

# Report to the Community

PUBLISHED MARCH 2021



## 2019-2020

How First 5 Kern programs have impacted the children and families of Kern County

## From the Executive Director



First 5 Kern is proud to present our Report to the Community for the 2019-20 fiscal year. This report details the impact that these programs have on the children and families of Kern County. That work provides a critical support system for these families, which has never been more important than it has during the last year.

This was a year that saw great challenges, ushering in the opening months of the COVID-19 pandemic, and some of our work on that front is reflected here. Many of our programs were forced to reinvent the ways they could reach our families, with social distancing protocols, reduced office hours and forced closures. First 5 Kern helped provide protective equipment, diapers and cleaning supplies to thousands of families through our programs and child care facilities throughout the county. Those efforts continue to this day and will continue until we return to some level of normalcy.

In many ways, however, we cannot return back to normal, because we know that under “normal” circumstances there is still great need in our communities that isn’t being addressed. The pandemic has exposed many inequities that serve as a barrier to families in accessing health care, education services, child care, technology and more.

For that reason we are also pivoting gradually in our efforts toward addressing these systemic problems that exist through projects that aim to alter the care our families can access, such as Help Me Grow, Resilient Kern and others initiatives we are working on.

Not only will you gradually learn more about these efforts in the coming months and years, but we will ask for your collaboration and participation in these programs.

While the reach of these efforts and our 39 programs cannot be completely shown in these pages, please know that behind every program there are many compelling stories. They are stories of young children in great need. These children are our neighbors, our friends, and our family members. They are also our future.

We appreciate all of the efforts of our funded programs and our many partners. This Report to the Community is but a brief overview of their efforts, as they work hard every day to serve the children and families of Kern County.

**Roland Maier**  
Executive Director

## Our Vision

All Kern County children will be born into and thrive in supportive, safe, loving homes and neighborhoods; and will enter school healthy and ready to learn.

## The Mission

To strengthen and support the children of Kern County, 0 to 5-years-old, and their families, by empowering providers through the integration of services with an emphasis on:

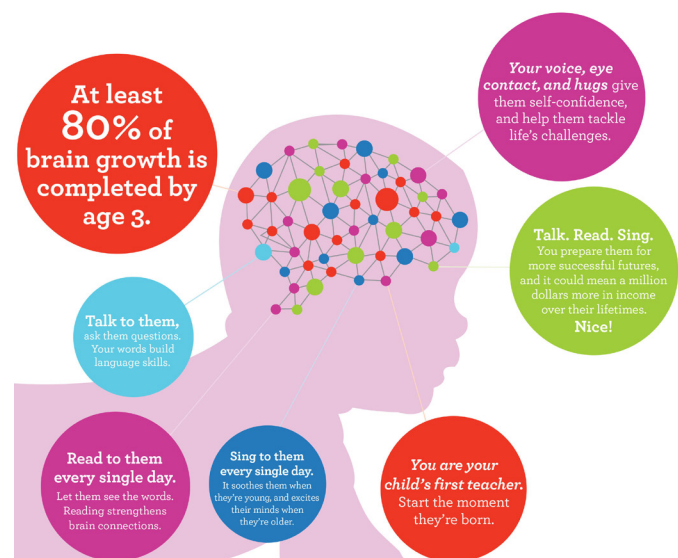
- Health and Wellness
- Parent Education and Support Services
- Early Child Care and Education
- Integration of Services

## Our Charge

First 5 Kern was established in 1998 when California voters passed Proposition 10 - The California Children and Families Act - which levied a 50-cent tax on each pack of cigarettes and other tobacco products sold. Revenues generated from the tobacco tax are used to fund local programs that promote early childhood development for children ages 0 to 5 in the areas of health and wellness, parent education and support services, early childcare and education, and integration of services.

### NOTES

- First 5 Kern is the designated Children and Families Commission for the County of Kern.
- “Children” refers to the ages of 0 to 5-years-old.
- “To date” reflects up to the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
- “First 5” reflects First 5 Kern unless otherwise stated (e.g., First 5 California).
- “Focus Areas” are selected through a formal strategic planning process.



