



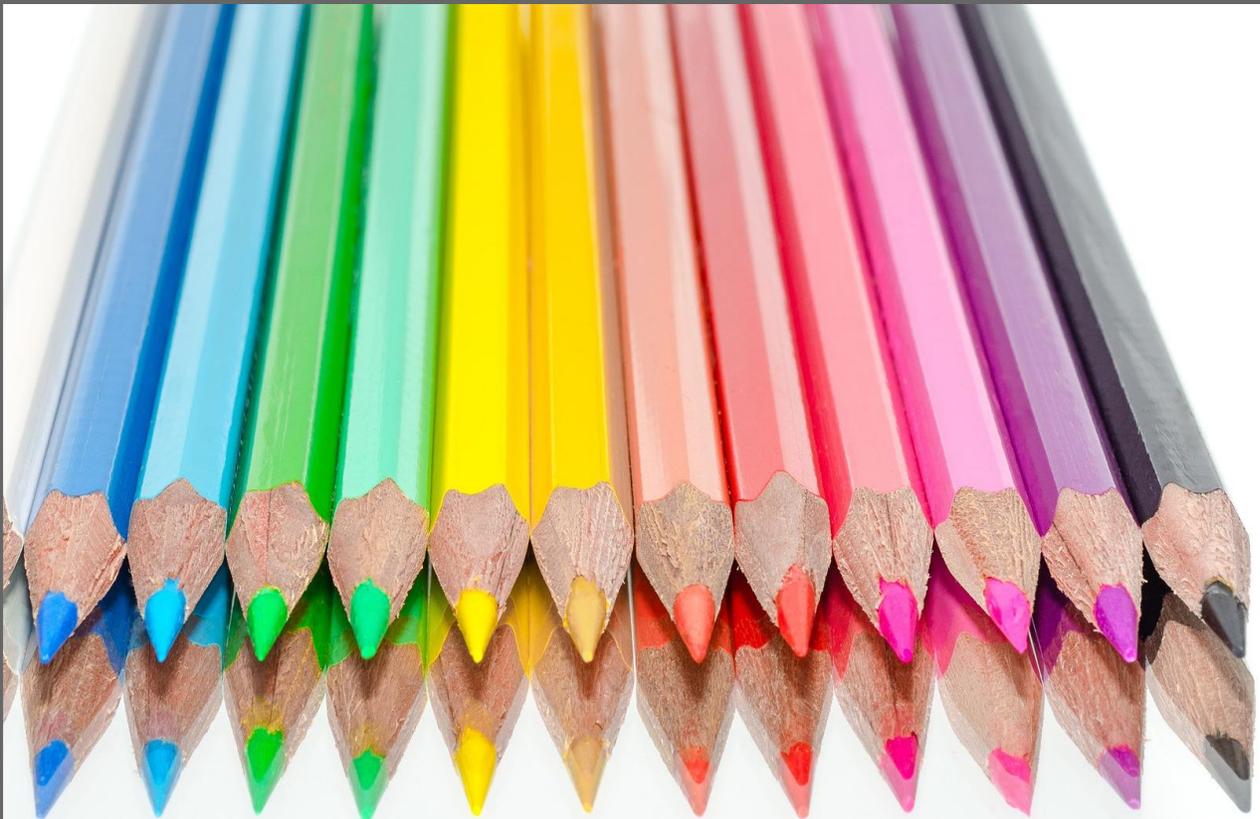
SPARK POLICY INSTITUTE  
igniting public policy and community change

# Bright Beginnings Evaluation

Final Report 2015-2016

July 2016

*A Research Report*



Prepared by Spark Policy Institute on behalf of:

**BRIGHT  
BEGINNINGS**  
EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE



**MONTEREY COUNTY  
CHILDREN'S COUNCIL**

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## INTRODUCTION

Bright Beginnings (formerly Early Childhood Development Initiative), in partnership with Spark Policy Institute (Spark), conducted an evaluation of its collective impact efforts for the 2015-2016 grant year. This report describes and summarizes final evaluation findings, including recommendations for improving the initiative's efforts in the upcoming grant year<sup>1</sup>. To complete this evaluation, Spark relied on primary and secondary data including:

- An online survey, administered to members of the Monterey County Children's Council (MCCC), the Bright Beginnings backbone, Policy Advocacy Network (PAN) members, Community Action Team (CAT) representatives and CAT facilitators. The survey was designed to capture insights related to several key areas identified by stakeholders as important for successfully improving early childhood development across Monterey County.
- A document review of secondary data related to the initiative, including legislative tracking efforts of the PAN, data on the six common indicators identified by Bright Beginnings as common goals, the Bright Beginnings Strategic Plan, and achievement forms submitted by the Bright Beginnings Manager.

According to the Bright Beginnings Theory of Action (Appendix B), the initiative is in the process of transitioning from the "Exploring/Developing Phase" to the "Fostering Phase". This transition moves the initiative from establishing the foundation for partnership development to refining working relationships and implementing continuous improvement processes. As such, this report focuses on priority areas identified in Bright Beginnings' strategic plan and Theory of Action that are important for moving the initiative into this new phase, specifically: Engaging Partners and Expanding the Network; Communication; Policy Development; Sustainability and Resource Development; Data and Evaluation Strategies; and Collective Impact Capacity and Backbone Support.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OVERVIEW

Bright Beginnings made progress in designing infrastructure for the initiative, engaging partners in planning processes, and increasing awareness around early childhood. The following examples highlight specific accomplishments aligned with the Theory of Action and across the five elements of collective impact. It is important to note that some of these actions were initiated in response to feedback received from initiative members through evaluation activities and convenings, indicating progress in establishing a learning culture within the initiative.



### Mutually Reinforcing Activities

- (Community Action Teams) CATs held strategic planning sessions, including asset mapping;
- Held strategy meetings with other initiatives to align activities and approaches;
- Provided training to align county level outcomes, indicators and activities; and
- CATs strategized on engaging parents and residents in action planning.

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<sup>1</sup> A mid-year report is available online at <http://brightbeginningsmc.org/timeline/> for additional evaluation findings and recommendations.

## Common Vision

- Formed CATs in 6 regions;
- Developed a Theory of Action;
- Hired facilitators and provided additional support to CATs;
- Built partnerships through media campaign; and
- Co-developed talking points to articulate alignment with Bright Futures.



## Continuous Communication

- Strategized media campaign and developed talking points;
- Conducted informational presentations to groups across the County;
- Developed file-sharing documents to improve communication between CATs;
- Hired a communications consultant to develop an internal and external communications plan and create tools and trainings for the initiative and partners.



## Shared Measurement

- Coordinated with other initiatives and organizations in Monterey County to explore data systems that will provide continuity within the county.



## Backbone Support

- Released Engagement Opportunity Requests to identify CATs;
- Formed the Policy Advocacy Network to guide public policy and systems change; and
- Created materials and processes to unite and support the initiative.

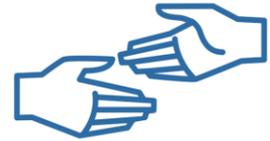


## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The evaluation findings highlight areas across key priority areas (*Engaging Partners and Expanding the Network; Communication; Policy Development; Sustainability and Resource Development; Data and Evaluation Strategies; and Collective Impact Capacity and Backbone Support*) where the initiative can leverage existing infrastructure, such as the PAN or the hired communications consultant, to help move the initiative from planning to action.

## Engaging Partners and Expanding the Network

Education and nonprofits are the primary sectors involved in Bright Beginnings. Other sectors, including business and nontraditional partners are not engaged, even though their participation is desired. This finding highlights a need to support dialogue related to prioritizing diverse partnerships for systems-level change, including encouraging shared understanding of the benefits, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for engaging diverse partners.



Similarly, there is a lack of clarity and some discrepancies among Bright Beginnings groups on the extent to which stakeholders from various sectors are engaged in the initiative. However, there is also an opportunity to leverage communications support to identify and inform initiative stakeholders on system/sector involvement.

