

First 5 Lake County Local Evaluation Report

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INTRODUCTION:

First 5 Lake conducts an annual evaluation of its efforts in order to understand the effectiveness and impact of its investments, guide improvements to programs and systems, inform decision-making, and promote accountability to the community regarding the use of First 5 funds. First 5 Lake invests in community partners to implement its [Strategic Plan](#).

This report describes each of the programs funded by First 5 Lake County and the results of their activities to support families with children 0 through 5. Information on programs is organized by the result areas First 5 investments must focus on: **Improved Family Functioning, Improved Child Development, Improved Child Health, and Improved Systems of Care**, with each grant assigned to one of the four result areas. Some result areas include multiple types of support. For example, under Improved Family Functioning, programs provide parent education, literacy support and general information and resources.

Given challenges related to COVID-19, an overview of how each program modified their services during the 2019-2020 fiscal year is included as well. Conclusions and recommendations provide the First 5 Lake Commission and the community with an understanding of the overall impact of funded programs and the ways in which these programs can be strengthened.

Program Descriptions

Each of the programs listed below are committed to achieving *First 5 Lake's mission of building the early childhood systems and supports needed to ensure the County's youngest children are safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and life.*

AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps members provide specialized programs on oral health and nutrition, as well as the evidence-based Second Step Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum.

Bloom: Bloom is operated by the Lake County Office of Education (LCOE). The program is dedicated to providing tools and resources to Lake County parents of children ages 0 through 5 that help them become more engaged in talking, playing, and reading with their children.

Easterseals Northern California (ESNorCal) Early Learning Centers: Children ages 0 through 5 can play with parents and caregivers at two Early Learning Center (ELC) locations or online via Virtual Circle Times. Parents and other caregivers also receive consultation and tips to support their understanding of child development.

ESNorCal Child Find Linkages Health Line: The Health Line connects parents and professionals to resources and information about child development. Travel stipends are also distributed to families with children ages 0 through 5 needing access to specialized healthcare or to mothers with prenatal complications.

First 5 IMPACT: IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive) helps children ages 0 through 5 and their families thrive by increasing the quality of early learning settings in the community. The program supports settings to achieve high-quality standards that help ensure more of the County's children enter school with the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to be successful.

Imagination Library: The goal of Imagination Library is to foster a love of reading by providing children with the gift of a specially selected book each month. High quality, age-appropriate books are mailed directly to children's homes.

Mother-Wise: Mother-Wise is a locally designed initiative to prevent and address Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders for new mothers. The program offers in-person and online support groups, screenings, referrals, and a donations closet.

Nurturing Families: Nurturing Families offers classes and other one-on-one support to parents to help them understand child development and learn new parenting skills. Children also participate in classes to help the family learn new ways to work together.

Oral Health: Dental screenings and oral health education are provided through LCOE's Healthy Start program.

Sutter Lakeside Hospital (SLH) Smart Start Family Support Program: SLH leads an infant safe sleep education program to provide concrete resources to parents to reduce infant deaths and injury related to suffocation and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). The program also includes a Family Resource Navigator (FRN) that contacts new mothers at predetermined intervals to help parents navigate the first year of their infant's life. Support includes education about milestones in the first year of life and information about and referral to community resources.

Title IV-E Training: Through a contract with Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, First 5 Lake coordinates training and education for resource families and professionals serving children in or at risk of entering foster care.

Expected Outcomes

First 5 funded programs are intended to achieve the following outcomes:

- Parenting knowledge and skills are enhanced to support children’s healthy development and social-emotional wellbeing.
- Families with young children are socially connected – developing and maintaining positive relationships that provide concrete emotional, informational, and spiritual support.
- Increased academic and social-emotional school readiness for all Lake County children.
- Families are increasingly educated about and supported in fostering interactions that help children develop the abilities to communicate clearly, recognize and regulate emotions, and establish and maintain relationships.
- Children are born healthy and experience optimal physical, behavioral, and developmental health.
- Families receive needed services from trauma-informed, culturally competent, collaboratively networked service providers.
- The reduction of child abuse and neglect and the increase of family resilience become common indicators of success.



Program Modifications

The 2020 **COVID-19 pandemic** impacted both service delivery and data collection efforts. Beginning in March 2020, with the state mandated shelter in place order enacted, most services ceased to be offered in person. Likewise, data collection efforts that relied on in-person service delivery, observational assessments, or hard copy form completion were affected. This should be considered when making year-to-year comparisons of services provided and children and families reached.



However, during unprecedented times like the last year, and in years prior with fires and power outages, First 5 Lake County grantees have maintained their dedication to serving children and families by adapting services to meet the needs of families with young children.

