



MONTEREY COUNTY  
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

2021-2022

# ANNUAL REPORT

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# Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles

## Vision Statement

All children in Monterey County live in safe, nurturing homes and communities; they are healthy, valued, succeed in school and realize their full potential.

## Mission Statement

The Children's Council provides leadership and policy direction to encourage the development of a comprehensive and collaborative delivery system of services to children and youth in Monterey County.

## Guiding Principles

**Collaborative** – promoting cross-agency policies and procedures that enhance seamless service delivery; encourage interdisciplinary problem-solving and support; and address the barriers to success;

**Comprehensive, Coordinated and Integrated** – recommending a full array of services and supports where the entire range of needs is addressed in an efficient, responsive and effective manner;

**Family-Centered and Family-Driven** – honoring, respecting and empowering families as their child's first teacher and strongest advocate;

**Culturally Responsive** – ensuring diverse populations receive culturally responsive services and supports;

**Community-Based/Community Driven** – ensuring that services are available and accessible in a variety of settings and locations;

**Participatory** – ensuring that program recipients participate in making and shaping decisions; and

**Outcomes-Oriented** – measuring outcomes for children, youth and families and using data to facilitate decision-making, identify obstacles and improve services.

## A Message from the Children's Council Chair

Honorable Board of Supervisors and Monterey County residents,

The Monterey County Children's Council (Children's Council) is pleased to present its FY 2021-2022 Annual Report, a snapshot documenting the status of children and youth in our County in an effort to not only have a better understanding of their needs, but to help foster continued and enhanced commitment in meeting these needs. Public comment and feedback on the work of the Children's Council is welcomed and strongly encouraged.

The Children's Council membership includes the executive leaders from major public, private, and non-profit sectors of the County whose agencies and organizations serve children and youth in a wide variety of ways. The Children's Council members meet monthly to coordinate cross-sector work focused on addressing systemic issues that are impacting the health, education, and well-being of children and youth in Monterey County. The Council is guided by its purpose and its vision: To provide leadership and policy direction to encourage the development of a comprehensive and collaborative delivery system of services for children and their families so that all children in Monterey County live in safe nurturing homes and communities; they are healthy, valued, succeed in school and realize their full potential.

This report reflects current efforts in support of the Children's Council's purpose and vision. The report presents a comprehensive data set which offers an understanding of the status of children and youth in Monterey County and more importantly, provides a context for focusing the work that needs to be done to improve the conditions and success of our children and youth. I am pleased to report that the Children's Council continued to focus on its Bright Beginnings Initiative, primarily funded by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, and this critical work is highlighted in this report. This year, the Children's Council sought to deepen its understanding of issues impacting our children, families, and caregivers using Reflective Practice as a tool while exploring issues related to child well-being and education. Presentations were delivered both by its membership and other community stakeholders and partners and can be found on our [Website](#). The report concludes with the historic record of previous Children's Council Initiatives and areas of focus that have successfully impacted the health, education, and well-being of children and youth in Monterey County.

The Children's Council Annual Report is a call to action for all of us to prioritize the health, education, and well-being of our children and youth, particularly now as we continue to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic which has further exacerbated the challenges faced by many of our young residents who are already disparately impacted. We believe that this report reflects the Children's Council's goal of connecting its work to a broad group of stakeholders and community members. Only through collective action, can we ensure every child and youth in Monterey County thrives and is prepared for success.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Medina, Chair  
Monterey County Children's Council

## Acknowledgments

The Monterey County Children's Council would like to acknowledge and extend its deepest appreciation to Cynthia Holmsky for her years of service and dedicated support on the Council. Holmsky retired as Director of the Bright Futures Education Partnership from California State Monterey Bay University in December of 2021.

## Why this Children's Council Annual Report is Important

The Annual Report was created to help our community understand the needs of our children and youth, in order to build community commitment to meet these needs. It is a local and state "snapshot" documenting the status of our children and youth. This Annual Report is intended to help community members make informed decisions regarding public policy issues, volunteer efforts and support for nonprofit organizations.

The Annual Report has four goals:

- To serve as a benchmark to measure how children and youth are faring over time
- To serve as a catalyst to mobilize community wide efforts to address the most critical challenges to children and youth's circumstances
- To recognize areas in which services and initiatives have been successful in improving children and youth's quality of life in order to maintain continued support for these efforts
- To present multiple indicators in a simple arrangement and location

## Methodology

This Annual Report serves as a benchmark to measure the relative success of efforts to improve conditions for all children ages 0-24. The Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Annual Report is based exclusively on secondary data reports. A list of indicators was created by the Children's Council in 2018. Secondary data was then collected from local and state-level published reports. The quality of the data was evaluated and then it was determined whether it addressed pertinent indicators for this Annual Report. Data was collected from a variety of sources as indicated on the specific pages and data series with historic trends and comparison between state and local rates were preferred.

## Measuring Results

Thirty indicators have been selected and organized into three major age ranges: birth to 18 years of age, birth to five years of age, and six to 18 years of age for which conditions for children are assessed as "stable", "fluctuating", "increasing", "decreasing", or "N/A" (not available) for Monterey County and the State of California. You will find this assessment on the Executive Summary page for each particular indicator.

## Executive Summary

Birth to 18	Monterey County Trend	State Trend
Children Supported by CalWORKs	Fluctuating	N/A
Children Living Below Poverty Level *	N/A	N/A
Children with Health Insurance	Stable	N/A
Child Abuse and Neglect	Fluctuating	Stable
Children in Foster Care	Fluctuating	Stable
Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Students	Decreasing	N/A
Student Homelessness	Fluctuating	N/A
Digital Divide *	Year 2 Data Trend Unavailable	N/A

Birth to 5		
Low Birth Weight *	N/A	N/A
Early Prenatal Care	Increasing	N/A
Education of Mother	Stable	N/A
Licensed Child Care and Education Slots	Fluctuating	N/A
Licensed Child Care and Education Costs	Increasing	N/A
Kindergarten Readiness *	N/A	N/A

6 to 18		
Public School Enrollment	Decreasing	N/A
Children Enrolled in Special Education	Increasing	N/A
English Language Arts	Decreasing	N/A
English Language Learners	Fluctuating	N/A
Math CAASPP Scores	Decreasing	Stable
Graduation Rates Over Time	Increasing	Increasing
Student Suspension Rates Over Time	Decreasing	Decreasing
Student Expulsion Rates Over Time	Decreasing	Decreasing
Student Drop Out Rate	Decreasing	N/A
Births to Teens	Decreasing	N/A
Sexually Transmitted Infection Cases	Increasing	N/A
Juvenile Misdemeanor and Felony Arrests	Fluctuating	N/A
Suicide Trends in Youth *	N/A	N/A
Substance Abuse and Non-Fatal Overdoses in Youth	Increasing	N/A
Substance Abuse and Overdoses in Youth	Increasing	N/A

**Note:** When an indicator has been assessed as “stable”, this means that the trend line is flat, indicating that there is not much change or inconsistency on the data figures. On the other hand, when an indicator is assessed as “fluctuating”, this means that the data figures are inconsistent from year to year. An assessment of “increasing”, refers to higher numbers in the value of the data and an assessment of “decreasing”, refers to lower numbers in the value of the data. When looking at the assessment of “increasing” or “decreasing”, please keep in mind that these terms reflect how the rate or number in each particular trend is changing. They do not indicate improvement or worsening.

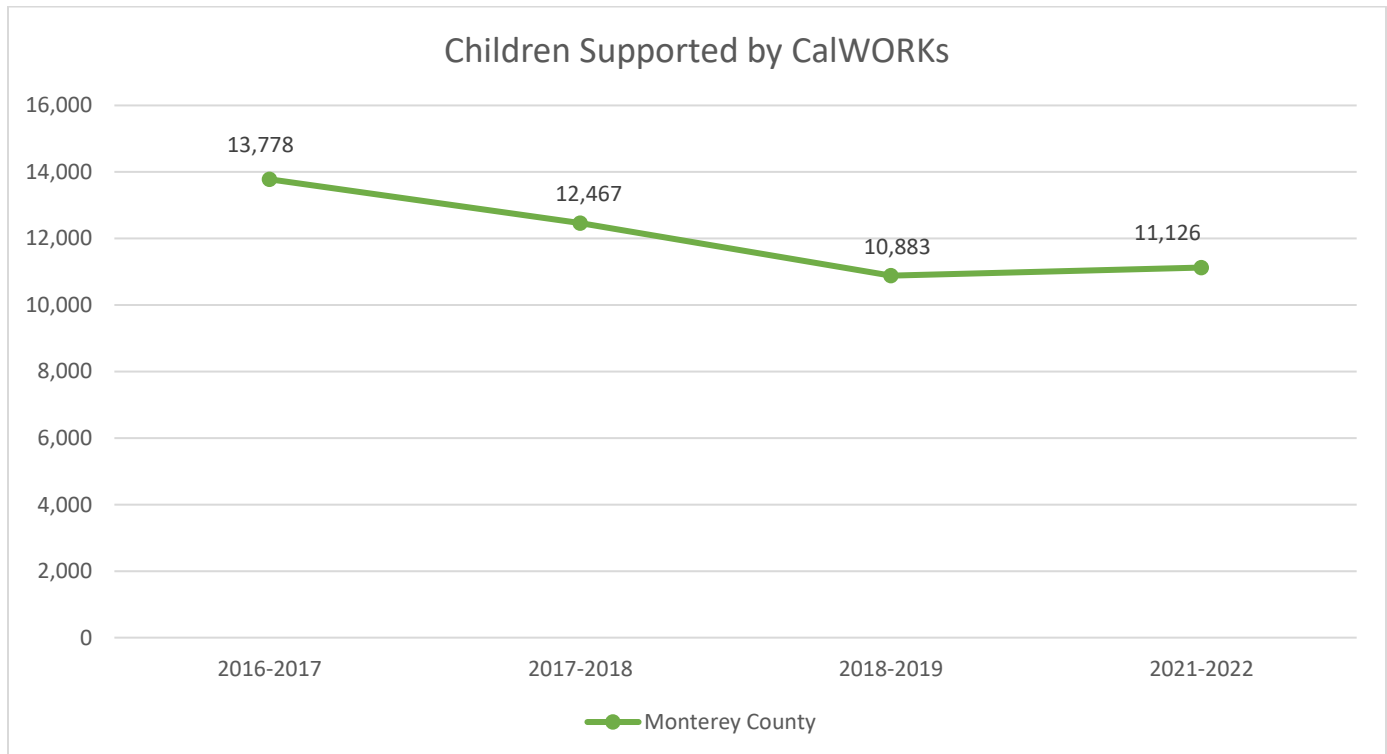
Indicator with an \* did not have updated data available to report during the timing to complete this report.

## Definition of the Indicator

The federal welfare reform legislation, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, known as CalWORKs, provides financial assistance to needy children and families in Monterey County. This indicator reflects the average annual caseload of children under the age of 18 receiving financial assistance through CalWORKs.

## Why the Indicator is Important

The CalWORKs program has multiple goals, including reduced welfare dependency, increased self-sufficiency, and decreased non-marital childbearing. The CalWORKs legislation sought to achieve the goals of improving child and family well-being by strengthening work first requirements and increasing support services for families engaged in work activities. California efforts to continue a focus on child well-being include provisions of a safety net program for children when adults are sanctioned or reach their sixty-month limit on aid, their requirement of school attendance, child immunizations, and assisting with paternity and child support enforcement activities.



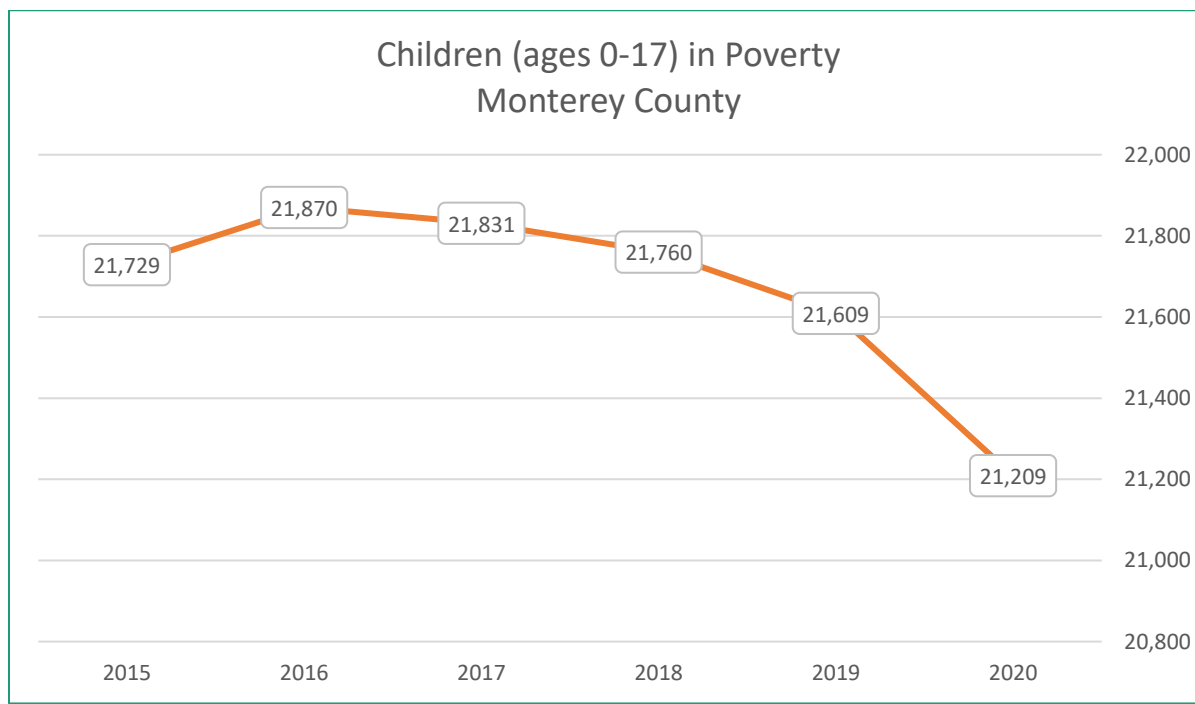
Source: Monterey County Department of Social Services — IT Data Development 2022

## Definition of the Indicator

The number of children under the age of 18 living in households with incomes below the federal poverty level based on 2018 Federal Poverty Guidelines of annual income \$14,150 or less for a family of three.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Childhood poverty has both immediate and lasting negative effects. Children living below the poverty line are more likely to have difficulty in school, become teen parents, and experience higher rates of unemployment and low-income earnings in adulthood. Poverty is also an important factor linked to the health of children and youth.



Note: [Data above is not yet available for 2021-2022 as of January 20, 2023.]

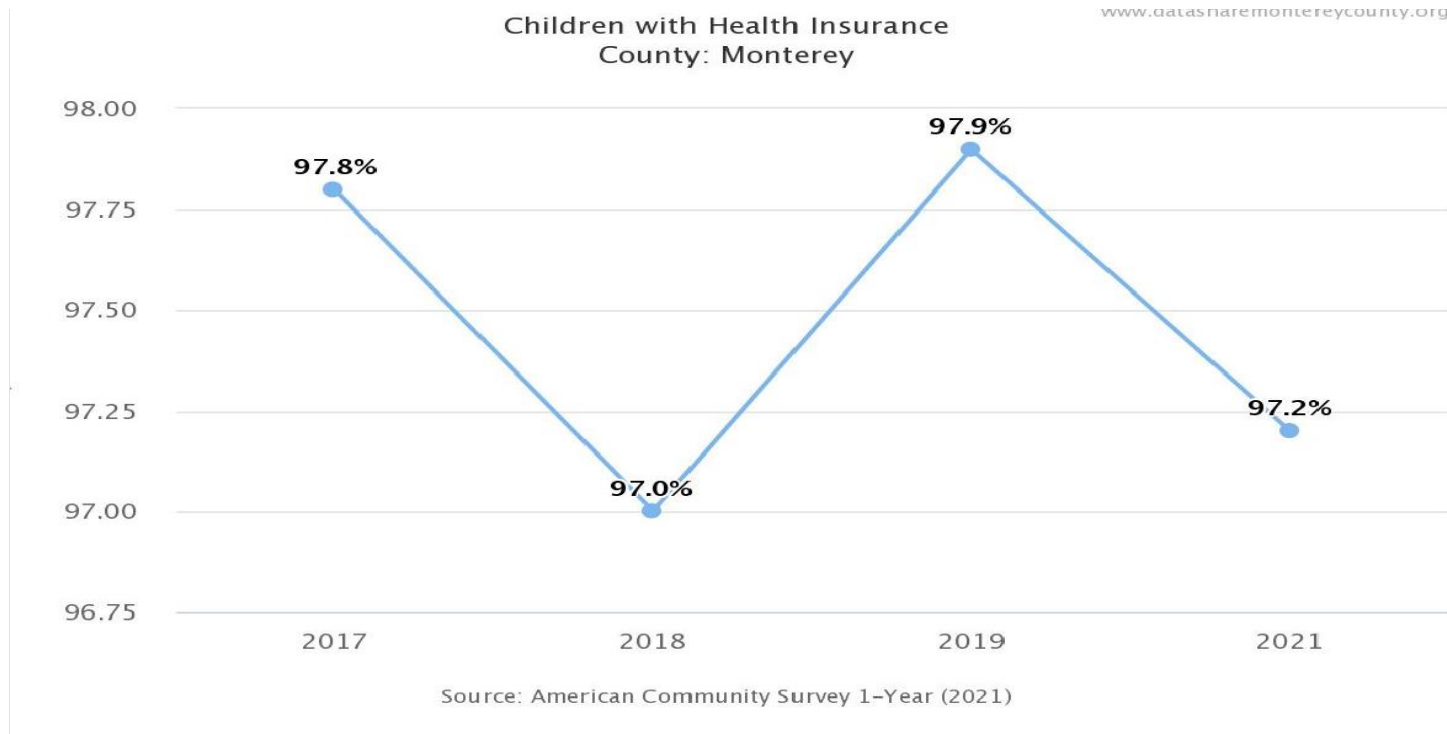
Source: Monterey County Department of Social Services — IT Data Development 2021

**Definition of the Indicator**

The percentage of children aged 0-18, with health insurance is based on the number of children who have private and public health insurance. The percentage of those who have health insurance was calculated by dividing the number of those insured by the total number of children living in Monterey County. Health policy changes occurred in 2014 when many provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) went into effect. One of those provisions included changes to the definition of a "qualifying child". Under ACA, a qualifying child is aged 0-26.

**Why the Indicator is Important**

Health insurance allows children to access health care services such as required regular checkups, dental and vision care, urgent medical services, and primary care services for illness and injury. Children with health insurance are more likely to receive preventative care and immunizations that will aid in decreasing the likelihood of illness and reduce out-of-pocket medical expenses. Generally, children with health insurance will experience better overall health throughout their childhood and into early adulthood.

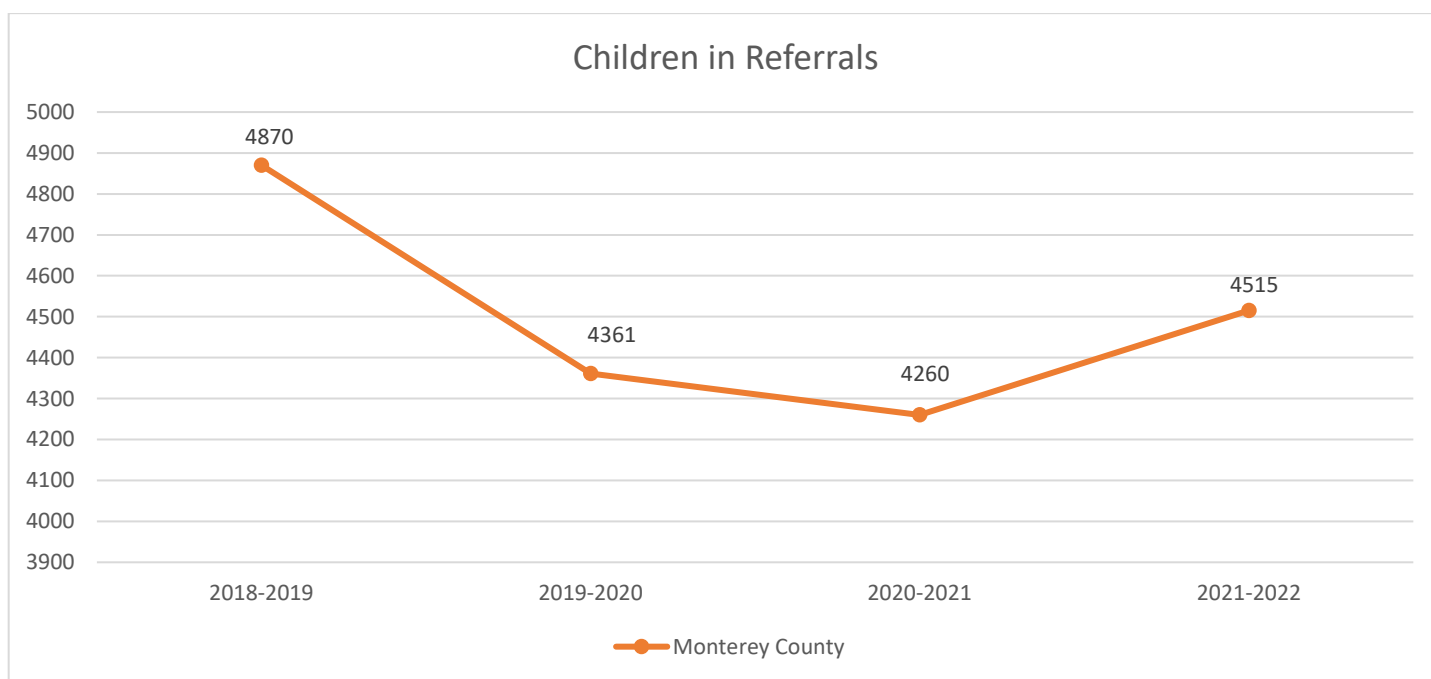


## Definition of Indicator

The rate of substantiated reports in which a referral was made due to allegations of child abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of children 18 years of age or less.

