



# FIRST 5 SOLANO

## 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE



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# OUR MESSAGE TO SOLANO COUNTY

Dear Solano County leaders, stakeholders, partners, residents, and families,

We are pleased to present the 2022 First 5 Solano Strategic Plan on behalf of the First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission.

We are at a critical moment in our history as an organization and as a community.

For nearly two years, the global pandemic has inflicted devastating tolls on our children and families, and the providers who serve them. Families have experienced unprecedented levels of loss – loss of loved ones, loss of livelihoods, and loss of their usual sources of social support. Providers, particularly those in the child care field, have seen increased levels of need and demand for their services along with lost revenue, lost staff, and increased costs to operate safely. The stress of the pandemic has forced many providers to close their doors.

In addition, our county – one of the most diverse in the nation – has long suffered from deep-seated systemic inequities. As in many other communities across the nation, George Floyd’s murder in spring 2020 has revived the attention to the local inequities. Our diversity should be celebrated, but communities in Solano County continue to face institutional discrimination and disparate health, educational, social, and economic outcomes, disparities that were only exacerbated by the pandemic.

The challenges we face are great and demand immediate, transformational action.

This moment has compelled us to reflect on our moral responsibility to act with urgency and intentionality. At First 5 Solano, we see our role as a thought leader and catalyst of innovative, prevention-focused approaches that address the multiple intersecting issues facing families with young children. We advance initiatives that will not only improve the lives of young children today, but also generations to come. And we have centered equity in our work, committing ourselves to reducing and eliminating opportunity gaps.

We also know we cannot do this work alone. To multiply our impact, we developed and nurtured relationships with and between agencies serving young children and cultivated champions for early childhood, who now passionately advocate on behalf of our young children. We are increasingly intensifying our efforts to integrate and sustain the systems that support young children and families.

At this turning point in our agency’s evolution, we offer this updated strategic plan to better reflect who First 5 Solano is, its contribution to community well-being, and the vision it has for the future. As a thought leader, innovator, and catalyst for change, First 5 Solano will continue to take bold, transformational steps to achieve its vision that *all Solano County children are healthy, eager to learn, and nurtured by strong families in safe and inclusive communities.*

Jennifer Barton  
Chair, First 5 Solano Commission

Michele Harris, MPA  
Executive Director, First 5 Solano

# INTRODUCTION

## Profile of First 5 Solano

The First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission (First 5 Solano) has long sought to improve the lives of young children and families in Solano County, recognizing that the foundation for a child's life is laid in the first five years. First 5 Solano's work is informed by research demonstrating that relationships and experiences early in life shape children's long-term outcomes in critical ways. For example, early trauma or adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have a detrimental impact on developing brains, leading to a multitude of health and mental health problems in adulthood.<sup>i</sup> Conversely, research also shows that comprehensive, high-quality supports early in life make a significant difference in a child's life course trajectory and come with high returns on investment.<sup>ii</sup>

Guided by early childhood data and research, First 5 Solano invests in direct service and systems change initiatives that address multiple domains of well-being, including health, early learning and development, and family support. In partnership with the community, First 5 Solano catalyzes and advances innovative, prevention-focused programs and systems that contribute to its vision that *all Solano County children are healthy, eager to learn, and nurtured by strong families in safe and inclusive environments.*

The work of First 5 Solano is funded with a blend of Proposition 10 tobacco tax dollars and other public and private funding sources and is overseen by a Commission of nine members appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. At the time of this plan's adoption, the nine members included:

- Jennifer Barton, First 5 Solano Chair, District 3 Representative
- Erin Hannigan, First 5 Solano Vice Chair, Solano County Supervisor, District 1
- Lisette Estrella-Henderson, Solano County Superintendent of Schools, Member-at-Large
- Gerald Huber, Director, Solano County Health & Social Services
- Marla Stuart, Deputy Director, Solano County Health & Social Services, Employment and Eligibility
- Tiffanee Jones, District 1 Representative
- Nimat Shakoor-Grantham, District 2 Representative
- Tyffany Wanberg, District 4 Representative
- Amy Fabi, District 5 Representative

In FY2020/21, First 5 Solano invested over \$4 million on initiatives in the community, reaching over 11,000 residents, including over 5,000 children aged 0-5 (16% of the population), with its

investments. With a commitment to results, First 5 Solano collects and reports data on an annual basis to ensure these investments are having the desired impact in the community (see Appendix 1 for more information about First 5 Solano’s approach to evaluating its efforts).

## **Purpose of Strategic Plan Update**

The purpose of this plan is to provide First 5 Solano with a framework for making investment decisions that strategically address the needs of children 0-5 and their families in ways that are consistent with current conditions and its priorities and values. It is one of several documents that First 5 Solano uses to make planning decisions (see Appendix 2 for an overview of the Commission’s planning tools). At the time of First 5 Solano’s prior strategic plan update in 2016, the community was still recovering from the Great Recession, and First 5 Solano was facing declining revenue from Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding. In this context, the Commission established a Systems Change priority area, goal, and results, recognizing that investment in direct services alone would not be enough to address the levels of need and complex problems facing young children and their families in the county. This was followed by the establishment of a comprehensive Systems Change Plan to guide First 5 Solano’s efforts to transform early childhood systems.