## Communication



Bright Beginnings stakeholders have varying degrees of knowledge about the activities of initiative groups, indicating a need to address internal communication structures to increase information flow. Stronger internal communications can help promote partnership opportunities across stakeholders and encourage systemic approaches to addressing early childhood development challenges.

## Policy Development

Bright Beginnings members are keen on increasing the policy component of the initiative, including leveraging the PAN. Similarly, there is strong interest in increasing targeted efforts to engage in local early childhood development (ECD) policy work that leads to concrete changes in early childhood systems and services. One potential approach is to assess current local level priorities, opportunities, and engagement across stakeholders to determine next steps for the PAN. This presents an opportunity to promote the PAN by increasing internal communications and stakeholder dialogues to strengthen Bright Beginnings' role in policy work.



Building on the above, there is a need for Bright Beginnings to increase collaboration around ECD policy with stakeholders, organizations, and countywide initiatives. In addition to the partnership with the Women's Foundation Policy Institute, the initiative might consider looking for opportunities to include public will building and policy advocacy efforts in planning and communication activities at both the local and county levels.

## Sustainability and Resource Development



Bright Beginnings members are unsure of expectations around securing resources for the initiative and note many barriers to resource allocation. This finding suggests the initiative may need to provide clarification on members' roles in resource procurement, as well as to increase awareness and provide support for securing resources that can contribute to initiative sustainability.

## Data and Evaluation Strategies

Community Action Teams are at different stages of development and thus require different levels and types of support to incorporate data-driven practices into their work. This presents an opportunity for the initiative to build data and evaluation capacity by leveraging MCCC and Backbone expertise, facilitating peer-to-peer learning between CATs, and offering direct training and resources to facilitators and CAT members.



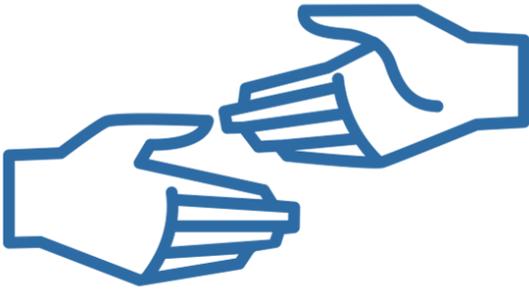
## Collective Impact Capacity and Backbone Support



The initiative is transitioning from planning-based to action-based priorities, which suggests a need to promote opportunities for stakeholders to identify, understand, and engage in mutually reinforcing actions linked to goals. This transition also indicates the need to increase Backbone efficacy to support action phases of collective impact. In addition, CAT members receive requests for leadership and support – and requests often match the expertise of Bright Beginnings leadership. This finding suggests the initiative may benefit from identifying opportunities to communicate CAT needs to leadership, as well as leadership assets to CATs. It also highlights the need to promote infrastructure that encourages use of leadership assets to support on the ground efforts.

# EVALUATION FINDINGS

## ENGAGING PARTNERS AND EXPANDING THE NETWORK



In successful collective impact initiatives, engaging and expanding a network of partnerships is a critical component for creating broad-level impact. Identifying, collaborating with, and influencing the work of partners across diverse sectors helps ensure a comprehensive approach to an issue and increases the likelihood of addressing root causes of the problem in a systemic way. Bright Beginnings has made progress on increasing awareness and engaging stakeholders in the initiative through CAT activities at the local level and through media campaigns at

the county level. For example, CATs have held strategic planning sessions with local stakeholders, as well as community events and parent listening sessions to help inform action plans and deepen community participation in early childhood development. The Backbone has developed talking points for various populations, made presentations to organizations throughout the county, and created radio literacy ads. Stakeholder survey results provided additional insight related to current levels of engagement and areas for improvement.

### Perceptions of Engagement

In order to assess awareness of, and perspectives related to, current engagement in the initiative, respondents were asked to rate the extent to which various stakeholder groups are involved in Bright Beginnings.<sup>2</sup>

- Overall, respondents felt Bright Beginnings engagement is at the right level or plan to engage at a higher level for three groups within two sectors: district-level educators (75%), nonprofit partners (67%), and school-level educators (64%). A few respondents, however, raised concerns that the initiative’s focus on educational inclusion may be hindering multi-sector diversity in the campaign.
- Stakeholders generally reported parents, healthcare providers, faith-based organizations, special interest groups, students, and unions are not currently engaged with the initiative but stakeholders noted an intention to engage these groups in the future. Several CAT representatives did report current engagement with one or more of these groups suggesting beginning movement toward diversifying partnerships at the grassroots level.
- In general, leadership was more likely to indicate that they did not know whether certain stakeholder groups were engaged in Bright Beginnings compared to CAT representatives. This may signal an important opportunity for leadership to be better connected with the work happening on the ground moving forward.
- Leadership was more likely to report multi-sector groups addressing social determinants of ECD—including social services, childcare, local government, and higher education – as engaged at the right

“The big picture is that I think that the **schools are over-represented** and that **parents, faith groups, and childcare providers are underrepresented.**”

– CAT Representative

<sup>2</sup> Some participants from leadership noted limited knowledge of community engagement work and tried to answer as best they could. Others answered for their group specifically. Taken together, the data represents stakeholder engagement across the initiative, rather than the community level alone.

level, while CAT representatives on the ground feel more engagement by these groups could benefit the initiative. Differences in perspectives between initiative stakeholders may suggest a need for Bright Beginnings participants to share information collectively about the types and roles of stakeholders currently involved in the initiative, as well as plans for increasing engagement by these groups over time. This type of sharing would support broader initiative-level strategic planning around partnership outreach, inclusion, and timing to move early childhood efforts forward. This finding also surfaced in the midyear report and resonated strongly with Bright Beginnings members who participated in the midyear debrief convening, indicating the initiative is ready to take action in this area.

- Children’s Council representatives, Backbone members, and CAT representatives generally agreed that the business sector is not engaged in initiative efforts at this time. These groups also collectively reported a desire to include the business community moving forward. Given the consistent response across survey participants, identifying the value of business sector involvement, ways to promote and encourage business involvement based on the identified values of inclusion, and a strategy for inclusion may be good next steps for Bright Beginnings to consider.

**Business Sector Involvement**

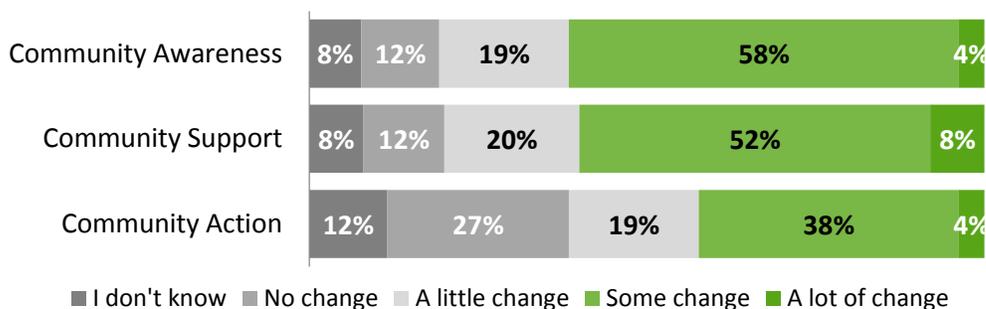
Identifying the **value** of business sector involvement, ways to **promote and encourage** business involvement based on the identified values of inclusion, and a **strategy for inclusion** may be good **next steps** for Bright Beginnings to consider.

### Changes in Engagement, Awareness, Support, and Action

Engaging the community, both formally and informally, to support a common cause is an important component of the collective impact approach. The Bright Beginnings roadmap includes several key strategies and outcomes related to community engagement, including engaging other initiatives in the area doing relevant work, engaging new and diverse funders in supporting ECD, engaging diverse and nontraditional partners and sectors, and generally increasing community awareness, support and participation for ECD.

Stakeholders feel community awareness and support for ECD has increased over the last 12 months, with additional positive changes in the community taking action to support ECD strategies. Bright Beginnings was seen as contributing to these changes by: convening partners, driving a common agenda, conducting outreach and education, supporting policy initiatives, and providing resources.