## Why the Indicator is Important

This indicator represents the prevalence of child abuse in Monterey County. State law requires several categories of professionals, including teachers, nurses, social workers, law enforcement officers and childcare providers to report suspected cases of maltreatment or child abuse. Other sources of child abuse reporting include parents, neighbors, friends, and anonymous persons. A report to the Child Abuse Hotline is the primary entry point for children and families into the Child Welfare Services of Monterey County. Depending on the severity of the report, there are established time standards for initiating the investigation. Reports are investigated and assigned to one of three disposition categories – “Unfounded”, “Inconclusive”, or “Sustained”.



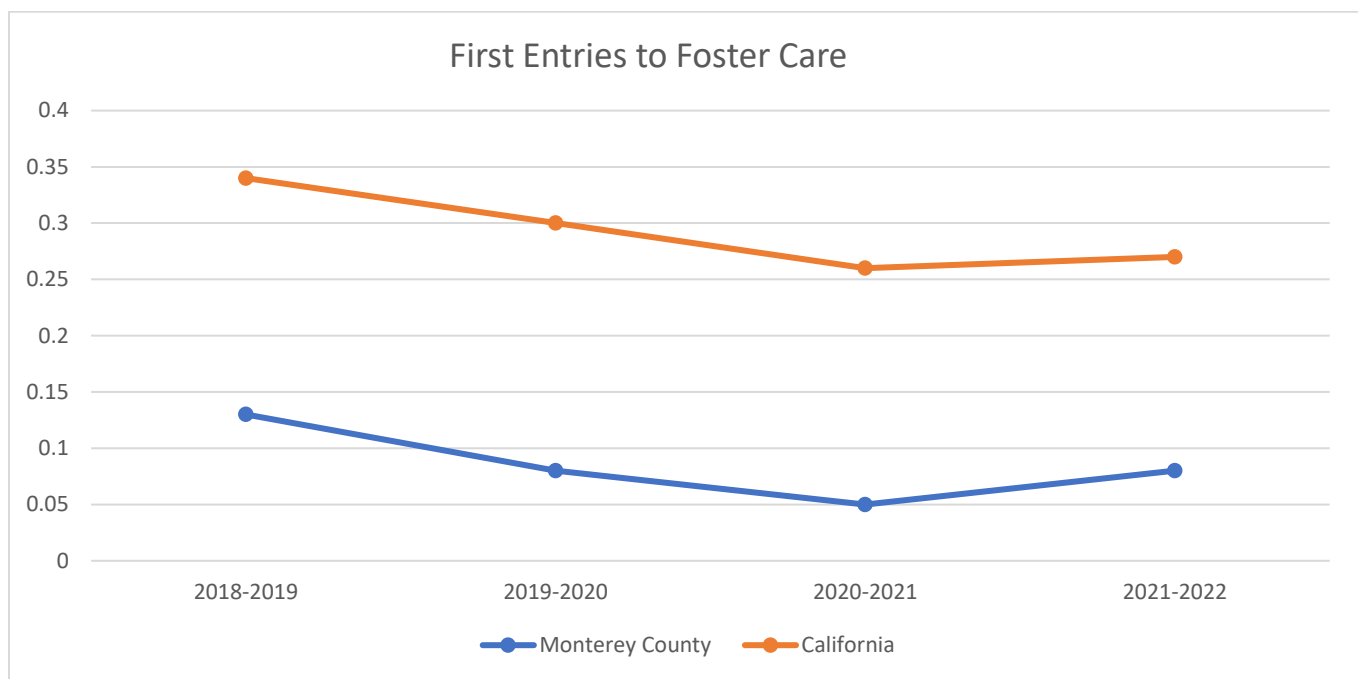
Source: *CCWIP reports*. University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucbc\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucbc_childwelfare)

**Definition of Indicator**

Rate of children placed in welfare supervised care including shelter, court-specified home, kin, guardian or other.

**Why the Indicator is Important**

Removal of children from their families and placement in foster care is a difficult intervention for children and only exercised when risk to children is extreme. Best practice as well as both federal and state laws discourage the removal of children from their homes unless absolutely necessary to ensure the child's safety. The placement of children in out-of-home care is an indicator of family problems that are so difficult, that a child cannot remain with his or her family. Child abuse and neglect are serious problems that cross socioeconomic boundaries and have profound effects on the safety and well-being of impacted children.



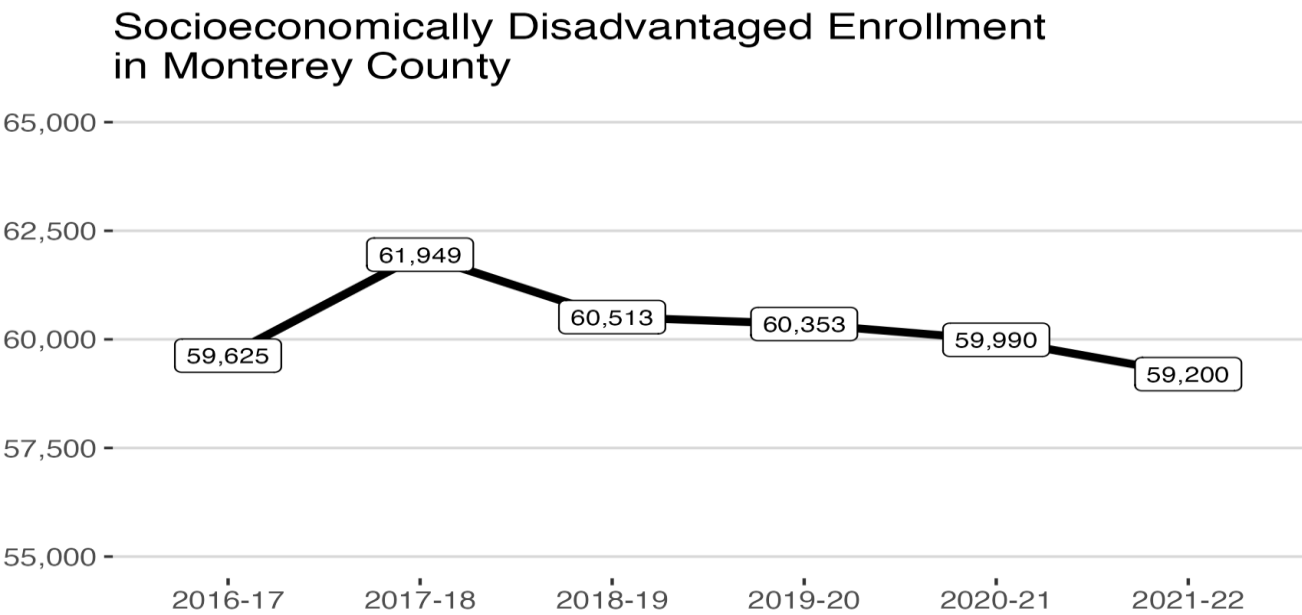
Source: *CCWIP reports*. University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: [http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucbc\\_childwelfare](http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucbc_childwelfare) Monterey County DSS IT

Definition of the Indicator

Enrollment is based upon the Cumulative Enrollment from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). This includes information about total enrollment, Free and Reduced Meal Program, Homeless, Els and others. Cumulative enrollment consists of the total number of unduplicated primary and short-term enrollments within the academic year (July 1 to June 30), regardless of whether the student is enrolled multiple times. If a student is enrolled in multiple schools within a district during the academic year, they are counted only once in the district’s cumulative enrollment.

Why the Indicator is Important

Knowing the size of a population in question helps to determine the scale and scope of efforts to support the population.



Source: Cumulative Enrollment Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesenrcum.asp>

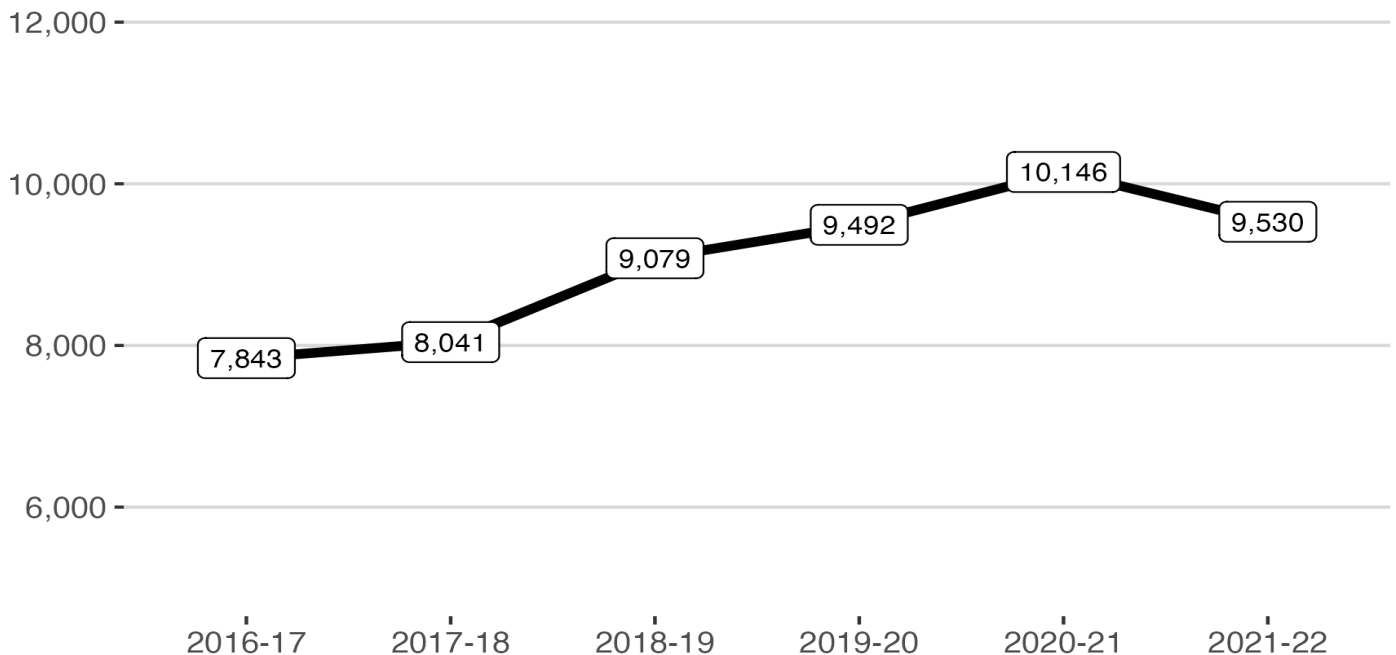
## Definition of the Indicator

Enrollment is based upon the Cumulative Enrollment from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). This includes information about total enrollment, Free and Reduced Meal Program, Homeless, Els and others. Homeless as defined by McKinney-Vento (A) means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and (B) includes—(i) children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals; (ii) children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings; (iii) children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and (iv) migratory children who qualify as homeless for the purposes of this subtitle because the children are living in circumstances described in clauses (i) through (iii).

## Why the Indicator is Important

Knowing the size of a population helps determine the needed scale and scope. Students experiencing homelessness have lower graduation rates and without support for the whole child they can struggle to thrive in the classroom.

## Homeless Enrollment in Monterey County



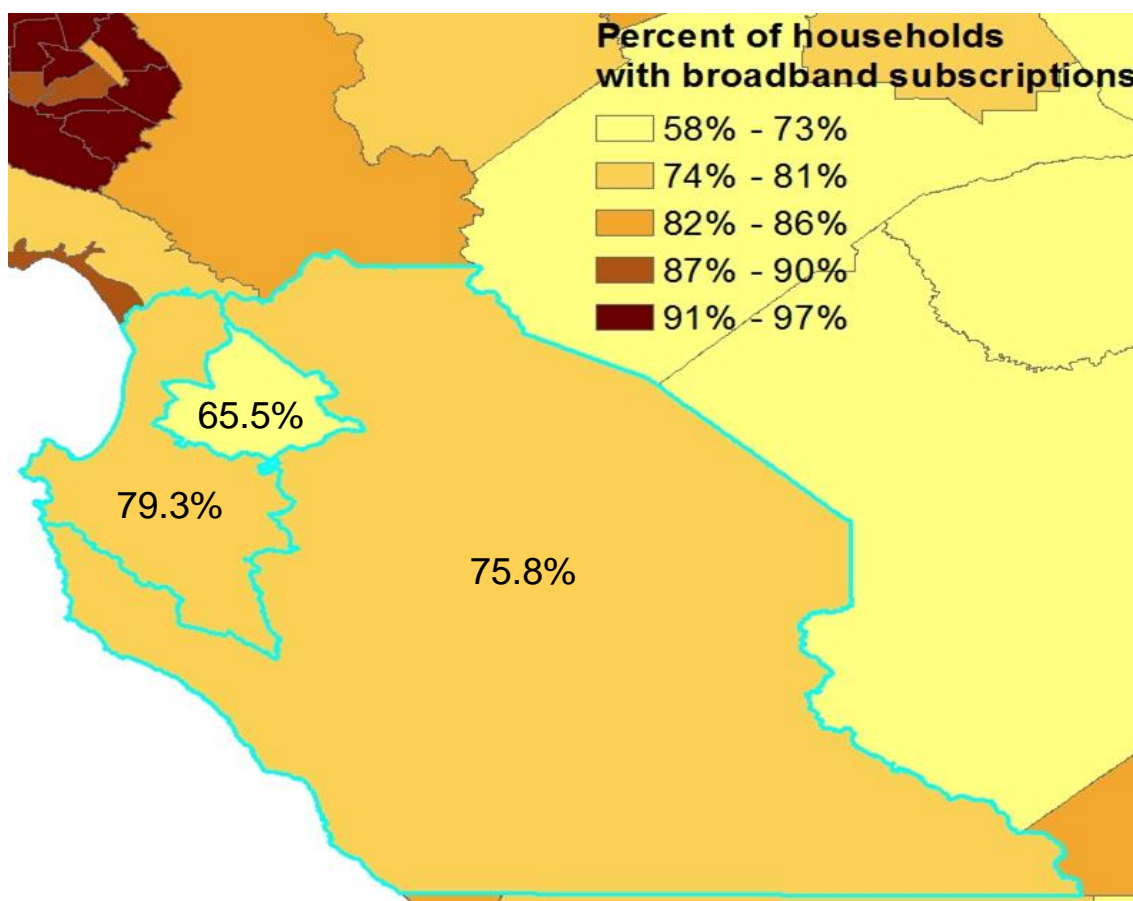
Source: Cumulative Enrollment Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesenrcum.asp>

## Definition of Indicator

The rates of broadband subscription in Monterey County as identified in the 2019 American Community Survey, PULSE Household Survey and analyzed by the Public Policy Institute of California. Areas of analysis are the Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs), geographic regions that the US Census Bureau has defined for disseminating statistical information about the population. Each PUMA is built on its constituent census tracts and surrounding county or counties and contains at least 100,000 people. Note that PUMAs borders do not always match county borders, so the south county portion of Monterey County also includes San Benito County as well.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Californians use the internet for a range of activities, including financial services (70%), telecommuting (39%), job searches (21%), and online classes or job training (21%). Telehealth has also been on the rise. As the pandemic shifted many activities online, usage almost certainly increased. Nearly all schools and colleges switched to distance learning in spring 2020, creating unprecedented demand for internet at home, particularly in households with multiple users.



Note: This indicator was added to last year's report based on COVID-19 impacts on children and youth to assure we continue to monitor these indicators as our community shifts to recover from COVID-19 impacts.

Note: [Note: Data above is not yet available for 2020 or 2021 as of January 20, 2023.]

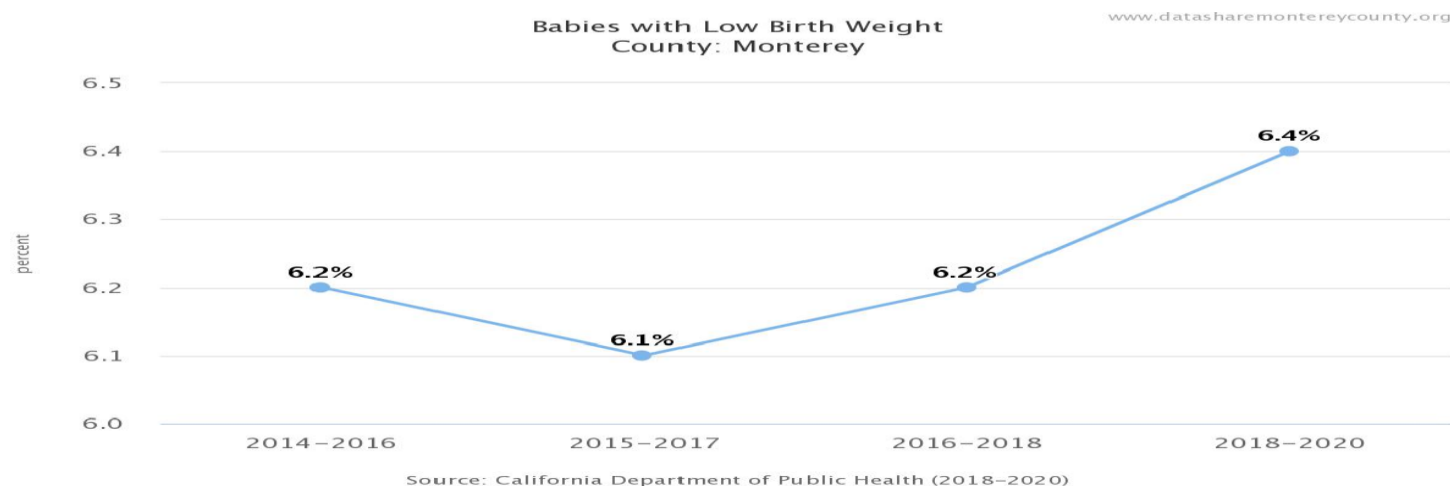
Source: <https://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-digital-divide/> and personal communication with authors Dr. Niu Gao and [Joe Hayes](#)

## Definition of Indicator

The percentage of children born weighing less than 2500 grams (about 5.5 lbs.)

## Why the Indicator is Important

Children born with low birth weights are more prone to infant death as well as developmental delays and certain chronic diseases. Causes of low birth weight babies include premature birth, smoking and maternal drug use.



# Early Prenatal Care

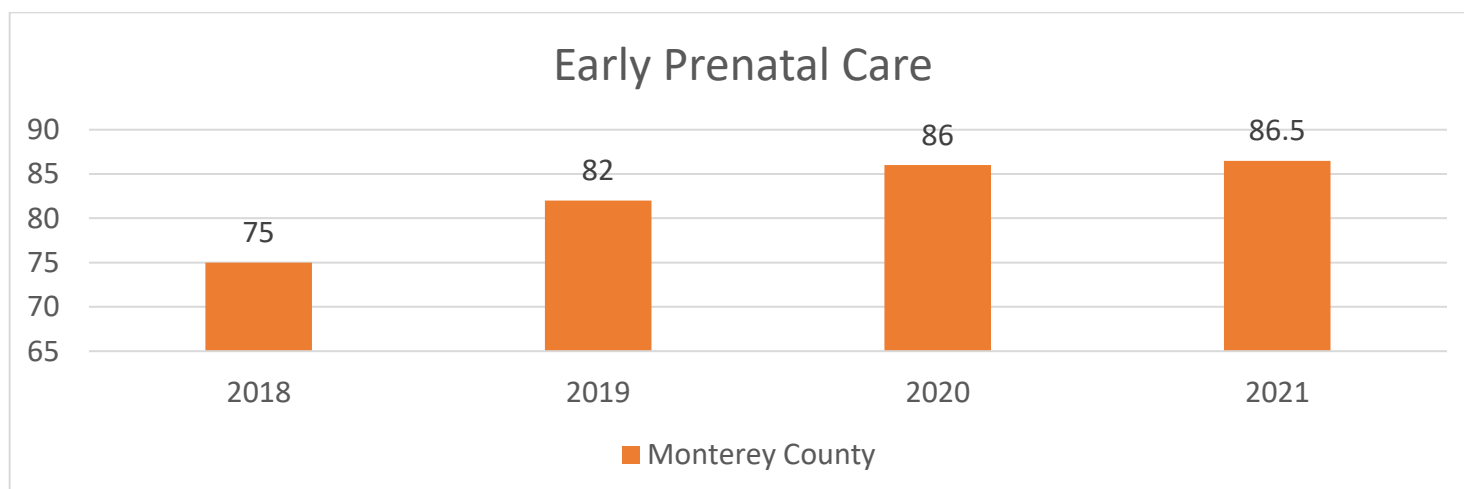
# Birth-5

## Definition of Indicator

The percentage of pregnant women who receive prenatal screening and treatment for medical conditions and identification of behavioral risk factors in the first three months of pregnancy. Proportion of Births to Mothers with Entry to Prenatal Care During First Trimester Among All Monterey County Births.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Studies have shown that earlier prenatal care is associated with better health and developmental outcomes for newborns as well as fewer complications for mothers.