Over the past five years, First 5 Solano has adapted to the changing landscape of needs and services in the county. In particular, COVID-19 and long-standing systemic inequities have impacted the well-being of children and families in the community and created or contributed to challenges for the providers who serve them. For example, COVID-19 led to unemployment and lost income for many families,<sup>iii</sup> the temporary and permanent closure of child care facilities,<sup>iv</sup> and the deepening of health and socioeconomic disparities.<sup>v</sup> There has also been growing awareness that deep-seated systemic inequities are at the root of many disparities in children’s health and well-being.<sup>vi</sup>

First 5 Solano has responded to the changing needs by accelerating its systems change efforts and commitment to achieving equity for young children and families. For instance, it has cultivated advocates for early childhood among state and local leaders who now advance policies that benefit young children and families. In addition, it has improved the sustainability of supports for young children and families by developing relationships with funders, applying for competitive funding opportunities, utilizing blended funding models, and investing in programs that bring high rates-of-return. It has also addressed increased needs, systemic inequities, and siloed systems by launching initiatives that offer comprehensive, integrated services to children and families in the county’s highest need neighborhoods.

Considering how significantly First 5 Solano has evolved since 2016, this updated strategic plan is intended to more accurately represent who First 5 Solano is and the work it does in the community. It will offer the First 5 Solano Commission a roadmap to make strategic investments that align with its values, make the best use of its limited resources to meet the community needs, and capitalize on opportunities to transform early childhood systems of care. (See Appendix 3 for more information on the planning process that led to this update.)

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

First 5 Solano's strategic framework is a conceptual map and guiding tool that articulates the agency's purpose, values, goals, and priorities. It is comprised of the following components:

## Strategic Framework Components

<b>Vision</b>	The conditions First 5 Solano hopes to ultimately see for children 0-5 and their families.
<b>Mission</b>	What First 5 Solano will do to help contribute to its vision for the community.
<b>Values</b>	The key principles guiding the investments that are made and the ways in which funded programs should be delivered.
<b>Priority Areas</b>	The broad overarching areas in which First 5 Solano makes its investments.
<b>Goals</b>	The objectives First 5 Solano has for children and families within each priority area.
<b>Results</b>	Indicators that First 5 Solano's goals have been achieved.



First 5 Solano will use its strategic framework to guide its investment decisions and align and connect its investments with specific, measurable results. The framework is multi-dimensional and it encompasses First 5 Solano's core components by including:

- A vision for a community that supports all young children to achieve their potential in safe, inclusive environments;
- The desired goals and results in four priority areas – Health and Well-Being, Early Childhood Learning and Development, Family Support and Parent Education, and Systems Change;
- The Commission's role in catalyzing innovative, prevention-focused strategies, including systems change approaches, that contribute to its vision, goals, and results; and
- The values it will adhere to in its work, including a commitment to equity.

The framework's design intends to convey the interconnectedness of its priority areas and goals. As the most effective interventions holistically address multiple results for children and families, First 5 Solano will continue its recent shift to direct the majority of its funding towards initiatives that impact goals and results *across* priority areas. It also intends to fund programs that benefit children now and invest in changes to early childhood systems that will improve the lives of generations to come.

The sections that follow the framework on the next page describe the current community needs in each priority area to provide context for First 5 Solano's strategic goals and results as well as potential strategies and systems change opportunities that First 5 Solano may pursue to achieve its strategic goals and results.

# FIRST 5 SOLANO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

**MISSION:** First 5 Solano is a catalyst that strategically advances innovative, prevention-focused approaches across systems that improve the lives of young children and their families.



**VALUES: EQUITY - ACCESSIBILITY - SUSTAINABILITY - ADVOCACY - COLLABORATION - RESPECT**

## Defining First 5 Solano's Core Values

### **EQUITY**

We are committed to reducing and eliminating disparities in access, experiences, and outcomes across all dimensions of diversity and identity.

### **ACCESSIBILITY**

We are committed to reducing barriers that families face in accessing care.

### **SUSTAINABILITY**

We intentionally leverage our human and financial resources to sustain services and strengthen the early childhood system.

### **ADVOCACY**

We use our unique role to build public support for policies and programs that benefit young children and their families.

### **COLLABORATION**

We model and promote collaboration, recognizing that the community benefits most from a system of care in which providers work together to improve the lives of young children and families.

### **RESPECT**

We are committed to supporting families, children, and organizations in ways that are respectful, inclusive, and responsive to the community.

# PRIORITY AREA 1: HEALTH & WELL-BEING

<b>Goal 1:</b>	All children are born to their optimal health potential
<b>Result 1:</b>	Mothers have healthy pregnancies
<b>Result 2:</b>	Newborns are healthy

## Desired Results

Solano County has made significant strides in the realm of perinatal care over time, witnessing a reduction in low birthweight babies and an increase in the number of mothers who access prenatal care by the end of their first trimester. In 2020, the percent of babies born low birthweight in Solano County was 7% and the percent of women accessing timely prenatal care was 84%.<sup>vii</sup> Unfortunately, despite progress Solano County has made in recent years in reducing perinatal disparities, gaps in outcomes remain – Black and Latina women are least likely to receive timely prenatal care, while Black babies have the highest rate of infant mortality and are most likely to be born low birthweight or preterm.<sup>viii</sup> In addition, pregnant women are at an increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 compared to non-pregnant women,<sup>ix</sup> and those with COVID-19 may have an increased risk of adverse pregnancy outcomes, such as preterm birth.<sup>x</sup>



To guide its efforts to address perinatal inequities and risks, First 5 Solano has set a goal that *all children are born to their optimal health potential* and measures community progress towards achieving this goal by considering these results:

- Mothers have healthy pregnancies
- Newborns are healthy

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Partnerships with agencies providing home visiting services in the county to support the alignment and coordination of their efforts and to incorporate home visiting into the services offered at comprehensive service hubs like the Vallejo First 5 Center.

