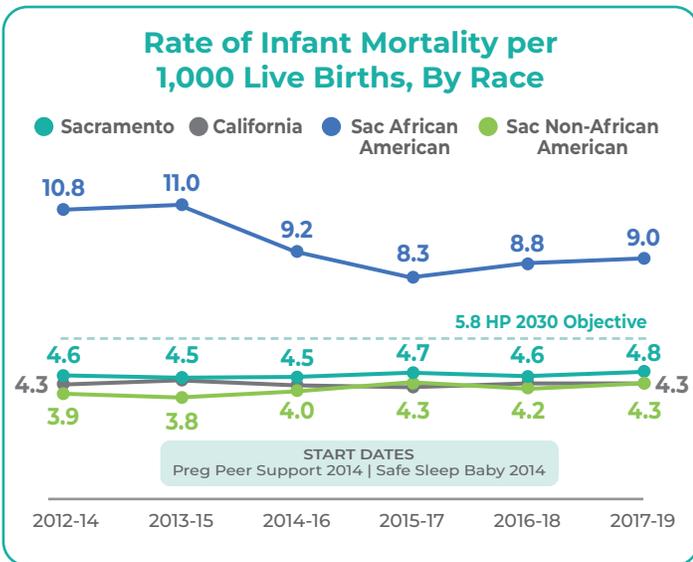
In California, one in five women will experience a perinatal mood and anxiety disorder (PMAD), and there are substantial disparities in health outcomes between ethnic groups, beginning as early as in utero. First 5 Sacramento seeks to eliminate these health disparities in Sacramento County.

The Reducing African American Child Death campaign helped decrease the rate of infant death among African American children by 17%.

Each year, there are about 2,000 African American infants born in the county. These babies have historically died at twice the rate of other infants. In 2020-21, First 5 Sacramento's efforts to reduce infant and child death among African Americans continued to make impressive strides. Pregnancy peer support coaches supported 159 women to reduce socioeconomic and health risks to their pregnancies. Family Resource Centers (FRCs) provided services to help decrease child abuse and neglect, and safe sleep training was provided to 691 expectant parents. The second Unequal Birth public media campaign also launched around the county.

In terms of community-wide impact, there has been a 17% decrease in the rate of African American infant deaths compared to the 2012-2014 baseline and a 32% decrease in disparity between African American infant mortality rates and all other races. Other notable changes include:

- **56% decrease** in African American infant sleep-related deaths and a 65% decrease in the disparity gap.
- **10% decrease** perinatal-related deaths among African Americans compared to 2012-2014.
- **85% reduction** in child abuse and neglect (CAN) homicides per 100,000 African American children ages 0 to 5 since 2012-2014 and a 95% decrease in the disparity between African Americans and other races.



More than 1,200 children received dental screenings and connected to a dentist if needed.

The Center for Oral Health's Early Smiles program provided screenings to 1,214 children and fluoride varnishes to 1,012 children at schools and community events. Due to COVID-19 health and safety requirements, screening opportunities were reduced compared to previous years. Among the children screened, 21% needed urgent or non-urgent dental services and were referred to follow-up care.

WIC programs helped mothers to exclusively breastfeed longer.

First 5 funded two Women, Infants & Children (WIC) programs which supported 2,802 mothers through lactation consultants, drop-in support, and a helpline. More than half (56%) of mothers reached for follow-up reported exclusively breastfeeding at six months post birth, which is higher than those reached in FY 2019-20 (47%), the Healthy People 2030 target (42%), and most recent statewide estimates (26%).

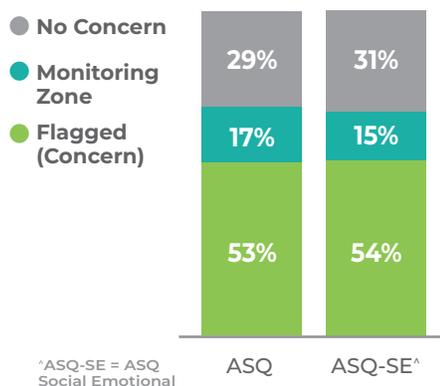


Priority Area:

EARLY CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Research is consistent about short- and long-term benefits of quality early education experiences for children, particularly in the way such experiences mitigate other risk factors. Early education includes formal early learning settings, as well as daily interactions with parents, family members, and the community. Formal early learning settings can screen children for developmental delays and connect them to early interventions when needed. First 5 Sacramento fosters these experiences and linkages through its investment in early care and development.

Developmental Screening Results from Help Me Grow



Help Me Grow screened 290 children, over half of whom had developmental concerns.

The Help Me Grow (HMG) collaborative supports early care and development through developmental screenings and wrap-around services. HMG provided 290 children ages 0 to 5 with developmental screenings. Among them, 53% were flagged with concerns on the ASQ and referred to follow-up services.

During FY 2020-21, a special study on the Help Me Grow program was also conducted to better understand how its three primary services (Call Center, home visiting, and informational website) were supporting families' ability to understand and promote their child's developmental milestones and get connected to essential services. Findings highlighted numerous successes as well some recommendations for improvement, such as enhancing communication between partner organizations, increasing marketing strategies, and resuming in-person visits when safe to do so.

Quality Child Care Collaborative (QCCC) and Preschool Bridging Model Plus (PBM+) programs supported early child care and education programs to improve quality, including shifting priorities due to COVID-19.