The following includes examples of how programs rallied to serve the community despite challenges related to COVID-19:

- AmeriCorps members supported food distribution at local food banks.
- Bloom hosted virtual fieldtrips to places like Owen Ranch and posted read-alouds where local and national celebrities were recorded reading children’s books.
- Imagination Library continued to support in-home literacy at a time when parents needed additional educational resources to prepare their children for school or maintain their interest in reading.
- LCOE’s Healthy Start program distributed 450 oral health kits to children in Lake County. This included family sized fluoridated toothpaste provided by the Department of Public Health. Dental case management continued during the shelter in place to assist families in need of dental services.

- ESNorCal provided Virtual Circle Time to support child development and connect parents to each other and to resources in the community.
- The IMPACT program provided \$1,000 stipends to 52 childcare providers that remained open during the shelter in place orders. Stipends were used to purchase cleaning supplies or to make up for decreased enrollment during the shelter in place order. Stipends were given to providers already in the program, as well as those not enrolled in the program.
- Sutter Lakeside Hospital offered Safe Sleep classes via teleconference and families were able to pick up their Baby Bundles through a drive through station or at an appointment with their physician. Families that delivered before the teleconference classes were in place received one-on-one education during their hospital stay to ensure they went home with the information needed to keep their infant safe.
- The Family Resource Navigator continued to reach out to mothers, reducing social isolation, connecting them to resources, and supporting healthy development in the first year of life. During the power outages in the fall of 2019 and the shelter in place order, the FRN proactively contacted families to see how they were doing.
- Nurturing Families facilitators maintained parents' engagement in the program, assisting them to complete the coursework by meeting individually when possible or connecting with them by phone and video conference.
- First 5 Lake County Commissioners continued to meet virtually to guide First 5 Lake County in achieving its mission.



Who Was Served?

Total Number Served	Family Functioning	Child Health	Child Development	Improved Systems of Care	Total Served*	
Children Ages 0 through 5	2,541	968	156	0	3,665	
Parents, Caregivers, and Other Family	2,736	1,770	0	2	4,508	
Providers	42	102	0	207	351	

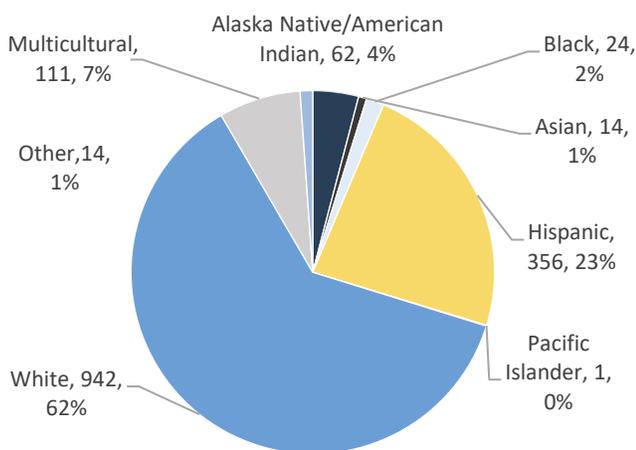
*Program participants may have received services from multiple service providers. The breakdown in the chart above represents potential duplication across programs.

Race/Ethnicity of Those Served

First 5 Lake County served 3,665 children and 4,508 parents, caregivers, and other family members (note that as mentioned on the previous page, these numbers represent potential, but minimal duplication across programs). Of that number, race and ethnicity was available for 1,524 children and 715 parents, caregivers, and other family members. The chart below excludes the 2,141 children and 3,793 parents, caregivers, and other family members for which that demographic information is not available. Race/ethnicity is not reported for providers served by First 5 programming.

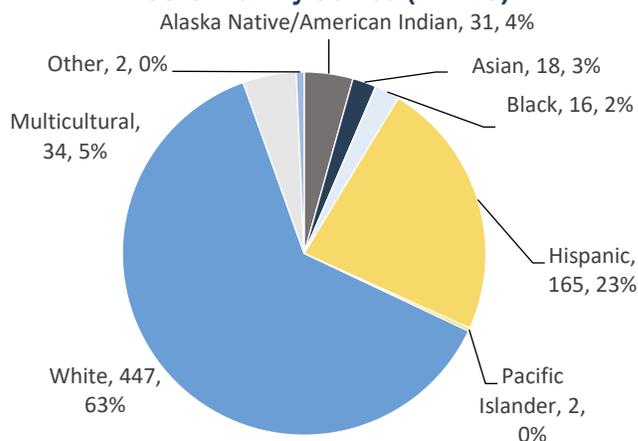
Children

Ethnicity of Children Served (N= 1,524)



Parents

Ethnicity of Parents, Caregivers, and Other Family Served (n=715)