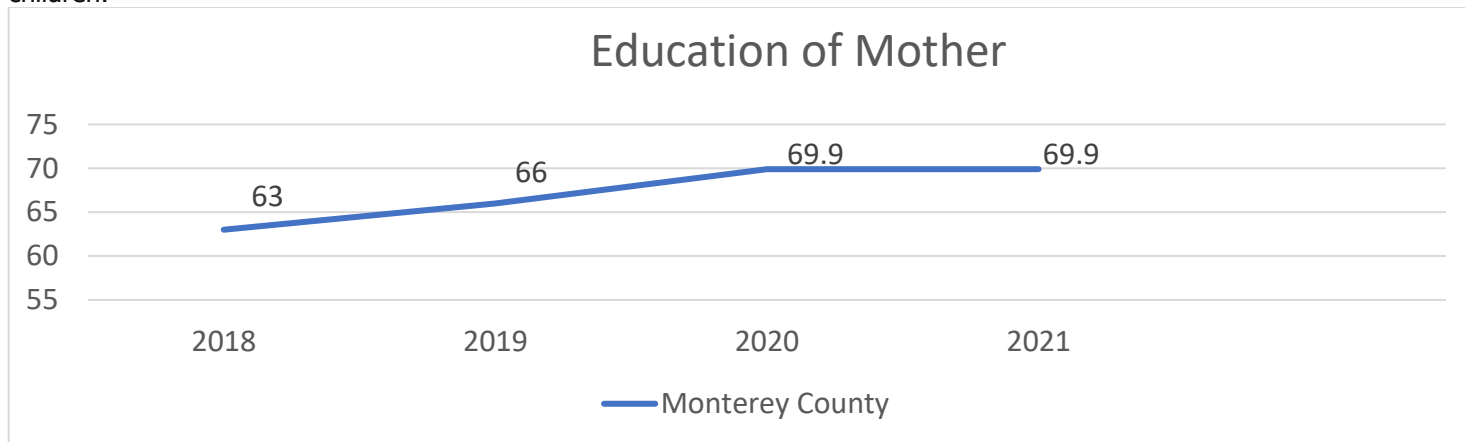
Source: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DMCAH/surveillance/Pages/Births.aspx>

**Definition of Indicator**

The percentage of mothers who have at least completed high school. A GED equivalency exam also qualifies as completing high school. Schooling obtained in Mexico or other national systems is also recognized. Proportion of Births to Mothers with at Least a High School Diploma or Equivalent Among All Monterey County Births.

**Why the Indicator is Important**

Maternal education level is closely tied to future academic achievement, health, and economic status for the mother and her children.



Data sources: Communicable Disease Data: Monterey County Health Department, Communicable Disease Unit. Birth Information: State of California, California Department of Public Health, VRBIS, California Comprehensive Birth File. Population Data: State of California, Department of Finance, Population Estimates. Analysis by Monterey County Health Department, Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit.

## Licensed Child Care Slots Available

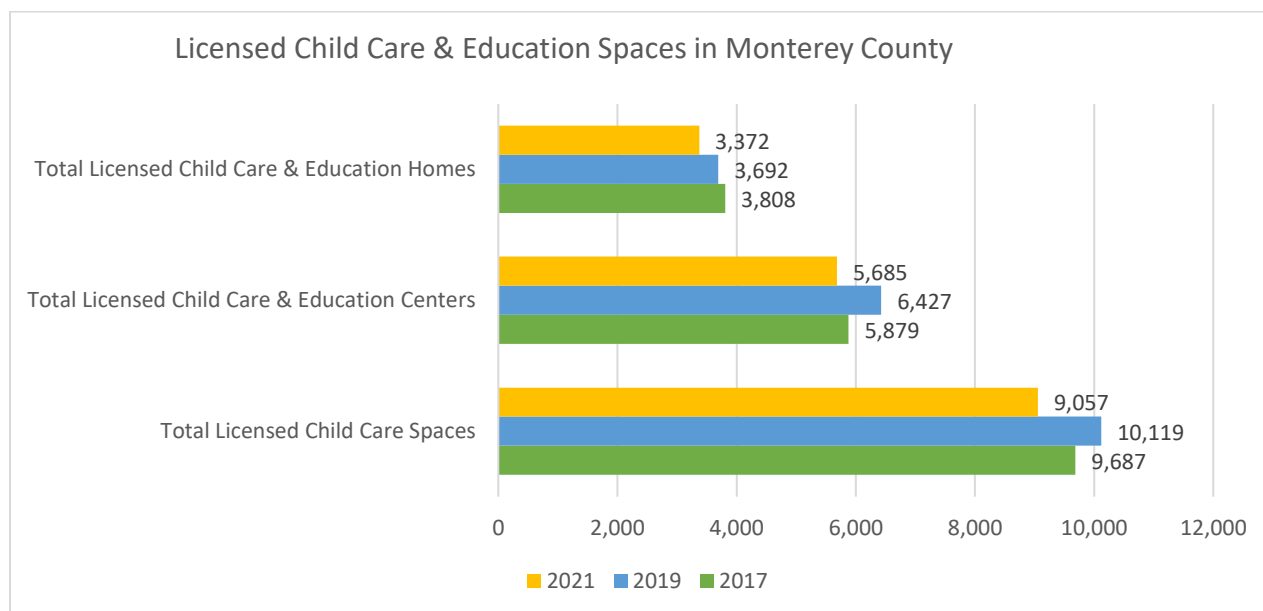
## Birth-5

**Definition of Indicator**

The number of licensed child care slots includes both part-day and full-day care for infant, toddler, and preschool. This also includes expansion of Transitional Kindergarten in school districts serving four year old children. It does not include license-exempt or family and neighbor care scenarios.

**Why the Indicator is Important**

Quality child care is very beneficial for a child's social, emotional and cognitive development. Many working parents have a difficult time locating quality care. Licensed care is available for about a third of parents in the labor force.



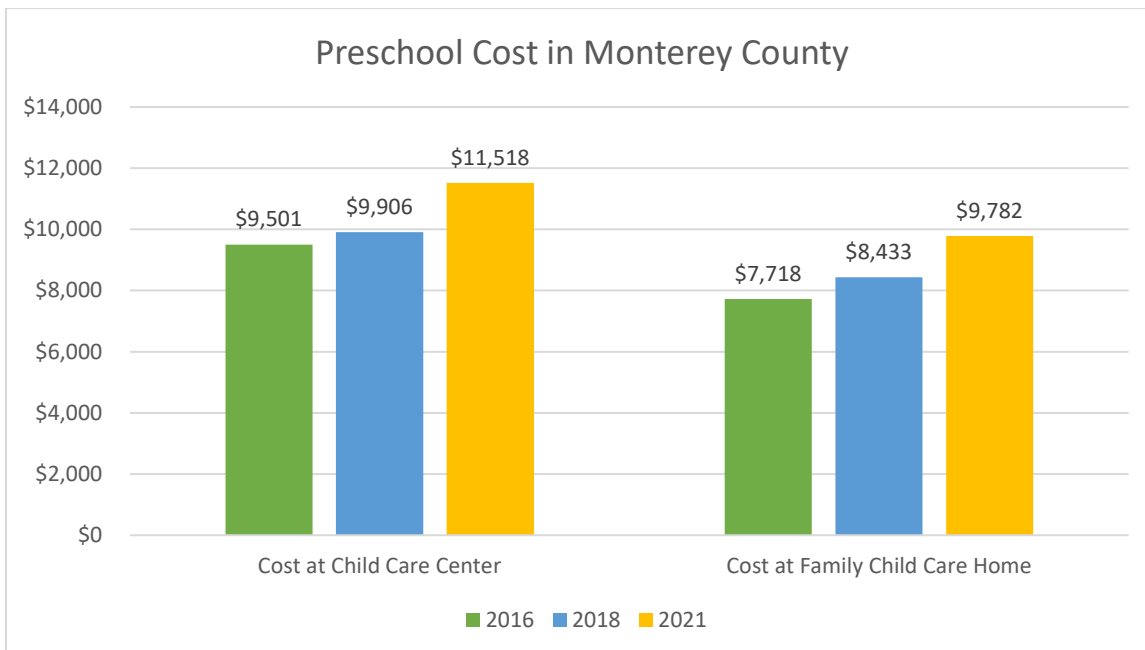
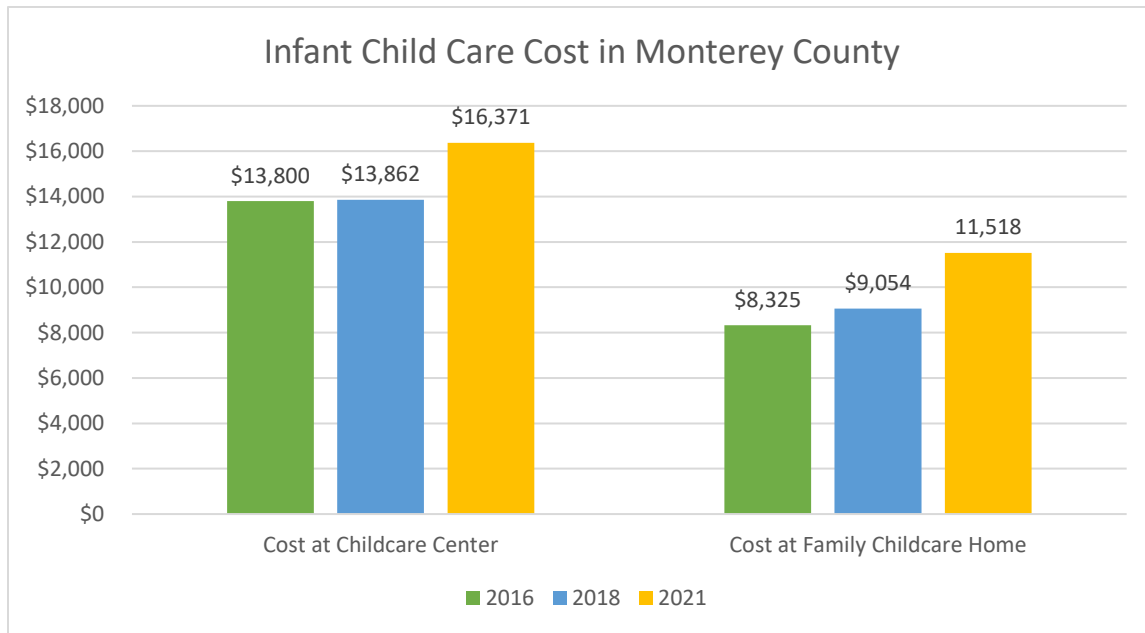
Source: [www.rrnetwork.org](http://www.rrnetwork.org)

## Definition of Indicator

The number of licensed child care and education spaces includes both part-day and full-day care and education in home-based and center-based settings. This does not include state preschool, transitional kindergarten, license-exempt or informal child care and education settings.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Paying for quality childcare can be a large burden on a family, especially families living at the cut off for subsidized care. Likewise, keeping trained quality childcare providers is difficult if they cannot earn an adequate salary.



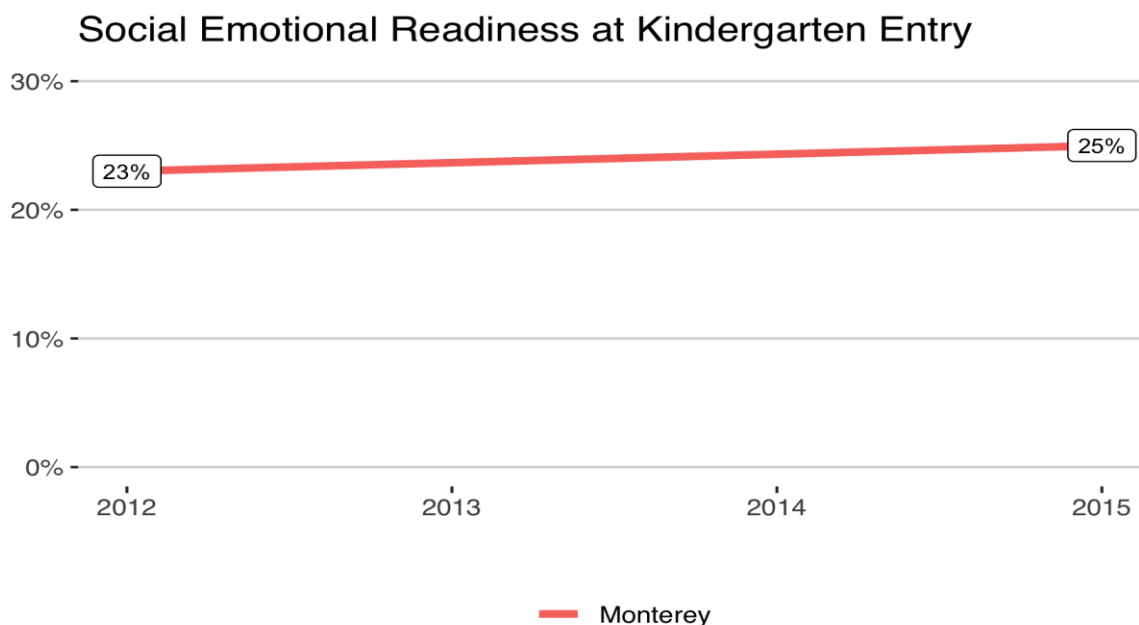
Source: Kidsdata.org (<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/1849/child-care-cost/table#fmt=3094&loc=320&tf=141&ch=984,985,222,223&sortColumnId=0&sortType=asc>)

## Definition of the Indicator

The School Readiness indicator measures the readiness of the school system to appropriately support a child's development and learning on entry into Transitional Kindergarten or Kindergarten. It is based on the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), providing a rating in four developmental domains. The assessment includes three tools. One is completed by teachers who have observed the child in the classroom setting. The second is a survey of Administrators and TK-K and early childhood educators on their views of the readiness of the early learning system. The third is a survey of parents to include their views on the readiness of the system and the experiences of their children prior to entering Kindergarten.

## Why the Indicator is Important

This indicator is the overarching indicator of success for the Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative. Understanding the readiness of the early learning system and environment surrounding our children helps us as a holistic system of care provide the supports young children and their families need to succeed.



Source: First 5 Monterey County Kindergarten Readiness Assessments

**Note:** In Monterey County, the School Readiness Assessment was last completed in 2015 (then called the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) and had been completed every three years prior. The assessment tools and processes have been re-evaluated to ensure appropriate focus on systems change and supporting early learning opportunities for all students, regardless of their early care and learning experiences before entering the school system, home language, or other contextual factors. This can lead to narrowing the racial and/or familial income equity gap in levels of educational support and attainment. Due to the pandemic, implementation of the assessment was postponed. The next assessment with the new tool set will be completed early 2023, and the report is expected to be ready by mid-2023.

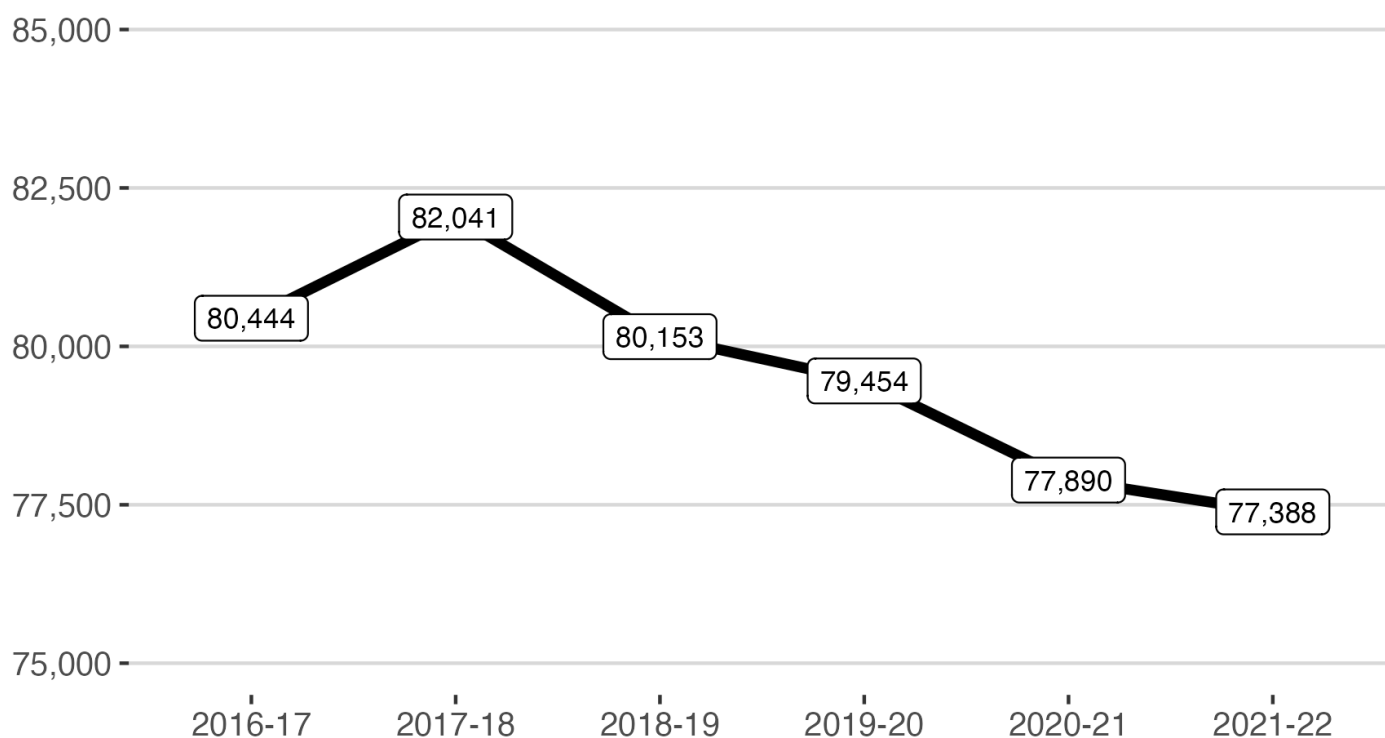
**Definition of the Indicator**

Enrollment is based upon the Cumulative Enrollment from the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). This includes information about total enrollment, Free and Reduced Meal Program, Homeless, Els and others. Cumulative enrollment consists of the total number of unduplicated primary and short-term enrollments within the academic year (July 1 to June 30), regardless of whether the student is enrolled multiple times. If a student is enrolled in multiple schools within a district during the academic year, they are counted only once in the district's cumulative enrollment.

**Why the Indicator is Important**

Knowing the size of a population in question helps to determine the scale and scope of efforts to support the population.

## Total Enrollment in Monterey County



Source: Cumulative Enrollment Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesenrcum.asp>

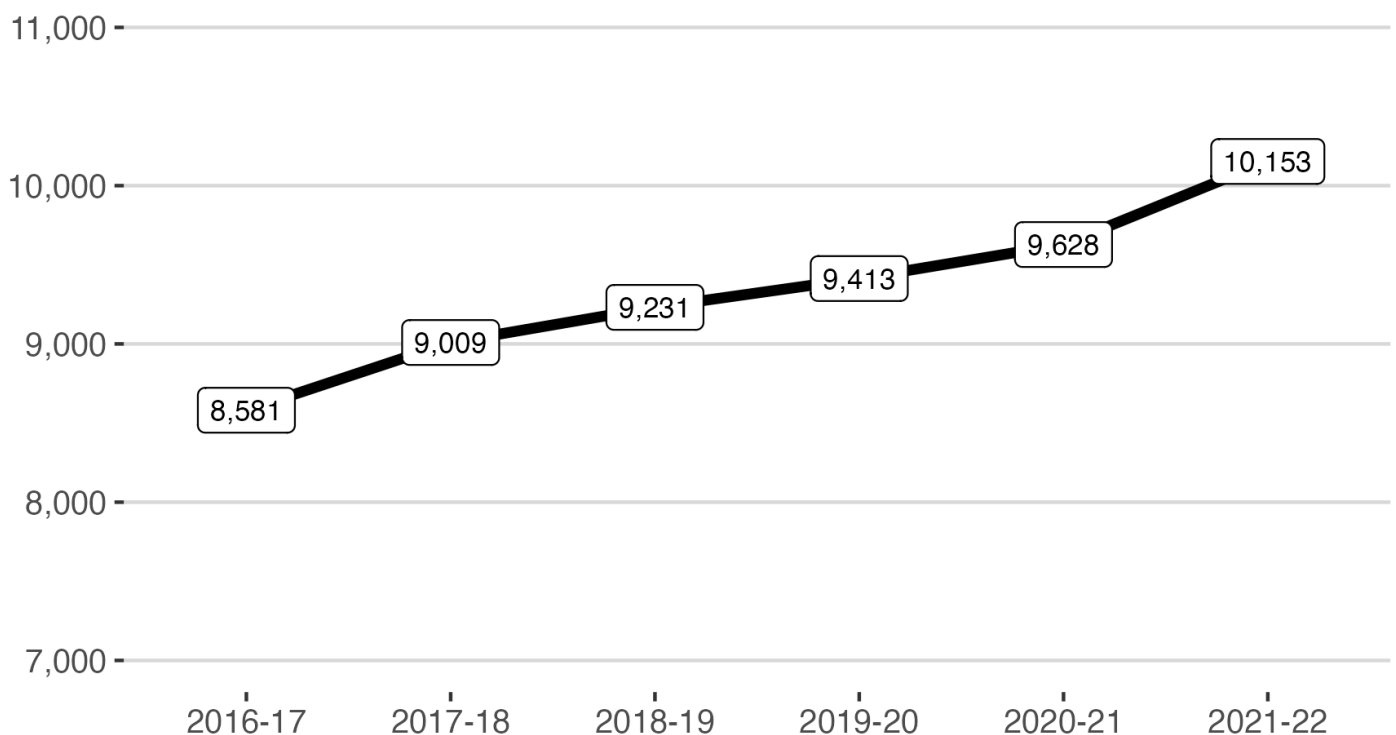
## Definition of the Indicator

California provides specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities. This instruction is provided in a variety of settings that allow infants and their families, preschoolers, students, and young adults to be educated with their peers as much as possible; that is, in the least restrictive environment. Special education services are available in a variety of settings, including day-care settings, preschool, regular classrooms, classrooms that emphasize specially designed instruction, the community, and the work environment. The disability categories and enrollment breakdown in California for individuals who received special education services are as follows: autism, near-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hard of hearing, intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment.

## Why the Indicator is Important

SPED enrollment is a key component in addressing the needs of all students and being able to deliver an enriched learning experience. Accurate student count affects funding to provide the necessary supports.

