FIRST 5 SAN BENITO & FAMILY IMPACT CENTER

EVALUATION 2019-20
Table of Contents

Acknowledgments .................................................................................................................. 3
Evaluation Highlights ............................................................................................................ 5
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 7
Systems Change ..................................................................................................................... 9
Family Impact Center Participant Characteristics and Needs ............................................. 16
Promotion .............................................................................................................................. 20
Prevention ............................................................................................................................. 21
Intervention .......................................................................................................................... 24
Summary ................................................................................................................................ 29
Acknowledgments

First 5 San Benito would like to acknowledge the following individuals for supporting the efforts of First 5 San Benito and the Family Impact Center in the community and their contributions to this report.

**FIRST 5 SAN BENITO COMMISSION**

- David Redman, OD, Optometrist, Chair
- Elias Barocio, Jr, San Benito County Migrant Program Manager
- Margie Barrios, Community Member
- Tracey Belton, San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency
- Mary Damm, United Way of San Benito County
- Marni Friedman MD, Family Physician
- David Ghilarducci, MD, FACEP, Interim Health Officer, San Benito Public Health
- Peter Hernandez, San Benito County Board of Supervisors

**FIRST 5 SAN BENITO STAFF**

- Lisa Faulkner, Executive Director
- Sarah Beatie, Administrative Analyst
- Rosie Contreras, Home Visiting Supervisor
- Maria Diaz Ruiz, Home Visitor
- Priscilla Favela, Home Visitor
- Samantha Hernandez, Quality Counts Director
- Carly Offerman, Administrator

**FAMILY IMPACT CENTER STAFF**

- Cristina Gomez-Hernandez, Intervention Services Director
- Maddison Kennedy, Home Visiting Systems Coordinator
- Chris Henriques, Contractor-Case Manager
- Monica Hernandez, Resource & Referral Social Worker
- Maria Diaz Ruiz, Home Visitor
- Priscilla Favela, Home Visitor
- Samantha Hernandez, Quality Counts Director
- Carly Offerman, Administrator

**FIRST 5 SAN BENITO STRATEGIC PLANNING CONSULTANT**

- Nicole Young, MSW, Optimal Solutions Consulting

**FIRST 5 SAN BENITO EVALUATION CONSULTANTS**

- Christina Branom, PhD, Applied Survey Research
- Lisa Colvig-Niclai, MA, Applied Survey Research
FAMILY IMPACT COLLABORATIVE ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Elias Barocio, Jr, San Benito County Migrant Program Manager
- Tracey Belton, San Benito County Health & Human Services Director
- Kendra Bobsin, CEO, Go Kids
- Gary Cameron, CAB Board Member, District II
- Esther Curtice, Executive Director, CASA of San Benito County
- Patrick Ellis, Executive Director, Chamberlain’s Children Center
- Victoria Fortino, United Way of San Benito County
- Jennifer Frusetta, RDH, San Benito County Oral Health Program
- Kellie Kennedy, San Benito County Sheriff’s Department
- Kollin Kosmicki, San Benito Live!
- Patrice Kuerschner, Executive Director, Emmaus House
- Lynn Mello, San Benito County Public Health
- Diego Ochoa, Superintendent, Hollister School District
- Samantha Perez, San Benito County Public Health
- Maria Sanchez, Mental Health Case Management Services Manager
- Jamila Saqqa, Housing Programs Coordinator
- Tonia Sonseri, CAB Board Member, District III
- Doreen Smith, Victim Advocate
- Captain Eric Taylor, San Benito County Sheriff
- Rachel White, LMFT, San Benito County Behavioral Health Services Assistant Director
- Alan Yamamoto, San Benito County Behavioral Health Services Director
Evaluation Highlights

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 had a significant impact on the health, development, and well-being of many San Benito children and families, exacerbating pre-existing challenges like unstable housing, unemployment, food insecurity, and worries about immigration. Through systems change efforts and wholistic, comprehensive programming built around boosting families’ protective factors,¹ First 5 San Benito and its partners at the San Benito County Family Impact Center addressed community needs throughout the year and reduced the negative effects of the pandemic. While COVID-19 shut down many services in the state, within a week of the Governor’s stay-at-home order, First 5 San Benito pivoted to offering virtual services and providing concrete support to families. The efforts of First 5 San Benito and its partners were based on a model of intervention that increases the intensity of support as families’ needs increase: Promotion activities were designed to impact the community as a whole, Prevention services were provided to a more targeted set of children and families, and Intervention services were offered to children and families with the highest needs. Systems change activities impacted the early childhood service system across the intervention spectrum. Below are highlights from the 2019-20 evaluation of first 5 San Benito and the Family Impact Center.