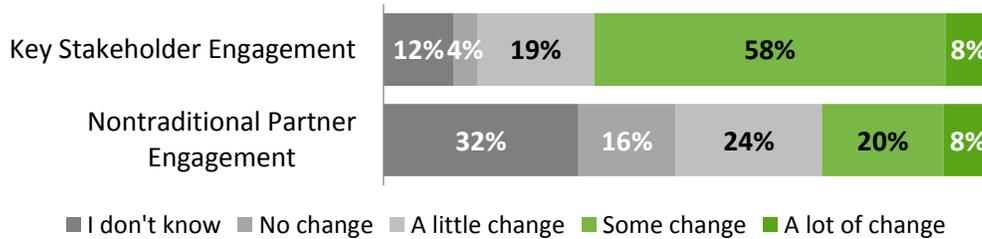
**Over the last 12 months, Bright Beginnings participants believe there have been increases in...**



Additionally, 42% of respondents reported “some” or “a lot” of change in community action related to ECD. These changes, all noted preconditions to initiative success, suggest Bright Beginnings is moving toward reaching its final outcomes.

Stakeholders also suggested nontraditional partnerships related to ECD have seen little to no change, or commented they didn't know enough about nontraditional partner engagement within the initiative to assess change. Coupled with the findings above in the "Perceptions of Engagement" section, strengthening engagement beyond traditional partners (education, nonprofits, etc.) may be an important priority moving forward.

**Over the last 12 months, Bright Beginnings participants believe there have been increases in...**



change. Coupled with the findings above in the "Perceptions of Engagement" section, strengthening engagement beyond traditional partners (education, nonprofits, etc.) may be an important priority moving forward.

**Ways stakeholders have engaged**

Respondents noted a variety of activities for partners they engaged such as: attending meetings and events, planning, asset mapping, collecting and sharing data, providing resources, and serving as anchor agencies. Specific examples include:

- Education partners planning for pre-literacy activities and data gathering;
- School superintendent delivering an engagement message;
- School district leaders sharing data, serving as an anchor agency, and providing meeting space and staff time;
- Faith partners engaged in asset mapping for their sector;
- Stakeholders holding educational sessions to learn as much as possible about ongoing services, outcomes, special efforts and programs for youth and families; and
- Stakeholders developing an indicator dashboard that will include Bright Beginnings indicators.

The activities reported generally suggest stakeholders are focused on partnering to improve or increase program-level engagement and outcomes. As the initiative moves forward, increasing partnerships that address higher level systems change will signal an important step toward moving from the development to the fostering phase of collective impact work.

**Strategic Partnerships**

Increasing partnerships that address **higher level systems change** will signal an important step toward moving from the development to the **fostering phase** of collective impact work.

As noted in the mid-year findings, Bright Beginnings members are already involved in a diverse set of local and county initiatives and there may be an opportunity to further leverage these connections to support partnerships around common goals and social determinants impacting ECD. Survey respondents reported a variety of connections with other initiatives in the county, including Impact Monterey (14 respondents), Bright Futures (11), Community Alliance for Safety and Peace (8), Monterey County Gang Violence Prevention Initiative (5), STRYVE (3), 4 Cities 4 Peace (3), and a variety of other programs, including branches of the Monterey County Free Libraries, Child Abuse Prevention Council, Monterey County Head Start/Early Start Advisory Board, Health in All Policies, Girls' Health in Girls' Hands, Gonzales Youth 21<sup>st</sup> Century Success Initiative, etc. Better understanding and promoting alignment with these initiatives, as well as other organizations invested in early childhood, can provide opportunities to include more diverse partners and increase initiative impacts on desired outcomes.

**Key learning:** A primary driver of the Bright Beginnings initiative and its success to date is the high levels of engagement from the education sector, although many survey respondents indicated a desire to increase diverse partnerships moving forward. At the same time, a significant number of members and most initiative leaders acknowledge not clearly understanding what types of partners are currently involved and the extent to which these partners are involved in the initiative. Additionally, for the sub-group of respondents reporting knowledge about partner involvement in the initiative, CAT representatives were the most likely to report a need to increase engagement of traditional and nontraditional stakeholders while leadership tended to report a sufficient level of engagement from these groups. Increased dialogue around who to include moving forward, and in what ways, could benefit the initiative. This type of dialogue can help the initiative think and plan strategically for systems-wide change. It also indicates an opportunity for Bright Beginnings stakeholders to gain a better understanding of how and why involvement of various stakeholder groups will be important for moving Bright Beginnings toward its identified outcomes.

## COMMUNICATION



External communications to build public will and participation are an important part of increasing stakeholder engagement, awareness, and action. Internal communication is also critical to successful planning and implementation of work across the initiative. Improving communications has been a consistent theme across evaluation activities and Bright Beginnings has made progress on strengthening this area. For example, Bright Beginnings hired a consultant to co-develop a communications plan that outlines internal and external communications strategies; worked with the consultant to develop tools and trainings for CATs and initiative partners; and worked with county partners to design a media campaign.

### External Communication

As discussed above, the Bright Beginnings roadmap includes intended outcomes related to increased awareness, support, and involvement among policymakers, funders, service providers, educators, community leaders, and diverse and nontraditional partners. Respondents reported seeing varying levels of change in community awareness, support, and action (shown above), and shared specific examples of how Bright Beginnings has contributed to these changes, including:

- Reaching out to communities and engaging parents as active participants;
- Serving as a catalyst for local leaders to convene and providing facilitators to support strategic planning for collective action;
- Engaging in outreach and education, including radio ads for literacy, presentations, leveraging existing participants, and providing education to communities.

Respondents also provided suggestions for improving communication activities, such as:

- Launching a countywide social marketing campaign spotlighting local early childhood learning heroes and champions;
- Sharing successes and learning across the county;
- Facilitating a newsletter type of information about CAT progress; and
- Providing communication and direct support to local communities.

## Internal Communication

Another key component of collective impact is continuous communication within the initiative. Bright Beginnings identified key strategies related to communication, including CATs informing the Backbone, the

PAN, and the MCCC about on-the-ground activities through established communication channels and launching a media campaign. Previous evaluation findings revealed communication as a key area for growth within Bright Beginnings. To gain a deeper understanding of areas for improvement, survey respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they feel knowledgeable about the activities of each Bright Beginnings group. Survey results revealed several key findings:

### Overall, participants report having the least knowledge of PAN activities



- With the exception of Backbone members and PAN participants, respondents generally indicated they did not know about the activities of the PAN compared to other groups. Similarly, PAN members reported being “not at all” to “moderately” knowledgeable about all other groups. This limited understanding between PAN and other Bright Beginnings groups reveals an opportunity for the initiative. As outlined in the next section on Policy Development, policy change has been identified as an important initiative component for Bright Beginnings stakeholders. Improving communication between initiative groups and PAN can help ensure PAN is aligning policy strategies with on the ground needs and activities for greater effectiveness.
- Leadership (including MCCC and Backbone Members) reported limited knowledge of CAT activities. Two respondents suggested that written CAT updates on a quarterly basis or through a monthly newsletter would help them stay informed about activities happening at the community level. One respondent requested additional direction from CAT leaders regarding how they would like more support. Bright Beginnings has increased email outreach, including updates on initiative progress, CAT highlights, and upcoming trainings. This suggests that it will be important to ensure Bright Beginnings members at the community and leadership levels are aware of changes made as outreach activities increase.
- Only a small percentage of CAT representatives indicated they were “very” or “extremely” knowledgeable about the activities of PAN (22%), the Backbone (33%), and the MCCC (22%). They also primarily selected “slight” or “no” knowledge about the other groups, indicating the communication flow is stronger from the bottom-up (CAT level to leadership level) than top-down. One respondent provided specific feedback around this issue, stating they are “not aware of what the backbone is doing, the types of support available to communities at the local level (aside from the facilitators), or whether community needs are being communicated effectively back to Bright Beginnings

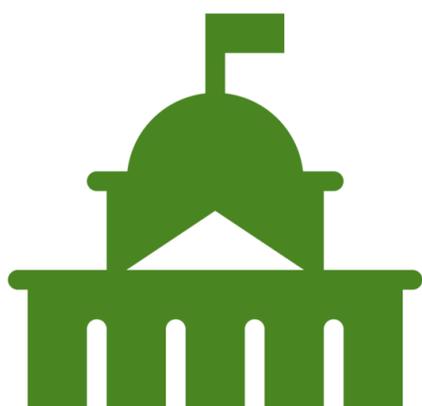
#### Group Communication

Improving communication between initiative groups and PAN will help ensure PAN is **aligning policy strategies** with on-the-ground needs and activities for greater **effectiveness**.

leadership”, since the facilitators are currently the liaison between CATs and the Backbone<sup>3</sup>. Another respondent mentioned they would like more detail about the Backbone’s direction and influence. While the Bright Beginnings roadmap specifically identifies CATs informing initiative participants about on-the-ground activities as a key strategy, strengthening information flow in the other direction could help community members better understand the types of information they should provide to leadership and the areas where leadership can support their work.