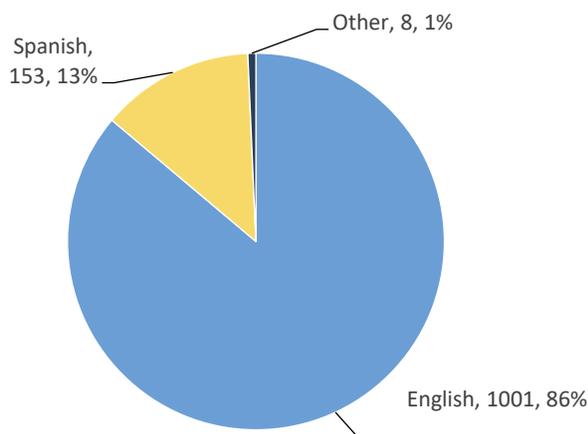


Primary Language of Those Served

As with race and ethnicity, the charts below include available data on the primary language of children, and parents, caregivers, and other family members served; program participants for whom language was unknown have been excluded (2,503 children and 3,757 parents, caregivers, and other family members).

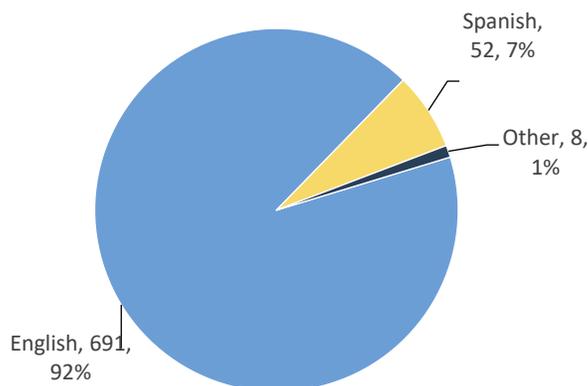
Children

Primary Language of Children Served (N=1,162)



Parents

Primary Language of Parents, Caregivers, and Other Family Served (n=751)



IMPACT OF FIRST 5 INVESTMENTS

IMPROVED FAMILY FUNCTIONING

Improved Family Functioning: Parent Education and Support

223

bus passes, gas vouchers, or stipends were provided by ESNorCal and Adventist Health Clear Lake Medical Center (a First 5 Lake “mini-grantee”) to assist parents and/or children in accessing health care or services located out of the county.



Trips Provided by ESNorCal

29

Related to physical health

10

Related to hearing

10

Provided to parents needing to visit children out of the county or for their own health needs

6

Supported women with high-risk pregnancies



In 2020, the Lake County Office of Education **Healthy Start** program served...

53

parents with intensive coaching using the Nurturing Parenting Curriculum

and impacted the lives of

101 children

An additional **82** parents, caregivers, and other family members benefitted from informal **support and coaching** provided by Healthy Start staff.

“After the lesson on the importance of routines a mom shared, “With the power out we have had a lot of free time, so lately we added a dedicated hour to arts and crafts time right after we sit down for lunch.”

-Nurturing Families Parent Participant



22

new facilitators were trained in the
Nurturing Parenting Curriculum



The program is dependent on quality facilitators who can deliver the content in an engaging way to connect with parents and help them improve their skills and knowledge.

20

providers also attended
**Nurturing Parenting Substance Abuse, Treatment and Recovery and
Nurturing Parenting Assessment**
trainings available through Title IV-E funds to improve facilitator's skills.

Approximately

30

parents and children attended a Parent Block Party and Resource Fair held at Lucerne Elementary on November 6, 2020.¹

Dinner was provided and parents had the opportunity to learn more about brain development, the ABC's of parenting, social-emotional learning, and how to prepare their child for kindergarten. Community-based agencies also participated to provide information on their services. Organizers felt there was a, "much deeper level of connection" with families participating than has been the case with other types of events held.

¹ This event was not supported by First 5 funds but was a collaborative effort among many First 5 grantees and other agencies and was coordinated by LCOE.

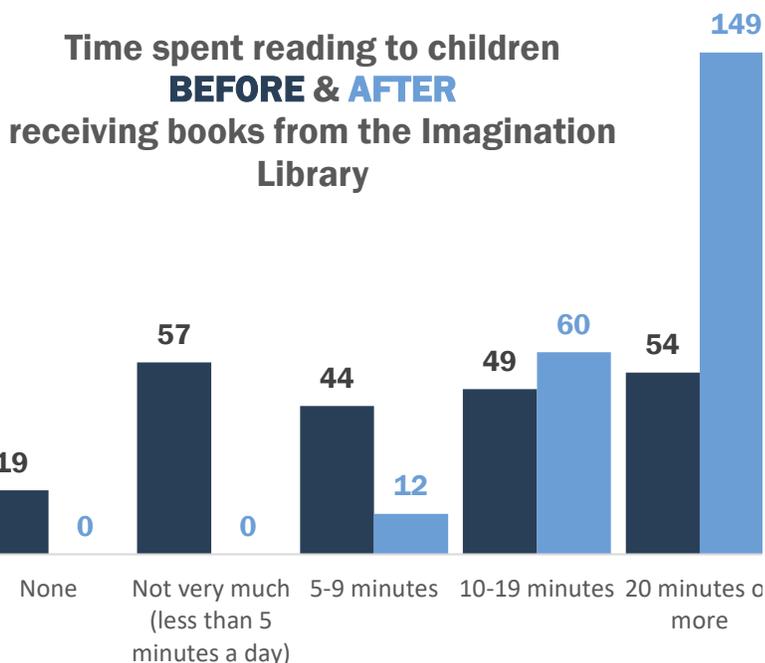
Improved Family Functioning: Early Literacy