Systems Change

- To address the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, First 5 San Benito collaborated with nearly 40 partners in the community to distribute 255,749 meals and other essential supplies, like diapers and formula, to hundreds of San Benito County families each week from March to June 2020.
- The Family Impact Center Collaborative meets to guide the work of the Family Impact Center, influence policies and systems to create and sustain a trauma-informed service system, and leverage existing resources and attract additional investments in children and families into the community.
- First 5 and Family Impact Center Collaborative partners have attracted new funding into the county for services for children and families. In 2019-20 Collaborative grants totaled $450,816, and revenue from all sources for First 5 reached $1.3 million.
- First 5 San Benito has been an integral partner in the Tri-County Central Coast Early Childhood Advocacy Network. Four virtual visits with legislators were held and two advocacy letters were written to advocate for addressing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- First 5 San Benito and its partners succeeded in petitioning the state and county to name January 2020 Positive Parenting Awareness Month.
- Community awareness about the dangers of vaping was built through a billboard developed in partnership with San Benito Public Health.
- Professional development was offered to 31 health and early care and education providers to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services.

¹ From the Protective Factors framework developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy and FRIENDS National Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP).
PROMOTION

- 231 English kits and 216 Spanish kits with information and resources for new parents were distributed.
- 22 car seats were inspected for safe and appropriate installation, and 20 car seats were replaced through the car seat safety program.

PREVENTION

- 51 families with 78 children participated in Story Time. Nearly all parents reported that the program benefited them – 99% of families said it gave them ideas about how to make reading fun at home.
- 349 children and their parents participated in the evidence-based Raising a Reader literacy program, which provided books and instruction on read aloud techniques to improve literacy.
- A total of 280 parents with 297 children participated in Power of Play (POP) and Wonders of the World (WOW) play groups. These gave families an opportunity to interact with one another, share parenting ideas, and receive educational materials.

INTERVENTION

- 29 parents/caregivers attended Family Fun Nights at the Family Impact Center, where they were provided food and child care, and taught strategies to strengthen their families and improve their parenting practices, using three curricula: Strengthening Families, Triple P, and Positive Discipline. Triple P individual sessions were also offered to 18 families following the stay-at-home order.
- 36 families received home visiting services using the evidence-based Parents as Teachers curriculum to strengthen their protective factors and help them manage the stress and social isolation caused by the pandemic. Parents also received referrals to other services and programs in the community, such as Early Start.
- 33 families with involvement in the child welfare system were offered case management services using Parents as Teachers, Promoting First Relationships, and Triple P Individual curricula, and referrals to needed community resources, to address their individual needs and strengthen their protective factors.
- Across parent education, home visiting, and case management programs, parents reported improvement from intake to exit, particularly in the areas of Concrete Support and Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. Overall, parents were extremely satisfied with their experience, with 100% saying the services helped them learn parenting skills and manage the challenges they face as a parent. They also all rated the services as “excellent” or “good.”
Introduction

Protective factors are strengths in families and communities that promote well-being and healthy development and keep children safe from abuse and neglect. The protective factors framework is based on research showing positive experiences and supportive relationships positively influence brain development and help children manage and recover from adverse experiences. Nurturing, supportive, safe, and stable family environments allow children to gain mastery across skill domains. When the five protective factors are present – Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children, and Concrete Support – the parent-child relationship flourishes and children have optimal developmental outcomes and resilience in the face of stress.

For many San Benito County families, the COVID-19 pandemic threatened these protective factors by exacerbating challenges like unstable housing, unemployment, food insecurity, social isolation, limited access to medical care, and worries about immigration. These challenges contribute to chronic stress among parents, which can interfere with positive parent-child relationships.

Through wholistic, comprehensive programming built around boosting families’ protective factors, First 5 San Benito and its partners at the San Benito County Family Impact Center supported families throughout the year and immediately responded to reduce the negative effects of the pandemic. While COVID-19 shut down many services in the state, within a week of the Governor’s stay-at-home order, First 5 San Benito pivoted to offering virtual services and providing concrete support to families. The efforts of First 5 San Benito and its partners were based on a pyramid model of intervention that increases the intensity of support as families’ needs increase. Promotion activities at the bottom of the pyramid were designed to be universal, affecting all or nearly all families in the community. Prevention services in the middle of the pyramid were provided to a more targeted set of children and families. Intervention services, at the top of the pyramid, were more intensive services for children and families with a higher level of need and vulnerability. Systems change activities impacted the early childhood service system across the intervention spectrum. The services and supports provided mitigated the chronic stress caused by the pandemic, by building protective factors in the community (see next page for a diagram depicting the services offered at each level of the intervention pyramid and a description of each protective factor). This report describes the families served by the efforts of First 5 San Benito and its Impact Center partners and how they were impacted.
THE IMPACT OF SYSTEMS CHANGE EFFORTS AND THE PYRAMID OF INTERVENTION ON THE FIVE PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Systems Change
- Coordinated County COVID Response
- Collaboration/Partnerships
- Funding/Sustainability
- Advocacy
- Professional Development
- Public Education

Intervention
- Case Mgt.
- Home Visits
- Parent Ed.