\* Cover image: Children at Special Start for Exceptional Children (Caring Corner) get hands-on experience with a bearded dragon



## First 5 Kern Funded Programs in 2019-20

For the 2019-20 Fiscal Year, 41 programs were funded directly by Proposition 10 dollars. Those programs were assigned to one of our four Focus Areas (FA), as outlined below. Many of the programs, however, offered services that impacted multiple focus areas. Family Resource Centers, for example, often offer care coordination (FA1), parenting classes (FA2), and child care services (FA3) all under one roof.

### Our 2019-20 funded programs from Focus Area 1

- Bakersfield Adult School Health Literacy Program (Kern High School District)
- Black Infant Health (County of Kern Public Health Services Dept.)
- Community Health Initiative of Kern County (Mercy Foundation - Bakersfield)
- Children's Mobile Immunization Program (Adventist Health Bakersfield)
- Kern County Children's Dental Health Network (Kern County Superintendent of Schools)
- Kern Valley Aquatics Program (South Fork Union School District)
- Make A Splash (City of Bakersfield Dept. of Recreation & Parks)
- Medically Vulnerable Infant Program (Clinica Sierra Vista)
- Medically Vulnerable Care Coordination Project (County of Kern Public Health Services Dept.)
- Nurse-Family Partnership Program (County of Kern Public Health Services Dept.)
- Richardson Special Needs Collaborative (Kern County Superintendent of Schools)
- Special Start for Exceptional Children (Caring Corner)
- Successful Application Stipend (County of Kern Public Health Services Dept.)

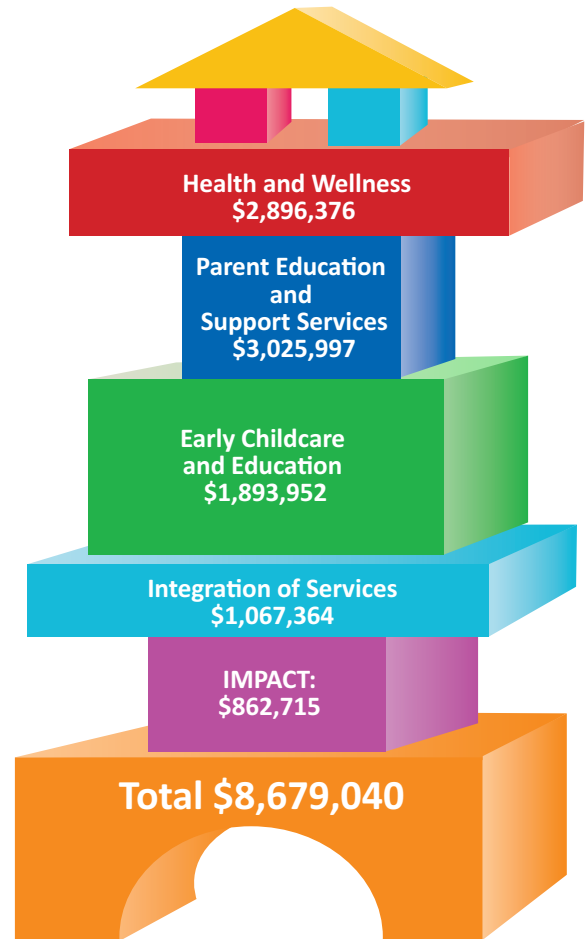
### Our 2019-20 funded programs from Focus Area 2

- 2-1-1 Kern County (Community Action Partnership of Kern)
- Arvin Family Resource Center (Arvin Union School District)
- Buttonwillow Community Resource Center (Buttonwillow Union School District)
- Differential Response (Kern County Network for Children)
- Domestic Violence Reduction Project (Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Inc.)
- East Kern Family Resource Center (Community Action Partnership of Kern)
- Greenfield School Readiness Program (Greenfield Union School District)
- Guardianship Caregiver Project (Greater Bakersfield Legal Assistance, Inc.)
- Help Me Grow Kern County (Community Action Partnership of Kern)
- Indian Wells Valley Family Resource Center (Clinica Sierra Vista)
- Kern River Valley Family Resource Center (Great Beginnings Program, Kernville Union School District)
- Lamont Vineland School Readiness Program (Lamont School District)
- McFarland Family Resource Center (McFarland Union School District)
- Mountain Communities Family Resource Center (El Tejon Unified School District)
- Shafter Healthy Start (Richland School District)
- Southeast Neighborhood Partnership Family Resource Center (Clinica Sierra Vista)
- Women's Shelter Network (Women's Center- High Desert, Inc.)