"We love the Imagination Library. It has given us wonderful moments and memories. My children are 8 years apart and they love spending time together looking at the newest book to arrive in the mail."

-Imagination Library Parent Participant

A survey targeted at Imagination Library program participants was distributed via the Bloom Facebook page beginning on May 5, 2020. 231 participating parents responded to the survey.

After receiving books from Imagination Library, parents reported increases in the amount of time someone spent reading to their child each day compared to before they received books. The largest increase was seen in parents reporting someone reading 20 minutes or more per day to their child, from only 54 parents/caregivers reporting reading 20 minutes or more to their children before receiving books and 149 parents/caregivers reporting reading 20 minutes or more per day after receiving books.



Approximately

62.0%

of children between 0 and 4 in Lake County were reached by Imagination Library in the last year, receiving books to build literacy skills.

66.5%

of respondents also noted that their children ask to be read to more often since receiving books from the program.

77.3%

of respondents agreed that the Imagination Library program has had a significant positive impact on their family.

"I am grateful for the free book sent to us. Books are expensive and something I would normally not spend money on." -Imagination Library Parent Participant

Improved Family Functioning: Information and Resources for Families

The Bloom program posts information for parents on Facebook at least weekly. Posts that reached over

1,000

parents and caregivers included information about kindergarten registration, classic children's books, and virtual field trips to places like Owen Ranch.

Parents also reacted positively to posts with information to support theirs or their child's mental health with connections to local resources.



Families picked up Bloom prizes faster than ever in the last couple of months of the year. Families were eager to have additional resources for engaging their children. One family who received a prize was excited to receive something because they had no water toys or outside toys for their child to play with. They were not even sure what their child could really do with water outside. This gave them something to explore together and a way to enjoy being outside.

366

parents completed activities posted on the Bloom Facebook page.

Parents that complete activities are entered to win prizes from the program. Activities included at-home scavenger hunts, arts and crafts, and other ways for parents to actively engage in their child's learning and development.



IMPROVED CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Improved Child Development: Early Learning Supports

156

(out of approximately 315) children enrolled in LCOE preschools received **Second Step lessons** from AmeriCorps members. Lessons build children’s social, emotional, and interpersonal skills.



766

hours of instruction related to physical and oral health, nutrition, and interpersonal skills were provided to preschool children by AmeriCorps members.



2

AmeriCorps members completed their **900-hour service commitment** and will be pursuing careers in early childhood education.



Improved Child Development: Quality Care and Education

59

sites participated in the **First 5 IMPACT Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) program**, an increase of **15** from last year. This increase was primarily due to family childcare homes and family, friend, and neighbor providers seeking to improve the quality of care they provide.

168 staff/providers received over

392

hours of coaching and technical assistance to support high-quality early learning throughout the county.



59

early child education professionals received \$700 stipends for completing **21 hours of continuing education**. Offering this support increases the quality of early education provided to young children and helps professionals stay in the field.

IMPROVED CHILD HEALTH

Improved Child Health: Oral Health



698

oral health screenings were conducted on children in preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten, serving **9 out of 15** preschools and elementary schools. Screenings are coordinated by the Lake County Office of Education Healthy Start program.

130

children were provided with oral health case management. This included coordinating appointments for children and families and providing transportation.

Children identified as needing additional care that were connected to dental health supports:

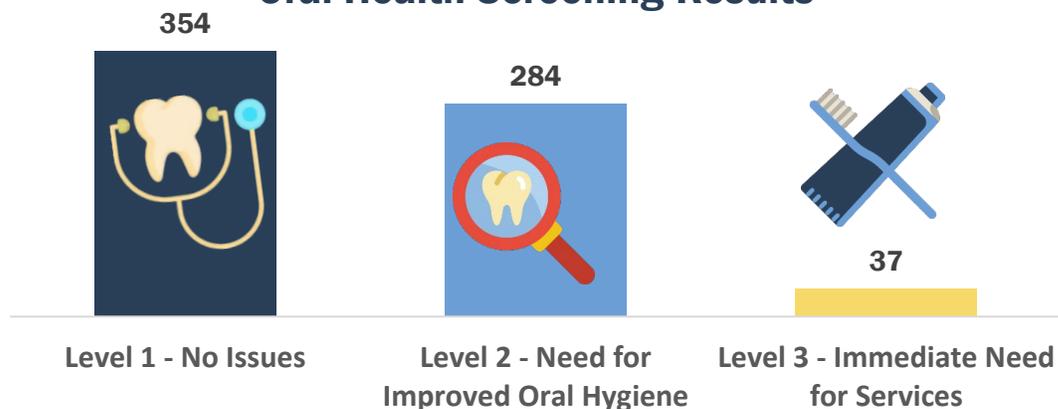
70



Screening results were available for **675** children



Oral Health Screening Results



28

elementary school students from one school in the Middletown Unified School District were **identified with severe dental issues**, such as abscesses.

This caused concern and spurred discussion among Healthy Start program staff, school administrators, dentists, and dental assistants about ways **oral hygiene can be emphasized and access to dental care can be improved.**

Improved Child Health: Developmental Screening & Intervention

A mother accustomed to visiting the ELC was reluctant to participate in Virtual Circle time. After being encouraged by a friend she met at the ELC, the mother joined, and her child was able to sing and play with other children. The mother was reassured by staff and other parents that her child's interactions were as expected for a young child joining a virtual meeting.

Screenings distributed using the research-based *Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)*

136

via the ESNorCal ELC and Healthline.

The ASQ and the ASQ:SE help parents and early childhood educators and caregivers identify and address developmental challenges in young children early in order to provide supports that will help them grow and learn on schedule.

The ASQ measures five domains or skill areas: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social. The ASQ:SE includes seven areas of social-emotional development, including, for example, independence, communication and interactions with people, adaptability, and self-regulation.

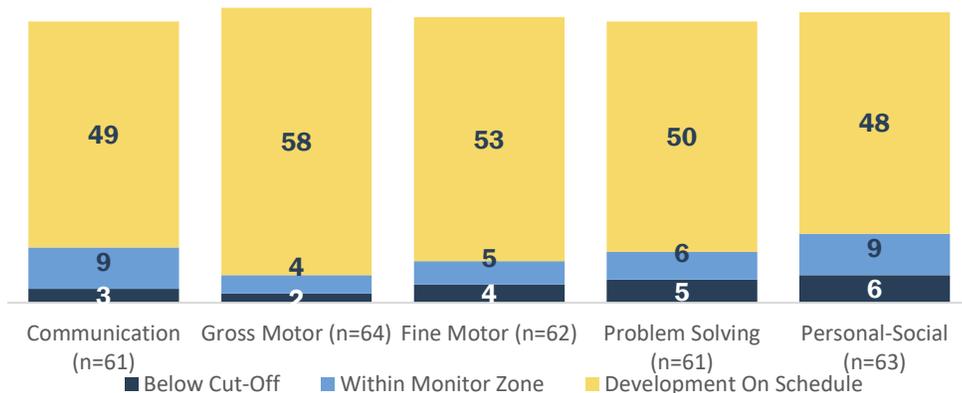
Parents meeting at the Early Learning Center were able to share candidly with each other about their children's development and the services they were receiving. Both parents were grateful to be able to connect with another parent in a similar situation.

The charts below display the results of the 64 ASQs and 51 ASQ:SEs that were scored by ESNorCal. Parents responding to the ASQ and ASQ:SE may skip questions, leading to a varying number of results across each domain.

ASQ:SE Screenings



ASQ Screenings by Developmental Domain



Development is on schedule for the majority of children screened using both the ASQ and the ASQ:SE.

The most common domains requiring referral were **Communication and Personal-Social development.**

Improved Child Health: Health Education and Well-Being

125

parents or other caregivers participated in the **Sutter Lakeside Hospital (SLH) Safe Sleep Classes.**



22%

or 22 out of 99 responses received from parents participating in the **SLH Safe Sleep Class**, were from parents who previously planned to sleep with their children and reported they were no longer planning to do so after attending the class.



14%

of parents participating in the class reported they did not have a safe place for their baby to sleep prior to class. This represents 14 out of 102 responses received. All parents were **provided with a portable crib** so their child would have a safe place to sleep.



70%

or 75 out of 107 new mothers attending the Smart Start Safe Sleep class opted into the **Family Resource (FRN) program**. Additional participants opted into the program at later dates.



The Family Resource Navigator contacts mothers at various intervals after delivery to check in on their **physical and mental health** as well as the health and development of their babies.

During the **first** year of the program (2019-2020),

65

mothers received support from the FRN.

Participants who do not respond to phone calls continue to receive letters and information on maternal and child health and well-being. This included an additional **18** new mothers.

The program sees the highest participation rates in the

2-weeks
(65 participants)

4-weeks
(45 participants)

2-months
(33 participants)

post-delivery periods.