- Partnerships with health agencies in the county, including Solano Health & Social Services, Partnership HealthPlan, community clinics, and local hospitals, to improve access to quality prenatal services.
- Participation in and promotion of collaboratives to coordinate home visiting providers and partners (e.g., Home Visiting Advisory Board), improve prenatal care access and quality (e.g., Prenatal Care Network & Learning Collaborative), and promote equity in healthy births with a particular focus on improving outcomes for Black families to address persistent disparities observed between Black women and babies and those of other races/ethnicities (e.g., Solano HEALS).

<b>Goal 2:</b>	All children maintain optimal health
<b>Result 3:</b>	Children access comprehensive health insurance and health care services
<b>Result 4:</b>	Children and parents/primary caregivers access appropriate mental health services

### Desired Results

Over the past several years, Solano County has maintained near-complete health insurance coverage for children 0-5 with an insured rate of 97% in 2019.<sup>xi</sup> Although data specifically for Solano County are unavailable for 2020, COVID-19 did not lead to the expected decline in health insurance rates for children statewide; losses of employer-sponsored coverage were made up for by increases in subsidized coverage.<sup>xii</sup>

In FY2019/20, 80% of children aged 3-6 on Medi-Cal in Solano, Yolo, and Napa counties (which share a Medi-Cal plan) had attended a well-child visit, higher than the rate for the state overall (75%).<sup>xiii</sup> The pandemic initially led to a significant decline in well-child visit attendance across the state and nation, particularly among children in lower-income and Black and Latino households.<sup>xiv</sup>

Approximately 16% of women giving birth in Solano County experience postpartum depressive symptoms, with rates significantly higher among Black women (21%) compared to women of other races/ethnicities.<sup>xv</sup> Although local data are not available, nationwide studies indicate COVID-19 led to an increased need for mental health care for parents,<sup>xvi</sup> including during the perinatal period.<sup>xvii</sup> Caregivers of young children in California also expressed increased concern for their children’s emotional health during the pandemic.<sup>xviii</sup>

While Solano has made great progress in improving access to health insurance for young children, additional work is needed to increase access to and utilization of well-child visits and address the mental health for the well-being of children and families. For First 5 Solano, this work is in service of its goal that *all children maintain optimal health*, measured by the following results:

- Children access comprehensive health insurance and health care services
- Children and parents/primary caregivers access appropriate mental health services

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Developmental screenings and referrals to early intervention and other health services, including through centralized service models like Help Me Grow Solano and the Vallejo First 5 Center, and promotion of universal developmental screenings and referrals in pediatric settings.
- Seeking alternative funding sources like Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) for mental health services for young children and parents/caregivers.
- Partnerships with health agencies in the county, including Solano Health & Social Services, Partnership HealthPlan, and community clinics, to improve insurance enrollment and access to well-child visits.
- Participation in and promotion of collaboratives to improve oral health (e.g., Solano Oral Health Advisory Committee), mental health (e.g., MHSA grantee meeting), and the overall health and well-being of the community (e.g., Healthy Solano Collaborative).



# PRIORITY AREA 2: EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

<b>Goal 3:</b>	All children learn and develop through high quality care
<b>Result 5:</b>	Reliable, affordable child care is consistently available to families
<b>Result 6:</b>	Child care providers know and practice high-quality child care programming

## Desired Results

Prior to the pandemic, the availability of child care was already limited in Solano County – only 24% of children 0-12 had a licensed child care or transitional kindergarten space available to them.<sup>xix</sup> During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to care became even more limited as K-12 schools closed and nearly 100 child care licenses in Solano County became inactive between March and December 2020.<sup>xx</sup> COVID-19 also revealed how essential child care is for the well-being of the community and health of the economy as millions of parents across the nation had to stop working or reduce their working hours to care for children at home.<sup>xxi</sup> First 5 Solano is committed to strengthening the child care industry so that *all children learn and develop through high quality care*, a goal that is further defined by two results:

- Reliable, affordable child care is consistently available to families
- Child care providers know and practice high-quality child care programming

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Professional development, coaching, and technical assistance for early care and education (ECE) providers.
- Advocacy for funding and policies to expand and support early learning and child care in the county.
- Seeking alternative funding sources like First 5 California and the California Department of Education to improve access to quality early learning opportunities.
- Partnerships with other entities like the Solano County Office of Education (SCOE) and Solano Family & Children’s Services to improve access to early learning opportunities for families and professional development for early learning professionals.
- Participation in and promotion of collaboratives to improve the quality of ECE programs (e.g., Quality Counts Consortium), meet the child care needs of families in the community (e.g., Local Child Care Planning Council), and support the early learning workforce (e.g., Solano College Child Development and Family Studies Advisory Council).