**Key learning:** Varying degrees of knowledge between groups indicates a need for continuing efforts in communication, from the top down and the bottom up; and presents an opportunity for improved information flow between groups about activities, successes and challenges. Not only will this contribute to increased understanding of the initiative as a whole, it can help promote partnership opportunities across stakeholders, including network building and resource sharing, to encourage systemic approaches to addressing early childhood development challenges.

## POLICY DEVELOPMENT

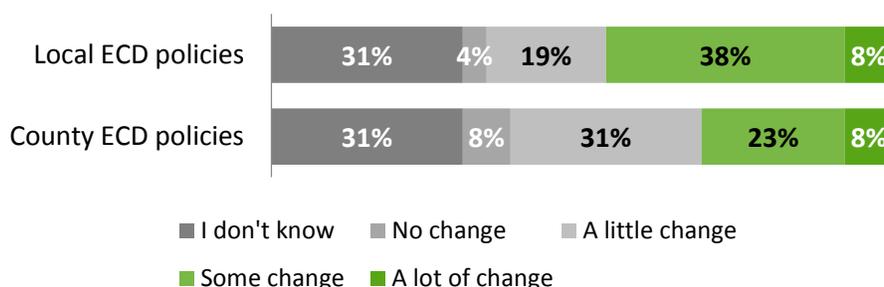


Bright Beginnings aims to engage in policy advocacy and development within communities and the county to impact ECD at a systems level. They have reignited the PAN and have formed a working relationship with the Women’s Foundation Policy Initiative.

When survey respondents were asked about policy changes, over 30% reported not knowing about ECD policy changes in their community. For those that were aware of policy change, respondents reported seeing *some* change in local policies (38%) and in county policies (23%) related to ECD. As an example of this support, one survey respondent noted Bright Beginnings’ support of a right-to-request-flextime policy initiative within the county.

One of Bright Beginnings’ approaches to engaging in policy development is through the PAN, which has contributed to the initiative primarily through legislative tracking and developing a partnership with the Women’s Policy Initiative. Thirty one percent of respondents identified PAN as a strength of the initiative; however, roughly half (52%) reported not knowing if PAN is a strength, which suggests increasing awareness of PAN efforts may be important for the campaign.

### Over the last 12 months, Bright Beginnings participants believe there have been increases in...



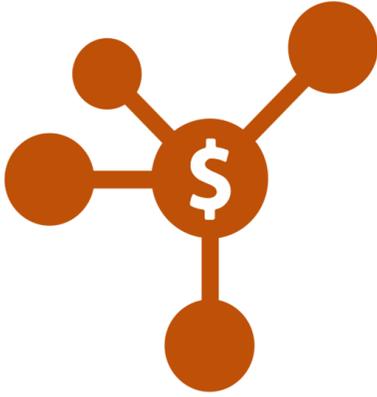
These results also indicate a need to build PAN infrastructure to better support Bright Beginnings policy efforts. Respondents noted PAN has had limited activity this year and many respondents indicated they would like to see more engagement from PAN. Suggestions for how the PAN could support early childhood development efforts in the county moving forward include:

<sup>3</sup> Since the survey was administered, the Bright Beginnings Manager has met with CAT leaders to discuss current support services and future needs, indicating movement towards improved feedback loops.

- Increasing outreach, stakeholder engagement and coordination by:
  - Offering practical ideas and solutions, as well as talking points and policy briefs, to stakeholders, including parents, libraries, potential providers, cities, school districts, the county, and the parks district;
  - Increasing coordination with other initiatives and organizations, including existing local programs and broader-based groups connected to Sacramento or Bay Area advocacy groups;
  - Working with the public and private sectors to examine innovative ways to increase affordable high quality daycare programs within Monterey County (e.g. agriculture, California State University-Monterey Bay, etc.);
  - Synthesizing engagement data from the First 5 strategic plan and building an agenda around it; Supporting and interacting with elected officials and offering practical “low hanging fruit” wins; and
  - Focusing on a common message and marketing campaign.
- Focusing on local policy by:
  - Forming a future policy platform for Monterey County to mobilize awareness, engagement, influence, and investment in policy making and directly advocating for specific local county legislation that improves conditions for positive early learning outcomes;
  - Developing a county-wide or city-specific policy that supports Bright Beginnings’ goals; and
  - Supporting local Women’s Foundation Policy Institute fellows in undertaking a local policy initiative and developing an ongoing mechanism to continue their work; and
  - Advocating for more funding for early childhood, including financial assistance to run quality pre-school programs in communities.
- Supporting data and evaluation by:
  - Using best practices to evaluate projects that support ECD at the local level; and
  - Integrating data systems at the school and preschool levels.
- Strengthening Bright Beginnings activities by:
  - Expanding efforts and finding tangible policy-related activities in which people can participate;
  - Convening CATs to assess current policy interests and organize together; and
  - Updating Bright Beginnings members about PAN activities and communicating with members about how they can support those efforts at the local level.

**Key learning:** Bright Beginnings members are keen on increasing the policy component of the initiative. Considerable opportunities have been noted for promoting and advocating for policy shifts, both in the short- and long-term, via PAN. To facilitate movement in this area, it would be beneficial to formalize next steps, which may include setting data-driven priorities and ensuring that actions and progress are clearly and consistently communicated with Bright Beginnings members.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

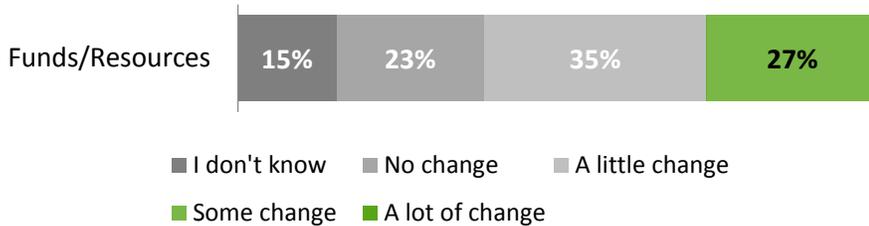


The collective impact approach involves building capacity and engaging in mutually enforcing activities. One strategy included in the Bright Beginnings roadmap related to resource development is to engage new and diverse funders in supporting ECD. The roadmap also includes relevant intended outcomes, including CATs successfully influencing the alignment of financial and community resources to improve community level outcomes and partners strategically (re)allocating resources to support early childhood in alignment with the shared vision.