With COVID-19, many expecting moms were unable to have a baby shower. New moms and families expressed great appreciation in being able to receive the education virtually and still receive the Baby Bundle.

The most common referrals made by the FRN were to



Referrals were also made to other First 5 funded programs such as Imagination Library, ESNorCal, and Mother-Wise.

Of the **17** women the FRN made contact with at the 4-month post-delivery mark, **ALL** noted that the program has improved their understanding of services available and improved their ability to navigate the service system.



76%

or 13 out of 17 program respondents, reported practicing safe sleep behaviors 4 months after delivery.

24%

or 4 program participants, practice safe sleep behaviors most of the time or sometimes.

Barriers noted to safe sleep were the ease of breastfeeding with the baby in bed or the comfort of having the baby close. These program participants noted that they were aware of safe sleep practices.

527 new or expecting moms were served by Mother-Wise.



22 women were screened by Mother-Wise using the **Edinburgh Postnatal Depression scale**.



116 perinatal moms accessed the **donations closet** to receive needed items such as baby clothes and supplies.



38 families were referred by **Mother-Wise** to resources around the community. These included referrals to therapy, the Safe Sleep Class, Lake Family Resource Center (LFRC), and other agencies.

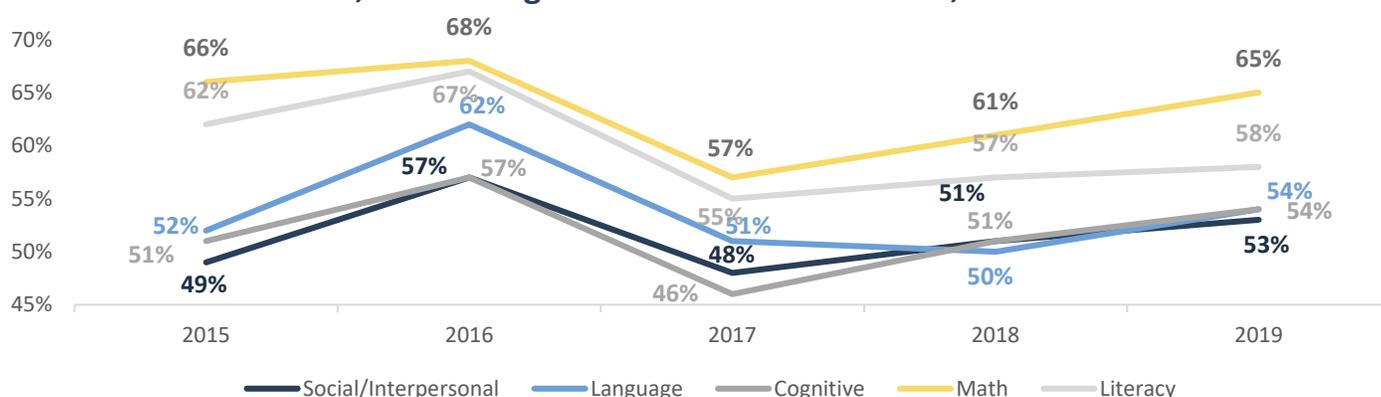
The Health Line operated by ESNorCal provided technical assistance on child development to **200 parents, caregivers, or other family members and 29 providers**. Through these efforts **96 children** ages 0 through 5 were also served.

KINDERGARTEN READINESS

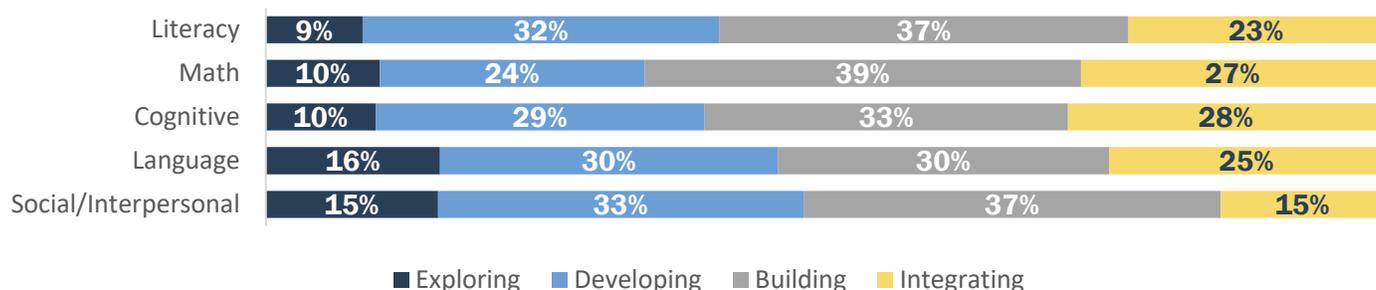
First 5 Lake has partnered with the Lake County Office of Education since 2008 to conduct a Kindergarten Entry Developmental Profile (KEDP) study.