<b>Goal 4:</b>	All children enter kindergarten ready to learn
<b>Result 7:</b>	Parents and primary caregivers are educated on, prepared to, and engage in helping their children enter school ready to learn
<b>Result 8:</b>	Children have access to quality, affordable early learning experiences in their community (Birth-5)

## Desired Results

Kindergarten readiness is not universally measured in Solano County, but third grade proficiency is considered a proxy measure as research shows it is significantly predicted by kindergarten readiness.<sup>xxii</sup> Fewer than half of third-graders in Solano County were at grade level in 2019, a rate that is lower than in neighboring counties.<sup>xxiii</sup> Economically disadvantaged children were less likely to be proficient than more affluent children, and Black and Latino children had lower proficiency rates than White and Asian children.<sup>xxiv</sup> The conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic likely had adverse effects on the kindergarten readiness and early elementary school proficiency rates of children. During school and ECE site closures, parents/caregivers faced challenges in keeping their children occupied and educated,<sup>xxv</sup> while children missed important learning and social experiences.<sup>xxvi</sup> Although longitudinal studies will be needed to determine the long-term impact of COVID-19 on children’s social, emotional, and cognitive development, there is already some evidence that it has had detrimental effects.<sup>xxvii</sup> It is also likely that disparities in kindergarten readiness have widened due to the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on lower-income families and communities of color.<sup>xxviii</sup>

First 5 Solano seeks to achieve equity in early learning opportunities so that *all children enter kindergarten ready to learn*. Realizing this goal will depend on the achievement of these results:

- Parents and primary caregivers are educated on, prepared to, and engage in helping their children enter school ready to learn
- Children have access to quality, affordable early learning experiences in their community (Birth-5)

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Short-term early learning experiences for children who did not participate in preschool and/or have other needs, such as being an English language learner or from a low-income family.
- Early learning and development support for parents/caregivers to be their child’s first teacher, including those provided through comprehensive service hubs like the Vallejo First 5 Center.
- Partnerships with other entities in the county involved in kindergarten readiness efforts, including school districts and the SCOE, to promote access to kindergarten readiness supports.

# PRIORITY AREA 3: FAMILY SUPPORT & PARENT EDUCATION

<b>Goal 5:</b>	All families are safe, stable, and self sufficient
<b>Result 9:</b>	Families know about and access the necessary community support systems and services to meet their basic needs
<b>Result 10:</b>	Children are raised in safe homes and healthy communities

## Desired Results

As of 2019, the poverty rate for children under 5 in Solano County had been declining, and at 8%, was much lower than the statewide rate of 14%.<sup>xxix</sup> However, the pandemic led to widespread unemployment and financial insecurity, and many families experienced difficulty meeting their basic needs. The 2020 poverty rate for Solano County children is not available, but the unemployment rate in the county jumped from 4% in 2019 to 10% in 2020,<sup>xxx</sup> and the food insecurity rate for children in the county increased from 14% in 2019 to 20% in 2020.<sup>xxxi</sup> On the other hand, data from the Census Bureau show that the federal economic stimulus payments helped protect millions of children from poverty in 2020 as measured by the Supplemental Poverty Measure, which accounts for many government programs that assist low-income families. In fact, according to that measure, poverty *declined* among children in 2020,<sup>xxxii</sup> with the largest declines in poverty observed for Latino and Black children.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The substantiated maltreatment rate among children 0-5 declined in Solano in 2020 to 6.2 per 1,000 and is lower than the rate in the state overall (9.8 per 1,000).<sup>xxxiv</sup> However, other research indicates that there has likely been an increased risk for maltreatment during the COVID-19 pandemic due to parental job loss and increased stress.<sup>xxxv</sup> The substantiated maltreatment rate remains significantly higher among Black children in Solano County compared to Latino and White children.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

As the community recovers from the pandemic, it will be important to closely monitor trends and disparities in socioeconomic and child maltreatment outcomes and take the necessary steps to ensure that *all families are safe, stable, and self-sufficient*. To attain this goal, First 5 Solano will pursue strategies that address the following results:

- Families know about and access the necessary community support systems and services to meet their basic needs
- Children are raised in safe homes and healthy communities

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Assessment of families' access to basic needs and connection to services and supports to meet those needs, including through centralized service hubs like Help Me Grow Solano and the Vallejo First 5 Center.

- Partnerships with other entities in the county engaged in family support efforts, such as Solano County Health & Social Services, family resource centers, faith-based communities, and schools, to improve access to services and supports.
- Increased investments and partnerships in the highest need neighborhoods of the county to achieve equity in family support outcomes.
- Advocacy for policies and funding to address the basic needs of families as they continue to recover from pandemic.
- Participation in and promotion of collaboratives to prevent and help the community heal from trauma (e.g., Solano Kids Thrive), improve the quality and integration of child abuse prevention services (e.g., Child Abuse Prevention Council), develop a comprehensive, systematic approach to ending family violence (e.g., Solano Partnership Against Violence), and coordinate interagency services for children affected by the Child Welfare System (e.g., System of Care Interagency Team).