## Students with Disabilities Enrollment in Monterey County



Source: Cumulative Enrollment Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/filesenrcum.asp>

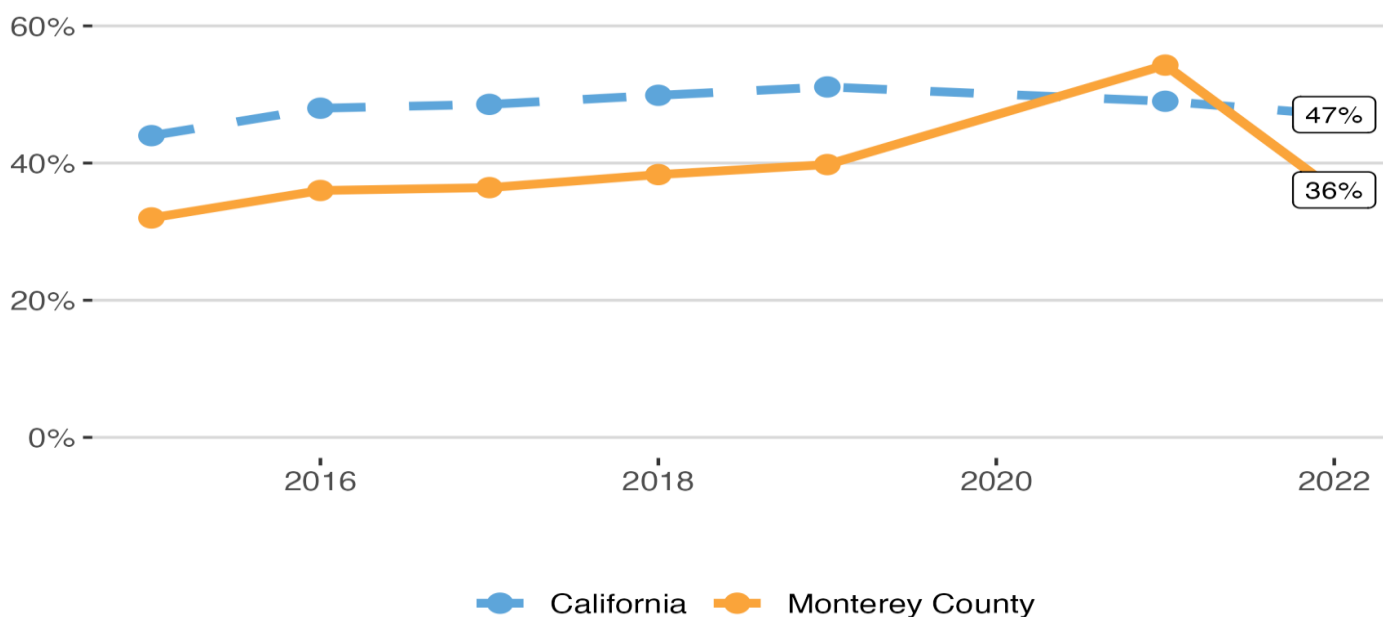
### Definition of the Indicator

California's academic standards – what we want students to know and be able to do – are designed so students graduate ready for college and/or career. One way student progress is measured is through computer-based assessments, for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. These assessments were created to gauge each student's performance in English Language Arts. Because the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) tests are given statewide, they provide an opportunity to measure the skills of all students against the same academic standards. The tests are computer-adaptive, allowing more precise measurement of individual skills. Parents receive a written report of their child's scores and can compare progress from one year to the next.

### Why the Indicator is Important

The purpose of the CAASPP system is to assist teachers, administrators, students, and parents to better understand academic performance in order to improve student achievement in California's Academic Content Standards.

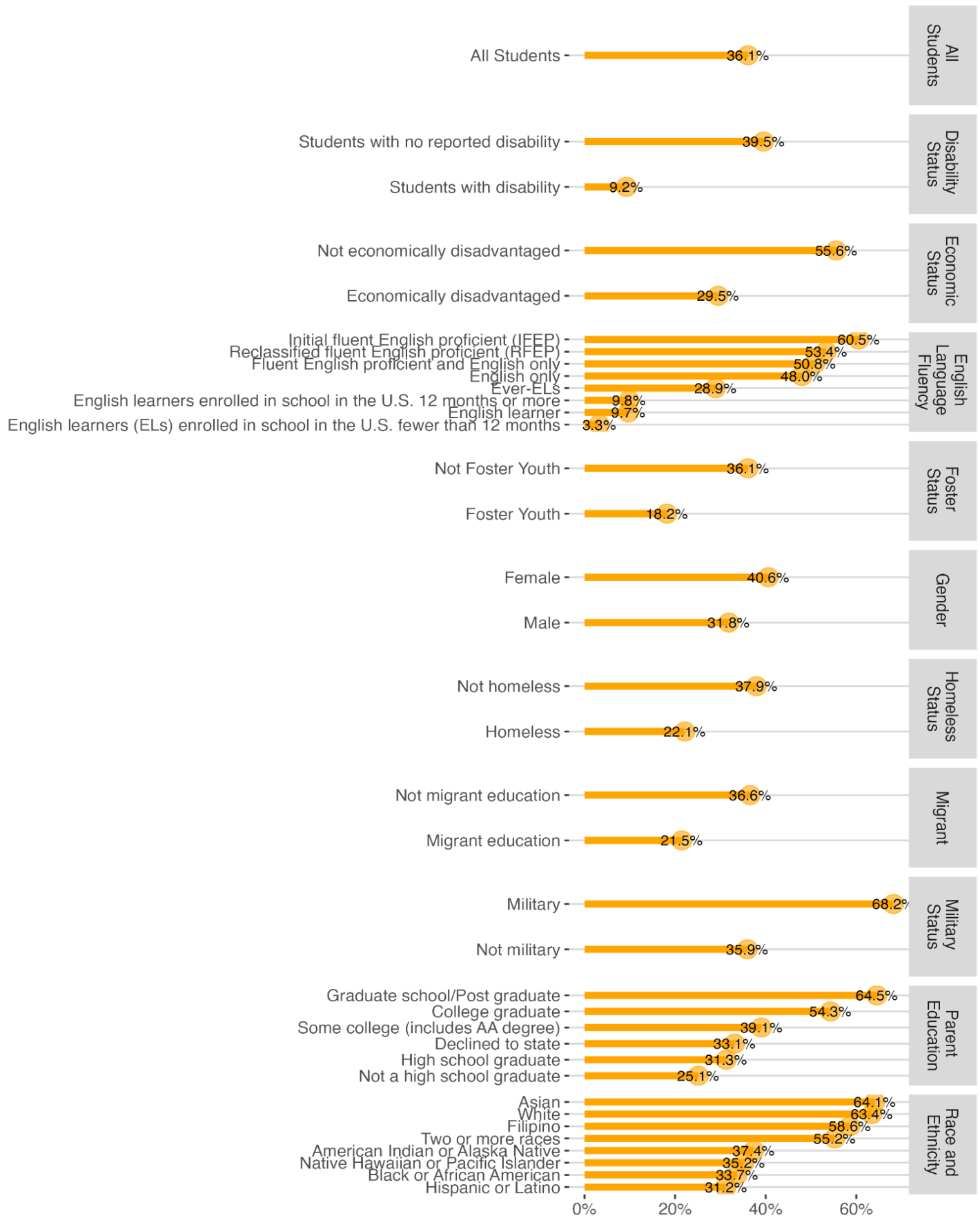
### ELA Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Rates Over Time



Source: CAASPP Research Files  
<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/ResearchFileList>

Note: Only about a tenth of eligible students took the CAASPP ELA and Math tests in spring of 2021. As a reminder, districts were able to determine the most viable assessment to implement. In Monterey County six districts elected to use the CAASPP ELA and Math tests. Because of the many unique circumstances last spring combined with the low numbers of students taking the state tests, it is not appropriate to analyze county level results and how they compare to other years.

# ELA Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Rates by Student Group



Source: CAASPP Research Files  
<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/ResearchFileList>

### Definition of the Indicator

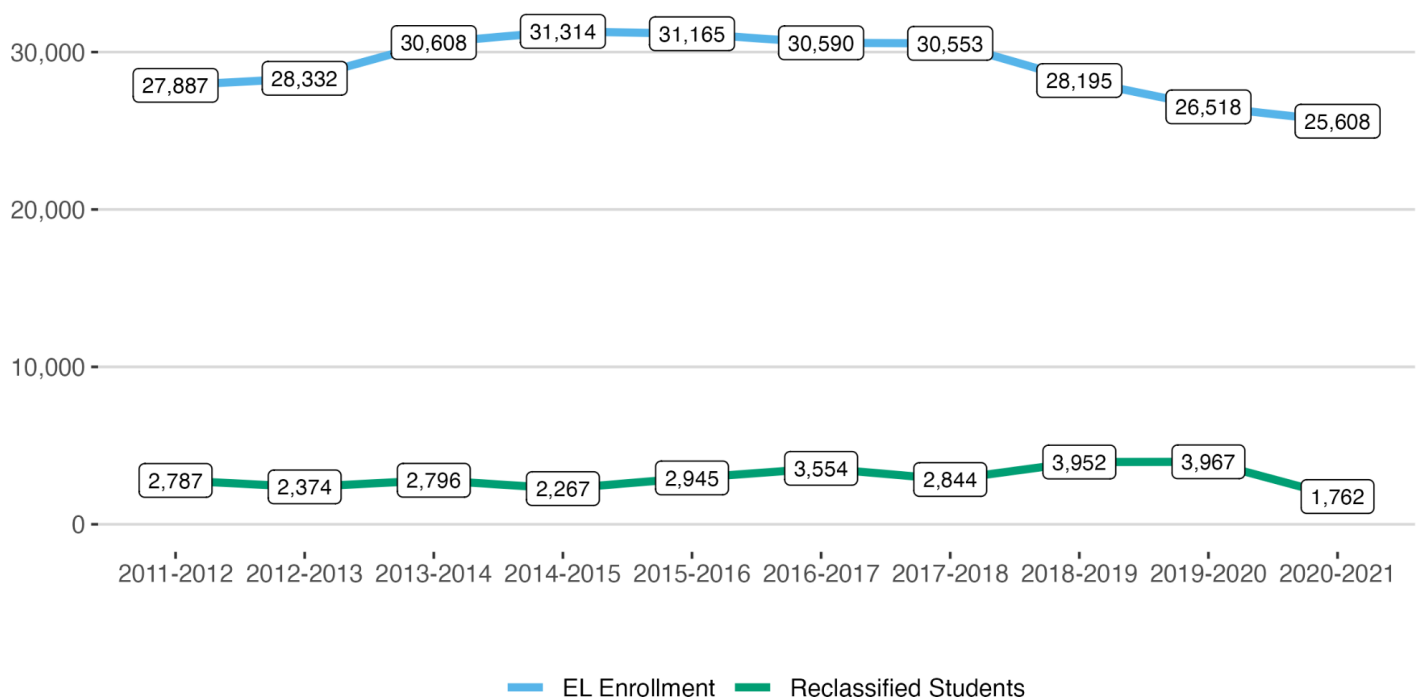
Enrollment is based on reclassification numbers identifying the entire English Learner (EL) population. English Learner students are those students for whom (1) parents report of a primary language other than English on the state-approved Home Language Survey **and** (2) who lack English-language skills based on the state approved assessment (Initial ELPAC) in listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing which are necessary to succeed in the school's regular instructional programs. EL students are reclassified according to the multiple criteria including assessment results (Summative ELPAC) and district-adopted standards that demonstrate that students have an English-language proficiency comparable to that of average native English speakers.

### Why the Indicator is Important

Knowing the size of the population in question helps to determine the scale and scope of efforts needed to support the population. EL students may need additional English Language Development support to create equitable learning environments. This helps ensure that English learners acquire full proficiency in English as rapidly and effectively as possible and attain parity with native speakers of English.

The EL reclassification rate gauges the success of meeting the state goal to have students redesignated as English proficient. Becoming English proficient is a step towards growth by aiding EL students to succeed with peers whose primary language is English. Reclassification also allows students more opportunities to take additional elective courses.

EL Enrollment and Number of Reclassified Students by Year



Source: EL Reclassification Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesreclass.asp>

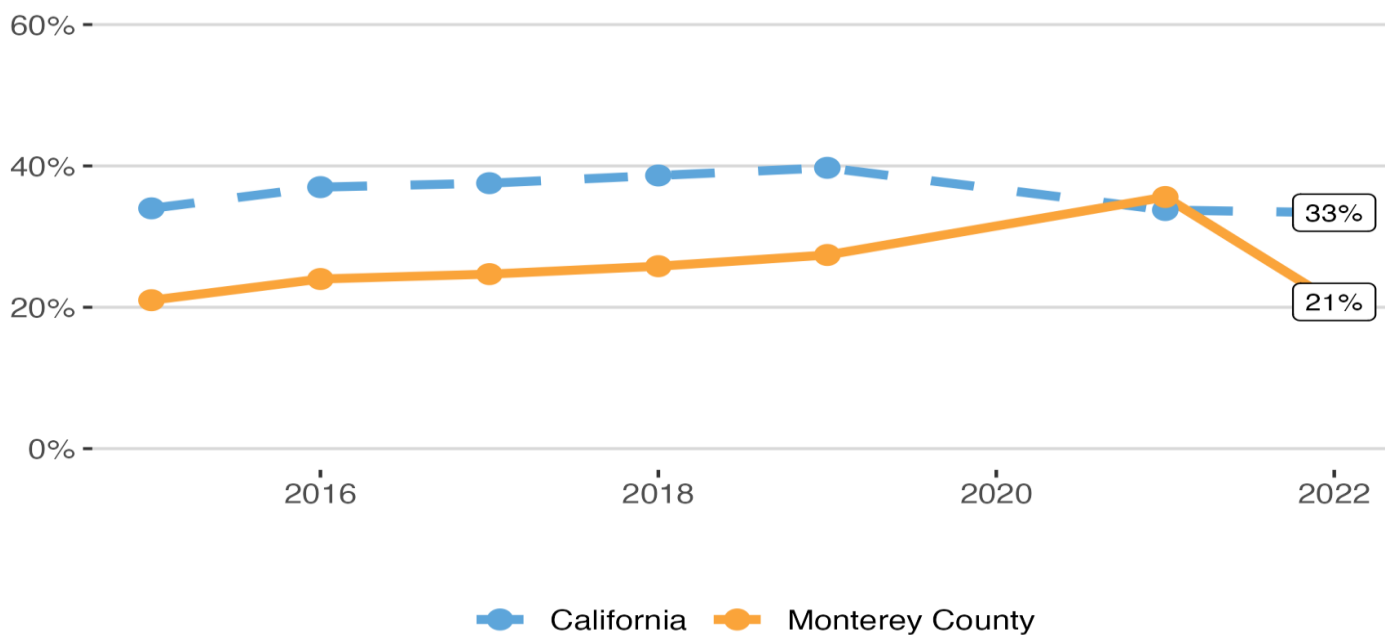
### Definition of the Indicator

California's academic standards – what we want students to know and be able to do – are designed so students graduate ready for college and/or career. One way student progress is measured is through computer-based assessments, for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. These assessments were created to gauge each student's performance in mathematics. Because CAASPP tests are given statewide, they provide an opportunity to measure the skills of all students against the same academic standards. The tests are computer-adaptive, allowing more precise measurement of individual skills. Parents receive a written report of their child's scores and can compare progress from one year to the next.

### Why the Indicator is Important

The primary purpose of the CAASPP System is to assist teachers, administrators, students, and parents by promoting high-quality teaching and learning through the use of a variety of assessment approaches and item types. These assessments are a measure of student achievement in the grade level standards adopted by the California State Board of Education.

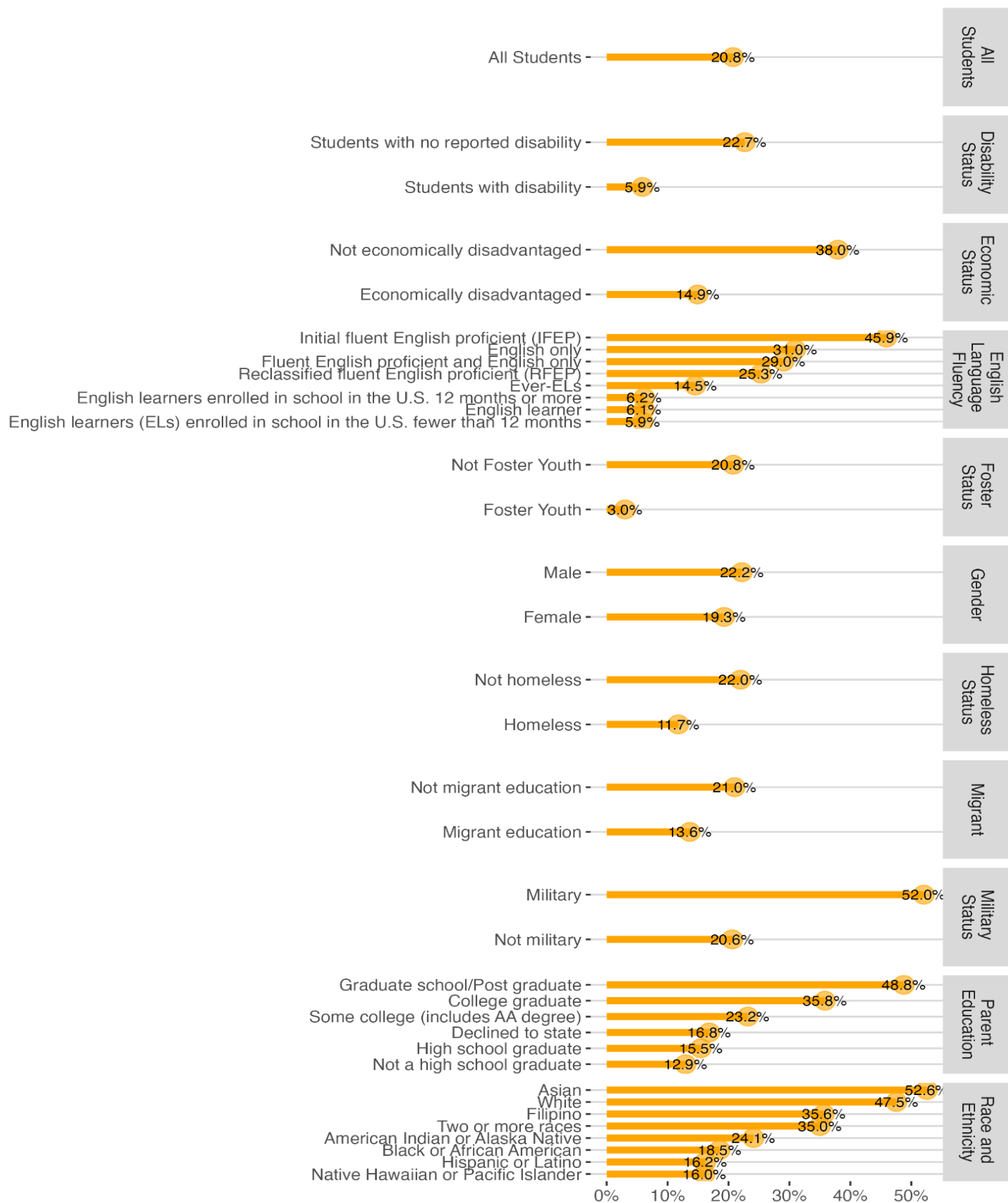
## Math Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Rates Over Time



Source: CAASPP Research Files  
<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/ResearchFileList>

Note: Only about a tenth of eligible students took the CAASPP ELA and Math tests in spring of 2021. As a reminder, districts were able to determine the most viable assessment to implement. In Monterey County six districts elected to use the CAASPP ELA and Math tests. Because of the many unique circumstances last spring combined with the low numbers of students taking the state tests, it is not appropriate to analyze county level results and how they compare to other years.

# Math Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Rates by Student Group



Source: CAASPP Research Files  
<https://caaspp-elpac.cde.ca.gov/caaspp/ResearchFileList>

## Definition of the Indicator

The Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate (ACGR) is the number of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma, divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. The four-year cohort is based on the number of students who enter grade 9 for the first time adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during grade 9 or during the next three years and subtracting any student from the cohort who transfers out, emigrates to another country, transfers to a prison or juvenile facility, or dies during that same period. Graduation data, including DASS graduation data, are reported in the CALPADS by LEAs and extracted via the CALPADS ODS.

For the ACGR, a “regular high school diploma” is the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in a state that is fully aligned with the state’s standards and does not include a general equivalency diploma (GED), certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or any other similar or lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals.