### Our 2019-20 funded programs from Focus Area 3

- Blanton Child Development Center (Kern County Superintendent of Schools)
- Delano School Readiness (Delano Union School District)
- Discovery Depot Child Care Center (Bakersfield Homeless Center)
- Lost Hills Family Resource Center (Lost Hills Union School District)
- Neighborhood Place Community Learning Center (North of the River Rec & Park Dist.)
- Ready to Start (Ready to Start Foundation)
- Small Steps Child Development Center (Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault)
- South Fork Preschool and Day Care Center (South Fork Union School District)
- Supporting Parents and Children for School Readiness (Bakersfield City School District)
- West Side Outreach and Learning Center (West Side Recreation and Parks District)
- Wind in the Willows Preschool (Wind in the Willows Education Org.)

## Community Investment and Impact



## Our Commitment

First 5 Kern is committed to using Kern County's tobacco tax dollars efficiently to support quality services. We aim to help our funded providers to be successful, and we work closely with them in all aspects of their operations.

First 5 Kern closely monitors every contracted partner to ensure programs are achieving results and meeting all their performance measures. Staff provides training and technical assistance to help build the capacity of all our funded partners and to support their success.

## FOCUS AREA 1

# Health and Wellness

First 5 Kern funded 13 programs addressing the health care needs of children 0 to 5-years-old, with the goal that all children will have an early start toward good health.

Programs include those aimed at enrolling children and pregnant women in health insurance programs, as well as providing access to dental screenings, mental health services, immunizations and care coordination for medically vulnerable children.



*Caring Corner (Special Start for Exceptional Children), is a longtime funded program that offers early childhood education and parent support for medically fragile infants and toddlers at no cost to families.*

## FOCUS AREA 1 HIGHLIGHTS

- The rate of prenatal smoking was reduced from 8.5% in 2018-19 to 3.4% in 2019-20 among participants from 15 programs, impacting 1,336 newborns.
- The rate of insurance coverage expanded to 98.2% this year across 12 programs. Four programs achieved 100% insurance coverage this year.
- 19 programs tracked the developmental growth of 1,661 children, using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires.
- The proportion of families having annual well-child checkups increased across 18 programs to 93.3% this year. Three programs that work directly with families achieved 100% completion of well-child checkups.
- The percent of full-term pregnancy increased from 76.5% last year to 84.9% this year across 17 programs.
- 2,654 children received dental screenings, leading to over 1,000 referrals to a pediatric dentist for further services.
- The percent of children receiving all immunizations increased across 14 programs from 89.5% in the last year to 93.6% this year.
- On average, the rate of monthly prenatal care increased from 92.2% last year to 96.4% this year in 14 programs. These programs served 1,251 families in FY 2019-20. Five programs reached 100% this year.

## FOCUS AREA 3

# Early Child Care and Education

First 5 Kern supports programs with the primary objective to provide childcare with an education component. The programs offer school readiness activities and resources, developmental assessments, nutrition services and parent education.



*Neighborhood Place Community Learning Center in Oildale served more children than any First 5 Kern funded early learning program.*

## FOCUS AREA 2

# Parent Education and Support Services

First 5 Kern-funded programs offer parents and caregivers access to culturally-appropriate training in child development, brain development, and parenting skills, as well as access to family support services such as a public health nurse, crisis intervention, substance abuse and health education.

These programs address needs of a diverse range of clients, including adolescents, teen parents and those needing assistance with domestic violence or guardianship.