<b>Goal 6:</b>	All parents and primary caregivers support their children’s development
<b>Result 11:</b>	Using community resources and supports, parents and primary caregivers are educated on and practice effective parenting strategies

### Desired Results

As mentioned in previous sections, the pandemic significantly strained caregivers.<sup>xxxvii</sup> One poll conducted with parents of young children in California found that 77% report higher levels of stress as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>xxxviii</sup> A national poll similarly found that parents are more stressed, in part due to COVID-19’s disruptions to schooling and child care and financial insecurity.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The available research suggests parents/caregivers need more support now than in the past to practice positive parenting strategies. First 5 Solano will invest in strategies to provide such supports so that *all parents and primary caregivers support their children’s development*. The following result is an indicator that the goal has been achieved:

- Using community resources and supports, parents and primary caregivers are educated on and practice effective parenting strategies

### Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

- Evidence-based parent education programs like Triple P that promote positive parenting practices, including classes offered at comprehensive service hubs like the Vallejo First 5 Center and throughout the community.
- Workshops for parents/caregivers on child development and strategies to support their child’s health and development, including workshops offered through comprehensive service hubs like the Vallejo First 5 Center.

- Seeking alternative funding sources like Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) dollars for evidence-based parent education and other mental health prevention and early intervention strategies.
- Partnerships with other entities delivering parent education, such as Child Haven, Parents By Choice, and Solano Family and Children's Services, to promote access to quality parent education programs.
- Provider trainings to support a robust workforce that is qualified to offer a evidence-based parenting classes.
- Participation in and promotion of collaboratives to improve coordination amongst parent education providers (e.g., Triple P Provider Collaborative).



# PRIORITY AREA 4: SYSTEMS CHANGE

<b>Goal 7:</b>	Early childhood systems are strong, integrated, sufficiently resourced, and equitable
<b>Result 12:</b>	Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers
<b>Result 13:</b>	Systems are integrated with cross-sector partnerships and aligned goals, services, and outcomes
<b>Result 14:</b>	Systems are expanded and sustained with financial resources and legislative or policy changes
<b>Result 15:</b>	Systems are transformed so access, experiences, and outcomes are equitable for all young children and families

## Desired Results

First 5 Commissions across the state, including First 5 Solano, are facing a decline in Proposition 10 tobacco tax funding, and First 5 Solano operates in a county that has limited sources of funding outside of government. The county ranks last of all Bay Area counties when it comes to foundation funding: just \$6 per capita was given in Solano in 2016, compared to \$93 per Napa resident, the closest comparable county.<sup>xi</sup> In addition, as one of the most diverse counties in the nation,<sup>xii</sup> Solano County has been particularly affected by the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and systemic inequities, underscoring the importance of efforts to make systems fair and just for all young children and families in the county.

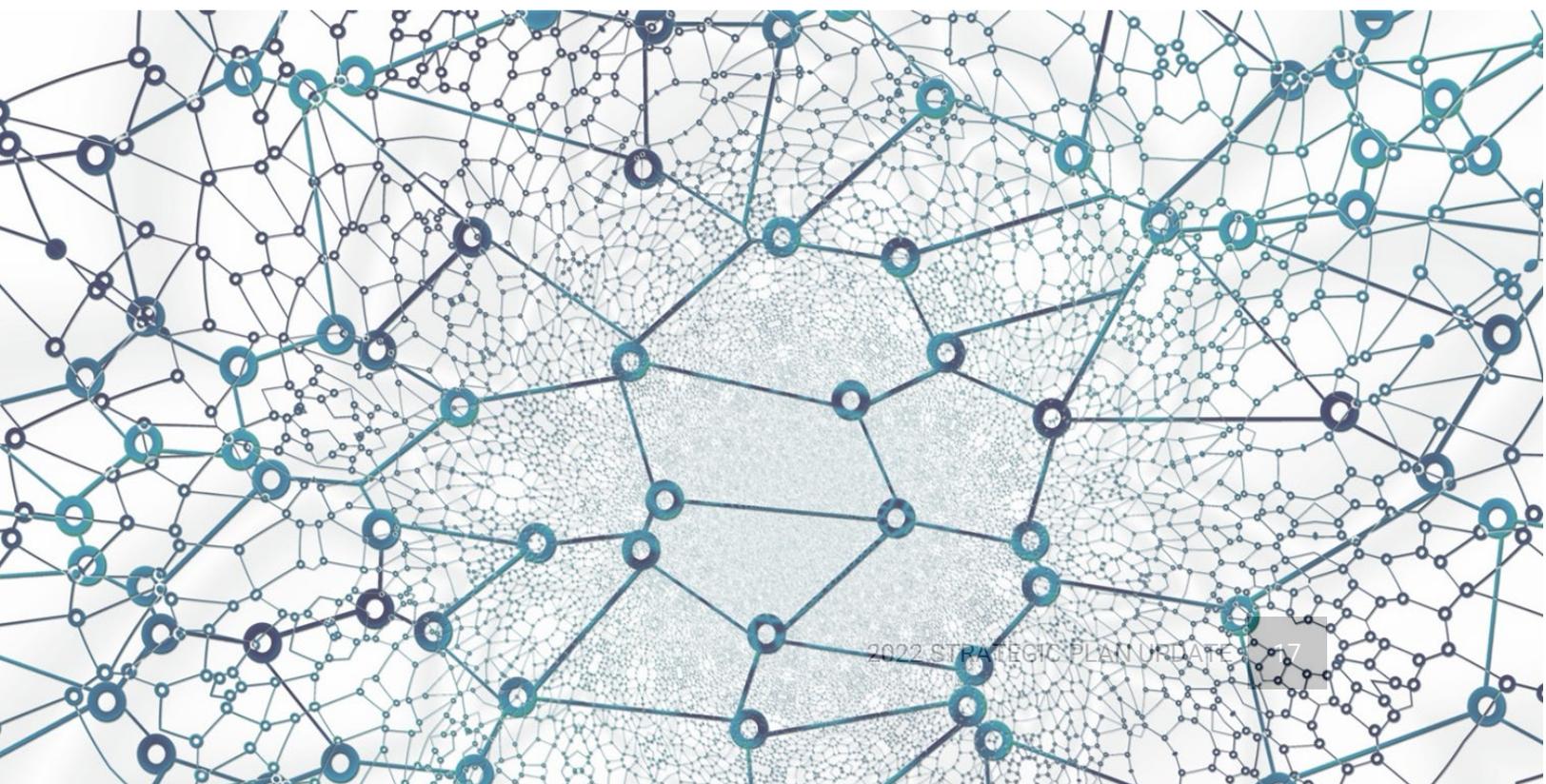
These challenges call for efforts that transform how early childhood systems operate and work with one another to achieve equity and improve the lives of young children and families. First 5 Solano's goal in this area is that *early childhood systems are strong, integrated, sufficiently resourced, and equitable*, as measured by the following results:

- Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers
- Systems are integrated with cross-sector partnerships and aligned goals, services, and outcomes
- Systems are expanded and sustained with financial resources and legislative or policy changes
- Systems are transformed so access, experiences, and outcomes are equitable for all young children and families

## Potential Strategies / Systems Change Opportunities

First 5 Solano has developed a standalone Systems Change Action Plan to identify systems change strategies that address the desired results in this area. Some of the key strategies in this plan include:

- Trainings and technical solutions to increase the organizational capacity of local providers serving young children and families.
- Trainings and coaching to increase the knowledge and skills of direct service providers to improve their capacity to offer high-quality services.
- Collective Impact initiatives and cross-sector collaboratives to increase systems integration.
- Centralized and integrated service models that connect families to what they need in one place.
- Advocacy for funding and policy or legislative changes that achieve positive outcomes for young children and families.
- Strategies that maximize resources to fund services for children and families (e.g., alternative funding, leveraged funding, and greater efficiency).
- Prioritization of equity in First 5 Solano practices, policies, and investments.
- Capacity building of policymakers, providers, and system leaders to achieve equitable access, experiences, and outcomes for children and families in Solano County.



## CONCLUSION

After the approval of this strategic plan update in January 2022, First 5 Solano will begin implementing strategies in the priority areas of Health & Well-Being, Early Childhood Learning & Development, Family Support & Parent Education, and Systems Change.

First 5 Solano cannot achieve its goals alone. The First 5 Solano Children and Families Commission expresses grateful appreciation for its community partners who support the work of the Commission and staff and are on the front lines in the community, ensuring families with young children are supported, seen, and heard.

In partnership with parents/caregivers and early childhood service providers, First 5 Solano will continue to strategically invest in services, supports, and resources that will achieve equity in the community and ensure ***all Solano County children are healthy, eager to learn, and nurtured by strong families in safe and inclusive environments.***



# APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE EVALUATION PLAN

The First 5 Solano Commission utilizes a Results Based Accountability (RBA) framework to describe the efforts and impact of its investments with the following performance metrics:



**How much** did we do?



**How well** did we do it?



Is anyone **Better off**?

Data are collected annually on these performance metrics for each of First 5 Solano’s initiatives. A data dashboard summarizing the results of First 5 Solano’s efforts as well as indicators of overall community well-being can be found on First 5 Solano’s website ([https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/first5/about\\_us.asp](https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/first5/about_us.asp)). Below is a sample evaluation plan with sample performance measures for each goal area. RBA metrics will be developed for each strategy or initiative following the adoption of the strategic plan and selection of strategies and activities.

Goals/Results	Measure Type	Sample Performance Measure
<b>All children are born to their optimal health potential</b> – Mothers have healthy pregnancies – Newborns are healthy	<b>How much</b>	Number of pregnant mothers referred for home visiting services
	<b>How well</b>	Percentage of mothers accessing home visiting services, by race/ethnicity
	<b>Better off</b>	Percentage of mothers accessing home visiting services, overall
<b>All children maintain optimal health</b> – Children access comprehensive health insurance and health care service – Children and parents/primary caregivers access appropriate mental health services	<b>How much</b>	Number of children receiving developmental screenings
	<b>How well</b>	Percentage of children with developmental concerns referred for early intervention services
	<b>Better off</b>	Percentage of children with developmental concerns accessing early intervention services
<b>All children learn and develop through high quality care</b> – Reliable, affordable child care is consistently available to families – Child care providers know and practice high-quality child care programming	<b>How much</b>	Number of early learning providers participating in professional development trainings
	<b>How well</b>	Percentage of early learning providers satisfied with trainings attended
	<b>Better off</b>	Percentage of early learning providers attending trainings who demonstrate improved knowledge/skills