Prevention
- Literacy Promotion
- Developmental Playgroups

Promotion
- New Parent Kits
- Car Seat Safety

Protective Factors
- Family Functioning/Parental Resilience: The ability to manage stress and function when faced with challenges, adversity, and trauma
- Social Connections: Positive relationships that provide emotional, informational, instrumental and spiritual support
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development: Understanding child development and knowing strategies to support children's physical, cognitive, language, and social and emotional development
- Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children: Positive parent-child interactions, including being emotionally responsive to children's needs, that help children develop social emotional skills
- Concrete Support: Access to basic needs, including food, shelter, and health care
Systems Change

The systems change activities of First 5 San Benito and its Family Impact Center partners included partnering with agencies throughout the county to meet the communities’ basic needs through emergency supply distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, promoting collaboration amongst community partners, leveraging and finding new funding for services, partnering with neighboring counties to advocate for children’s issues, building community awareness about the dangers of vaping, and offering professional development for service providers to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services.

COORDINATED COUNTY COVID RESPONSE

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, First 5 San Benito collaborated with nearly 40 partners in the community (see next page for a full list) to distribute food and other essential supplies, like diapers and formula, to San Benito County families, which particularly helped build the essential protective factor called Concrete Support. With many families losing their jobs and unable to meet their basic needs due to the pandemic, First 5 and its partners stepped in to provide this essential emergency service. Families receiving these emergency supplies were also referred to home visiting services if they needed additional support. By helping families meet their basic needs, the program reduced the stress caused by the pandemic and promoted their health and well-being.

Over 19,000 meals and fresh produce and dairy produce were distributed weekly to families at several distribution sites in the county and delivered to rural families and families unable to leave their homes. In addition, approximately 16 packages of diapers, wipes, and formula, and 200 activity kits were distributed each week. The chart below details the number of supplies distributed over 14 weeks from mid-March to the end of June, 255,749 supplies in all. Even after the end of the countywide emergency supply distribution, First 5 San Benito case managers and home visitors continued to connect their families to essential supplies.

Emergency Supply Distribution Partners

- California Child Abuse Prevention
- California Conservation Corp
- CASA
- Chamberlains
- City of San Juan Bautista
- Dr. Darick A. Nordstrom, DDS
- Dr. David Redman, OD
- Dr. Marni Friedman, MD
- Emmaus House
- First 5 California
- First 5 Association
- Go Kids
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies
- Local Planning Council
- Martha’s Kitchen
- My Father’s House
- Ridgemark Women’s Golf Club
- Round Table
- San Benito Community Action Board
- San Benito County Behavioral Health
- San Benito County Board of Supervisors
- San Benito County CAPC
- San Benito County Department of Public Health
- San Benito County Migrant Center
- San Benito County Sheriff’s Office
- San Benito Live
- Sunlight Giving Foundation
- The American Red Cross
- The Bishop’s Warehouse
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints
- The Community Food Bank of San Benito County
- The Community Foundation of San Benito
- The Health Trust
- The Manager
- United Way of San Benito County
- The David & Lucille Packard Foundation
- The Monterey Peninsula Foundation
- Victim Witness Services – Office of the District Attorney
FAMILY IMPACT CENTER COLLABORATIVE

To improve systems of care in San Benito County, impacting all protective factors, First 5 San Benito has organized a multisector collaborative of 21 local leaders to provide guidance on the Family Impact Center, which launched in 2019 to address the needs of county residents. Collaborative partners who have entered into a formal relationship with First 5 via MOUs include the following agencies:

- San Benito County Sheriff’s Office
- San Benito Behavioral Health Services Agency Child Welfare
- San Benito County Department of Behavioral Health
- San Benito County Migrant Center
- Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition
- Hollister School District
- Emmaus House
- San Benito County United Way

Members of the Impact Center Collaborative have been participating in strategic planning efforts to strengthen systems and networks to improve the outcomes of children and families. In addition to guiding the launch of the Impact Center services, the collaborative aims to influence or change policies, systems, and public opinion to create and sustain investments in trauma-informed services; and leverage or change the way that service providers, funders, policymakers, and community members work together to utilize existing resources and attract additional investments in children and families through the following systems change approaches:

- Providing multiple entry points to the service system, warm handoffs and referrals, and a collaborative treatment approach to address fragmentation; as will be discussed later, nearly half of families were referred to the Impact Center from another agency, highlighting the key role partners play in strengthening the resource and referral system in the county
- Promoting and valuing multiple sources of expertise to break down hierarchies separating community members, service providers, and policymakers
- Embracing complexity, identifying the multiple causes of problems, and breaking down silos wherein providers within different service sectors do not communicate and collaborate with one another
- Providing and promoting shared language, tools, and approaches across disciplines to reduce specialization

FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Since 1999, First 5 San Benito has been leveraging and investing Proposition 10 tobacco tax funds to promote positive outcomes for children ages 0 to 5 and their families and the community providers that serve them. As tobacco tax revenues decline, First 5 San Benito has diversified its revenue sources and sought opportunities to partner with other agencies to meet the needs of children and families in more cost-effective, sustainable ways.