## Focus Area 2 Highlights

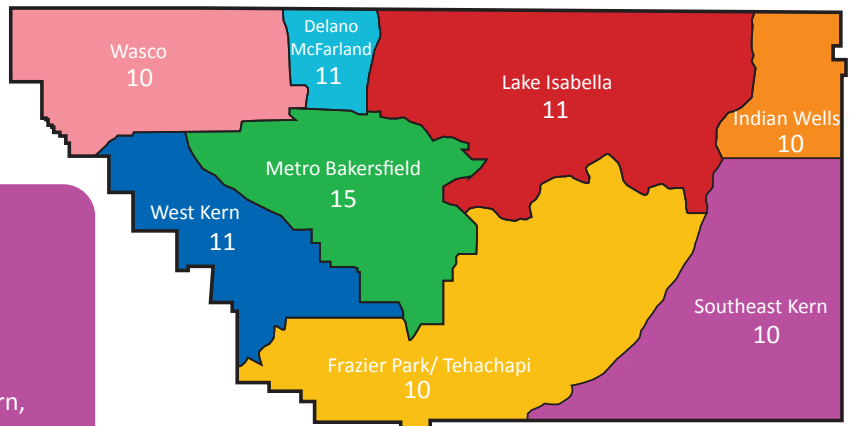
- The number of children read to at least once per week was tracked by a sample of 1,171 child data in 17 programs. The rate increased from 98.9% in last year to 99.1% this year.
- A total of 206 participants attended Nurturing-Parenting workshops at six program sites.
- Four programs operated Court-Mandated Parent Education classes, serving 69 parents.
- 1,021 families utilized First 5 Kern-funded programs for general case management support, an increase from the previous fiscal year.
- The Differential Response program, designed to keep families out of Child Protective Services, worked with families representing 2,525 children.



South Fork preschool was one of many programs that hosted parent cafes in 2019-20. Parent cafes, Nurturing Parenting workshops, and parent education classes are an important service many programs provide.

## Parent Education In Kern County

This map of Kern County shows the number of parent education programs that are available through programs funded by First 5 Kern.



\*Numbers are aggregated across countywide and local programs.

## FOCUS AREA 3 HIGHLIGHTS

- Local service providers delivered early learning support for 4,173 children.
- Among center-based programs funded by First 5 Kern, Neighborhood Place Community Learning Center (located in the Oildale Community) provided services to 260 children in FY 2019-20, the most of all our funded programs.
- 916 children received early education services from 18 First 5 Kern-funded programs.

***“Investments in high-quality parenting education will be among the best investments any community can make.”***

***- University of Oregon parenting research program report***



## FOCUS AREA 4

# Integration of Services

First 5 Kern works within the community to build relationships to facilitate the creation and implementation of integrated and collaborative systems of information. It is a component of all focus areas, advocacy, and outreach.

The effort enhances system building, optimizes early childhood development and strengthens Kern families. The goal of this focus area is to invest in and improve coordination across systems of care, to efficiently connect young children to early intervention.



Resilient Kern is a First 5 Kern initiative dedicated to promoting trauma-informed care throughout the county. A second cohort of over 100 participants convened with four full-day training sessions in 2019.

Trainings continued virtually in 2020 throughout the pandemic. Hundreds of local providers and care workers have completed trauma-informed trainings through the program.

This program is expected to continue to grow in the coming years and build local and statewide partnerships to expand trauma-informed care and increase ACE screenings locally.



Help Me Grow Kern County was officially launched in 2019. The program provides free developmental screenings for children under the age of 6, using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires, ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2, and connects families to services throughout the county as needed.

Parents can screen their children online through the website, or with a developmental specialist over the phone by calling 2-1-1.

## Making an IMPACT

A key program within Focus Area 4 is IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive), a statewide initiative funded by First 5 California that strengthens early learning programs throughout the county.

The Kern Early Stars program is the recipient of IMPACT funds locally. Using a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) program model developed by a statewide consortium of early childhood education representatives, the program provides training and resources to teachers and directors working in child development programs as well as family child care providers throughout Kern County.