Although no respondents reported seeing “a lot” of change, over 60% reported seeing “a little” (35%) or “some change” (27%) in increased funds or resources directed toward ECD in the last 12 months. Respondents also

reported the types of resources they have been able to secure specifically for Bright Beginnings work over the past year. Two respondents (7%) reported securing grant funding and 13 (45%) have secured in-kind donations, including staff time and resources.<sup>4</sup> A few respondents shared their experiences in securing resources for Bright Beginnings work:

**Over the last 12 months, Bright Beginnings participants believe there have been increases in...**



- Successes:** One respondent discussed how they attained grant support through a joint media campaign between Bright Beginnings and the county. Another reflected that funders are interested in collaborative process and in how local communities strategize around activities. One CAT received grants to help with some of the actions and indicators related to Bright Beginnings, but did not brand them accordingly. Several participants noted dedicating time and expertise to the initiative and one participant noted securing volunteers to help support the work.
- Barriers and Needs:** A few CAT respondents noted that obtaining resources for the initiative was a familiar request. These CATs primarily reported participating in joint resource development, with some CATs receiving in-kind support from community partners. Others noted that they intend to secure resources in the future. Reported barriers specifically related to time constraints and responsibilities to raise funds for their own organizations, though one respondent alluded to the idea that funds raised through CAT members’ respective organizations could be used to support Bright Beginnings goals. CAT respondents noted multiple opportunities for Bright Beginnings leadership to support resource allocation, including letters of support, notifications of new funding opportunities, information on how to approach the

**Resource Allocation Support**  
 Opportunities for Bright Beginnings leadership to support resource allocation include **letters of support, notifications** of new funding opportunities, **information** on how to approach the business community for financial resources, and **logistical support**.

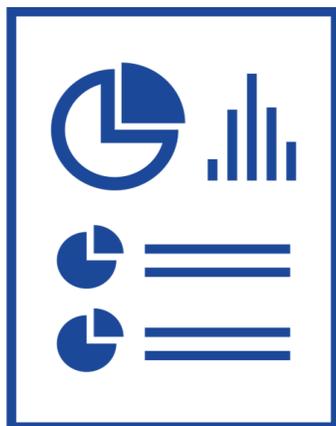
<sup>4</sup> Not all respondents considered their time spent as in-kind donation, so this number is likely underreported.

business community for financial resources, and support in determining logistics, such as which agency should take the lead on providing a tax receipt letter.

- **Clarification needs:** There was confusion among several members of leadership and CATs about the extent to which Bright Beginnings members are expected to participate in securing resources, particularly at the community level. For example, one participant from leadership was not sure whether the initiative is raising funds from within the community, but stated that the initiative appears to be well funded already and believes that CATs expect Bright Beginnings to fund them. Similarly, a CAT representative was unsure about the expectations around fundraising at the community level, but indicated a need for support if this is the case.

**Key learning:** For Bright Beginnings members, expectations regarding securing resources to sustainably support the initiative are unclear. Additionally, responses suggest stakeholders currently equate resource allocation with raising monetary funds as opposed to the equally important contributions of leveraging in-kind support or transferring in-house funds to support Bright Beginnings work. Leadership opportunities include providing clarification on members' roles in resource procurement, increasing awareness of different types and levels of resource development, and providing direct support to communities to address the barriers they face in securing and aligning resources toward a common goal.

## DATA AND EVALUATION STRATEGIES



The collective impact approach emphasizes the importance of establishing a learning culture and common measurement between organizations. Bright Beginnings identified strategies related to these concepts, including developing a shared measurement system, monitoring and using community-level data for common and process indicators to adapt strategies, and using evaluation results to inform decision making. Bright Beginnings has successfully identified six common indicators and begun to coordinate with other Monterey County initiatives and organizations to explore data systems that will provide continuity within the county. For example, the Backbone visited Hayward Promise Neighborhood to explore potential shared data systems. In addition:

- Several CAT representatives gave examples of how they have used data to learn from and adapt their community work, including collecting data, using a shared measurement system, gathering parent input, and using baseline data to guide discussions around school readiness for their region, as well as to motivate the local school district to encourage all elementary sites to participate in the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment this year.
- Two respondents mentioned data challenges due to their location and needing assistance in developing an evaluation plan locally.
- There is some movement toward data sharing at the local level; however, 55% of respondents reporting data sharing is not currently a strength and 31% reporting they didn't know if data sharing was a strength of the initiative. Several respondents noted Bright Beginnings is in the early stages of data collection and though discussions are in place, data sharing is an evolving issue that will take time to develop. Survey respondents reported a desire to see data become more of a focus area for the initiative, specifically:

- Providing data sharing support, including: devoting staff to data; offering support for evaluation planning and how to measure specific outcomes; providing guidance on how to discuss and share data, use data for decision making, data entry, and access existing available data.
- Developing a shared data system across multiple partners, including Bright Futures;
- Sharing data across the county;
- Engaging school districts and community partners to address data and impact management; and
- Revisiting the six indicators that have been selected and considering additional options for measuring kindergarten readiness countywide.

**Key learning:** CATs are at different stages of development and therefore require different levels and types of support for transitioning to data-driven practices. The six common indicators are useful for orienting groups toward a common goal, but CATs need additional support at the community level around data from the planning stages (e.g. developing data-sharing relationships with partners) to the implementation stages (e.g. how to identify community-level indicators aligned with the six common indicators and collect data around them). The initiative might benefit from building data and evaluation capacity by further leveraging MCCC and Backbone members' individual expertise, facilitating peer-to-peer learning between CATs, or offering direct training and resources to facilitators and CAT members.

### **Bright Beginnings Common Indicators:**

**Social/Emotional Development:** 25% of children show mastery on self and social development (F5MC KRA, 2015).

**Academic Achievement:** 22% of students meet or exceed grade-level standard in English language arts in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade (CAASPP, 2015).

**Mothers' Education:** 36% of births to mothers with less than a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education (MCHD Birth Report, 2013).

**Reading to Children:** 17% of parents practice early literacy skills of reading, storytelling, or showing picture books with their children on a daily basis (F5MC KRA, 2015).

**Access to Prenatal Care:** 26% of births to women who receive later or no prenatal care (MCHD Birth Report, 2013).

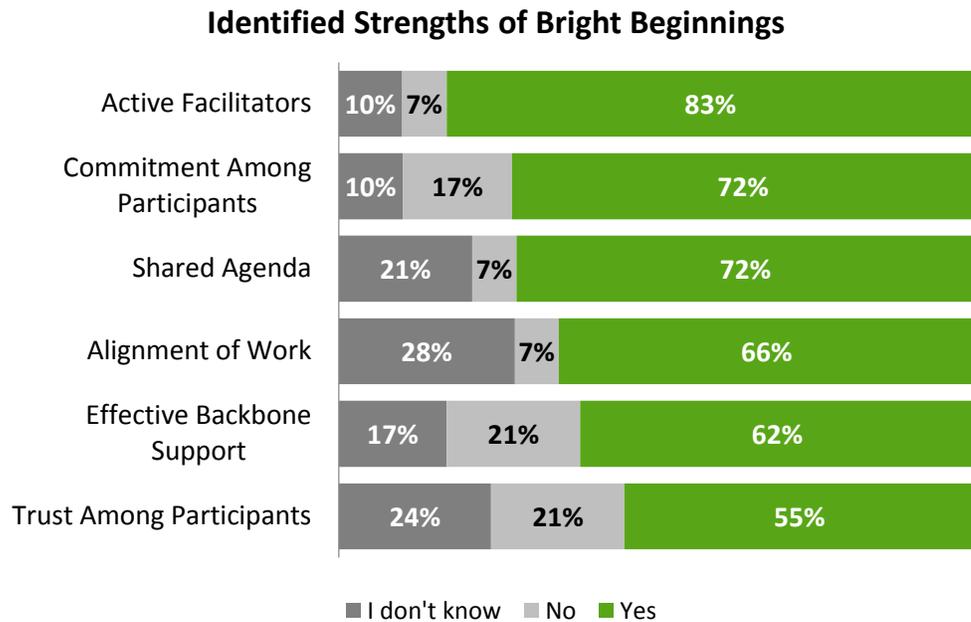
**Access to Center Early Care and Education:** 47% of working families with children ages 0-4 have access to part- or full-day care; and 41% of children ages 3-4 have access to preschool (AIR; CAN, 2013).