First, 5 San Benito’s total revenue in 2019-20 was over $1.3 million, which came from a diverse range of sources, including:
Tobacco tax revenue;

- Grants applied for in collaboration with Family Impact Center Collaborative partners (see below for more information on these grants);
- Grants from foundations like the Sunlight Giving, Packard, and Monterey Peninsula Foundations;
- Grants from First 5 California;
- Grants from the Child Abuse Prevention Center, Sunlight Giving Foundation, and Community Foundation to address the effects of COVID-19; and
- Other sources like private donors and rental income.

**FIRST 5 SAN BENITO REVENUE 2019-20**

As mentioned above, the Family Impact Center Collaborative has identified and secured additional funding for services and supports for San Benito County providers and families. These new funds were made possible with the cross-sector collaboration of Impact Center partners. Through their efforts, partners brought an additional $450,816 into the county in 2019-20. Funds were awarded to

- San Benito County Sheriff’s Office (the federal Justice Assistance Grant [JAG]) for prevention and education, including the Family Strengthening Program delivered at the Family Impact Center (see section titled Intervention later in this report for more information);
- County Health and Human Services (HHS) for child abuse prevention efforts, received from the state Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP);
- Local Planning Council (LPC), Go Kids, First 5 Santa Clara, and the Bay Area Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) Regional Hub for quality early learning supports, including professional development for early care and education providers;
- County Department of Public Health for an anti-vape campaign (more details on this campaign can be found later in this section); and
Others like Gavilan Community College for ESL classes and child care for its students, provided by First 5; agencies involved in Census 2020 efforts; and recipients of a Community Foundation grant writing workshop.

**FAMILY IMPACT CENTER COLLABORATIVE GRANTS 2019-20**

In addition to the Family Impact Center Collaborative, First 5 San Benito has been a fiscal sponsor, served on the planning committee, and been an integral partner in the formation of a Tri-County Central Coast Early Childhood Advocacy Network. This Tri-County Network brings together early childhood stakeholders from Monterey, Santa Cruz, and San Benito Counties, to advocate for policies and systems that benefit children 0-8 and their families, including those that would strengthen all protective factors.

Activities of the Network include education on policy implementation, support for the development of dedicated Children’s Funds, and creating learning, networking, and capacity building opportunities for early childhood advocates. The Network also tracks legislation, leads and coordinates district lobbying visits to build relationships with regional legislators, and advocates for passage of state legislation that aligns with its four priority impact domains (adapted from the First 5 Association of California 2018 Policy Agenda):

- **Strong families** – Expand access to effective, trauma-informed, and multicultural/multilingual family strengthening programs; support community hubs for integrative services and crisis supports; support parent engagement; protect and strengthen the social safety net to build family resiliency and promote self-sufficiency; and increase access to family supporting jobs.

- **Quality early care and learning** – Increase the supply of high quality early learning programs, including expanding opportunities for ECE career pathways and enhancing informal or unfunded care settings; embed high quality standards in all state funded early learning programs and support state and local efforts to meet them; and promote affordability of early learning programs, while ensuring fair workforce compensation.
First 5 San Benito and Impact Center Evaluation 2019-20

- **Health & well-being** – Ensure all families supporting children 0-8 have affordable and comprehensive health insurance; protect and increase use of essential Medi-Cal services; increase coordination across systems of care to connect young children to screening and early intervention; expand the availability of healthcare providers and professionals; and foster healthy lifestyles.

- **Effective & sustainable systems** – Build alternative revenue sources for children’s services; improve and integrate county data systems to track and evaluate outcomes; and mitigate public health risks that widely affect children’s health and well-being.

Below are highlights from activities the Network engaged in during the 2019-20 fiscal year:

- 47 individuals, including 17 parent leaders, participated in a storytelling workshop to give parent leaders a space to share their stories.
- 55 individuals attended the Parent Power Summit, which built the capacity of parent leaders to advocate for children.
- 25 individuals attended the virtual COVID Advocacy Briefing around COVID-19 emergency legislation affecting children and families.
- 4 Virtual Legislative visits with state legislators; there were 22 meeting participants, and 8 parent leaders shared their stories.
- 192 individuals representing each county are members of the Network; 6 individuals are members of the Dedicated Planning Group for the Network.
- 2 advocacy letters were sent to state legislators to advocate for addressing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic; the letters encouraged protections for school funding, continued school meals, paid leave to working families, a rent moratorium, and financial support for immigrant families.