## IMPACT numbers

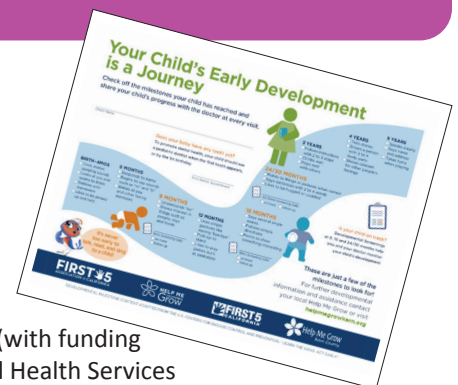
2019-20 FY funding received: \$862,715  
Number of IMPACT sites in Kern County: 104  
Children participating in IMPACT sites: 3,057  
Child care providers who participated in trainings: 427  
Children receiving developmental screenings: 2,306

Learn more at [KernEarlyStars.org](http://KernEarlyStars.org).



The Kern Early Stars held a ratings celebration in early 2020, to acknowledge the work that child care providers have invested in bolstering their programs to provide quality learning settings for young children.

Help Me Grow Kern County is a partnership between First 5 Kern, Kern Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (with funding provided by the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), and a partnership with Community Action Partnership of Kern's 2-1-1 Kern County program. Learn more at [HelpMeGrowKern.org](http://HelpMeGrowKern.org).



## Collaborations and Coalitions

First 5 Kern, with guidance from its Strategic Plan, allocates funds for initiatives that provide Kern County children with the foundation they need to succeed. First 5 Kern is actively involved in and supports initiatives that bring organizations together to achieve better outcomes for children and their families in our community.

Additionally, First 5 Kern steadfastly maintains a voice at the table for collaborations across Kern County impacting children 0-5, many of whom meet regularly at the First 5 Kern offices. They include:

- 34th Street Neighborhood Partnership
- Bakersfield College Child Development Advisory Committee
- Buttonwillow Community Collaborative
- Child Death Review Team
- Community Health Initiative
- Delano Neighborhood Partnership
- Early Childhood Council of Kern
- East Bakersfield Community Collaborative
- East Kern Collaborative
- Fetal Infant Mortality Review
- Good Neighbor Festival Committee
- Greenfield H.E.L.P.S. Collaborative
- Head Start - Policy Council
- Health Net Kern Community Advisory Committee
- Indian Wells Valley Collaborative
- Kern Complete Count Committee - 2020 Census
- Kern County Breastfeeding Coalition
- Kern County Network for Children General Collaborative
- Kern Early Stars
- Kern River Valley Collaborative



Group photo of nurses First 5 Kern helped organize and promote the Safe Sleep Certification ceremony at Memorial Hospital in October, 2019. Bakersfield became just the second California city to feature two Gold-Certified Safe Sleep hospitals in the state.

- Lost Hills Community Collaborative
- McFarland Collaborative
- Medically Vulnerable Care Coordination Committee
- Oildale Community Collaborative
- Quality Counts California
- Resilient Kern (Trauma-Informed Kern County)
- Richardson Special Needs Collaborative
- Safe Sleep Coalition
- Safely Surrendered Baby Coalition
- Shafter Healthy Start Collaborative
- South Chester Partnership Collaborative
- Southeast Neighborhood Partnership General Collaborative
- South Valley Neighborhood Partnership Collaborative
- Tobacco Free Coalition of Kern County
- West Side "Together We Can" Collaborative
- Wasco Community Collaborative

## COVID RELIEF

Over 200 child care providers and family resource centers received PPE and cleaning supplies from the Child Care Task Force during the early months of the COVID pandemic. The task force was a collaboration with Kern County Superintendent of Schools and Community Connection for Child care.



3,064 bottles of liquid hand soap  
216 gallons of bleach  
3,546 bottles of all-purpose cleaner  
158,000 pairs of gloves  
22,350 kids masks



72,900 adult masks  
6,322 bottles of hand sanitizer  
3,425 packs of baby wipes  
4,650 cases of diapers  
1,032 boxes of tissues

8,320 rolls of toilet paper  
540 rolls of paper towel  
625 lbs. of laundry detergent

# Report to the Community



@First5Kern

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Retired, Kern County Public Health Services Department

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Kern Medical

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Wasco Union Elementary School District

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**DR. JEFF HANRAHAN**, Clinica Sierra Vista

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