The figure below shows the trends for the percentage of developmental indicators within each of the five skill areas of the KEDP (Social/Interpersonal, Language, Cognitive, Math, and Literacy skills) that were rated as “school ready”. Math and Literacy skills were rated at a higher developmental level across all five years for kindergarten students, while Social/Interpersonal skills have traditionally been rated lower. No clear explanations were found for the year-to-year fluctuations seen in these trends.

Percent of Developmental Indicators Rated as “School Ready” by Skill Area, All Kindergarten Students in the KEDP, 2015-2019



A different way to look at the overall developmental status of this cohort of kindergarten students is to assess the number of skill areas that were rated as “school ready”. Children scoring at the Building or Integrating stage within the KEDP framework are considered more ready for kindergarten.



The second figure shows the results of this analysis for kindergarten students included in the 2019 KEDP. Social/Interpersonal and Language skills have the lowest overall levels of development, with 48% and 46% of kindergarten students being assessed at the Exploring or Developing stages for these skill areas, respectively. Math, Literacy, and Cognitive skills all show higher, albeit slightly in some cases, levels of development. Math was the most developed skill area for kindergarten students, with 66% at the Building or Integrating stages.

For the full 2019 KEDP report visit the Special Projects page of the [First 5 Lake County website](#).

IMPROVED SYSTEMS OF CARE

Improved Systems of Care: Collaboration

In 2019-20, First 5 Lake’s Executive Director:

Served as a member of the

Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Advisory Board

Children’s Council

Lake County IMPACT/QRIS Steering Committee and Lake County Child Care Planning Council



Lake County Complete Count Committee

Lake County Oral Health Advisory Council (OHAC)

Participated in the

Healthy Start Collaborative

Strategies 2.0 Immersion Project

Health Leadership Network

Health Education Coalition

Nurturing Families Advisory Committee

Building Resilient Lake County Trauma-Informed Guide Team

Stakeholder meetings for Child Welfare Services and Lake County Probation

Led and launched the [State of Our Children](#) effort and made presentations at the Lakeport and Clearlake City Council meetings as well as to the Board of Supervisors and at a gathering of superintendents of Lake County school districts.

First 5 Lake County also [hosted a retreat for the First 5 Northwest Region Executive Directors](#); serving to strengthen relationships, share resources, and magnify the issues facing smaller population counties.

Guided the [Smart Start Collective](#), a collaborative of professionals serving families of children ages 0-5 in Lake County, in finalizing and launching the [Smart Start Lake County Website](#) and preparing for the creation of a universal, online Eligibility Wizard to be launched in 2020-21.

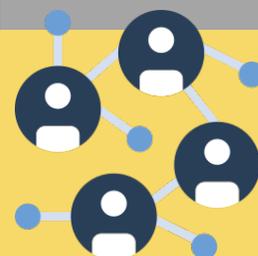
Examples of the positive results from this collaborative work include:

Organizing a joint, multi-agency visit to programs in two neighboring counties that are **providing multiple parenting-related services under one roof.**



Hosting a **pop-up health fair and sponsoring a free family movie** at a local theater.

Setting up and facilitating orientation meetings for the Family Resource Navigator at Sutter Lakeside Hospital with community partners to better serve families **through a network of connected providers.**



Gathering a group to attend a **training on Balancing ACEs with HOPE** followed by a private lunch with speaker, Dr. Robert Sege.

Working with the Department of Public Health to map out **billboard locations and contacts across the County** for future outreach efforts.



Organizing distribution of **We Count! children's books** and children's t-shirts for 2020 Census promotion.

Printing and distributing **community resource guides** in English and Spanish to family-serving organizations.



Improved Systems of Care: Training

In 2019-20, First 5 Lake’s executive director:

Provided an informational session to local foster/resource parents about the **Foster Neighbor program**.



Partnered with representatives from a local hospital and Tribal Health to present a breakout session at the 2020 **First 5 CA Child Health, Education and Care Summit**

Through a Title IV-E subcontract, First 5 Lake staff facilitated or organized:



98
hours of training were made available by First 5 to

36

Agencies with



209

providers participating



Training Topics Included:

The attendance of four local service providers at the **Darkness to Light Stewards of Children Facilitator Training and National Ignite Prevention Conference**

The attendance of two local service providers at the **First 5 California 2020 Child Health, Education & Care Summit**

An online training on **Lake County Community Resources**



An online **“Writing to Heal Workshop”** with nationally recognized speaker and author, Donna Jackson Nakazawa

The **Stewards of Children** child sexual abuse prevention trainings for Department of Behavioral Health, WIC, Probation, and a training open to the community.