Goals/Results	Measure Type	Sample Performance Measure
<p><b>All children enter kindergarten ready to learn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and primary caregivers are educated on, prepared to, and engage in helping their children enter school ready to learn</li> <li>Children have access to quality, affordable early learning experiences in their community (Birth-5)</li> </ul>	<i>How much</i>	Number of children enrolled in short-term pre-K
	<i>How well</i>	Percentage of children enrolled in short-term pre-K from the target population (i.e., low-income, English learner, and/or without preschool experience)
	<i>Better off</i>	Percentage of children enrolled in short-term pre-K demonstrating improved kindergarten readiness skills
<p><b>All families are safe, stable, and self sufficient</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families know about and access the necessary community support systems and services to meet their basic needs</li> <li>Children are raised in safe homes and healthy communities</li> </ul>	<i>How much</i>	Number of families needing support for basic needs
	<i>How well</i>	Percentage of families needing support for basic needs referred to community resources
	<i>Better off</i>	Percentage of families needing support for basic needs who access community resources
<p><b>All parents and primary caregivers support their children’s development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using community resources and supports, parents and primary caregivers are educated on and practice effective parenting strategies</li> </ul>	<i>How much</i>	Number of caregivers participating in parent education classes
	<i>How well</i>	Percentage of caregivers participating in parent education classes who are satisfied with the program
	<i>Better off</i>	Percentage of caregivers participating in parent education classes who demonstrate improved parenting knowledge/skills
<p><b>Early childhood systems are strong, integrated, sufficiently resourced, and equitable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systems are strengthened with the increased capacity of providers</li> <li>Systems are integrated with cross-sector partnerships and aligned goals, services, and outcomes</li> <li>Systems are expanded and sustained with financial resources and legislative or policy changes</li> <li>Systems are transformed so access, experiences, and outcomes are equitable for all young children and families</li> </ul>	<i>How much</i>	Number of funding and legislation/policy opportunities pursued
	<i>How well</i>	Number of funding and legislation/policy opportunities pursued that will improve equity
	<i>Better off</i>	Amount of funding awarded and number of people impacted by legislation/policy changes achieved

# APPENDIX 2: FIRST 5 SOLANO PLANNING TOOLS

	<b>Strategic Plan &amp; Systems Change Action Plan</b>	<b>Long Term Financial Plan</b>	<b>Multi-Year Program Investment Plan</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Sets vision, mission, values, priority areas, goals, and results	Provides long-term policies and projections for funding priorities	Communicates how funds will be allocated toward strategies that contribute to strategic goals and results	Translates vision into action through detailed spending plan
<b>Key Functions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Describes vision and role of First 5 Solano in achieving that vision</li> <li>– Outlines values First 5 Solano will adhere to in its work</li> <li>– Sets strategic goals and results within priority areas</li> <li>– Offers sample strategies to achieve the goals and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Forecasts funding by type of revenue or expense</li> <li>– Quantifies amount of program investment each year</li> <li>– Establishes policies on use of financial resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Reviews recent allocations against LTFP policies</li> <li>– Directs program investment funds to initiatives aligned with strategic priority areas, goals, and results</li> <li>– Provides a timeline for funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Provides specific forecasts and expenditure plans by revenue and expense accounts</li> </ul>
<b>Scope</b>	Broad	Broad	Moves from broad to specific	Specific
<b>Planning Horizon</b>	Generally 5 years	10 years	Generally aligns with Strategic Plan	One year
<b>Does not...</b>	Make specific spending commitments	Obligate future Commissions to specific funding or authorize contracts	Specify grantees or contracts	Guarantee future funding to current grantees

# APPENDIX 3: STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS & FRAMEWORK CHANGES

## Planning Process and Timeline

In March 2021, First 5 Solano embarked on a strategic planning process designed to be inclusive of the voices of its partners in the community. At stakeholder group meetings, 64 service providers were polled on their vision for children and families in Solano County and the values that are important to their work. At the April 2021 First 5 Solano Commission meeting, results from these feedback sessions were presented, and Commissioners also were polled to share their views on:

1. The ideal conditions and outcomes for Solano County children and families,
2. First 5 Solano's role in achieving these conditions and outcomes, and
3. The values that should be central to First 5 Solano's work.

Commissioners and stakeholders both emphasized the importance of achieving equitable experiences and outcomes and creating inclusive environments for all young children and families in Solano County. Commissioners also highlighted First 5 Solano's role in spearheading innovative, prevention-focused efforts that improve early childhood systems of care.

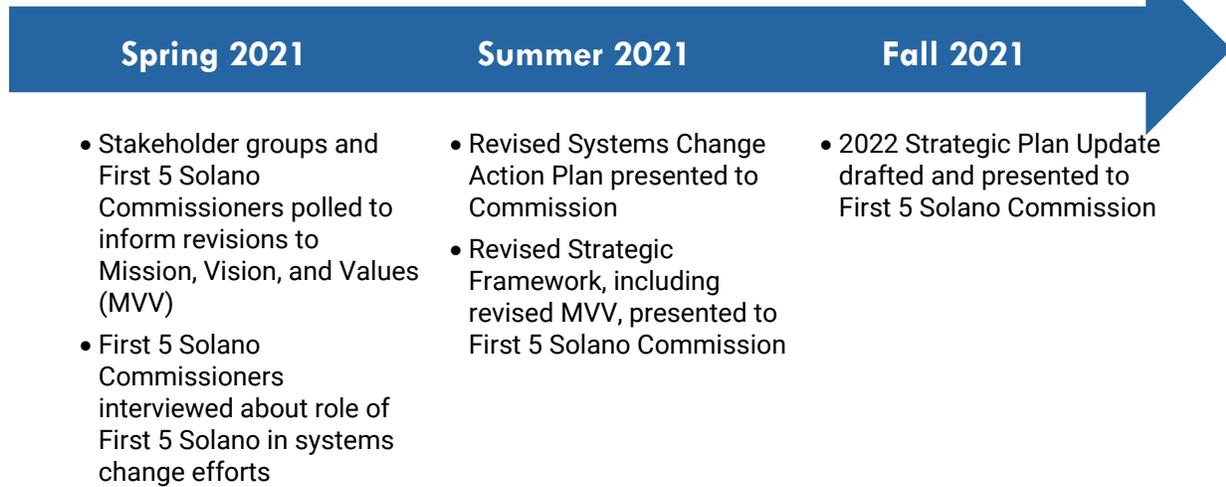
In May 2021, the feedback received from stakeholders and Commissioners was synthesized into draft mission, vision, and values statements. Commissioners reviewed the revised mission, vision, and values and provided additional feedback and input in June 2021.

First 5 Solano Commissioners were also individually interviewed in spring 2021 on the best role for First 5 Solano to play in contributing to improvements within and across early childhood systems. These interviews led to updates to First 5 Solano's Systems Change goal and results and an update to the First 5 Solano's Systems Change Action Plan.

First 5 Solano Commissioners reviewed a strategic framework illustrating their priority areas, goals, and results and provided additional input in August 2021.

The 2022 Strategic Plan Update has been informed by Commissioner and community input gathered over the course of this nine-month planning period (see timeline that follows).

## Strategic Planning Timeline



Results from the stakeholder and Commissioner polls and significant changes made to the strategic framework are summarized in the next sections.

### Strategic Planning Poll Results

Service providers and First 5 Solano Commissioners were polled to provide input on their vision and priorities for the community. Mission, vision, and values statement revisions in the 2022 Strategic Plan Update were based on responses to the following:

-  If you could wave a magic wand and transform Solano County for young children and families, what would it look like?
-  In a few words, what is the most important role for First 5 Solano to play in supporting young children and families in the county?
-  What three values should be central to the work of First 5 Solano and its partners to support young children and families?

The top themes that emerged from the Commissioner and stakeholder polls follow.

## TOP THEMES FROM MISSION POLL

Theme	Sample Quote
<b>Provide Resources / Leverages Funding</b>	"Provide funding for programs that support our goals, leveraging our funds to get more funds."
<b>Advocate</b>	"First 5 is an advocate for children and their families."
<b>Change Systems</b>	"First 5 is a systems change leader in the county."
<b>Focus on Prevention</b>	"Keep our collective focus on 0-5 because that is where the most important prevention happens."
<b>Pursue Equity and Inclusive Practices</b>	"First 5's role is to promote equity and inclusion."
<b>Develop Innovative Solutions</b>	"First 5 develops creative solutions and gives voice to our county's children."

## TOP THEMES FROM VISION POLL

Theme	Sample Quote
<b>Equitable Access to Services</b>	"Equitable resources for all children and families."
<b>Early Learning Opportunities</b>	"Free child care for all children."
<b>Safe Environments</b>	"Children have access to safe and supportive environments."
<b>Inclusive Services</b>	"Equitable and inclusive services for ALL children and families."
<b>Basic Needs Met</b>	"All children are securely housed, fed, and cared for."
<b>Children and Families are Healthy</b>	"Healthy families, loved children."

**TOP 10 VALUES**

- 1** Equity
- 2** Accessibility
- 3** Respect
- 4** Sustainability
- 5** Advocacy
- 6** Collaboration
- 7** Supportive
- 8** Inclusive
- 9** Leveraging
- 10** Prevention

**Strategic Framework Changes from 2016**

Significant changes from the 2016 strategic framework were made based on the stakeholder and Commissioner input collected. These changes are summarized below.

<b>Vision</b>	Language in the vision is aligned with First 5 Solano’s priority areas and incorporates stakeholders’ and Commissioners’ input on the desired conditions and outcomes for young children and families, including that children will live in <i>inclusive</i> communities.
<b>Mission</b>	The mission now highlights First 5 Solano’s role in transforming early childhood systems and emphasizes its commitment to innovative, prevention-focused strategies. It seeks creative solutions to complex problems and catalyzes efforts that will make the greatest impact with its limited resources.
<b>Values</b>	The original 17 values/principles were condensed to the 6 values most important to stakeholders and Commissioners to reduce redundancy and help First 5 Solano focus on upholding the values that matters most.
<b>Priority Areas, Goals, and Results</b>	Based on feedback from Commissioners, the Systems Change goals and results [Goal 7, Results 12-15] were modified to highlight First 5 Solano’s role in making early childhood systems more equitable.
<b>Overall</b>	The framework was redesigned to incorporate all of the above components to demonstrate their interconnectedness. Similarly, First 5 Solano’s priority areas, goals, and results surround the vision to illustrate their connection and contribution to First 5 Solano’s vision.

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