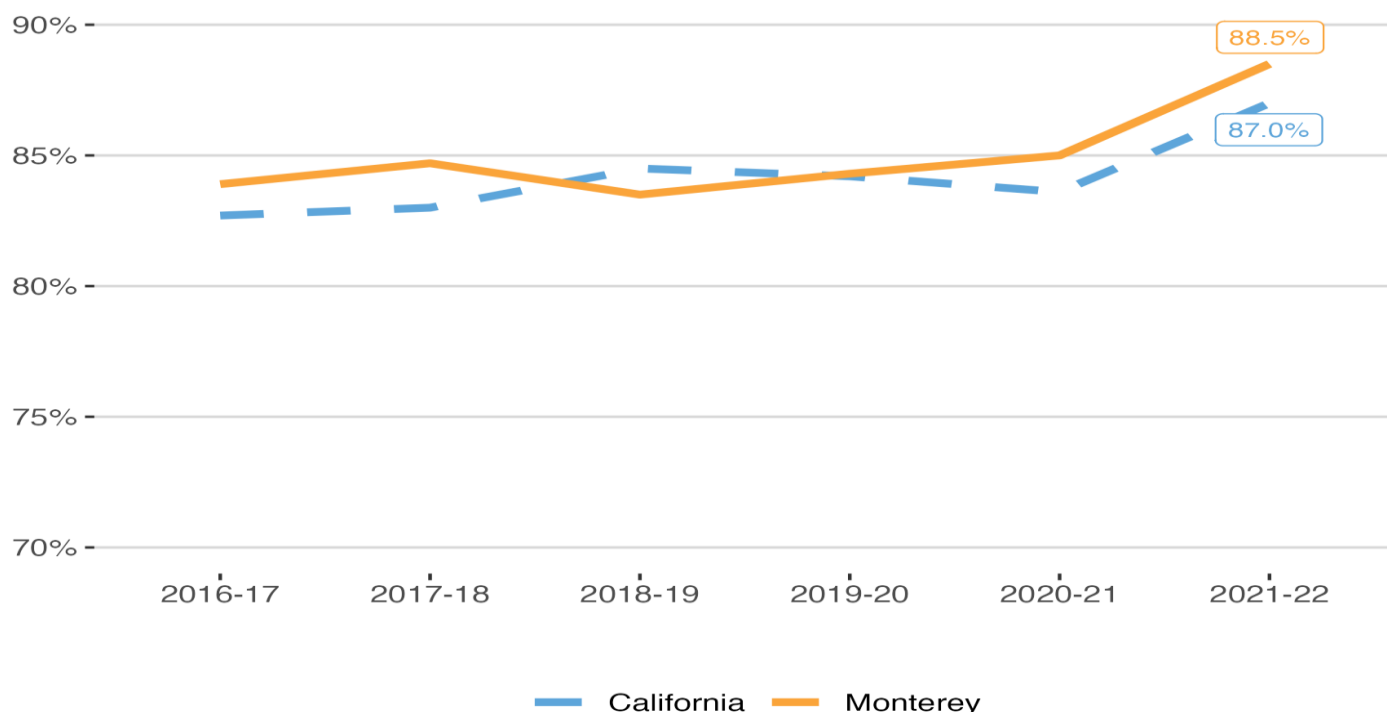
The figures reported here include all charter schools and DASS schools.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Education provides the foundation for young people to realize their fullest potential as productive, successful members of society. The graduation rate is a standard measure of basic academic competence. It is generally considered a minimum requirement for entry into the professional workforce and is an essential prerequisite for additional education and training.

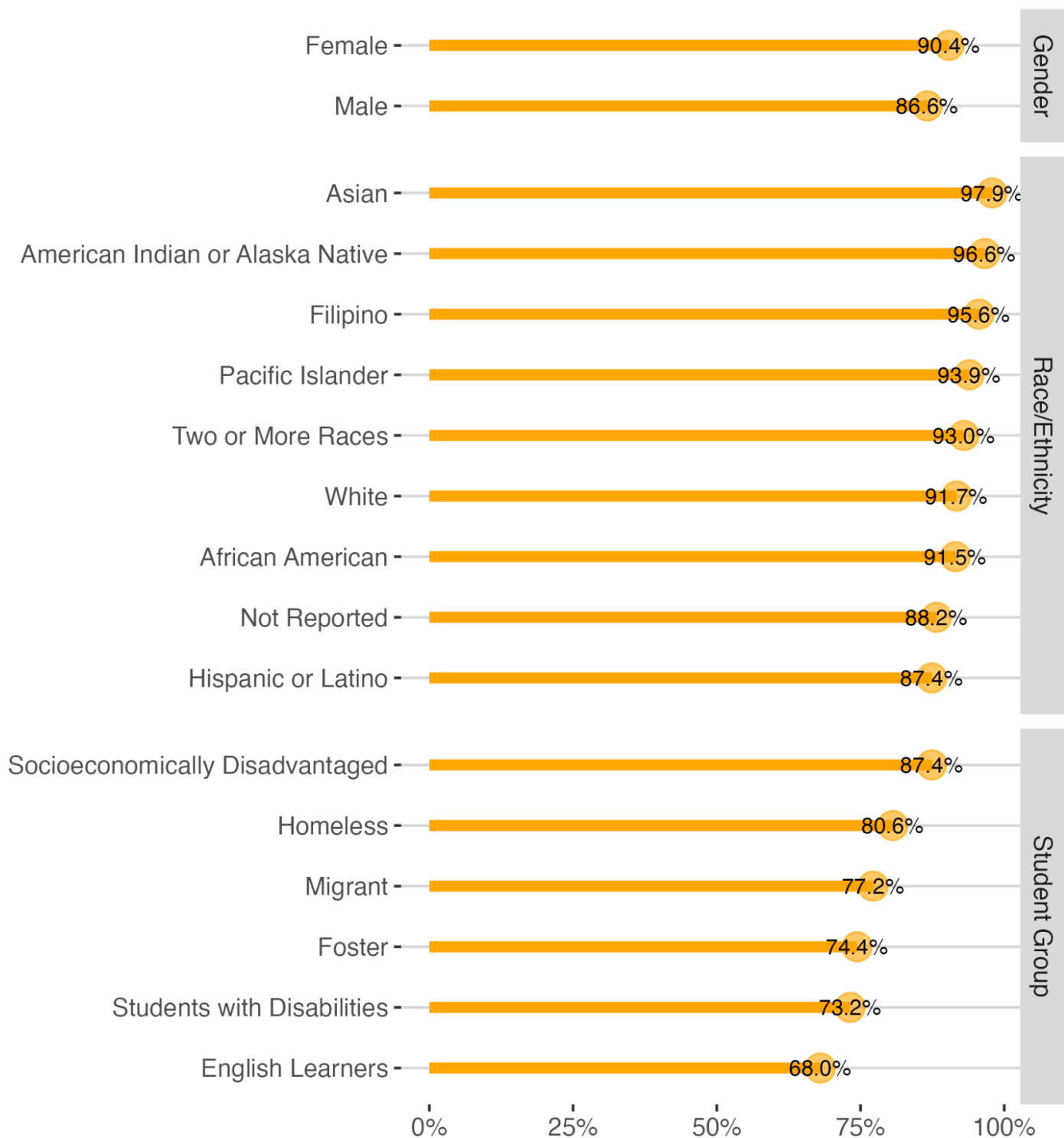
Greater economic earnings, health and social well-being correlate strongly with educational level

## Graduation Rates Over Time



Source: Adjusted Cohort Outcome Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesacgr.asp>

## Graduation Rates by Student Group



Source: Adjusted Cohort Outcome Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesacgr.asp>

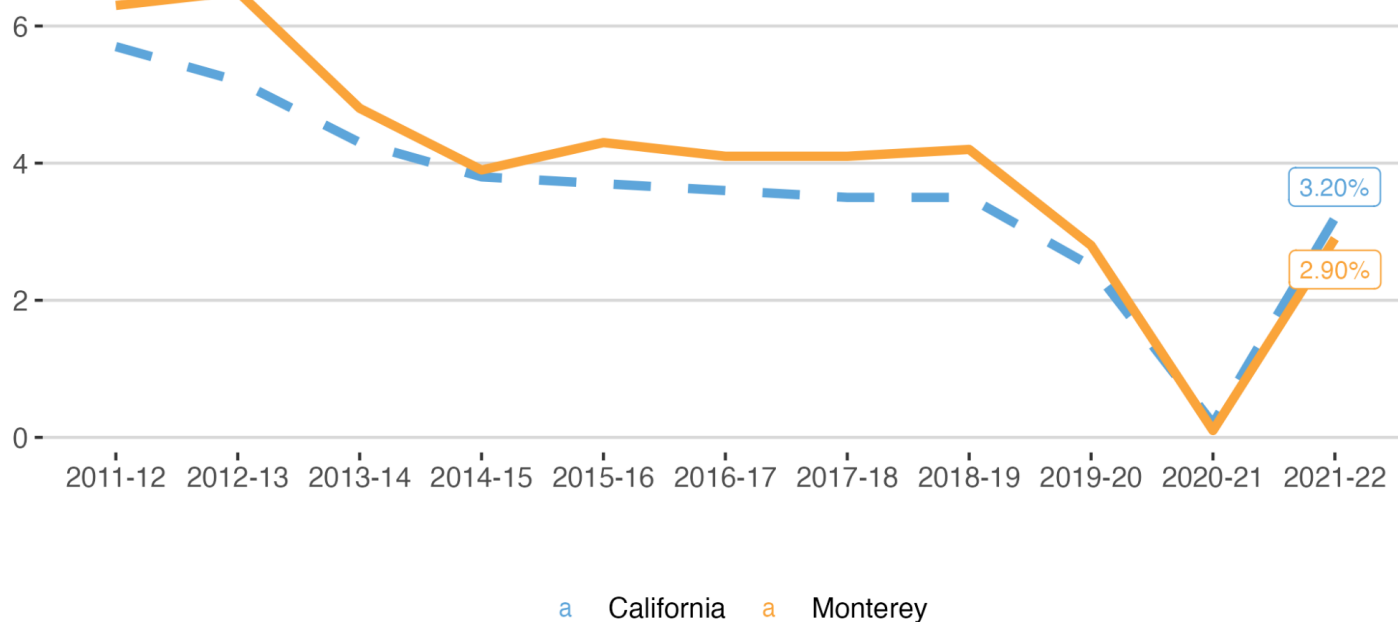
## Definition of the Indicator

The Suspension Rate indicator is based on the number of students who were suspended at least once in the current school year. Note: If a student was suspended more than once in the school year, they are counted only once. The Suspension Rate is calculated by dividing the number of students suspended for an aggregate total of one full day in the current year by the cumulative enrollment. For this measure the desired outcome is a low suspension rate.

## Why the Indicator is Important

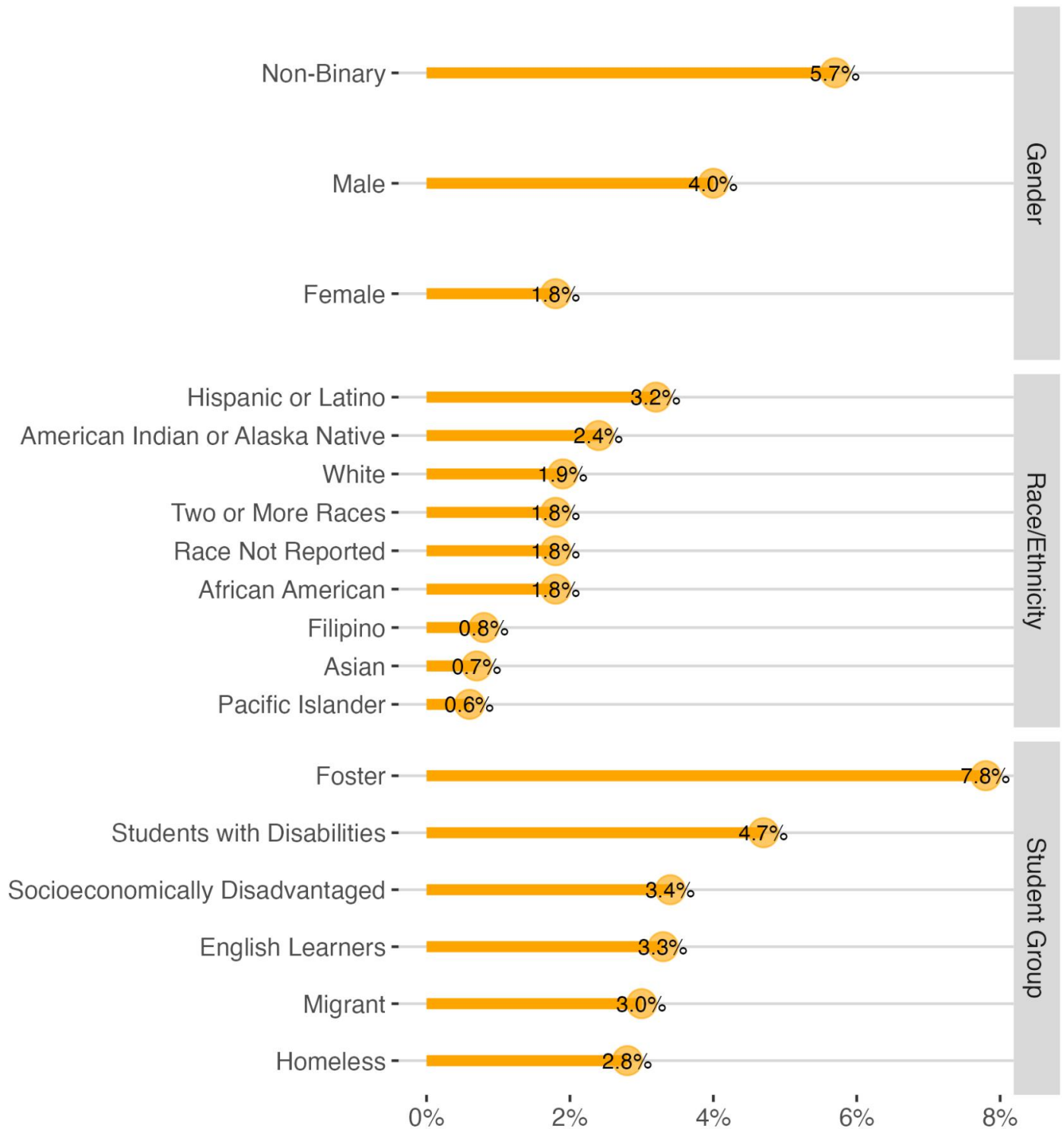
Effectively improving the school climate and creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment begins with keeping kids in the classroom. Exploring suspension rates can identify challenges of school culture and climate and identify students most affected.

### K-12 Suspension Rates Over Time



Source: Suspension Data Files  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/files/sd.asp>

# K-12 Suspension Rates By Subgroup



Source: Suspension Data Files  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesd.asp>

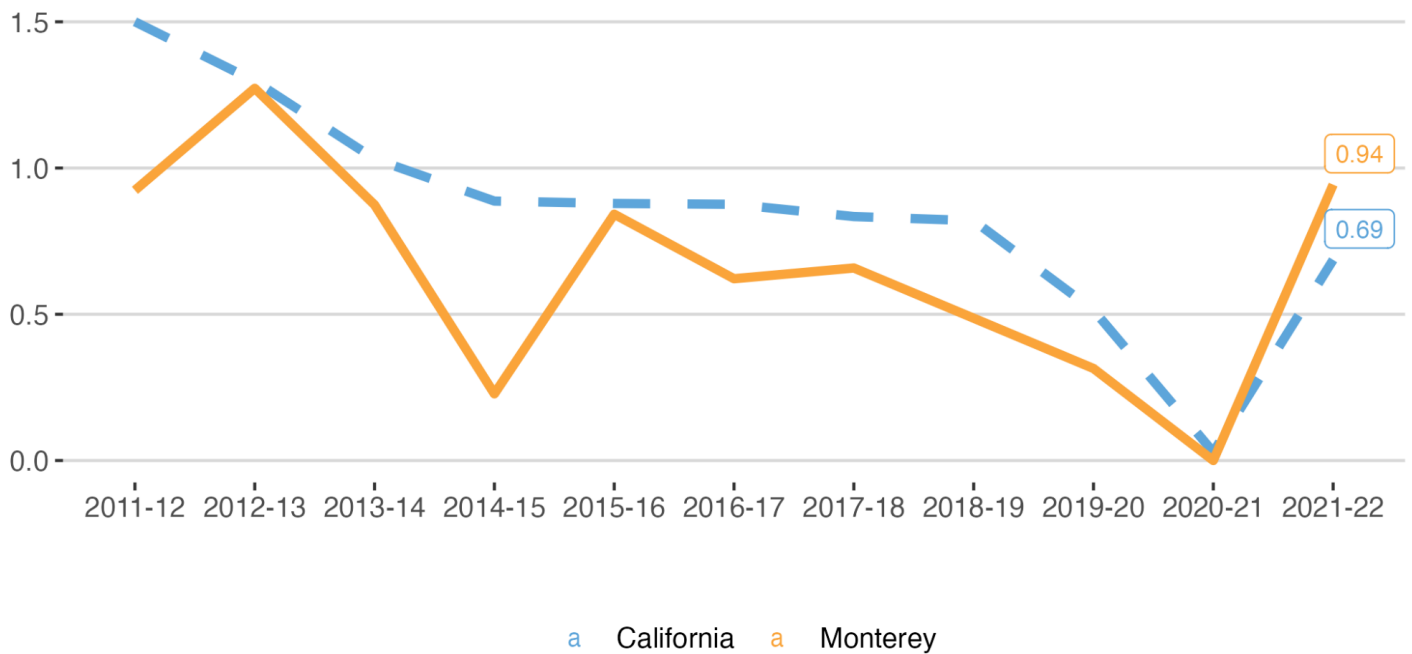
## Definition of the Indicator

Discipline data are submitted by local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools to the California Department of Education (CDE) as part of the annual End of Year 3 (EOY 3) data submission in the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS). Offenses that students may be expelled for include violent incidents, weapons possessions, controlled substances incidents, and defiance.

## Why the Indicator is Important

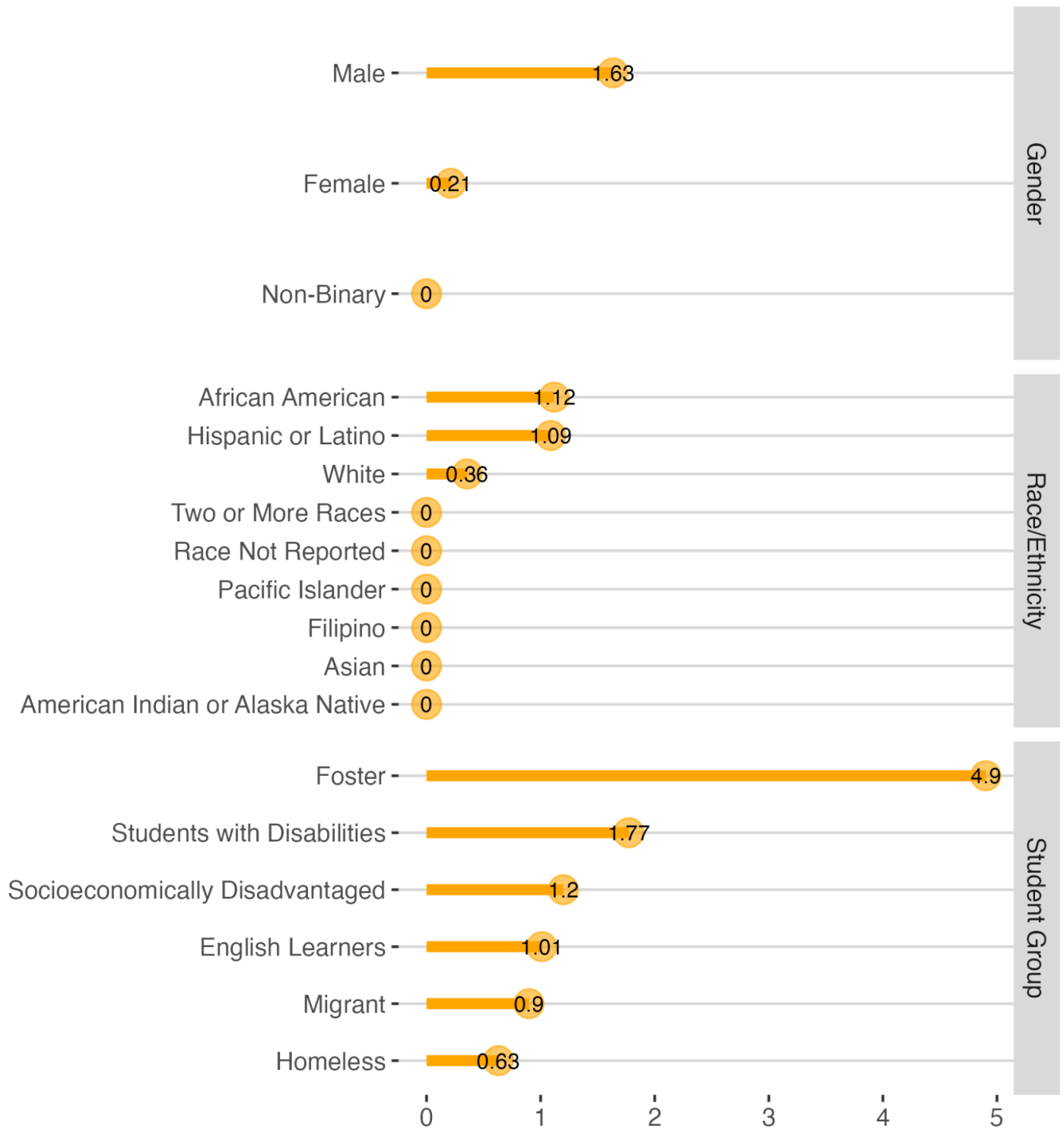
Expulsions indicate students for whom their educational and social system has not been successful. There were no expulsions in Monterey County in 2020-21 due to school closures during the pandemic . County and school district superintendents develop plans that outline individualized educational alternatives for expelled students that identify gaps in educational services to them and develop strategies for filling those service gaps. The goals of the plan are to ensure that expelled students have appropriate options; decrease the dropout rate; and increase the graduation rate.