The Nurturing Parenting in **Substance Abuse, Treatment and Recovery** and a Nurturing Parenting **Assessment training**

An online training in **“Listening to Children’s Fears: COVID-19 as an Aid to Empathy”** with author and internationally respected infant and early childhood mental health practitioner, Dr. Alicia Lieberman

Improved Systems of Care: Community Strengthening

In 2019-20, First 5 Lake's executive director:

Served as the liaison between the County Public Health Officer and local child care providers in drafting COVID-19 guidance that child care settings would be able to implement.



Organized a **Kids Press Conference** where a kid reporter interviewed the County Sheriff, Superintendent of Schools, Public Health Nurse and a local preschool teacher about COVID-19 and the questions that children have about it.

Organized and facilitated a meeting with the County Public Health Officer with local organizations seeking to provide summer children's programming in alignment with COVID-19 safety protocols.



Participated monthly in **Sutter Lakeside Hospital and Adventist Health Clearlake's Safe Sleep Seminars**, sharing with expectant mothers and their support partners about all of the services and programs available in the County through First 5 Lake funding.

Continued to strategically use **Facebook** to promote community resources, child health and development, family strengthening, and local family-friendly events.



Followers of the First 5 Lake page increased by

50% in 2019-20 with over **900**

total followers at the end of the year, and posts are frequently shared with a reach in the thousands.



Launched a First 5 Lake **Instagram** account



CONCLUSIONS

Programs such as **Imagination Library and AmeriCorps** increase the regularity with which families read to their children and support social-emotional learning within early care and education settings, key aspects to achieving the Commission’s desired outcome *of increasing academic and social-emotional school readiness for all Lake County children.*

The Commission is making progress on its desired outcome that all children are born healthy and experience *optimal physical, behavioral, and developmental health in the first year of life.*

Families have additional opportunities to be educated about and access health related services through the Sutter Lakeside Hospital Smart Start Family Support program.

Programs such as this and **Mother-Wise** support meeting the Commission’s strategic *priority to connect with families at the earliest possible point in time.*

Efforts by **ESNorCal** have resulted in children receiving developmental screenings in a variety of settings, including directly through the Early Learning Center, to *identify developmental delays early and intervene when necessary.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on findings from this evaluation and the KEDP, literacy and social-emotional skills should be a continued focus of programming to improve kindergarten readiness.
- The Bloom platform may be able to be leveraged to increase messaging and support to parents and educators in these areas.

- The **Family Resource Navigator (FRN)** component of the Sutter Lakeside Hospital Smart Start Family Support program is an innovative program that evolved from the Smart Start Safe Sleep Classes operated by Sutter Lakeside Hospital. As a relatively new program, data and information on the program should continue to be shared with the Commission as it continues to evolve to serve families.

- Although screening is done throughout the county by professionals trained by ESNorCal, this evaluation does not measure if this screening is reaching the point of being conducted “universally” by child-serving agencies, as described in the First 5 Lake County Commission’s strategic priorities. It may be valuable to determine if and where there are gaps to making developmental screening more available throughout the county.

CONCLUSIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parenting knowledge and skills are enhanced to support children’s healthy development through delivery of the *Nurturing Families* curriculum by LCOE’s Healthy Start program. Parents receive a high-level of individualized support through this program.

Children in Lake County have access to *oral health education, screenings, and care* for immediate dental needs through LCOE’s Healthy Start oral health program.

- Due to challenges related to COVID-19 the program couldn’t provide as many community classes as anticipated. Additional ways to provide this type of broader education should be explored.
- Parents participating in this program typically have children between 3 and 5 years of age or older. There may be a gap in providing this education to parents with children in the first year of life or at the earliest possible resource connection, as stated in the Commission’s strategic priorities. Connecting with the FRN at Sutter Lakeside Hospital may assist in identifying families that could benefit from the Nurturing Parenting curriculum.
- In addition, during the current reporting year, the program instituted the Nurturing Skills Competency Scale (NSCS) for parents participating in drop-in and other class formats. The NSCS is designed to measure changes in family life, and knowledge and utilization of specific parenting practices.
- While data was collected on the six constructs included in the NSCS, sufficiently matched pre/post NSCS tests were not available to report on improvements after completing the program. The evaluation consultant will continue to provide support to the program to better reflect the impact classes and additional support are having on parents and children. Providing incentives to parents returning post-tests may increase the number available for analysis.
- Oral health screening is likely to be complicated by issues surrounding the COVID-19 public health crisis. Families may be more likely to delay or discontinue care, making the oral health screenings provided in schools throughout the county even more critical so that dental health services are accessible to families.
- Broad, public health messaging campaigns may also be helpful in encouraging people to continue seeing an oral health care provider.

For all programs, it will be important in the coming year to identify **new, innovative, and sustainable ways to serve families with young children in Lake County.**