**Positive Parenting Awareness Month**

First 5 San Benito and its partners succeeded in petitioning the state and county to name January 2020 Positive Parenting Awareness Month. The proclamation highlights the importance for parents/caregivers to develop warm, nurturing relationships with their children and gain confidence as parents. It also recognizes the efforts of the Family Impact Center Collaborative partners to offer the community a toolkit of proven strategies for strengthening relationships with their children, promoting children’s development, and preventing or managing common parenting challenges. Evidence-based positive parenting programs are made possible by partnerships between First 5 San Benito and the Family Impact Center Collaborative partners (see previous section for a list of partners).
**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

*Developmental Screening and Assessment Training*

First 5 San Benito partnered with San Benito Public Health to deliver a three-hour training to 21 nurses and other professionals on the importance of developmental screenings and assessments for children and mental health screenings for their parents/caregivers. The training also covered the use of evidence-based screening and assessment tools and the process for referring based on screening outcomes. Participants gave high ratings for training (on average 4.9 out of 5). Some of the participant comments include the following:

- “Thank you for providing this information – much-needed in our community.”
- “Hugely valuable training! What a gift to the community.”
- “Everything was great, from the space and presentation to the detail of the information given.”
- “Thank you for providing this information – such valuable insight into development and maternal depression.”

*Talk, Read, Sing*

Through a program called Talk, Read, Sing, First 5 San Benito staff visited 10 child care providers on a bimonthly basis to provide them support to improve the quality of their care. While one staff member worked with the providers, a second staff person offered Story Time, yoga, and other activities for the children.

**ANTI-VAPING CAMPAIGN**

First 5 San Benito received funding from the San Benito County Department of Public Health to develop an anti-vaping billboard to educate the community about the dangers of vaping, particularly during pregnancy. All of the 40 residents who were surveyed about the billboard responded correctly that vaping during pregnancy is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes, 96% said the messages were impactful, and 91% said the messages made them think about the risks of vaping.

**IMPACT OF ANTI-VAPING BILLBOARD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vaping during pregnancy is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-vaping billboard messages were impactful</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anti-vaping billboard messages made respondent think about the risks of vaping</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Impact Center Participant Characteristics and Needs

When families first connected with the Family Impact Center, they completed an intake survey, which collected data on the demographic background of families as well as their needs in a variety of areas. Families were referred to services or provided resources depending on their reported needs. To strengthen the county’s cross referral system, the Family Impact Center has developed and maintained close relationships with resource and referral partners, including Doreen Smith Victim Services, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies Coalition, United Way of San Benito County, and the Migrant Center.

Characteristics of Children and Families

Demographic characteristics of the children served are shown in the following set of charts. More than half of the children (59%) were boys. Half of the participants were six years or older at time of intake. About 13% of children had a diagnosed special need according to the parent.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN**

Source: Family Intake Form 2019-20. N=131 for gender; N=132 for age; N=134 for special needs.

Two-thirds of children served were Hispanic/Latino (66%), and 22% were White. Seven percent were multiracial, and 6% were of other racial/ethnic groups.

**RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN**

The parent/caregivers also reported information about themselves on the intake survey. Most of the parent/caregivers were the mothers of children (86%), followed in frequency by fathers (14%). Nearly half of parents/caregivers (46%) were aged 30 to 39 years old. Three percent of parents were currently pregnant.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of parent/caregivers by age group and relationship.]

Source: Family Intake Form 2019-20. N=64 for relationship; N=63 for age and currently pregnant.

The race/ethnicity of the parents/caregivers was similar to that of the children served in that a majority of the parents/caregivers were Hispanic/Latino (71%); however, compared to the children, parents/caregivers were less likely to be multiracial, and they were more likely to be Hispanic/Latino. About half were Hispanic/Latino and English-speaking, 21% were Hispanic/Latino and Spanish-speaking, and 22% were white. Across all racial/ethnic groups, 76% of parents/caregivers spoke English, 21% spoke Spanish, and 3% spoke another language.

**RACE/ETHNICITY AND PREFERRED LANGUAGE OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of race/ethnicity and preferred language.]


**Families’ Needs and Connection to Services**

Families reported connecting to the Impact Center in a variety of ways. The most common way that families connected to Impact Center programs was through another service agency or program (47%), followed by family/friends (35%) and social media (12%). Agencies referring to the Impact Center included Health and Human Services, the library, and the County Office of Education.
HOW FAMILIES HEARD ABOUT SERVICES


A series of intake questions also asked families about their needs and what other information and services they were interested in receiving. Families first reported on how frequently over the last two weeks they had been concerned about a variety of issues and problems. Families were most concerned about affording rent or other housing costs, affording healthy food, feeling down or depressed, and their children’s behavior.

FAMILIES’ CONCERNS

The greatest number of families said that they desired resources to support their children’s development. More specifically, 39% said they wanted classes on parenting and child development. Twenty-eight percent desired early reading resources, kindergarten readiness information, and support for managing their children’s challenging behaviors. In addition, 19% desired support for their children’s emotional or behavioral issues, and 17% requested information about family counseling, physical recreation opportunities for their children, and resources to support their children who have special needs.