## **COLLECTIVE IMPACT CAPACITY AND BACKBONE SUPPORT**



Implementing a collective impact approach involves strong backbone infrastructure to support capacity building and alignment toward shared goals. The Bright Beginnings Backbone has provided supports to strengthen the work of the initiative, including hiring community facilitators and a communications consultant. More recently, the Backbone held a meeting with CATs to discuss the current level of support and identify future needs and hired a facilitator for a collaboration between Bright Beginnings, Bright Futures, and Impact Monterey. It is important to note that many of the recent actions taken by the Backbone tie directly to mid-year evaluation findings and feedback received from CATs, indicating progress on establishing a learning culture within the initiative.

The graph to the right shows the percentage of respondents who identified certain components of successful collective impact initiatives as strengths of Bright Beginnings. Overall, the majority of respondents rated each identified component as a strength of the initiative. Additional qualitative data revealed insight into how some of these components are operating within the initiative and how they can improve.



### Active Facilitators

Respondents are most familiar with the support offered through the CAT facilitators and see them as valuable assets to the initiative. Respondents believe Bright Beginnings has contributed to some of the change they have seen in their communities by convening cross-sector partners toward a common agenda. The facilitators play a large role in this effort and are a key support CATs would like to see continue next year.

### Effective Backbone Supports

In addition to supporting the work of facilitators, the Backbone has contributed by supporting advocacy and a common agenda; hosting community meetings to foster CAT development; bringing partners together around common indicators; providing support for meetings, communications, community programming, materials, data, and a cohesive message; and coordinating with partners (e.g. the Community Health Improvement Plan, updates to the Health Department’s Strategic Plan, etc.).

Respondents gave suggestions for how the Backbone and the initiative in general can more effectively move the work forward, including: helping define the value of Bright Beginnings for sharing with the community, increasing support to expand CATs into other areas of the county, and continuing to build capacity and direction to pursue community goals. One example is providing educational training about child care models or evidence based practices for ECD.

Backbone and MCCC members shared examples of the support they could provide but have not had a chance to yet, which generally mirrored respondent suggestions for increasing Backbone support, suggesting great opportunity. Examples included leveraging professional network connections, including in the business community, encouraging staff and Bright Beginnings leadership to be present at CAT meetings and activities, attending CAT meetings for support, and providing work-family expertise and continued professional development training in ECD.

### Backbone needs

Backbone and MCCC members also shared examples of the types of support the Backbone needs to be successful, including:

- Sharing data in a visually appealing and understandable way;
- Having a clear understanding of each community's needs to facilitate adapting specifically to meet those needs;
- Conducting a routine review of the initiative's goals and action plan;
- Developing a strategy and communication plan;
- Funding support for specific activities, including early reading and education, ESL and GED classes, and parent education and training; and
- Increasing engagement in the initiative, perhaps through additional training and providing a better understanding of what a successful backbone looks like.

Further discussion with the Backbone regarding how these components can help improve the work and strategies for encouraging the implementation of these suggestions may be beneficial for planning backbone activities in the upcoming grant year.

### Collective Impact: Moving from Planning to Action

One key area identified by multiple respondents was the importance of transitioning from planning to action. Beyond a shared vision and common indicators, a few respondents mentioned the need to define specific goals and develop an action plan for how to reach these goals. Potential suggestions for how to transition to action include:

- Identifying and supporting mutually aligned activities;
- Setting achievement dates and quantifiable goals aligned with each indicator;
- Providing clarity on how communities can reach their goals in terms of fiscal management and human resource allocation.

Respondents also provided examples of specific actions they would like to see the initiative transition to, including: defined actions each sector of community members can take to support kindergarten readiness; increased focus on results to show community members measurable progress on how children have benefited as a result of Bright Beginnings activities; implementing hands-on practical activities in communities, including distributing reading materials and parent education classes; and offering an initiative-wide convening/conference focused on the practitioner level that includes celebrating early learning champions and their collective actions.

**Key Learning:** Overall, the majority of respondents feel the components of successful collective impact are occurring within the Bright Beginnings initiative. Improving how Bright Beginnings groups interact is an important next step in improving their impact. Support for CAT teams is a significant strength, which should be both continued and expanded. Capacity exists for improved engagement between the CAT teams and the leadership team, which should be pursued, for example, by better leveraging leaderships' connections in the community and increased attendance in on the ground activities by leadership. In return, leadership can improve their effectiveness through receiving training, support, and better understanding of the activities and outcomes of the work in the community, as well as the expectations of the backbone role. Effectively transitioning from initiative planning to action is a top priority, with requests for initiative leadership to identify and promote mutually reinforcing actions, as well as provide real world examples of specific actions and successful strategies to give communities a more realistic understanding of next steps. Additionally, support with defining metrics, data collection, and reporting results at the initiative level to promote shared understanding of progress by stakeholders and community members is desired by all groups.



## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Bright Beginnings made progress in designing infrastructure for the initiative, engaging partners in planning processes, and increasing awareness around early childhood. The evaluation results also reveal key opportunities to improve as the initiative progresses along the Theory of Action, including expanding and diversifying stakeholder engagement; strengthening internal and external communication strategies; and focusing on building collective impact capacity and backbone support, especially in the areas of policy development and using data for decision-making. The recommendations table below can be used to support Bright Beginnings moving forward in the 2016/2017 year.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Notes of Interest	Opportunities	Points to Consider
<b>Engaging Partners &amp; Expanding the Network</b>		
<p><i>Clarifying current engagement:</i> Lack of clarity and some discrepancy exists between Bright Beginnings groups on the extent to which stakeholders from various sectors are engaged in the initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leverage communication supports to identify and inform initiative stakeholders on system/sector involvement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What structures or processes need to be in place for Bright Beginnings to increase engagement across traditional and nontraditional sectors?</li> <li>What additional supports or strategies are needed to facilitate the creation of a cohesive and targeted engagement plan?</li> <li>How can Bright Beginnings leverage successes to motivate participation from diverse sectors?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Diversifying stakeholder engagement:</i> Education and non-profits are the primary sectors involved in BB. Other sectors, including business, and non-traditional partners are desired, but not engaged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support dialogue related to prioritizing diverse partnerships for systems-level change. Encourage shared understanding of the benefits, challenges, opportunities, and strategies for engaging diverse partners.</li> </ul>	
<b>Communication</b>		
<p><i>Internal communication strategies:</i> Bright Beginnings stakeholders have varying degrees of knowledge about the activities of initiative groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Address internal communication structures to increase information flow. This can help promote partnership opportunities across stakeholders and encourage systemic approaches to addressing ECD challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can Bright Beginnings create internal communication infrastructure that improves information flow without burdening members?</li> <li>What additional supports or strategies are needed to improve information flow within the initiative?</li> </ul>
<b>Policy Development</b>		
<p><i>Leveraging the Policy Advocacy Network (PAN):</i> Bright Beginnings members are keen on increasing the policy component of the initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote PAN by increasing internal communications and stakeholder dialogues to strengthen Bright Beginnings' role in policy work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can Bright Beginnings leverage current momentum around the PAN, including partnership with the Women's Foundation Policy Institute?</li> <li>What structures or processes need to be in place for Bright Beginnings to increase engagement in policy advocacy among members?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Policy collaboration:</i> There is a need for Bright Beginnings to increase collaboration around ECD policy with stakeholders, organizations and countywide initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Look for opportunities to include public will building and policy advocacy efforts in planning and communication activities at both the local and county levels.</li> </ul>	

