

Mission:

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.

Executive Summary – Children's Council Annual Report (FY 2024–2025)



The Monterey County Children's Council Annual Report provides a comprehensive snapshot of the well-being of children and youth ages 0–18 in Monterey County. Using 30 indicators established in 2018 and relying on secondary data sources, the report tracks trends over time to inform public policy, guide community action, and support nonprofit and volunteer efforts that improve outcomes for children and families.

Top Six Noteworthy Highlights:




91% graduation rate

Educational outcomes show several positive developments. Graduation rates have improved steadily in both Monterey County and California, with Monterey County maintaining higher rates than the statewide average and reaching 91% by 2025 (p. 26)

4.6% dropout rate decline

Dropout rates have declined significantly in Monterey County, falling to 4.6%, which is about 43% lower than the California average (p.32).




34% students with disabilities

Enrollment of students with disabilities has grown steadily—approximately 34% over nine years—reflecting expanding identification and service needs within the school system (p. 19).




7.4% public school enrollment

Overall public school enrollment has declined by about 7.4% since 2016–2017. Despite the decrease in total enrollment, the number of homeless students has continued to rise, resulting in a larger share of students experiencing housing insecurity (p. 18).




66% student homelessness

Student homelessness has increased significantly, with enrollment rising approximately 66%, from 7,843 students in 2016–17 to 13,010 in 2024–25. Migrant students experience the highest rates of homelessness, with more than one-third affected in recent years. Homelessness has also increased among English Learners and students with disabilities, indicating growing housing instability among vulnerable student populations (p. 8).




44% home-based infant care cost

Child care expenses increased across both centers and family child care homes between 2021 and 2025, with home-based infant care costs rising nearly 44% and center-based infant care increasing about 28%. Preschool costs have also risen, particularly in center-based programs. These trends suggest that the youngest children face the highest and fastest-growing care expenses, which can create financial challenges for families (p.15).

Overall, the Annual Report underscores both progress and continuing challenges. While improvements in graduation and dropout rates reflect positive educational outcomes, rising student homelessness, increasing child care costs, and growing special education enrollment highlight areas where continued community attention and coordinated support are needed. The report serves as a benchmark for tracking these trends and mobilizing collaborative efforts to improve the well-being of children and youth across Monterey County.