



MONTEREY COUNTY CHILDREN'S COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Deneen Guss, Ed.D., Superintendent, Monterey County Office of Education, (Ralph Porras, Alternate)
Elsa Jimenez, Director, Health Dept. (Miriam Mendoza, Alternate)
Roderick Franks, Director, Dept. of Social Services (Eva Geronimo, Alternate)
Jose Ramirez, Chief, Probation Department (Julie Kenyon, Alternate) Chair
Katy Castagna, CEO, United Way Monterey County (Josh Madfis, Alternate)

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**Mayra Diaz**, Coordinator for Mo. Co. Children's Council  
**Relindis Diaz**, Reflective Practice Facilitator  
**Sonja Koehler**, Director, Bright Beginnings

## MEMBERS

**Dan Baldwin**, Community Foundation for Monterey County, (Michael Castro, Alternate)  
**Susan Blitch**, County Counsel (TBD, Alternate)  
**Zulieka Boykin**, Housing Authority of Monterey County (Lucila Vera, Alternate)  
**Raymond Buenaventura**, Public Defender (Ashley Butler, Alternate)  
**Caroline Cota**, So Co Mo Joint Unified School District (TBD, Alternate)  
**Laura Dunn**, Child Care Planning Council (TBD, Alternate)  
**Debbie Gorgulho**, Soledad Unified School District (TBD, Alternate)  
**Michael Gutierrez**, Hartnell Community College, (Jason Garrett, Alternate)  
**Monica Lal**, Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce  
**Lori Luzader**, Special Kids Connect (Jennifer Netniss, Alternate)  
**Sam Lavorato**, Judge, Superior Court, Juvenile Justice Division (TBD, Alternate)  
**Tina Nieto**, Sheriff (Charles DaSilva, Alternate)  
**Jeannine Pacioni**, District Attorney (Lan Nassoura, Alternate)  
**Virginia R. Pierce**, Child Abuse Prevention Council (Claudia Gomez, Alternate)  
**Melanie Rhodes**, Behavioral Health (Liz Perez-Cordero, Alternate)  
**Francine Rodd**, Monterey County First 5 Commission (Ramona McCabe, Alternate)  
**Wendy Root Askew**, Supervisor District 4, (Yuri Anderson or Kera Abraham, Alternate)  
**Susan Swick**, Ohana Montage Health (Krista Reuther, Alternate)  
**Hillary Theyer**, Monterey County Free Libraries (Berenice, Astengo, Alternate)  
**TBD**, Community Alliance for Safety and Peace Jaskiart "Jessica" Bhardwaj, Alternate)  
**TBD.**, CSUMB (Karen Myers Bowman, Alternate)

## 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.

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

**901 Blanco Circle, Salinas, CA**  
**MCOE**

**Monday, August 10, 2026**  
**12pm to 1:30pm**

## AGENDA

- 1. Welcome/Introductions** – Dr. Deneen Guss, Chair
- 2. Public Comment** for items not on the agenda (limited to 3 minutes per person)
- 3. Action Items:**
  - a. Approve the minutes of the June 8, 2026, Monterey County Children's Council meeting – *Attached*
  - b. Approved Designated Alternate Andrew Pace for Member Susan Blitch
- 4. Presentations/Discussions:**
  - a. [Bright Beginnings Update](#) – Sonja Koehler
  - b. Summary MCCC Survey Results – Katy Castagna
  - c. Reflective Practice – Relindis Diaz
  - d. Follow Up from Past Fiscal Year Presentations
    - I. Foster Youth Program – Roderick Franks, DSS
    - II. SNAP – Roderick Franks, DSS
    - III. SRN – Josh Madfis, UWMC
  - e. Reflective Practice – Relindis Diaz
- 5. Announcements**
- 6. Adjourn**

**Next meeting: September 14, 2026**