FIRST 5 MARIN: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF CARE FOR KIDS
Children and Families in Marin, by the Numbers

Over 52,000 children live in Marin, the healthiest and wealthiest county in California. But not all children enjoy this good fortune. In fact, the “Race Counts” report by the Advancement Project found Marin to be number one for disparities among all California counties. Those disparities, combined with the exorbitant cost of living, make living in Marin an extreme challenge for a significant number of families.

- Almost one-fourth of Marin children (23%) are living at or below 199% of the Federal Poverty Level—just $50,200 for a family of four.
- Almost 27% of our public school students qualify for free or reduced-priced meals due to their families’ low-income status; and 13% of our children are facing “food insecurity” and may be missing meals and going hungry—in the wealthiest county in California.

Data About Children in Marin

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<th>Statistic</th>
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<td>18,720 of our students have at least one immigrant parent.</td>
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<td>$3,732 The average monthly costs for licensed child care for one infant and one preschooler.</td>
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<td>$149,545 The “Self-Sufficiency” standard for a family of four with an infant and preschooler in Marin without assistance.</td>
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Demographics:
- 60% of our children are White;
- 25% are Latino;
- 5% are Asian;
- 2% are Black;
- 7%, other.
When it comes to early childhood education, quality counts! The National Association for the Education of Young Children has identified ten standards that indicate a “high quality” early childhood education (ECE) program—whether at a preschool, kindergarten or child care provider. These standards promote optimal child development, health and safety—and school readiness.

RELATIONSHIPS The program promotes positive relationships among all children and adults, and encourages a child’s sense of worth and belonging. Children feel secure and welcome; they are encouraged to work and play together, and to resolve problems.

CURRICULUM A well-planned written curriculum guides teachers and staff with consistent goals for learning and social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development. Children learn through exploration and play, individually and in small groups. Materials and equipment spark interest; activities are designed to improve reasoning, problem solving, and getting along with others.

TEACHING Teachers are welcoming and engaging. Children are carefully supervised at indoor and outdoor activities daily. Teaching strategies are adjusted to respond to individual needs and interests of each child.

ASSESSMENTS Formal and informal assessments monitor children’s learning and development; results inform teaching decisions, goals and program improvements.

HEALTH The program has a hand washing policy; nutritious food is prepared and stored safely; staff have training in pediatric first aid; there are plans for responding to illness and notifying families; infants are put to sleep on backs.

STAFF Teaching staff have educational qualifications, knowledge and professional commitment. The program provides orientation, training and staff development.

FAMILIES All families are welcome, informed and encouraged to be involved. Staff communicates regularly and shares program information in language families understand.

COMMUNITY The program accesses community resources to enrich learning and child development.

ENVIRONMENT The program provides a clean, safe and healthy indoor and outdoor environment for learning and play. Facilities, equipment and materials are organized and maintained to promote child and staff learning and development in comfort and safety.

LEADERSHIP The program has a qualified administrator; the program is licensed; written policies are shared with families; procedures and management systems support staff stability and satisfaction; class/groups meet required teacher/child ratios.

To learn more about high quality ECE, visit the National Association for the Education of Young Children at www.naeyc.org.

Playing together means learning together! For those children who cannot attend preschool, a learning-based playgroup may offer a critical boost to their development—and to their school readiness. Playgroups with a robust curriculum, a trained leader and parental involvement can be a tremendous asset to a young child—and to their families. It all depends on a “high-quality” program. Children in playgroups benefit from improved social-emotional development, language skills, cognitive abilities, pre-literacy, and gross and fine motor skills. They learn to interact with a teacher, get along with their peers, and control their behaviors in a classroom environment. All these benefits will help a child entering kindergarten—and help the teacher and their classmates too. Parents involved with a playgroup learn about child development, and how they can continue “teaching” at home. They also join a community of local parents and gain valuable referrals to services. First 5 Marin sponsors several playgroups throughout the county, including “Aprendiendo Juntos” (Learning Together) or “AJ” in the Canal neighborhood of San Rafael. AJ offers playgroups four times per week, and had 180 families participating in 2017-18.
First 5 Marin is bringing the Help Me Grow program to Marin County to coordinate and unite community programs and services to help children thrive. We have been working with our community partners over the last year to plan and design a coordinated system of care to help every child grow and develop to their full potential, supported by a network of developmental and behavioral resources.

Help Me Grow is a coordinated system of community care for children and families, helping to ensure that every child can grow, develop and thrive to their full potential.

Help Me Grow has four central components:

1. **IDENTIFY & CONNECT**
   Ensuring all children with developmental delays are identified and linked to appropriate resources.

2. **CENTRALIZED REFERRALS**
   Helping families and professionals navigate resources and referrals in a centralized system.

3. **EDUCATING AND INFORMING**
   Providing public outreach and education about developmental delays, screening tools and community resources.

4. **DATA/EVALUATION**
   Collecting and evaluating data to improve systems that support young children and their families.

