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, (Reid Norris, Alternate)
Susan Blitch, County Counsel (Andrew Price, Alternate)
Zulieka Boykin, Housing Authority of Monterey County (Lucila Vera, Alternate)
Raymond Buenaventura, Public Defender (Ashley Butler, Alternate**)**
Jackie Chavez, Family Children Services (Melissa Alejandre, Alternate)
Caroline Cota, So Co Mo Joint Unified School District (Zandra Galvan, Alternate)
Laura Dunn, Child Care Planning Council (TBD, Alternate)
Sharon Ofek, Carmel Unified School District (Debbie Gorgulho, 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 (Lana 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)
Krista Reuther, Ohana Montage Health (TBD, 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, November 9, 2026
12pm to 1:30pm

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 October 12, 2026, Monterey County Children's Council meeting – *Attached*

   b. Approve Designated Alternate, Jessica Moon for Member

4. **Presentations/Discussions:**

   a. Bright Beginnings Update – Sonja Koehler

   b. Follow Up from Past Fiscal Year Presentations
      I. Probation Department – Jose Ramirez

   c. Reflective Practice – Relindis Diaz

   d. Community Crisis Services – Kelly Molton, Behavioral Health Department

   e. Reflective Practice – Relindis Diaz
      I. Break out groups discussion
      II. Report Out

5. **Announcements –**

6. **Adjourn**

Next meeting: December 14, 2026
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