**TYPES OF REFERRALS NEEDED BY FAMILIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes on parenting and child development</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for managing your child’s challenging behaviors</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources to help you/ your child get ready for kindergarten</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs to help your child learn early reading skills</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for your child’s emotional or behavioral issues</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family counseling</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical recreation for your child</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for your child who has special needs</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help for managing anxiety, stress, or depression</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional child care to run errands, parents time out</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social connections to other parents</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental, hearing, or vision screening</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS/child welfare</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorce, custody, or other family law support</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular child care in center or family child care home</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help finding a dentist; dental exam for your child</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help finding a doctor</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance coverage</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship issues/ domestic violence</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASQ developmental screening</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration support</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food (food pantry, CalFresh (food stamps, EBT))</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment support (e.g., unemployment, job training)</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability (SSI)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol or drug treatment</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Family Intake Form 2019-20. N=64.*
Promotion

The promotion efforts of First 5 San Benito and its partners included distributing car seats to promote safety and kits to support new parents.

NEW PARENT KITS AND CAR SEAT DISTRIBUTION

First 5 San Benito distributed new parent kits and car seats throughout the fiscal year.

The kits for new parents provide information and resources on various topics, including health, brain development, literacy and learning, child safety, and childcare, to promote the protective factor Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development. There were 231 English parent kits and 216 Spanish parent kits distributed in 2019-20.

First 5 San Benito also addresses injury prevention by funding the inspection of car seats for safe and appropriate installation. In 2019-20, 18 families were served through this program. In total, 22 car seats were inspected, and 20 car seats were replaced.
Prevention

Prevention programs offered in the current fiscal year included Story Time and Raising a Reader to promote literacy in the community, Roadmap to Kindergarten to help children and families prepare for school, and developmental playgroups to support positive parent-child interactions. These investments are critically important, because early literacy and school readiness have implications for children’s long-term outcomes, including high school graduation, career success, and socioeconomic outcomes in adulthood.

STORY TIME PROGRAM

In the current year, 51 parents and 78 children were served by the Story Time program, which improved the protective factors Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children. Parents participating in these programs completed a brief survey at the end of the session, which asked them to rate their agreement with a set of statements about the benefits of Story Time on a scale from 1=Not True to 4=Very True. Shown below are the percent who marked “True” or “Very True” in response to the statements. The vast majority of participants agreed that Story Time provided parents the opportunity to meet other parents they could relate to, offered children the opportunity to interact with their peers, and gave parents ideas about fun activities they can do at home to promote literacy.

PERCENT OF PARENTS AGREEING WITH STATEMENTS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF STORY TIME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child interacted with other children his/her age</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent met other parents that they can relate to</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent got ideas about making reading fun at home</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent got ideas about other fun things to do at home</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Story Time Survey 2019-20 N=308. Note: Data reflect percent who marked “True” or “Very True” for each statement.

RAISING A READER PROGRAM

The evidence-based Raising a Reader literacy program also promoted the protective factor Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development as well as Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children by providing books and instruction on read aloud techniques to the parents of 349 children in 21 classrooms across the county. Among the parents who participated, 274 filled out a survey about their family’s reading habits and behaviors prior to the intervention (due to the COVID-19 pandemic, collection of data at the end of the intervention was not possible). The chart below displays the percent of parents who reported that they and their children engaged in positive reading behaviors the last time they looked at books together. Children were most likely to pay attention and turn the pages and least likely to pretend to read the book.

| Child interacted with other children his/her age       | 93%     |
| Parent met other parents that they can relate to       | 97%     |
| Parent got ideas about making reading fun at home      | 99%     |
| Parent got ideas about other fun things to do at home  | 99%     |

Source: Story Time Survey 2019-20 N=308. Note: Data reflect percent who marked “True” or “Very True” for each statement.
The chart below shows the percentage of parents who reported positive literacy activities with their children and the degree to which their children enjoy books. About 32% of the parents reported that they read together for at least 30 minutes at each sitting, and 59% reported that they had a book routine at home. In addition, 66% of the parents reported that their child enjoys books “much” or “very much”.

Finally, the Raising a Reader participants reported the number of times they or another member of their household looked at books in the last week with the child as well as the number of times the child asked to look at books. On average, parents reported that these behaviors approximately four times in the last week.
ROADMAP TO KINDERGARTEN

In 2019-20, six parents participated in four sessions of Roadmap to Kindergarten. This program helps prepare families for kindergarten entry by teaching them about what to expect and how they can help their child be ready for school, thereby contributing to the Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development protective factor.

PLAY GROUPS

There were two types of play group series offered in the 2019-20 fiscal year: Power of Play (POP), for children aged 0-2, and Wonders of the World (WOW), for children aged 3-5. These groups gave families an opportunity to interact with one another, share parenting ideas, and receive educational materials, contributing to Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children.