QCCC staff provided education, assessments, and technical assistance to 109 teachers, including consultation and trainings related to providers' growing needs and concerns for health practices, distance learning, parent engagement, and children's social-emotional development. PBM+ provided 101 teachers with at least one hour of consultation and completed Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) developmental screenings for 380 children.

More than 300 children attended Transition Summer Camps to increase kindergarten readiness skills.

Transition summer camps are 3-4 week programs designed to support preschool aged children's learning and kindergarten preparedness. Camps target under-resourced children who might otherwise not have access to preschool or other school readiness programs and emphasize school readiness skills such as numeracy, literacy, and social-emotional development. In 2020-21, First 5-funded transition summer camps served 317 children. Among those with pre- and post-assessments, 67% increased self-regulation skills, 62% increased kindergarten academics, 55% increased social expression.¹

School districts conducted nearly 4,000 screenings to detect health or developmental concerns.

Early screening, detection, and referrals are essential to address children's health or developmental delays before they reach the school system, when such delays can significantly disrupt progress in school. School districts conducted 3,735 screenings to identify potential delays or concerns related to child development, speech/language, vision, and/or hearing. Among them, 15% of children screened were provided needed referrals for vision, 11% were referred to speech/language services, 9% received developmental referrals, and 4% received referrals for hearing services.

¹Excludes children with a maximum score (4.00) at pre- and post-test measures as "improvements" would not be measurable



Priority Area:

EMPOWERED FAMILIES

Parenting styles are one of the most powerful predictors of child outcomes, and warm and nurturing interactions help buffer children from the effects of chronic stress. The Center for the Study of Social Policy identifies five protective factors that strengthen families: parental resilience, social connections, knowledge of parenting and child development, concrete support in times of need, and the social-emotional competence of children. First 5 Sacramento invests in programs that emphasize and build on these protective factors in parents and thereby prevent child abuse and neglect.

Birth & Beyond Family Resource Centers are helping reduce child abuse and maltreatment among high need families.

Birth & Beyond (B&B) Family Resource Centers served 3,956 parents/caregivers and 1,340 children, providing resources and referrals, crisis intervention, and evidence-based parenting education and home visiting. Across B&B programs, short-term gains were seen in parents' knowledge of parenting, reduction in stress, and reduction in risk for child maltreatment.

Sacramento Crisis Nursery offered a safe haven for more than 200 children in distressed families.

The Sacramento Crisis Nursery supported 208 families by providing emergency daytime child care to 238 children and one or more overnight stays for 187 children in families dealing with crisis situations such as lack of employment, housing/homelessness, medical needs, domestic violence, mental health, and alcohol or other drug use. Children could stay at the Nursery for the day or overnight, while their parents received support to address their crises. From pre-to post-assessment, parents had statistically significant reductions in stress and 97% of parents said they were better able to solve crisis situations as a result of the support they received.

Birth & Beyond participants were **half as likely** to experience substantiated child maltreatment recurrences than a countywide comparison group.

Children receiving B&B home visiting following a baseline Child Protective Services (CPS) event were statistically matched on key vulnerabilities to a sample of CPS-involved children that did not engage with B&B. Children in the B&B treatment group were half as likely to experience substantiated recurrence in 12-months (6%), compared to the non-B&B sample (12%). B&B children also had a lower substantiated recurrence rate than countywide estimates (7%).

Substantiated Child Maltreatment Recurrence within 12 Months, Ages 0-5 (n=684)

B&B TREATMENT GROUP
(n=342)

6%

12%

COMPARISON GROUP
(n=342)

7%

COUNTYWIDE
(2019)



FROM UNCERTAINTY TO SUCCESS:

One client's story from Help Me Grow

Cristina,³ and her two-year-old son, Elias, moved to Sacramento County in 2021. The family was previously receiving Early Intervention (EI) services for Elias's developmental needs in another county. Cristina was working to transfer services to Alta California Regional Center (Alta) and found Help Me Grow (HMG) while searching online. Mom completed an Ages and Stages Questionnaire – Social Emotional (ASQ-SE) on the HMG website. HMG staff contacted them right away and explained that Elias's assessment was flagged for additional needs. Cristina described their family's history with speech therapy and their efforts to transfer services. She also noted that he had not previously received SE services.

Within 30 days, the HMG Call Center Coordinator reconnected with Cristina to follow-up on her ability to transfer services to Alta. Cristina had not yet heard from them, so HMG staff followed up with Alta's EI intake managers on behalf of mom and Elias. As a result, Cristina learned that there was an error in the transfer paperwork. At this point, Elias had not been receiving services for at least two months. HMG supported mom through her growing frustration by providing options to advocate for her family and move the process forward.

HMG continued to check in with Cristina on a weekly basis to assure her that efforts were being made to work through this problem. The HMG Call Center Manager and Coordinator each worked closely with Alta to prevent further delay for Cristina and Elias. Once they were finally connected to support at Alta, Cristina called HMG to share the news, and expressed her gratitude to HMG in an email, excerpted below:

"...to have [HMG Call Center Coordinator]'s kind and reassuring attitude along the way has been a very big help for me. She has done everything she possibly could on her end to help me get things figures [sic] out as much as she could... she went above and beyond to help and from the very start she did her very best to make things somewhat smooth for me although most of it has been out of her control."

"[HMG Staff] went above and beyond to help and from the very start ... to make things somewhat smooth for me although most of it has been out of her control."

– Cristina, HMG
Call Center Caller

³Fictional names used