<p><i>Focusing on local policy:</i> There is strong interest in increasing targeted efforts to engage in local ECD policy work that leads to concrete changes in EC systems and services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use assessment of current local level priorities, opportunities, and engagement across stakeholders to determine next steps for the PAN.</li> </ul>	
<h3>Sustainability &amp; Resource Development</h3>		
<p><i>Clarifying expectations and opportunities for securing resources:</i> Bright Beginnings members are unsure of expectations to secure resources for the initiative and note many barriers to resource allocation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clarification on members' roles in resource procurement;</li> <li>• Increase awareness and provide support for securing resources that can contribute to initiative sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure Bright Beginnings members understand and have the support they need to contribute to sustaining the work?</li> </ul>
<h3>Data &amp; Evaluation Strategies</h3>		
<p><i>Supporting CATs in their data and evaluation efforts:</i> CATs are at different stages of development and require different levels and types of support to incorporate data-driven practices into their work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build data and evaluation capacity by leveraging MCCC and Backbone expertise, facilitating peer-to-peer learning between CATs, and offering direct training and resources to facilitators and CAT members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What additional knowledge or resources do the MCCC and the Backbone need to further support data and evaluation efforts at the community level?</li> <li>• What processes or structures are needed to ensure Bright Beginnings is integrating data-driven decision-making at all levels in a cohesive manner?</li> </ul>
<h3>Collective Impact Capacity &amp; Backbone Support</h3>		
<p><i>Transitioning from planning to action:</i> The initiative is transitioning from planning-based to action-based priorities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote opportunities for stakeholders to identify, understand, and engage in mutually reinforcing actions linked to goals</li> <li>• Increase backbone efficacy to support action phases of collective impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can learning be integrated into the Bright Beginnings infrastructure during this transitional phase?</li> <li>• What additional learning or resources will help the Backbone target their support effectively?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Matching CAT needs with leadership assets:</i> CAT members have requests for leadership and support; requests often match the expertise of Bright Beginnings leadership.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify opportunities to communicate CAT needs to leadership and leadership assets to CATs;</li> <li>• Promote infrastructure that encourages use of leader assets to support on the ground efforts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What additional supports are needed for the Backbone to shift from planning to action?</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX A

## DATA COLLECTION

Using primary and secondary data, the final evaluation activities focused on diving deeper into findings from the midyear analysis (Appendix C) and explored priority indicators not captured in the midyear analysis. Data collection activities also expanded evaluation participation to active stakeholders across a variety of segments within the initiative. Including the voice of more stakeholder groups provides a clearer picture of initiative activities and allows for diverse perspectives to inform the work moving forward.

Spark administered an online survey in March 2016 to members of the MCCC, the Bright Beginnings Backbone, PAN members, CAT representatives, and CAT facilitators. The survey was designed to capture insights related to several key areas identified by stakeholders as important for successfully improving ECD across Monterey County including:

- Engaging diverse stakeholders and growing the network;
- Implementing effective communication strategies;
- Developing policies related to ECD;
- Sharing relevant data and using evaluation to better inform strategies; and
- Building capacity to create change.

Additionally, Spark completed a document review of secondary data related to the initiative, including legislative tracking efforts of the PAN, data on the six common indicators identified by Bright Beginnings as common goals, the Bright Beginnings Strategic Plan, and achievement forms submitted by the Bright Beginnings manager. This report incorporates data across these various data sources and builds on findings from the interim report to identify common themes and support initiative improvements.

The survey response rate was 50%, with 29 out of 58 surveys completed. The table shows how many people from each Bright Beginnings group responded to the survey<sup>5</sup>. Of the CAT representatives who responded to the survey, two were from North County, two were from Pajaro, two were from Greenfield, three were from Seaside/Peninsula, and one was from Gonzales. Secondary data review was primarily composed of Achievement Forms and CAT facilitator meeting notes submitted by the Bright Beginnings manager, as well as published documents related to the six community level indicators and documents made available on policy and legislative decision-making data and trends.

Bright Beginnings Role	Number
MCCC Members	8
Backbone Members	7
PAN Members	7
CAT Representatives	9
CAT Facilitators	3

## CONSIDERATIONS

As with any evaluation process, limitations of the data should be taken into account when exploring findings. For this report, readers should keep several points in mind related to the survey. Although the survey response rate is considered high (50%), the sample size for the survey was relatively small (58 persons). This small sample increases the “weight”, or influence, of each respondent’s answer. Therefore, a few persons with extreme responses can unintentionally sway the overall response. The survey design included strategies to

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<sup>5</sup> The numbers reflected in the table add up to more than 29 because several respondents play multiple roles in the initiative.

help reduce this bias, but keeping this issue in mind can help support a more accurate understanding of responses.

Additionally, the current initiative infrastructure contains a higher percentage of persons in leadership compared to active CAT member positions. Thus, the leadership voice is more highly represented within the survey response compared to CAT member voice. Analysis of the data included review of responses by respondent type (leadership, Backbone, and CAT) to differentiate these perspectives. When differing opinions were found by respondent type, those differences have been highlighted in the report.

Finally, this survey only represents the perspectives of those significantly involved as primary stakeholders in Bright Beginnings activities. As the initiative moves forward and builds influence within the community, a broader-reaching data collection activity will be able to provide a more holistic understanding of the initiative from the perspectives of partners solicited to participate and of those reached in the community.

For secondary data review, analysis only included information provided by the CAT facilitators and the Project Manager on a monthly basis. These data may not be fully representative of actual achievements as recall may have been limited or CAT members and leadership teams may not have provided full details for all achievements. Future improvements to the reporting system, including more regular reporting from multiple stakeholders, could provide a more accurate reflection of actual success.

## APPENDIX B

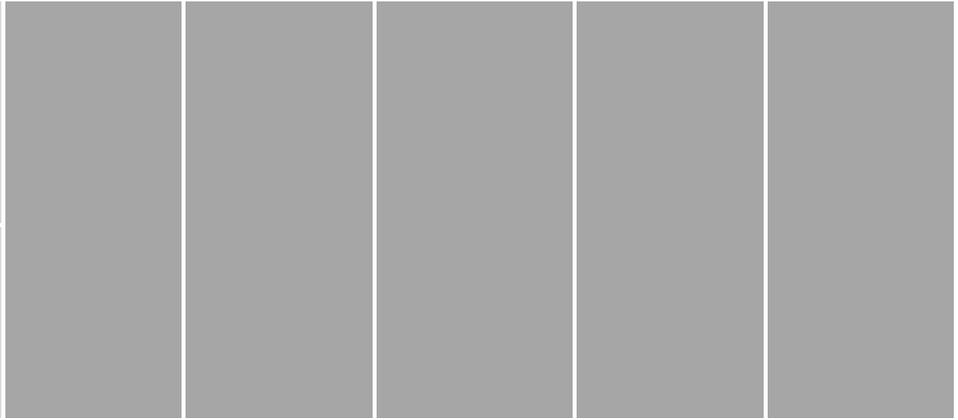
### BRIGHT BEGINNINGS THEORY OF ACTION

The Collective Impact framework allows Bright Beginnings to implement a proven road map for the Initiative. Based on lessons from the StriveTogether Cradle to Career Network and FSG, Bright Beginnings has developed a Theory of Action that offers quality benchmarks that differentiate the phases of the work within the five stages of Collective Impact. The Theory of Action helps distinguish when the work transitions from traditional collaboration to sustainable, effective partnerships. It includes the five core elements of Collective Impact as well as two cross-cutting elements that support the work of each of the core elements.

	Exploring	Developing	Fostering	Integrating	Applying
<b><u>Common Vision:</u></b> All participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving the problem through agreed-upon action.	Work on the beginning aspects of formulating a partnership.	Focus on accessing and collecting data and putting in place the supports necessary for data-driven decision making.	Focus on using data in a continuous improvement process to identify improvements and interventions to impact an outcome.	Focus on navigating the necessary evolutions, transitions, and continuous improvement a partnership goes through to improve outcomes.	See real impact as evident through improvement in the community level outcomes and indicators.
<b><u>Mutually Reinforcing Activities:</u></b> A diverse set of stakeholders, typically across sectors, coordinate a set of differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.					
<b><u>Shared Measurement:</u></b> All participating organizations agree on the ways success will be measured and reported. A short list of common indicators is identified and used for learning and improvement.					
<b><u>Continuous Communication:</u></b> All players engage in frequent and structured open communication to assure mutual objectives and create common motivation.					
<b><u>Backbone Support:</u></b> An independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative provides ongoing support guiding the initiative's vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement building public will, advancing policy, and mobilizing resources.					