K-12 Expulsion Rates per 1,000 Over Time



Source: Expulsion Data Files  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesed.asp>

# K-12 Expulsion Rates per 1,000 By Subgroup



Source: Expulsion Data Files  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesesd.asp>

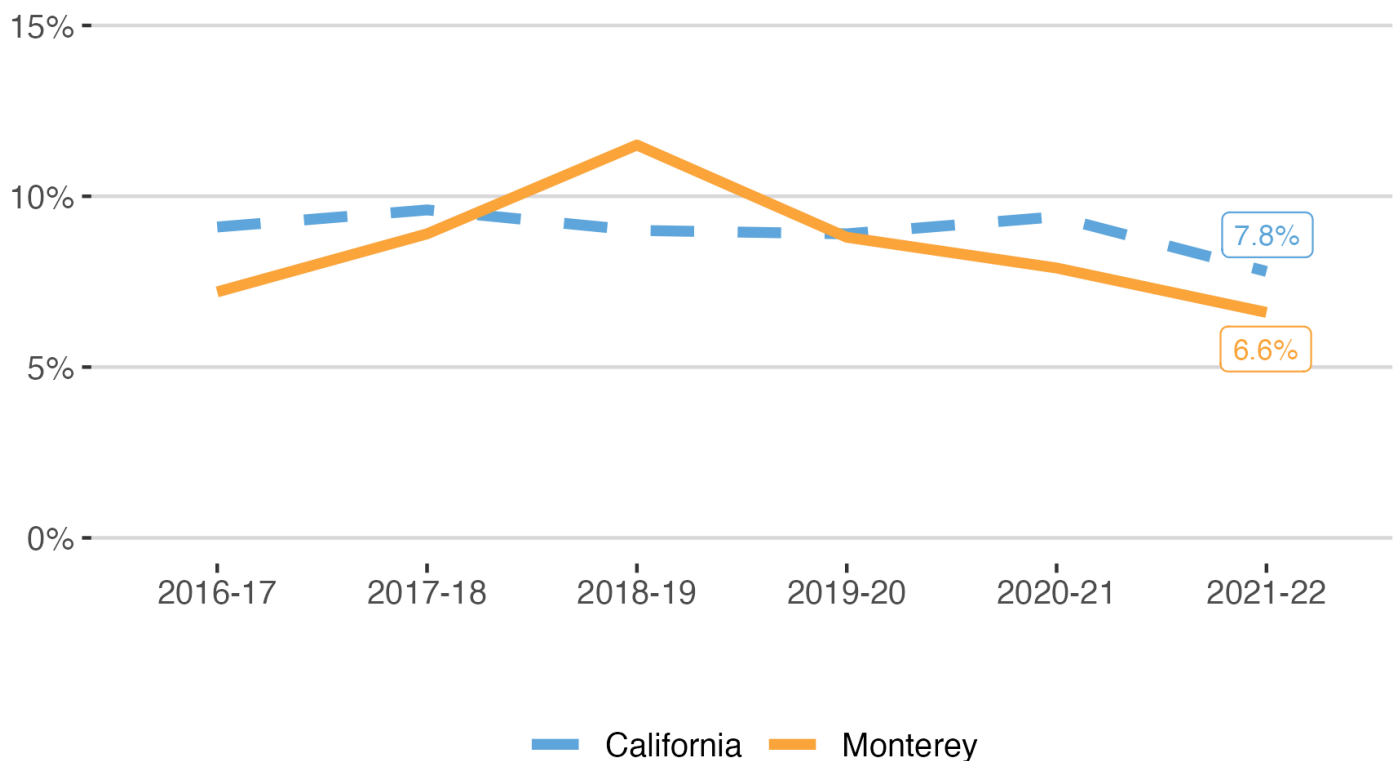
## Definition of the Indicator

The number of students who dropped out from the cohort. The four-year cohort is based on the number of students who enter grade 9 for the first time adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during grade 9 or during the next three years and subtracting any student from the cohort who transfers out, emigrates to another country, transfers to a prison or juvenile facility, or dies during that same period.

## Why the Indicator is Important

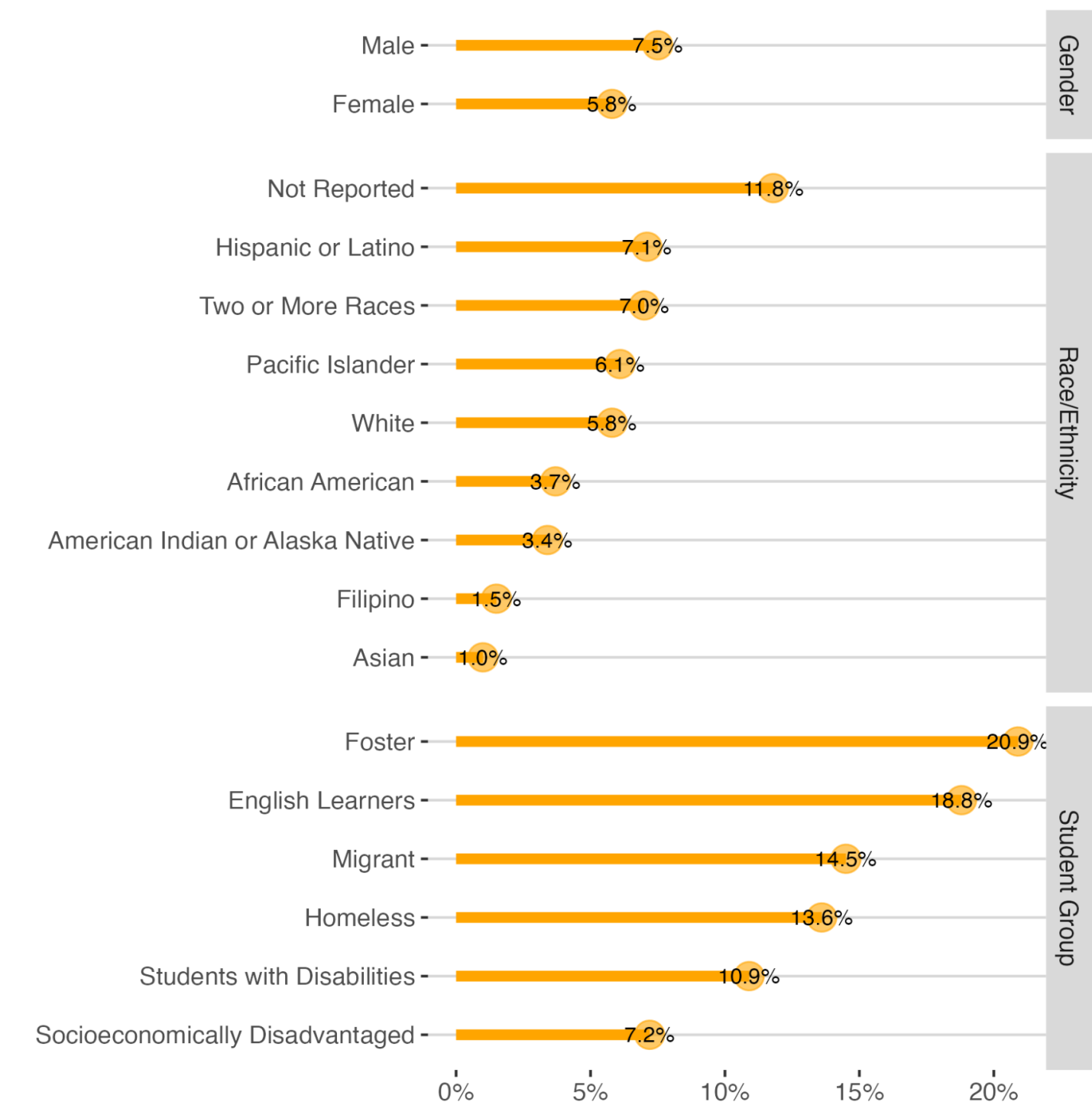
Students who fail to complete high school are less likely to find and keep a good job. It is generally considered a minimum requirement for entry into the professional workforce and is an essential prerequisite for additional education and training, greater economic earnings, health and social well-being correlate strongly with educational level.

## Dropout Rates Over Time



Source: Adjusted Cohort Outcome Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesacgr.asp>

# Dropout Rates by Student Group



Source: Adjusted Cohort Outcome Data  
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sd/sd/filesacgr.asp>

## Definition of Indicator

The rate of live births to teen mothers 15 to 19 years of age per 1000 births to the same age group during a specific year.

## Why the Indicator is Important

The impact of giving birth as a teen can have negative consequences for both the mother and the child. Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school or college and are more likely to require public assistance and live in poverty than their peers who are not mothers.

Research demonstrates that birth to teen mothers is highly correlated to economically disadvantaged communities or families, poor educational achievement, low self-esteem, substance abuse or behavioral problems, and in turn being the child of a teen mother.

Year range	3-year rolling rate (per 1000)
2014-2016	30.6
2015-2017	28.4
2016-2018	26.5
2017-2019	25.4
2018-2020	23.8
2019-2021	19.9

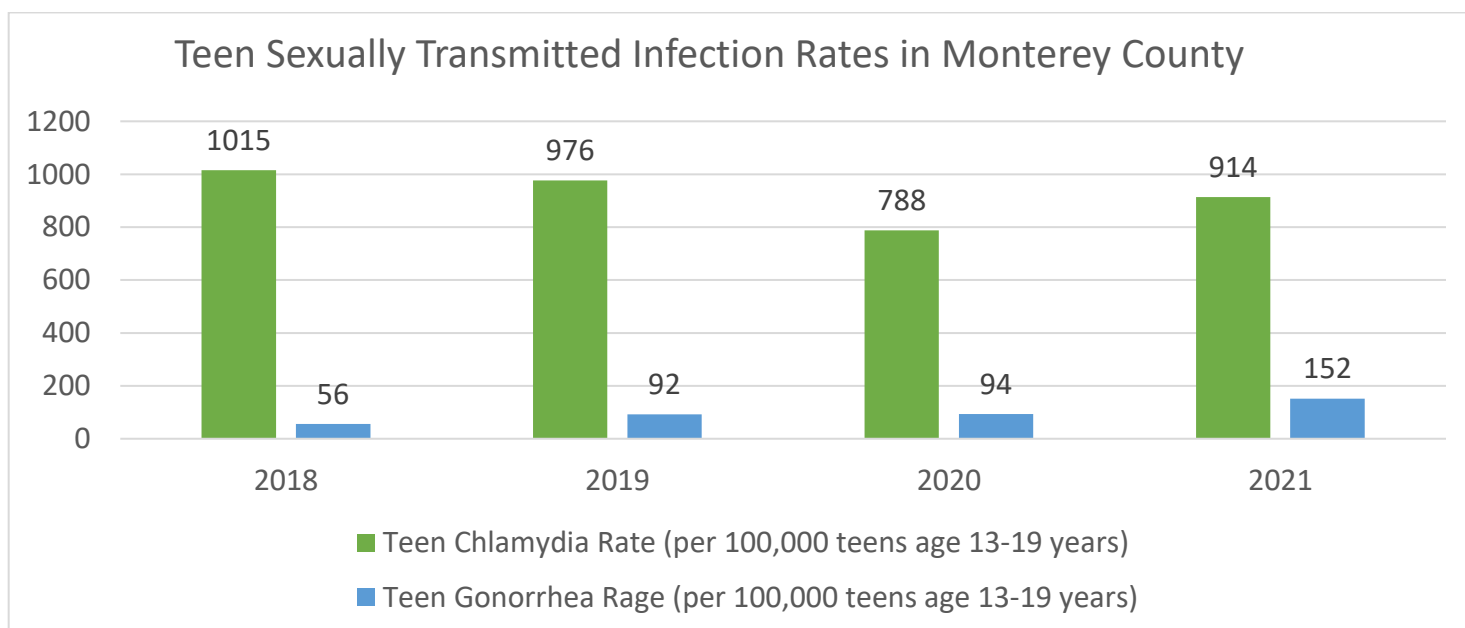
# Sexually Transmitted Infection Cases

## Definition of Indicator

Number of reported chlamydia and gonorrhea cases among youth ages 13-19.

## Why the Indicator is Important

While chlamydia and gonorrhea are treatable, left untreated, they may cause long-term harm including reproductive health issues, fetal and premature problems, and increased sexual transmissions.



Source: Communicable Disease Data: Monterey County Health Department, Communicable Disease Unit. Birth Information: State of California, California Department of Public Health, VRBIS, California Comprehensive Birth File. Population Data: State of California, Department of Finance, Population Estimates. Analysis by Monterey County Health Department, Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit. Data updated 1/18/2023.

## Definition of Indicator

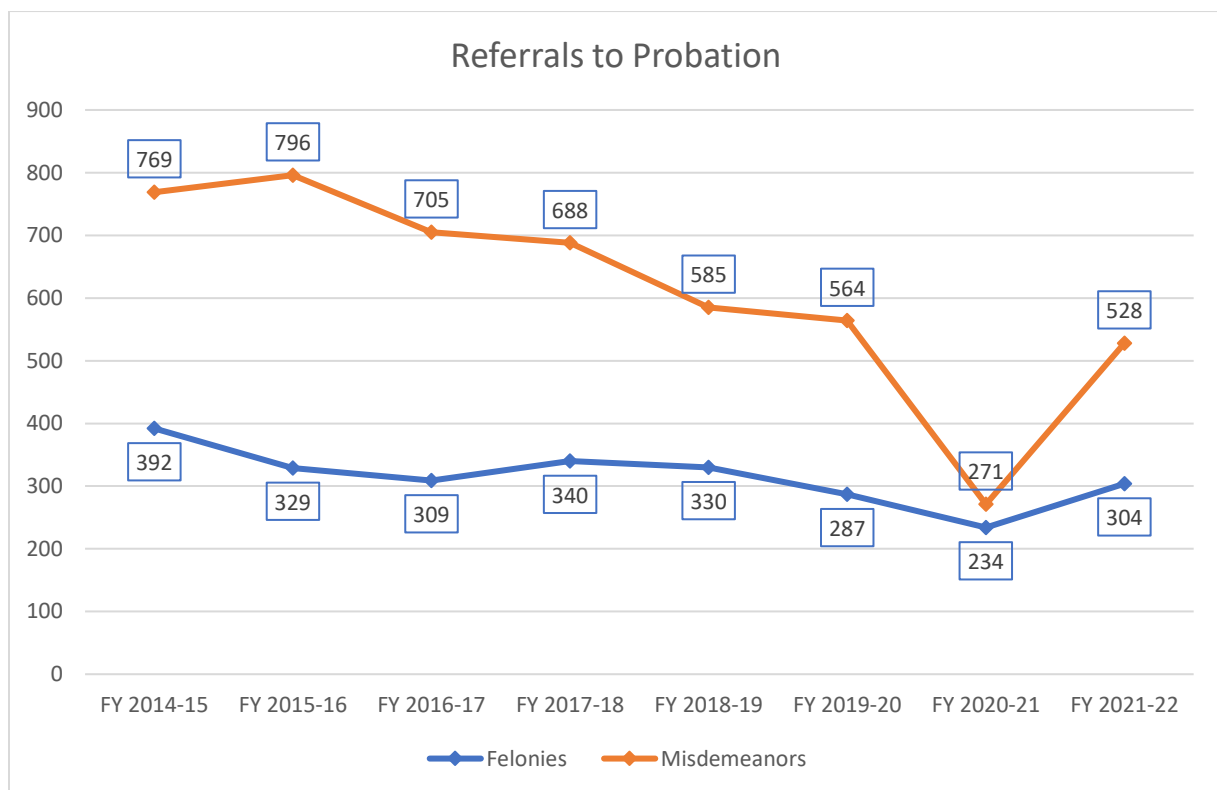
Rates of arrest are perhaps the most widely quoted indicator of crime. It is important to make the distinction between minor crimes, misdemeanors, and more severe crimes, felonies, which may impose a more stringent sentence. Misdemeanor arrests refer to the number of arrests of youth ages 12 to 17 for less serious or less violent offenses, such as petty theft, vandalism or trespassing. Felony arrests indicate the number of arrests of youth ages 12 to 17 for more serious or more violent offenses, such as homicide, forcible rape, robbery, assault and kidnapping.

It is also important to note that this definition is based upon the number of arrests rather than the number of individual offenders, and that an arrest is not a conviction. A single youth may be arrested several times a year, so arrests do not necessarily match the actual number of juvenile offenders. More often than not, felony arrests exceed the actual number of juveniles charged with felony crimes.

## Why the Indicator is Important

Youth crime is an important factor in community safety. Additionally, youth who engage in criminal activities are exhibiting self-destructive behavior. As a risk factor, early offenders recidivate at high rates, often well into adulthood. Furthermore, adults who are arrested for the most serious and violent crimes are more likely to have been youthful offenders than are adults who commit lesser crimes.

Arrests for violent crimes are an indicator of more severe risk factors than any other type of arrest. A low level of youth violence in society may be viewed as an indicator of young people's ability to control their behavior, as well as the adequacy of pro-social agents such as families, peers, schools, and other institutions to guide youth behavior to acceptable norms. Violence affects the quality of life of young people who experience, witness or feel threatened by it. In addition to the direct physical harm suffered by young victims of serious violence, such violence can adversely affect the victims' mental health and development and increase the likelihood that they themselves will commit acts of serious violence.



Source: Monterey County Probation Department, IT Case Management system, Smart Probation 2022.

## Definition of the Indicator:

The death by suicide rate of children under age 18 is reported as both number of individuals and as a percentage. Where the number of suicide deaths is less than 10 among children less than 18 years of age actual numbers are redacted. The age-adjusted rates are rates that would have existed if the population under study had the same age distribution as the "standard" population and is a way to make fairer comparisons between groups or counties with different age distributions. The age-adjusted suicide death rate in Monterey County is 11 per 100,000. The Coroner's data for the last 10 years indicates that on an average, 19% of suicide deaths were among children less than 18 years of age.

Suicide ideation and attempts data are widely under-reported. Specifically for suicide attempts among children, since 2013 due to ICD code changes, attempts data is incomplete. The suicide ideation data is based on the responses to the question in CHIS survey among Monterey County residents- *During the past 12 months, did you ever seriously consider attempting suicide?* The percentages data indicate "yes" to this question.

## Why the Indicator is Important

The death of a child is tragic. Suicide is a serious public health problem in the US and has lasting effects on individuals, families, and communities. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the overall mental health challenges for children and youth as a result of isolation, fear, stress, and uncertainty. Research indicates that mental health concerns, trauma (including suspected or confirmed abuse, neglect, and domestic violence), family-related problems (including divorce, custody disputes, parental substance use, family history of suicide or mental health concerns), or school problems (including expulsion, changing schools, suspension, bullying) were contributing factors for children who died by suicide. Further, research suggests young children who attempt suicide are six times more likely than their peers to attempt suicide again once they enter adolescence. To prevent subsequent child and youth suicide attempts and prevent child death it is important to address risk factors at the individual, family, and community level. Key prevention strategies include: building individual and family resilience (promoting connectedness, develop support networks, increased coping skills and parenting skills), building protective environments, strengthening economic supports for families, increasing awareness of mental health and suicide risk factors, and increasing access and delivery of mental health care.

[Note: Data above is not yet available for 2021-2022 as of January 20, 2023.]



Data Source: Monterey County Coroner's office, US Census Bureau

References: <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/index.html>

Ruch, D. A., Heck, K. M., Sheftall, A. H., Fontanella, C. A., Stevens, J., Zhu, M., Horowitz, L. M., Campo, J. V., & Bridge, J. A. (2021). Characteristics and precipitating circumstances of suicide among children aged 5 to 11 years in the United States, 2013-2017. *JAMA network open*, 4(7), e2115683-e2115683.

Yard E, Radhakrishnan L, Ballesteros MF, et al. Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Suicide Attempts Among Persons Aged 12–25 Years Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January 2019–May 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2021;70:888–894.

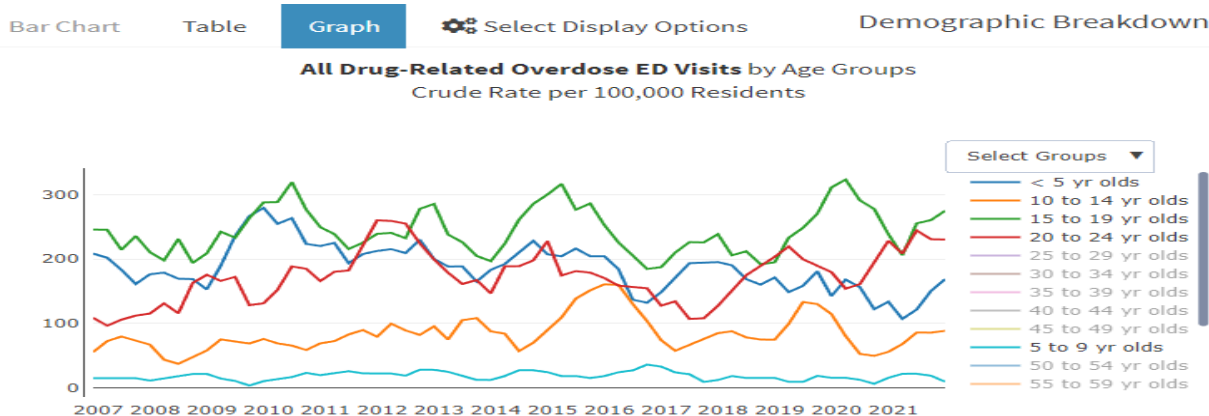
Note: This new indicator was added to last year's report based on COVID-19 impacts on children and youth to assure we continue to monitor these indicators as our community shifts to recover from COVID-19 impacts.

## Definition of Indicator:

Crude Rate per 100,000 residents for all drug-related overdose Emergency Department visits in Monterey County by year by age groups for those up to 24 years of age.

## Why the Indicator is Important

This indicator shows the trends of Emergency Department visits for overdose in the Monterey County youth over this time period. All drug overdose emergency department visits caused by non-fatal acute poisonings due to the effects of drugs, regardless of intent (e.g., suicide, unintentional, or undetermined). Emergency department visits related to late effects, adverse effects, and chronic poisonings due to the effects of drugs (e.g., damage to organs from long-term drug use), are excluded from this indicator.