A total of 150 parents and 175 children participated in 17 POP play groups from September 2019 to March 2020. During the same time period, 130 parents and 127 children participated in 17 WOW play groups.

Participants in POP and WOW were asked to provide comments on their experiences. The testimonials from that follow illustrate the ways in which families felt that POP and WOW benefited them and their children:

The O'Donnel Family

We first moved to Hollister 3 years ago and we had no idea what First 5 was about. A friend told me about you and we decided to attend. It was amazing! It was free! The story-times and activities were age-specific and the whole team really honed in our kid’s unique skills and personalities. As a mom, that made me really happy. I've become a big advocate about First 5. I tell all my friends. I tell people at the park. I tell everyone I can!

You know what else I remember? When I first began to go to POP and WOW I had a very active child on my hands. He was so different than my other kids. I felt like I couldn’t get through to him. The First 5 staff were all so reassuring. They made me feel confident in being able to teach a kid that learns differently. I didn’t realize how much I needed that until it happened. Our kids are all about to be school-age but we hope we can return when, or if, another little one comes into our lives. Until then, thank you all soo much!

The Jerez Family

I think we have been part of POP and WOW for a couple of years now. My kids love it. My daughter has gotten so much out of the programs. Staff are great with her and the whole team just has a heart for connecting with kids and families. I have one child that has a learning difference. Programs here at First 5 have helped us figure out how to manage it. These programs mean so much to my family. We have been so lucky to have our kids grow up in them.
**Intervention**

Intervention services were offered to a more targeted set of children and families, and included case management, home visiting, and parent education programs at the Family Impact Center designed to build positive parent-child relationships and prevent behavioral or social-emotional problems in children. These programs contributed to families’ protective factors – factors that strengthen families, improve child development, and keep children safe.

**Program Participation Data**

Based on the needs and concerns reported, Impact Center staff referred families to family strengthening and parent education programs to meet their needs. These programs were made possible through a collaborative effort between First 5, the San Benito County Sheriff’s Office, and the San Benito County Health and Human Services Agency. Participation data for these programs is described next, followed by a summary of the impact these programs had on families’ protective factors.

**Family Strengthening and Parent Education: “Family Fun Nights”**

Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, First 5 and its partners offered a series of programs to strengthen families and deliver parent education at the Family Impact Center. Several nights each week, families were invited to the Center, provided food and child care, and taught strategies to strengthen their families and improve their parenting practices. Three different curricula were offered depending on the family’s needs and the age of their children: Strengthening Families, Triple P, and Positive Discipline. These programs particularly supported the following protective factors: Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children.

**Strengthening Families Program**

In the evidence-based Strengthening Families Program (SFP) delivered in partnership with San Benito County Sheriff’s Department, six parents with nine middle and high school aged youth participated in four classes and workshops designed to improve family functioning and positive parenting practices. In this program, parents received education on appropriate developmental expectations and techniques for positive parent-child interactions, positive family communication, and positive discipline practices, while the youths participated in facilitated small groups designed to increase their communication skills, manage their emotions, and improve their relationships with parents, peers, and teachers. Due to COVID-19, families were transitioned to one-on-one case management in March 2020.

**Triple P Positive Parenting Program**

Twelve families participated in a series of eight Triple P group sessions before the onset of COVID-19 (Triple P individual sessions were offered to 18 families following the stay-at-home order). Triple P is an evidence-based parenting program with varying levels of intervention depending on client needs. Families in San Benito County received Triple P Level 4, which is designed for “at risk” families to help parents manage difficult behaviors. Classes covered strategies to build healthy relationships with their child, manage their children’s behavior, and prevent behavior problems from developing.

**Positive Discipline Program**

A third program offered on Family Fun Nights was Positive Discipline, which helped parents develop “authoritative” parenting strategies that promote healthy parent-child interactions, while setting clear boundaries and limits. Over the course of eight sessions, 11 parents learned techniques to improve their parenting practices and relationship with their children.
Home Visiting
First 5 San Benito also provided home visiting services to local families to help them develop parenting skills, and during the COVID-19 pandemic, home visitors helped families manage the stress and social isolation caused by the pandemic. As the state required residents to stay home except for essential activities, many people were separated from their usual sources of social connection and support. Through weekly virtual “home visits” using the evidence-based Parents as Teachers curriculum, First 5 San Benito home visitors supported 36 families with 47 children 0-5, all of whom received a developmental screening called the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. Parents also received referrals to other services and programs in the community, such as Early Start. Through these efforts, home visitors supported all five protective factors: **Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children, and Concrete Support.**

Case Management
The COVID-19 crisis added to the stress and challenges many San Benito County families were already experiencing prior to the pandemic, especially those who had been involved with the child welfare system. To provide these families essential support, First 5 San Benito offered virtual case management services, using Parents as Teachers, Promoting First Relationships, and Triple P Individual curricula. Through regular meetings with a case manager, families were connected to concrete support and other services in the community, and learned strategies to improve parent-child interactions and address their children’s needs. Case management was provided weekly to 33 families to strengthen **Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children, and Concrete Support** protective factors.