**Learning Culture\*:** All participants contribute to an environment dedicated to learning from what has worked and what hasn't through support, trust and respect.

**Collective Impact Capacity\*:** The Initiative builds the skills, talents and resources necessary to support moving forward with the vision and mission.



## APPENDIX C

Opportunities for Growth	Ideas for Improvement	Points to Consider
<b>Common Vision</b>		
<p><i>Partnering with existing county initiatives:</i> CATs working closely with other initiatives at the community level have the benefit of a strong foundational stakeholder base and additional resources. However, it may take more time or additional steps to ensure everyone agrees on and is working toward a common agenda.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None explicitly identified.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What structures need to be in place for ECDI to bring people together around a common agenda?</li> <li>• What additional supports or strategies are needed to collaborate with existing initiatives around a common agenda?</li> </ul>
<b>Mutually Reinforcing Activities</b>		
<p><i>Stakeholder retention – Addressing meeting fatigue:</i> Many community stakeholders are involved in overlapping initiatives with numerous meetings and emails, which can lead to “meeting fatigue.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating actionable agendas that engage stakeholders in ways that leverage their skills and recognize their value;</li> <li>• Matching agenda items to attendees to ensure stakeholders who come to meetings are appropriate given the agenda items;</li> <li>• Improving two-way communication and feedback loops between meetings such that people who miss meetings can be kept in the loop and have opportunities to give input (i.e. virtual communication platforms, etc.);</li> <li>• Creating action-oriented meeting notes to capture action items, key decisions, timelines, and responsibilities;</li> <li>• Identifying actions that can be taken between meetings to ensure that work continues outside of standard meetings.</li> <li>• Targeting communication to stakeholder level of involvement and time commitment (i.e. some CATs are beginning to use tools to help determine which stakeholders would like to be involved and at what level).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can ECDI use the diverse experiences across CATs as a learning opportunity? How can that learning be integrated into the ECDI infrastructure?</li> <li>• How can CATs leverage the expertise of the MCCC and the Backbone throughout the policy development process?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Stakeholder recruitment – targeted outreach:</i> Most CATs are struggling with recruiting participants, including parents and families as well as nontraditional partners such as businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional support for engaging in effective outreach and recruitment that considers the diversity of stakeholders. For example, fliers and word-of-mouth may work better for parents and families, suggesting email blasts and other electronic communications from ECDI may not be reaching these critical constituents.</li> </ul>	

Opportunities for Growth	Ideas for Improvement	Points to Consider
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to leverage MCCC and Backbone member networks, connections, and contacts to build participation at the community level.</li> </ul>	
<b>Shared Measurement</b>		
<p><i>Clarifying processes for collaboration around data sharing:</i> As collaboration around key indicators and data collection methods advances, there is a need to establish processes and protocols to facilitate effective collaboration based on lessons learned and existing best practices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities to learn more about building data-sharing partnerships, including suggestions for laying the foundational work in relationship-building, key questions to consider throughout the process, organizational dynamics related to sharing data, and available resources and supports (e.g. examples/templates of FERPA-compliant MOUs/MOAs for data sharing).</li> <li>Identify resources, supports, and processes to improve effective collaboration around shared measurement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can ECDI streamline the process for collaborative data sharing?</li> <li>What additional supports are needed to build ECDI capacity for data-driven decision-making?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Identify and address gaps in local capacity:</i> Local partners vary in experience with/capacity for data collection.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct SWOT analysis or similar approach to assess community strengths and gaps in data-sharing capacity;</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Invest in collaborative information technology systems:</i> Organizations, including schools and community based organizations, have different data management systems, making it difficult to share data efficiently.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support the development of an initiative-wide shared measurement system, consider investing in information technology systems that allow seamless data sharing between diverse data platforms. For example, software intermediaries that allow programs to share data without changing individual organizations' systems</li> </ul>	
<b>Continuous Communication</b>		
<p><i>Improved communication channels and feedback loops:</i> Communication channels could be improved at all levels, including between CATs, as well as between CATs, the MCCC, and Backbone members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider creating a communication structure that allows for a two-way flow of information between CATs, as well as between CATs and the MCCC and Backbone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can ECDI ensure participants at all levels are included when exploring challenges and solutions to improve continuous, accurate, and effective communication?</li> </ul>
<p><i>Improved communication platforms:</i> Stakeholders can't always attend in-person meetings, which interferes with their</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rather than relying solely on email and face-to-face meetings, consider using communication platforms or strategies that allow for readily available on-demand information or virtual participation (i.e. Wiki</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can ECDI create an environment conducive to exploring and implementing</li> </ul>

Opportunities for Growth	Ideas for Improvement	Points to Consider
ability to stay informed and contribute in meaningful ways.	page, pod-casts, actionable meeting notes, webinars, etc.).	proposed solutions?
<i>Targeted and streamlined information sharing:</i> At all levels, there are diverse stakeholders with varied interests, time, and capacity for engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a process or use communication tools that help identify which stakeholders need to know specific types of initiative information can help to streamline communication, reduce information overload, and increase meaningful engagement.</li> <li>• Identify light-lift opportunities for community members who may be interested in engaging in short-term and small commitments initially (i.e. a loose network of advocacy stakeholders interested in making calls, writing letters, etc. during a targeted policy effort).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure sustainability of established partnerships? For example: How can ECDI best leverage the partnership with the Women’s Foundation of California in a way that unites CATs beyond training activities?</li> </ul>
<i>Increased communication between county initiatives:</i> ECDI participants and other community members are unsure of how the initiatives fit together. As ECDI and other initiatives work to transition their partnership from coordination to deeper collaboration, there is a need to improve communication between partners and to the broader public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring key stakeholders from various county initiatives and ECDI together to define and articulate what they are doing and how they all fit together then communicate this to communities.</li> <li>• Continue to participate in the Monterey County Impact group that currently supports various collective impact efforts across the county.</li> </ul>	
<b>Backbone Infrastructure*</b>		
<i>Build CI capacity around data sharing:</i> CATs recognize the value in sharing data and using data for decision-making, but need additional support to implement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build capacity, communication and processes around data collection, including strategizing how to use existing data and clarifying what data sources and support will be available to CATs in the future. Consider investing in accessible data sharing platforms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What additional resources does the Backbone need to further support CATs?</li> <li>• What additional learning will help the Backbone target their support effectively?</li> </ul>
<i>Laying foundational groundwork at the community level:</i> The Backbone and MCCC were heavily invested in upfront planning (e.g.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refine processes for supporting initial foundational work at the community level, including investing in relationship building with executive leadership. This is especially important as ECDI expands to new communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the Backbone leverage and integrate emergent strategies,</li> </ul>

Opportunities for Growth	Ideas for Improvement	Points to Consider
<p>bringing stakeholders together to identify common indicators); there is a need to continue this type of foundational work at the community level.</p>		<p>such as the development of successful CAT leadership structures and “anchor organizations”?</p>
<p><i>Increased opportunities to leverage expertise:</i> The MCCC and Backbone members have considerable expertise and connections around ECDI. CATs would like increased interaction that allows them to leverage the knowledge, networks, and resources of Backbone and MCCC members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for CATs to access MCCC and Backbone members to leverage their expertise and professional networks. For example, by attending CAT meetings, providing contact lists, making introductions to key partners, or providing advice that support CATs in building and maintaining membership.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Onboarding new members:</i> As new members and new communities join the initiative, there is a need to create an onboarding process and materials.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support in creating onboarding kits for people and communities new to the initiative that include video, print, and e-materials that are updated regularly and easily accessible to a variety of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Consider developing and implementing a collective impact leadership assessment in interested communities/CATs to better understand readiness and which supports may be needed in a particular area.</li> </ul>	

\*The entire table includes areas where the Backbone can lend support and improve ECDI structure; the Backbone Infrastructure section provides additional Backbone supports specifically requested by participants.

\*\* Note: This table was created prior to ECDI’s change in name to Bright Beginnings.

## IMAGE CREDITS

Icons by:

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