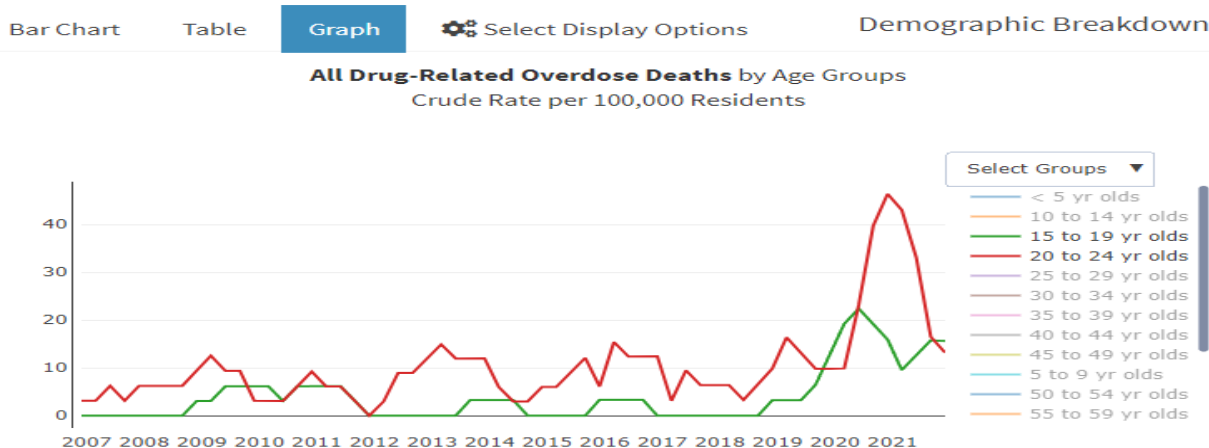
# Substance Abuse and Fatal Overdoses in Youth

## Definition of Indicator:

Crude Rate per 100,000 residents for drug related overdose deaths by year for the age groups of 15-24 years of age.

## Why the Indicator is Important

This indicator is reflective of the lives lost to drug overdose in teens and young adults.



Note: These new indicators were added to this year's report based on COVID-19 impacts on children and youth to assure we continue to monitor these indicators as our community shifts to recover from COVID-19 impacts.

Source: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/> CDPH California Overdose Surveillance Dashboard and Monterey County Prescribe Safe

# Initiatives and Areas of Focus

## Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative

In 2012, the Monterey County Children's Council launched the Early Childhood Development Initiative in a place-based approach to holistically supporting young children and their families. Since then, its scope has broadened to a countywide approach, the name "Bright Beginnings" was added, and it became the steward of the early childhood related goals within the Bright Futures Education Partnership cradle to career initiative.

In 2018, a strategic framework was launched to guide the Initiative. This Framework, "Together, preparing every child for life and school," defines a common goal and guiding principles, and prioritizes the collaborative efforts of the multi-sector, multi-disciplinary partners. The Bright Beginnings backbone team supports the Initiative by shepherding the strategic framework, supporting collaborative projects, and by providing continuous communications and accountability through a shared measurement system. The Early Childhood Development Advisory Group provides insights and advice on direction and priorities of the Initiative, which is funded by diverse funding streams, hosted by First 5 Monterey County, and ultimately governed by the Children's Council.

In 2021-2022, Bright Beginnings continued supporting child care and education providers through the still changing landscape of the COVID pandemic, initiated a year-long strategic planning process for the Maternal Mental Health Task Force, re-engaged the network of capacity builders for Family, Friend and Neighbor Child Caregivers, and engaged with business and economic development leaders on the vital role quality child care and education plays in a thriving Monterey County. Read more about these success stories and more in the detailed Annual Report found in the Appendix. Also, visit [www.BrightBeginningsMC.org](http://www.BrightBeginningsMC.org) or on social media: @BrightBeginningsMC and @brightbeginmc.

## 2011: All Kids, *Our Kids*, Be There for Them Every Day

In 2011, Children's Council launched All Kids *Our Kids* based on the three assets all children and youth need in order to succeed in school and life: caring relationships, high expectations for all that they can be and do, and opportunities for meaningful participation. Children and youth thrive and succeed when these three assets are part of their life experience at home, in school, with their peers and in the community. The initiative grew out of the council's initial task force on "Graduating Healthy Students Prepared for Success" (see below).

The Children's Council is pleased to report that All Kids, *Our Kids* has been successfully launched from Children's Council as an independent program now known as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for All Kids (PBIS) and is housed in the Monterey County Office of Education.

## 2010: Graduating Healthy Students Prepared for Success

In 2010, the Children's Council conducted an inventory of initiatives and programs around the county that are directed at early childhood development, parent education, literacy, job training, and other efforts aimed at influencing positive outcomes for young people graduating from high school. With these initial tools, a task force on "Graduating Healthy Students" began. Building on research gathered and embracing the strengths-based philosophy of the earlier work of the Children's Council, this group worked on supporting the development of the expansion of community-driven resources and services that aim at improving educational outcomes for the children and youth and derive a process or model that serve the entire county.

This task force eventually expanded and focused in 2011 to become the All Kids, *Our Kids* Initiative, aimed at significantly impacting adult behavior to value, respect and know all children, through a framework of building developmental assets in children and youth from the pre-natal stage through high school graduation.

One result of the work of this task force was the development of benchmarks in the areas of physical and emotional health, social competence and civic engagement, and in academic and work preparedness that have become a basis for the presentation of many of the indicators of the council's annual reports over the years.

## 2008: Community Alliance for Safety and Peace

In 2008, the Children's Council began to direct efforts at finding ways to reduce violence and the influence of the culture of violence in our communities. In response to a rising rate of homicide and gun violence among young males, related to gang activity, the Council's Violence Prevention Subcommittee was formed. In 2009, the committee transitioned into a countywide coalition known as the Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (CASP). This alliance is made up of organizations and leaders of Salinas and Monterey County that are determined to reduce violence and build a better future for our children.

CASP's strategy for doing this has been developed in partnership with the community, uniting in a campaign called For Our Future/Para Nuestro Futuro. The strategy is based on four key principles:

- A single operational structure manages action and progress.
- Action is research and data-driven.
- The youth are at the center.
- There is deep and meaningful engagement with the community

CASP is made up of youth service organizations, county housing and health officials, local and state elected officials, criminal justice and law enforcement officials, educational leaders, business leaders, representatives

of the faith community, and private funding organizations. More than 30 organizations and leaders are involved.

While the immediate tragedy of gang violence continues to compel this effort, CASP seeks to achieve both a present and long-term benefit across the continuum of prevention, intervention, enforcement, and re- entry.

#### **2004: Transitional Housing (THP) for Probation Youth not in Placement**

In November of 2004, the Council appointed a committee to research the needs of transition age youth leaving the probation or child welfare systems. While many make substantial progress in the structured environment of the Youth Center, or drug recovery programs, their transition back into the community is often complicated by returning to unsafe or inappropriate housing which generated many of the original problems. The committee developed a plan for housing alternatives.

The Behavioral Health Division of the Health Department (BHD) included the recommendation to target youth exiting the youth center in the Mental Health Service Act (MHSA) plan submitted to the state in October 2005. A Request for Proposal for transition age youth housing was issued in January 2006 and a contract was awarded to Peacock Acres. Services began in January 2007, with one house continuing in operation and four youth being served. The Department of Social and Employment Services supported Peacock Acres to start a THPP+ program for youth exiting the Foster Care System. THPP+ began in early

2008 and provides housing for emancipated youth. CHISPA has also worked with Behavioral Health in creating a Transition Age Youth house. In 2009, Community Human Services opened Safe Passage, a transitional supportive housing program in Monterey, for homeless youth aged 18-21.

#### **2003: Children's Behavioral Health System of Care (La Familia Sana/The Healthy Family)**

In 2003, the Children's Council began a collaboration with the Monterey County Health Department, Behavioral Health Services to develop a comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and their Families. This was, and continues to be a groundbreaking local effort to establish a network of partnerships among Health, Probation, Social Services, Education, community-based

organizations, and families all with the intention of increasing the capacity of families to effectively address a wide variety of issues that affect their lives, through the implementation of evidence-based interventions.

In partnership with youth, families, and system of care collaborators, La Familia Sana/The Healthy Family builds on the strengths of its mental health services for children by improving interagency partnerships to provide seamless services, improving cultural competence, and including family members in all service levels. All programs are implemented through an integrated, collaborative, inter-agency System of Care.

The implementation was carried out with emphasis on system of care values, including:

- Honoring family and youth partnerships
- Striving for cultural competence at all system of care levels
- Collaborating with interagency partners to provide seamless services for children focusing on the individual needs of every child and family

Highlights Include:

- The Children's Council worked with La Familia Sana to implement evidence-based practice titled Parent Child Interaction Therapy in conjunction with First 5 Monterey to address the mental health needs of children ages 2-8.
- A Family Partnership Program was established to provide direct services and support to families and to involve families in leadership/advisory roles
- La Familia Sana implemented specific programs targeted at Transition Age Youth, ages 16-25.
  - The mission is to empower these youth and families to create and sustain positive measurable change in their lives

### **2000: Child Welfare Redesign/Child Welfare System Improvement Planning**

Child Welfare Redesign represents an ongoing strategy that began in the early 2000s and was initially intended to improve the local child welfare system's capacity to plan, implement and measure improvement in four key areas:

1. Recurrence of Maltreatment
2. Child Abuse/Neglect Referrals
3. Timely Social Worker Visits
4. Multiple Forster Care Placements

Family Children's Services (FCS) and Probation have been successful with their focused system improvement. In 2009, the Monterey County Department of Social Services took over full oversight of the Child Welfare System Improvement Planning Process to allow the Children's Council to focus their efforts on strategies for addressing the increasing violence in the county.

# 2021-2022 Presentations

**Year Focus:** To continue the overarching theme of mental health and broadening the focus to include substance use disorder or behavioral health on how it affects 0-24 year-olds.

## August 9, 2021:

- a. Schools Reopening – Dr. Deneen Guss, MCOE

## September 13, 2021:

- a. Addressing Systemic Racism through a Data Lens – Michael Applegate, Bright Futures

## October 11, 2021:

- a. Using Local Control Funding Formula for Schools as a Tool to Address Racial Inequities through Authentic Community Engagement – Alma Cervantes

## November 8, 2021:

- a. Taking a Closer Look at Facilitating Power's: Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership with Local Examples – Sonja Koehler, Bright Beginnings

## December 13, 2021:

- a. Overview of Annual Report Plan Contents and Approval Process
- b. Review learnings for 2020-2021
  - 1. Covid-19 Impacts Small group discussion
  - 2. Large group share out and discussion

## February 14, 2022:

- a. Monterey County Children's Council 2020-2021 Annual Report – Elsa Jimenez, Chair
- b. Blue Zones Project Monterey County - Tiffany M. DiTullio

## March 14, 2022:

- a. Mental Health Supports – Dr. Marni Sandoval, Behavioral Health
- b. Digital Divide Local and State Updates - Trish Paulson, Adam Gavalla from MCOE, Eric Chatham from County of Monterey, Freny Cooper from Monterey Bay Economic Partnership, and James Hackett from Cruzio Internet

## April 11, 2022:

- a. Reflective Leadership and Interconnected Systems - Monica Mathur-Kalluri, OTD (Doctor of Occupational Therapy), and Tala Ghanous, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- b. Child Abuse Prevention Council – Ginger Pierce, CAPC

## May 9, 2022:

- a. Reflective Leadership and Interconnected Systems Part 2 - Monica Mathur-Kalluri, OTD (Doctor of Occupational Therapy), and Tala Ghanous, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- b. School Enrollment Trends in CA – Mike Fine, FCMAT

## June 13, 2022:

- a. Reflective Leadership and Interconnected Systems Part 3 - Monica Mathur-Kalluri, OTD (Doctor of Occupational Therapy), and Tala Ghanous, LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker)
- b. Governor's May Budget Review and Local County Budget Discussion – Lori Medina, DSS and Elsa Jimenez, Health Department

## 2021-2022 Members

Executive Committee	Organization
<b>Katy Castagna</b> <b>Elsa Jimenez</b> <b>Deneen Guss</b> <b>Todd Keating</b> <b>Lori Medina</b>	United Way Monterey County Monterey County Health Department Monterey County Office of Education Monterey County Probation Department Department of Social Services
General Assembly	Organization
<b>Jose Arreola</b> <b>Dan Baldwin</b> <b>Stephen Bernal</b> <b>Dan Burns</b> <b>Susan Chapman</b> <b>Laura Dunn</b> <b>Katy Eckert</b> <b>Les Gerard</b> <b>Jose Gomez</b> <b>Larry E. Hayes</b> <b>Kristan Lundquist</b> <b>Lori Luzader</b> <b>Robin McCrae</b> <b>Laura Neal</b> <b>Eduardo Ochoa</b> <b>Jeannine Pacioni</b> <b>Virginia Pierce</b> <b>Francine Rodd</b> <b>Wendy Root Askew</b> <b>Hillary Theyer</b> <b>Gina Uccelli</b>	Community Alliance for Safety and Peace Community Foundation of Monterey County Monterey County Sheriff's Office Salinas Union School District Public Defender Office Child Care Planning Council Behavioral Health County Council Housing Authority Monterey County Superior Court, Juvenile Justice Division City of Salinas Special Kids Connect Community Human Services Department of Social Services Cal State Monterey Bay District Attorney Office Child Abuse Prevention Council First 5 Monterey County Monterey County Board of Supervisors Monterey County Free Libraries Washington Union School District
Designated Alternates	Organizations
<b>Josh Madfis</b> <b>Edward Moreno</b> <b>Ernest Vela</b> <b>Jose Ramirez</b> <b>Laurel Lee-Alexander</b> <b>Jayne Surbeck</b> <b>Randy Bangs</b> <b>Michelle Woulden</b> <b>Marni Sandoval</b> <b>Annette, Cutino</b> <b>Heidi Whilden</b> <b>Shirley Milleco</b> <b>Jessica Perez-Martinez</b> <b>Michael Applegate</b> <b>Marisol Mendez</b> <b>Julia Cooper Altman</b> <b>Beth Reeves-Fortney</b> <b>Eric Mora</b> <b>Daniel Stonebloom</b>	United Way Monterey County Monterey County Health Department Monterey County Office of Education Monterey County Probation Department Community Foundation of Monterey County Monterey County Sheriff's Office Soledad Unified School District Public Defender Office Behavioral Health County Counsel Superior Court, Juvenile Justice Division Community Human Services Department of Social Services Cal State Monterey Bay, Bright Futures District Attorney Office Child Abuse Prevention Council Monterey County First 5 Supervisor District 4 Office Washington Union School District

## Appendix

See attachment on the next page

**COMIENZOS  
BRILLANTES**  
INICIATIVA PARA PROMOVER EL DESARROLLO INFANTIL

**BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

2021-2022 Annual Report  
DRAFT - April 11, 2023



# Acknowledgement & Gratitude

We respect the lives and wisdom of those that came before us and will come after us. We honor the indigenous people of Monterey County that have stewarded these lands for thousands of years, including the Ohlone, Costanoan, Rumsen, Mutsun, and Esselen tribes. We acknowledge that many amongst us today have been forcibly removed from their native lands and traditions. We uplift the people who have been and continue to be oppressed and excluded. We uphold equal rights and equitable opportunities for people of color, women, LGBTQ+, and people with diverse abilities. We care and advocate for *all* children of Monterey County.

The Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative is an ever growing and evolving initiative. It would not exist without the many partners, leaders and followers that guide, fund and do the work in our community. While only a partial list representing 2021-2022 has been captured here, we are grateful for the commitment of all.

## MONTEREY COUNTY CHILDREN'S COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Lori Medina - Department of Social Services (Council Chair)

Edward Moreno - Public Health Officer (Initiative Co-Chair)

Francine Rodd - First 5 Monterey County (Initiative Co-Chair)\*

## BRIGHT BEGINNINGS BACKBONE STAFF

Sonja Koehler - Director

Cristina De Orta - Program Support

Iris Gamez - Communications & Community Engagement Coordinator

Laura Keeley-Saldana - Early Learning Systems Program Manager

## EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

*(\* also Bright Futures Steering Partner)*

Jose Arreola - City of Salinas

Alma Cervantes – Building Healthy Communities

Laura Dunn - Carmel Unified School District

Dana Edgull - Behavioral Health

Claudia Gomez - Door to Hope

Limary Gutierrez - Greenfield Unified School District

Krista Hanni - Health Department

Niaomi Hrepich - Department of Social Services

Sonia Jaramillo - Office of Education - Early Learning Program

Caryn Lewis\* - Office of Education - Ed Services

Noemy Loveless - North Monterey Unified School District

Josh Madifs\* - United Way of Monterey County

Sarait Martinez - Centro Binacional

Megan Matteoni - Office of Education - Quality Matters

Libby McMahon - Read to Me Project

Fernanda Ocana - City of Salinas

Maria Ortiz - MAOF Resource & Referral

Mayra Perez Diaz - United Way of Monterey County

Ginger Pierce - Child Abuse Prevention Council

Angie Ramirez - CAPSLO

Laurie Ramirez - Office of Education - Child Care Planning Council

Beth Reeves-Fortney - First 5 Monterey County

Mayola Rodriguez - Go Kids, Inc.

Wendy Root Askew - Office of the Supervisor – District 4

Josh Warburg - Bright Futures

Shannan Watkins\* - Early Development Services

The work described within this report would not happen without the generous support of our funders, including: Monterey County Health Department; Packard Foundation (via First 5 Monterey County and United Way); Monterey Peninsula Foundation (via First 5 Monterey County); Mexican American Opportunity Foundation; and First 5 California.

# What does Bright Beginnings mean to you?

What role do you see/sense/experience Bright Beginnings playing in our community?

Long term systems change that support families and children through legislative and leadership activities and advocacy

Cambios en los sistemas a largo plazo que apoyan a las familias y los niños a través de actividades legislativas y de liderazgo y defensa

**Hope for collective impact!**

¡Esperanza de impacto colectivo!

Collective wisdom, broad impact, collective work.

Sabiduría colectiva, amplio impacto, trabajo colectivo.

Connected to the community.

Conectada(o) a la comunidad

Raising awareness

Sensibilización

connecting systems

sistemas de conexión

Supporting the alignment of mutually reinforcing activities geared towards systems change

Apoyar la alineación de actividades que se refuerzan mutuamente orientadas hacia el cambio de sistemas

**Shared values.**

Valores compartidos.

**Bright Beginnings is very motivating**

**Comienzos Brillantes es muy motivador**

BB is the initiative working with first 5 working for children and families in MC. Supports parents leadership and early learning for all families in Monterey county.

CB es la iniciativa que trabaja con los primeros 5 trabajando por los niños y las familias en CDM. Apoya el liderazgo de los padres y el aprendizaje temprano para todas las familias del condado de Monterey.

**Support parents where they are without expectations or judgment.**

**Apoyar a los padres donde están sin expectativas ni juicios.**

**great organization that advocates for our children**

**gran organización que aboga por nuestros niños**

Support parents capacity and leadership in early learning. helping to support ICAP funds for the children in the schools.

Apoyar la capacidad y el liderazgo de los padres en el aprendizaje temprano. Ayudar a apoyar los fondos de ICAP para los niños en las escuelas.

**Be on the lookout for gaps. Work with the community to fill those gaps.**

**Esté atento a las lagunas. Trabajar con la comunidad para llenar esos vacíos.**

Supporting all involved in early childhood to realize their full potential and commitment to equity

Apoyar a todos los involucrados en la primera infancia para que desarrollen todo su potencial y compromiso con la equidad

From the Early Childhood Advisory Group  
Spring 2022

# **Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative**

Transforming Systems to Improve the Well-being of All Children in Monterey County

The Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative was launched by the Monterey County Children's Council in 2012, to bring greater attention, resources and innovation to the systems that serve the holistic development of all young children and their families. Its strategic framework and diverse partners are guided by a deep commitment to equity, interconnectedness, co-creation, and impact that unites and heals.

Emerging from the height of the pandemic's disruption, we started 2021-22 seeking to connect to each other and to the purpose of the Initiative in renewed ways. In review of

the year, we see how the creative mobilization of talent and resources at the onset of the pandemic strengthened our foundation for collective impact. As our work has become more integrated across sectors and disciplines, we paused to ask ourselves: What does Bright Beginnings mean to us?

You will see the stories that represent the resilience and brilliance that shines in our community. You will see how we inspire each other to come together to transform our systems to be ready for all children in Monterey County, so that every child is ready to succeed.

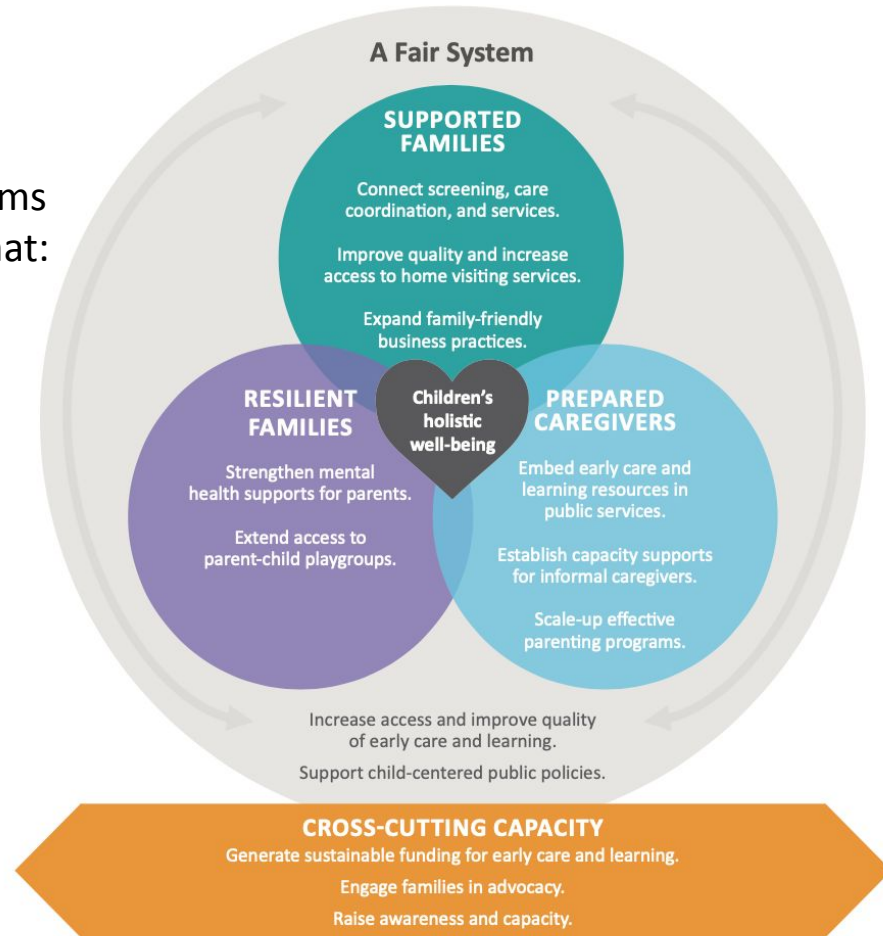
We tell these stories through the Bright Beginnings strategic framework, showing how our collaborative projects drive our vision and goals forward.