“I really appreciate that I got to learn how to handle a healthy range of emotions in kids. I think this is something I used to struggle with. And I’ve seen how it makes a difference to validate feelings.”
– Case Management participant

Impact of Programs on Protective Factors
At program entry and exit, parents in the intervention programs² completed surveys that asked about the presence of their Protective Factors: **Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, Concrete Support, and Nurturing and Attachment/Social and Emotional Competence of Children.**

Parents used a four-point scale (1 = Not at all true for me to 4 = Definitely true for me) to answer questions about four of the protective factors at program intake and exit – **Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development, and Concrete Support.** Across nearly all of these

² Because many families participated in multiple intervention programs and in order to large enough sample to offer meaningful results, the data for participants in intervention programs combined is presented here.
protective factors, participants in intervention programs showed some improvement from intake to exit, especially in the area of Concrete Support and Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development.

CHANGE IN SOCIAL CONNECTIONS, FAMILY FUNCTIONING, CONCRETE SUPPORT, AND KNOWLEDGE OF PARENTING FROM INTAKE TO EXIT

![Change in Protective Factors Chart]

Source: Family Intake and Exit Form (Social Connections, Family Functioning/Parental Resilience, and Concrete Support) and SFP (Knowledge of Parenting) 2019-20. N=49. ***Statistically significant, p<.001. Note: SFP survey was a retrospective pre-post survey.

On a separate survey, parents were asked questions about the quality of their relationship with their child, such as “I shared affectionate, warm relationship with my child.” Parents only filled out this survey at exit and used a five-point scale to give their ratings (1 = Definitely does not apply to 5 = Definitely applies). The chart below shows the average level of “closeness” between parents and children, reflecting their level of the protective factor Nurturing and Attachment/Social-Emotional Competence of Children. Levels of this protective factor were higher among intervention participants than the average parent.³

LEVEL OF NURTURING & ATTACHMENT/SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF CHILDREN OF PARTICIPANTS COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE PARENT

³ Based on norms reported by the survey developers. More information available here: https://curry.virginia.edu/faculty-research/centers-labs-projects/castl/measures-developed-robert-c-pianta-phd
Parents in the programs were also asked to report how often they read with their children or sang songs or told stories. Although not statistically significant, there were increases from intake to exit in the percentage of parents engaging in these enriching activities with their children at least three times per week.

**CHANGE IN FREQUENCY OF READING AND SINGING SONGS/TELLING STORIES FROM INTAKE TO EXIT**

![Graph showing change in frequency of reading and singing stories from intake to exit.]

At program exit, parents indicated their satisfaction with the programs as well as whether they learned parenting skills and experienced improved relationships with their children as a result of the program. All parents felt that the program helped them with the challenges they face as a parent and that they learned parenting skills they could use at home with their children. In addition, 96% of parents also reported that their relationship with their children had improved, they learned skills they can use with their children’s other parent/caregiver, and that the program answered a question or concern they had about parenting.

**PERCENT OF PARENTS/CAREGIVERS WHO AGREE/STRONGLY AGREE THE PROGRAM HELPED THEM**

- Helped me with the challenges I face as a parent: 100%
- Helped me learn parenting skills: 100%
- Improved my relationship with my child: 96%
- Helped me learn skills to use with child’s other parent/caregiver: 96%
- Answered questions/concerns I had about parenting: 96%

Overall, parents were extremely satisfied with the Impact Center programs. All parents responding to the exit survey rated the programs as excellent or good overall. At least nine in 10 rated all other aspects of the program as excellent or good as well.
Parents’ comments about the programs they participated in also illustrate how it helped them and their families:

- "The program helped me understand my children better."
- "Having someone checking in on us weekly made us feel not alone during this time."
- "During these difficult times, First 5 has helped me stay calm, because I know if I need something, I can reach out to them and they will do everything they can."
- "Everything about the program was helpful. I learned a lot of techniques on how to help my child."
- "It was fun to do something together with my child. I have learned that socializing is important for my child."
- "This program helped me understand my child’s needs according to their age."
Summary

First 5 San Benito and its partners offered a system of services and supports in 2019-20 to strengthen the protective factors of families in the county. The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the health, development, and well-being of San Benito children and families, but through systems change efforts and tailored programming designed to meet families’ most pressing needs, First 5 San Benito and its partners at the San Benito County Family Impact Center reduced the negative effects of the pandemic. This report summarized the myriad ways in which First 5 San Benito helped the community overcome the challenges of the pandemic and contribute to improvements in child health, family functioning, and early childhood systems in the county.