How it Works

With the Help Me Grow program, parents and families would be well-informed about developmental delays and disabilities, and they would know how to begin to access community resources. Service providers would know about “screening tools” and a child’s speech delays (for instance) would be identified (at home or the doctor or preschool) and parents would then be connected to proper intervention and treatment. Families would be supported by professionals throughout a child’s treatment and services. Finally, data on outreach, programs, services, successful interventions and unmet needs will be collected and evaluated to document and improve all systems of care.
The Marin Communications Forum

For the past five years, First 5 Marin has been hosting presentations and public policy forums for our community partners. This monthly series known as the “Marin Communications Forum,” has become the go-to event for free educational sessions and interactive discussions on the latest issues—as well as a great place for connecting with colleagues and networking with new contacts.

During FY 2017-18, the Marin Communications Forum offered a robust set of topics in ten events, with approximately 1500 people in attendance. Topics included:

- Social-Emotional Development
- UN-Affordable Housing in Marin
- Financial Literacy for Families
- Making Ends Meet in Marin
- Children and Technology
- Race Counts
- Childhood Poverty & the Safety Net
- Early Childhood Mental Health & Wellness
- Building Latino Power, Presence & Purpose

Attendees include staff from local government, non-profits and service providers, healthcare, education and elected officials. Increasingly, we are hearing requests from community partners to co-host events at which they can provide the program content and the Forum can attract the audience.

The Marin Communications Forum is successful, in part, because First 5 Marin has a very unique status. As an “independent local government agency” dedicated to young children and families, First 5 is neither “The County” nor a non-profit; we are a community partner offering a convenient learning environment and a safe place for public discourse.

After the close of FY 2017-18, the Marin Communications Forum continued a very strong program with tremendous attendance. Topics included: the Pre-K to K-12 Transition; Food Insecurity, Missing Meals and Hunger in Marin; Health Equity; and a legislative forum with State Senator Mike McGuire and Assemblyman Marc Levine.

Race Counts

In March 2018, First 5 Marin convened a Marin Communications Forum on race and equity. Over 400 people attended, by far the most ever. The forum opened with a presentation of the report, “RACE COUNTS: Advancing Opportunities for All Californians” (by The Advancement Project CA) which found Marin to be “number one” for racial disparities among all California counties.

Audience participation at this forum was thoughtful…and passionate. Why? Because from prenatal care to life expectancy in Marin, there are vast disparities in health outcomes, education assessments and economic opportunity.

Students who report feeling connected to their school
55% LATINOS
74% WHITES

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Sources: RaceCounts.org • ChildrenNow.org • Kidsdata.org.
FIRST 5 ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

PROGRAM REVENUES & EXPENSES*

REVENUES
Prop 50 Tobacco Tax Revenue $1,271,051
Prop 56 Tobacco Tax Revenue $59,074
Investment income $240
TOTAL REVENUES $1,343,403

PROGRAM EXPENSES
Partnership for Change $735,033
Grassroots Capacity Building $129,494
Public Education $270,081
Public Policy Advocacy $149,432
Evaluation $106,447
General Administration $60,871
TOTAL EXPENDITURES $1,451,308

NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE ($117,943)

ASSETS
Cash and Investments $5,630,703
Accounts Receivable $259,950
Interest Receivable $30,775
TOTAL ASSETS $5,911,428

LIABILITIES
Accounts payable $29,381
Accrued expenditures $301,918
Accrued wages and benefits $2,207
TOTAL LIABILITIES $363,506

FUND BALANCE
Committed $2,768,153
Assigned $2,952,779
TOTAL FUND BALANCE $5,720,932

GOVERNMENTAL FUND BALANCE SHEET – JUNE 30, 2018*

NET CHANGE IN FUND BALANCE ($117,943)

* A copy of our audit is available upon request.

Like • Comment • Share

One of the key strategies for First 5 Marin’s outreach and education efforts is social media. Follow these pages on Facebook to stay informed on the latest news, data, research, and public policy issues:

- First 5 Marin Children & Families Commission: We are pleased to have 1450 followers for the Commission’s page, where we share information on preschool, childcare healthcare, family literacy, the “Talk-Read-Sing” campaign, and public policy issues like the 2020 Census and the “Public Charge” rule for immigration. FACEBOOK.COM/FIRST5MARIN
- The MarinKids page has 950 followers. We’ve been sharing data on children, youth and teens in Marin for years, and advocating for early childhood education, healthcare, and equity. FACEBOOK.COM/MARINKIDS
- The “Healthy Kids from Day 1” page promotes daily physical activity, fitness, and nutrition for the early childhood education environment and for all young children. FACEBOOK.COM/HEALTHY-KIDS-FROM-DAY-1

There was such a strong response to our “Race Counts” forum in March 2018 that we started a page just to share data and news about race, ethnicity and equity issues. FACEBOOK.COM/RACECOUNTSMARIN

The Voces de Marin page is where we share data, news, and public policy issues related to Latinos in Marin—from education equity to health outcomes to immigration. FACEBOOK.COM/VOCESMARIN

See also: Marin HEAL (about hunger, nutrition, fitness) and the Marin Breastfeeding Coalition (for infant and maternal health).
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