They are organized around the key areas of the systems that supports young children and their families, so that:

- The early care and learning system is fair.
- Families' resilience is strengthened through social and emotional well-being.
- Families are supported by interconnected systems.
- Caregivers are prepared, with access to resources and opportunities to learn.

These areas overlap, and are reinforced by cross-cutting strategies to mobilize to generate funding and build collective capacity.

The child's well-being is always at the heart of what we do.



The collaborative projects shared here are those that are directly supported by the Initiative's backbone team. There are many more led directly by partners of the Initiative.

While each project is neatly listed under one

of the key areas, most will connect with multiple areas. This creates the synergistic effect that accelerates collective impact and systems transformation.

#### A FAIR SYSTEM

##### 1.1 Access & Quality

- Greenfield Early Learning Partnership
- Early Learning Network
- [www.MontereyCountyChildCare.org](http://www.MontereyCountyChildCare.org)
- Career Pathways: Pre-A & Apprenticeship
- COVID Response & Recovery  
Expansion of ECE Facilities Plan  
Child Care Home Start-Up Accelerator  
BHC Community Outreach & Needs

##### 1.2 Public Policies & Practices

- Preschool for All (also Mamas)
- Child Care Is Everyone's Business

#### RESILIENT FAMILIES

##### 2.1 Parent Mental Health

- Monterey County Maternal Mental Health Task Force

#### SUPPORTED FAMILIES

##### 3.2 Home Visiting

- Home Visiting Coordination Hub

##### 3.3. Family Friendly Business

- Family Friendly Business Certification

#### PREPARED CAREGIVERS

##### 4.2 Informal Caregiver Supports

- Family Friends & Neighbors Network of Champions

#### CROSS CUTTING

##### 5.1 Sustainable Funding

- Assistance to state contractors (also A Fair System)
- ARPA Funding
- Regions Rise Together Investment Blueprint

##### 5.2 Advocacy

- Mamas de Salinas Abogan - Moms of Salinas Advocate

##### 5.3. Capacity & Awareness

- REDI systems - centered in Race, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (COLIBRI, MC Children's Council)

NOTE: For more information on each project, please refer to the 2020-2021 Annual Report.

## Fair System

Access and quality of child care.

Child-centered public policies.

# The early learning system is fair.

Growing a fair early learning system is about equitable access to quality child care and education for all families and children. With a 14% return on investment community-wide, we believe investing in child care is everyone's business, and leads to a just and inclusive economy. (Source: [www.HeckmanEquation.org](http://www.HeckmanEquation.org))

Therefore, Bright Beginnings approached this focus area in two ways: 1. Supporting the current care and education businesses and workforce; and 2. Elevating the vital role of child care in a thriving economy.

Coming out of shelter-in-place, with licensed child care still restricted, teacher attrition at a high, and parents having a hard time returning to work without child care,



## Bright Beginnings Monterey County

Oct 29, 2021 · 🌐

Panelists did an incredible job in addressing the gaps in our childcare system. This infrastructure is very complex and Sonja did a great job in explaining it in a very digestible way! Thank you all!



## Monterey Bay Economic Partnership

Oct 29, 2021 · 🌐

Childcare is underfunded and until Covid under valued. The US offers the least government funding. Childcare can in some cases be more expensive than a 4 year college! Childcare is as important as infrastructure . It needs to be affordable, reliable, and safe. [#SOTR2021](#)

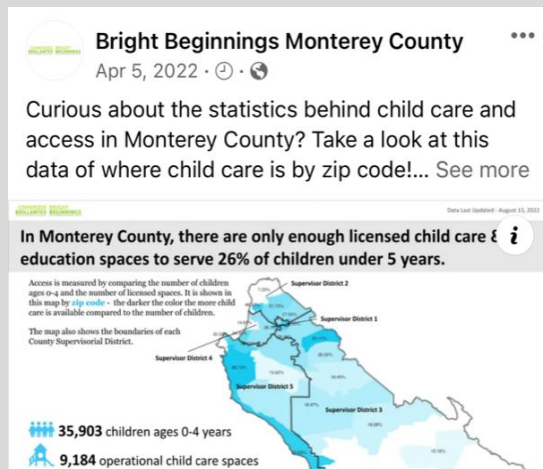


the early learning community knew what it needed: local investment in child care and education infrastructure. The Child Care & Wellbeing COVID Response & Recovery Coalition developed a comprehensive investment pathway to support young children and their families to recover. Bright Beginnings advocated for investments through various funding sources. In the Spring of 2021, the Board of Supervisors

heeded the call, investing \$1.5mil in American Rescue Plan Act funds in the early learning system and families.

This ARPA funding was part of a suite of supports for the current and future workforce and child care businesses:

- 397 early care and education teachers received stipends of \$1,850, administered by MCOE.



**Bright Beginnings Monterey County**  
Jan 22, 2022 · 🌐

The [Monterey County Board of Supervisors](#) has granted American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to the [Monterey County Office of Educati...](#) See more

**Calling All Early Childhood Educators!**  
**Llamado Para Todos Los Educadores de ECE**

Come learn how to apply for ECE workforce retention stipends.  
Venga a aprender cómo solicitar los estípidos de retención de la fuerza laboral de ECE.

**MONTEREY COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION**  
Learning • Support • Connect

- The Soledad Adult School pre-apprenticeship and Hartnell College apprenticeship programs for early educators were supported through MCOE and by a grant from the California Apprenticeship Initiative. The programs committee is co-chaired by Bright Beginnings, along with faculty from Hartnell, and many partners are on the committee (e.g., First 5 Monterey County and MCOE).
- Maps showing gaps in access to child care by zip code and County Supervisor District were developed and published by Bright Beginnings. (Bottom line: There are only enough licensed child care spaces to serve 26% of children under 5 years in Monterey County.)
- A survey of parent receptivity for new child care sites was conducted on the Peninsula, by Bright Beginnings in partnership with MPUSD, Monterey Bay Aquarium, Monterey County Hospitality Association, Pebble Beach Company, Portola Hotel, Monterey Peninsula Chamber, and First 5 Monterey County. (Bottom line: Vast majority of the 606 parents who completed the survey agree that the potential MPUSD sites for child care are desirable.)
- A survey of home-based child care providers was conducted to identify current capacity and needs to expand enrollment, by MAOF and Bright Beginnings. (Bottom line: Home-based child care providers were operating at their optimal capacity, which is slightly below licensed capacity, and professional development for infant care was a priority.)

- Free professional development opportunities to meet the increasing need for infant and toddler care were offered by MAOF, Quality Matters, and Bright Beginnings.
- 30+ new family child care homes were licensed, supported by MAOF and Bright Beginnings.
- A workgroup to support business innovations for family child care homes was launched, with CSUMB, El Pajaro Community Development Center, and Bright Beginnings.
- First 5 Monterey County distributed child care stipends to families that could not access other resources, reaching 144 children in our community.

Nationally, the pandemic has put the vital role of child care in a thriving economy in the spotlight. Locally, we have seen attention rise, as well, such as at the 2021 California Economic Summit in two sessions: an in depth interview with early learning champion Betsy Tornero of Mamas de Salinas Abogan & Mujeres en Accion, and during a panel with Dr. Carrisa Purnell of the Alisal Family Resource Center, Jackie Cruz of Hartnell College, and Roxanne Wilson of the Coalition of Homeless Services Providers.

The Bright Beginnings team led the authoring of the section on child care investments in the Regions Rise Together Economic Blueprint, together with partners like First 5

Monterey County, Office of Education, Early Development Services, United Way, Hartnell College, Building Healthy Communities, Mujeres en Accion, and the Labor Council.

At the 2021 Monterey Bay Economic Partnership's State of the Region, Paul Farmer of the Salinas Valley Chamber, Francine Rodd of First 5 Monterey County, Andy Stone of the Santa Cruz Workforce & Development Board, and Sonja Koehler of Bright Beginnings discussed the chronic local and national underinvestment in access to child care and how its led to the current, wide gaps in access for all families.



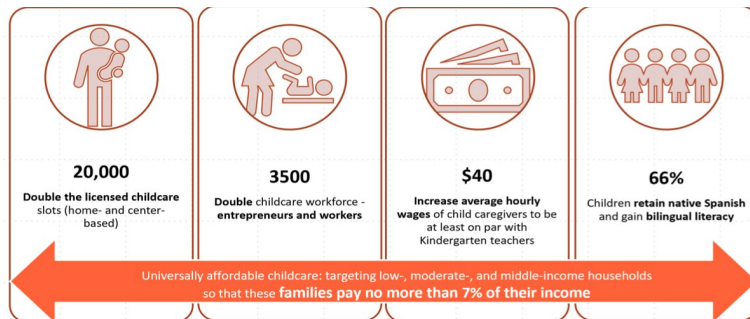
## Bright Beginnings Monterey County

Mar 23, 2022 • 🌐



For some, access to quality and affordable early childcare is unattainable. "That's when 90% of our brain development happens, 85% by age four, laying foundational skills for mental health, social/emotional health, math skills, reading skills, everything that's important," shared Sonja Koehler, director of Bright Beginnings.

This is why the Regions Rise Together Salinas Investment Blueprint has created a plan that increases access for families and develops a larger childcare workforce in the Human Capital Development focus area.



## Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week

### Resolution No.:

Resolution proclaiming the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as **Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week** in Monterey County.

**WHEREAS**, maternal mental health is essential to a family's overall health and well-being, and;

**WHEREAS**, in the United States, perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, more commonly known as maternal mental health conditions, are the most common complication of childbirth, impacting one in five women, and;

**WHEREAS**, in California, twenty-one % of pregnant and postpartum women are affected by a maternal mental health condition, with the prevalence being higher in some populations, and;

**WHEREAS**, in Monterey County, it is estimated that more than fifteen % of pregnant and postpartum women experience depressive symptoms, which negatively impacts vulnerable infants and families, and;

**WHEREAS**, social determinants of health including socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, lack of social support, fear and stigma all influence the likelihood that a woman will experience a maternal mental health condition and whether they seek treatment, and;

**WHEREAS**, through routine screenings, increased awareness, and a culturally sensitive, holistic approach, we can work towards preventing maternal mental health disorders and work towards ensuring families have resources, support, and treatment, and;

**WHEREAS**, in Monterey County, there is momentum to increase awareness, reduce stigma, expand capacity and training for family serving agencies and providers on maternal mental health, and;

**WHEREAS**, community initiatives, like the Monterey County Maternal Mental Health Task Force, chaired by Monterey County Behavioral Health with support from Bright Beginnings, foster resilience and wellness of mothers and their families by reducing stigma around maternal mental health and promoting better access to mental health services, and;

**WHEREAS**, in Monterey County, the Board of Supervisors calls upon all of us, residents, community organizations, local government, healthcare providers, and early childhood advocates to become informed on the symptoms and impact of maternal mental health on the entire family system, to work together to connect women sooner to care, and to increase opportunities for healing, creating hope and equity in our County.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Monterey County Board of Supervisors, on behalf of the County and all its citizens thereof, hereby proclaims the week of May 2<sup>nd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 as **Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week**.

### Resilient Families

Mental health supports for parents.

Access to parent-child play groups.

## Families' resilience is strengthened through social and emotional health.

The monthly Maternal Mental Health Task Force meetings, chaired by Monterey County Behavioral Health, saw record attendance, with average attendance continuing to rise year to year: In 2021-2022, there were an average of 24 attendees, and a total of 82 distinct attendees and 30 distinct agencies represented throughout the year.

The Task Force ran a successful awareness campaign in May, including Spanish & English radio and social media outreach, and community walks by the Mamas de Salinas Abogan. During the months of April and May, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution proclaiming Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week in Monterey County, and the Parenting Connection's warmline for perinatal support saw double its usual traffic.



*"I want to acknowledge the work that the Maternal Mental Health Task Force has been doing over the years. Its goals are to increase awareness, reduce stigma and encourage anyone who is suffering to know that they don't have to suffer alone, and that treatment is very effective for maternal mental health disorders."*

- Supervisor Wendy Root-Askew

*"These mental health challenges need to be addressed head-on, and I think, bringing light to those situations - acknowledging that they exist - is that first step."*

- Supervisor Chris Lopez

*Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week Activities. Left: Gloria Romero of Mamas de Salinas Abogan, participating in a community walk with her child in East Salinas, May 5, 2022. Above: Statements from Board of Supervisors meeting during which the Resolution for MMH Awareness Week was presented. Right: Samples from multi-media campaign.*

**Bright Beginnings Monterey County**  
May 1, 2022 · 🌐

Are you feeling the baby blues? You aren't alone. One in six new parents struggle with mental health before or after birth. Help is close by! Call [The Parenting Connection of Monterey County](tel:8317835933) at (831) 783-5933 to talk with someone or join a new-parent circle. Visit our website to learn more: <https://brightbeginningismc.org/maternal-mental-health/>

#MMHWeek2022 #MakingOverMotherhood #ToughAsAMother #RecoveringOutLoud

**ESPERANZA**

I found myself grieving the birth that I had wanted... It was not what I had imagined.

Me encontré en pesar sobre el nacimiento que quería... esto no fue lo que me imagine.

My partner and I grew distant... we were merely going through the motions.

Mi pareja y yo empezamos a distanciarnos... simplemente estábamos pasando el día.

### Supported Families

Access & quality to home visiting.

Connected screening, care coordination, and services.

Family friendly business practices.

## Families are supported by interconnected systems.

The Bright Beginnings Family Friendly Business certification program continues to be promoted through the Salinas Valley Business Journal, and has proven to be an effective way to engage businesses in a broader conversation about how they can support families, including access to quality child care and education.

The Initiative's partners lead much of the exciting work that falls under Supported Families. Examples include: the Health Department's integration of perinatal mental health with the Nurse Family Partnership home visiting program; First 5 Monterey County's Integrated Service Collaboratives supporting holistic cross-agency care coordination; and United Way's Active Referral Network offering a platform for cross-agency service referrals.



Bright Beginnings Monterey County

Apr 10, 2022 · 🌐



Bright Beginnings is excited to spotlight our newest Family Friendly Business – [California State University, Monterey Bay](#). Check out thi... See more

## Family Friendly Spotlight

Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative is excited to spotlight our newest Family Friendly Business – California State University, Monterey Bay. Here are some of the ways they support balance between work, education and family responsibilities:

**COMIENZOS  
BRILLANTES**  
INTEGRATING YOUR BUSINESS & COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

**BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



CSUMB has generous policies on parental leave and flexible time to meet family obligations. There is a child care center on campus, and designated lactation rooms for parents at several sites. The library has child-friendly spaces for families can study and learn together.

CSUMB makes the campus rental and for-purchase housing available to employees at lower-than-market rates and includes internet, cable, and some utilities.

In the housing, each street has a pocket park or recreation site. Amongst the housing, there are two central parks, including a dog park, and ready access to walking and biking trails.

CSUMB provides access to its biggest asset, education, by allowing eligible employees to transfer to any eligible dependent or partner, attending any of the 23 CSUs, benefits of waiving tuition on the greater of two courses or 6 units per semester/quarter. This benefit helps to substantially reduce the cost of attending college, even for advanced degrees, on families. And shorter commute times means more time with family!

***Is your business family friendly? You too can certify!***  
***Learn more at [www.BrightBeginningsMC.org](http://www.BrightBeginningsMC.org).*** ■



Bright Beginnings Monterey County

Oct 19, 2021 · 🌐

Last week, [United Way Monterey County](#) announced that it enhanced its support to the Family, Friends, and Neighbors (FFN) c... See more



#### Prepared Caregivers

Capacity supports  
for informal caregivers.

Embedded early care &  
resources in public services.

Scaled parenting  
programs.

## Caregivers are prepared to appropriately support young children's development.

To ensure all caregivers - whether parents or informal caregivers - can find the resources they need to support young children, we strive to help our partners meet people where they already are in their daily lives: out in the community.

It is estimated that informal caregivers, often called Family, Friend and Neighbors (FFN), provide child care to an estimated 70% of families in Monterey County. For some, informal caregivers are their first choice, for example for parents wanting a specific linguistic and/or cultural environment. For others, they are the only option, filling the wide gap in available licensed child care in our community.



To support these often unsung heroes of child care, Bright Beginnings re-initiated the countywide Network of capacity builders for informal caregivers, including United Way of Monterey County, Mujeres en Accion, MAOF Resource & Referral, Monterey County Free Libraries, Go Kids, Door to Hope, and First 5 Monterey County.

The FFN Network was supported in part through a collaborative grant from the Packard Foundation (administered by the United Way). The Network set out to launch a strategic planning process, including an inaugural event to convene and celebrate FFN (both to be completed in the next fiscal year). During a surge, it also coordinated the distribution of COVID care kits to 120 FFN, including rapid tests and children's books.

Here are additional ways Bright Beginnings and its partners met families and caregivers in the community throughout the year:

- Supporting early learning events in school districts like Greenfield, the Alisal, and Monterey Peninsula. Greenfield held their enrollment event as a drive-through, which allowed them to double attendees from previous years to about 250 families.
- Offering reflective practice to the VIDA Community Health Workers (CHW), partnering with First 5 Monterey County, which increases the CHWs ability to serve the individual and reduces their own burnout in this highly stressful work.
- Providing books and other resources for the Special Kids Connect Resource Fair.
- Showing off the collective work of the Initiative at community events, like the Salinas Valley Chamber Awards Luncheon.
- Managing the one-stop for child care at [www.MontereyCountyChildCare.org](http://www.MontereyCountyChildCare.org).





## Bright Beginnings Monterey County

Mar 8, 2022 · 🌐

**Mamas De Salinas Abogan** are a group of moms that advocate and raise awareness about the importance of quality early education.... See more  
See Translation



COMENZAMOS  
BRILLANTES  
BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS

Hermosa como una flor y valiente como una Guerrera.  
Feliz día de la Mujer a estas mujeres poderosas - Mamas de Salinas Abogan!

### Cross-cutting Strategies

Sustainable Funding  
Advocacy  
Awareness & Capacity

## Mobilize to generate funding and build collective capacity.

Woven throughout the collective work of the partners through the Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative, there are tales of collective funding requests - like the ARPA funding for the formal early learning system, the California Apprenticeship Initiative Grant for early educators, and the Packard Foundation grant for informal caregivers. We see representatives of child care and education at the table with other business leaders and advocating during public planning and budgeting processes. There is a demand to better understand the numbers, business models, and market failures behind the national and local child care landscape.

Bringing an extra dose of heart and spirit to the collective work of the Initiative are the Mamas de Salinas Abogan, the ever growing group of now 17 women that showed up together in their community at 78 distinct events. At these events, advocated for investment in early care and education at the Alisal Union School Board, the Board of Supervisors, Salinas City Council meetings, and at visits with state legislators. They showed up across the county to raise awareness about maternal mental health and to share resources to support early childhood development. They participated in the Central Coast Advocacy Network's Parent Power Summit, the Solis Policy Fellowship program, and various COLIBRI action learning cohorts to embed equity in policies and

budgets that support early childhood. They tell their own stories in a series of videos released through their popular social media channels, inspiring countless others to do the same.

The Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative is the collective movement to put young children at the heart of our community. Just like the Mamas, we hope these stories inspire you to join this growing local movement to invest in our children today, as an investment in our collective future.

## Looking Ahead: 2023 and Beyond

According to the New York Times, the United States invests about \$500 per child a year. That compares to a \$14,436 average by other developed nations. A silver lining of the pandemic is the growing attention on closing the gap in investment for early childhood.

Here in California, the governor has launched a campaign to expand free access to preschool programs through the traditional school system for children three years and older. It will take years to roll out, and still leaves a gap for younger children during the most critical stages of childhood: The first three years are when 85% of brain development occurs, laying the foundation for all future learning and social/emotional health. This new emphasis on preschool and transitional

kindergarten also puts greater pressure on an already dwindling early care and education workforce, as higher demand and higher wages draws teachers into the school system.

The good news is that in Monterey County, in great part due to the Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative, we have strong relationships between schools, the office of education, and the entire early care and education system to collectively support our youngest learners. We have growing support in the rest of the community, too, with more business and community leaders advocating for greater public and private investment in early childhood.

These strong cross-sector, multi-disciplinary relationships lead to creative, comprehensive solutions for young children, looking at their holistic needs - including mental, physical and social health. They also help build the agile, resilient systems needed to break down the inequities that reinforce unjust health and wealth outcomes, especially for families of color.

Looking ahead, the Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative will continue to invest in each of its key areas, but even more so in those cross-cutting strategies that can drive

progress across all areas at once: in greater awareness, advocacy, funding and capacity. With these relatively small investments now, we can leverage far more in the future.

Anchored in new ways of working together, we will amplify our collective voice and build on our growing network of early childhood champions, showing up in our community, meeting people where they are. The early childhood leaders of today are working together to ensure a bright beginning for the leaders of our future.



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



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**COMIENZOS  
BRILLANTES**

INICIATIVA PARA PROMOVER EL DESARROLLO INFANTIL

**BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS**

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE