

# Strategic Plan

2018 - 2021

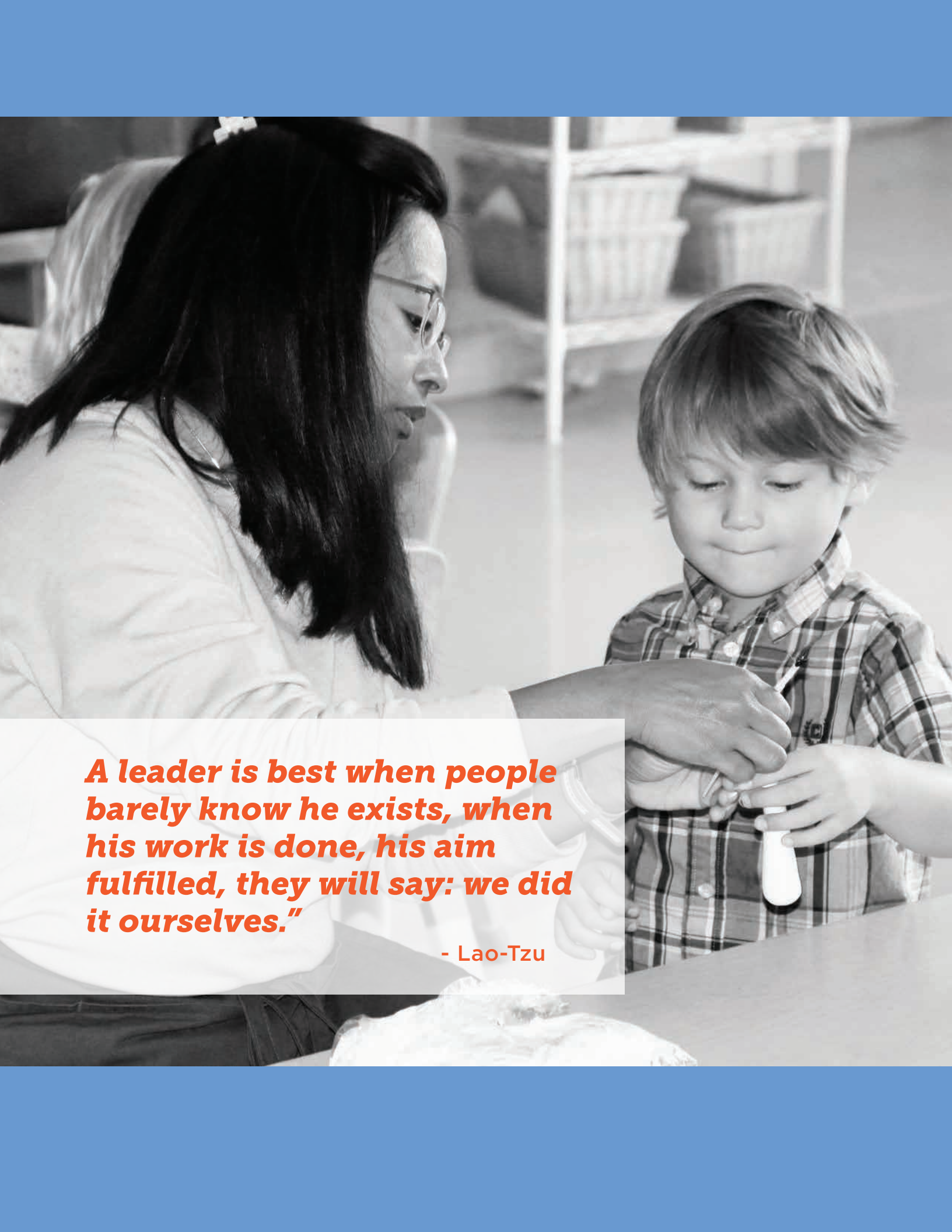


QUALITY MATTERS  
MONTEREY COUNTY



**Monterey County Quality Matters**

Early Care and Education Rooted in Community, Growing in Excellence



***A leader is best when people barely know he exists, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will say: we did it ourselves."***

**- Lao-Tzu**

## LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

It is with appreciation and commitment that we provide you with the Quality Matters Monterey County Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2018-2021. Quality Matters plays an essential role in ensuring opportunity, assistance, and care for the early care and education educators in coordination with our valued partners.

As we reflect on this past year, one word comes to mind, “progress.” We came together as a community of partners around a shared agenda to plan and implemented a new exciting effort to increase the quality of our early childhood education to transform the system of care for young children and families. Participation from a wide variety of community members proved that while daunting, the task is not impossible. However, Dr. Martin Luther King stated it best, “Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable....every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle, the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

Together, we capitalized on the many assets our community partners bring, enhanced our capacity to leverage data, created new communication materials to more effectively advocate for high-quality early care and education, and began to use the frame of equity for the work that we do together in order to transform outcomes for children in our community.

We appreciate the time and dedication of many individuals and organizations who contributed to the creation of this strategic plan. We are thankful to the parents and families for sharing their strengths and struggles. Also, with sincere gratitude to our community of early care and education educators for sharing their insights and their valuable time. Special recognition of appreciation to our partners for sharing their practice-based knowledge, resources, energy, and support.

While we’re continually hopeful and continuously energized by the knowledge that this great work is invaluable and the best investment to our community and future of our children, the data tells us that there’s much more work to be done. Many challenges remain. We are hopeful that the Quality Matters 2018-2021 Strategic Plan will encourage your continued engagement in this collective impact effort. Most importantly, you will find the plan used to understand the critical role of the Quality Matters and our strategic direction. This five-year plan developed within the context of the opportunities and challenges within our county. Should this be the first time you hear about the effort, we hope it will provoke you to join our Consortium.

Together in Quality Matters,

QUALITY MATTERS OPERATIONAL PARTNERS



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent decades there have been significant advances in understanding the critical role of the early childhood system of care as a preventive early intervention strategy for supporting positive outcomes for children and families. Nationally, there has been a movement toward defining and implementing quality standards in the field of early learning by creating a centralized system for supporting early care and education providers to measure and improve their quality practices. Locally, in Monterey County and other communities across California, there has also been a movement towards a comprehensive system to ensure that early care and education programs are of high quality.

The development of a child care and education Quality Rating and Improvement System or “QRIS,” is predicated upon a locally determined system for continuous quality improvement. This system is based on a tiered rating structure with progressively higher quality standards for each tier. In addition, this system provides supports and incentives for programs, teachers and administrators to reach higher levels of quality, and provides information to the parents and the public about program quality. Fiscal Year 2016-2017 marked the first full year of operation of Quality Matters, the local QRIS effort in Monterey County.

The research on early childhood education is rich with practices that promote student performance in order to prepare them for school and life success. We know for example that reading out loud to young children promotes language and early literacy skills while supporting the later development of reading comprehension. We also know that beyond their benefits to individual children and families, investments in quality early childhood education are good for the community as a whole. Finally, we know that investing with an equity mindset promotes economic growth and reduces social costs. Within a public policy framework, equity is fostered when programs and investments are focused on the people and places that face the greatest barriers. Equity means giving everyone, including all racial and ethnic groups, the opportunities and access they need so that they can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

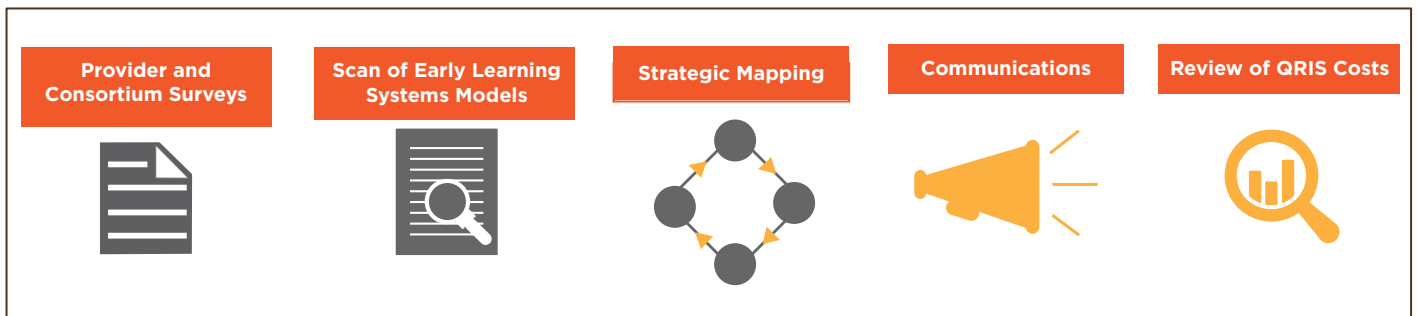
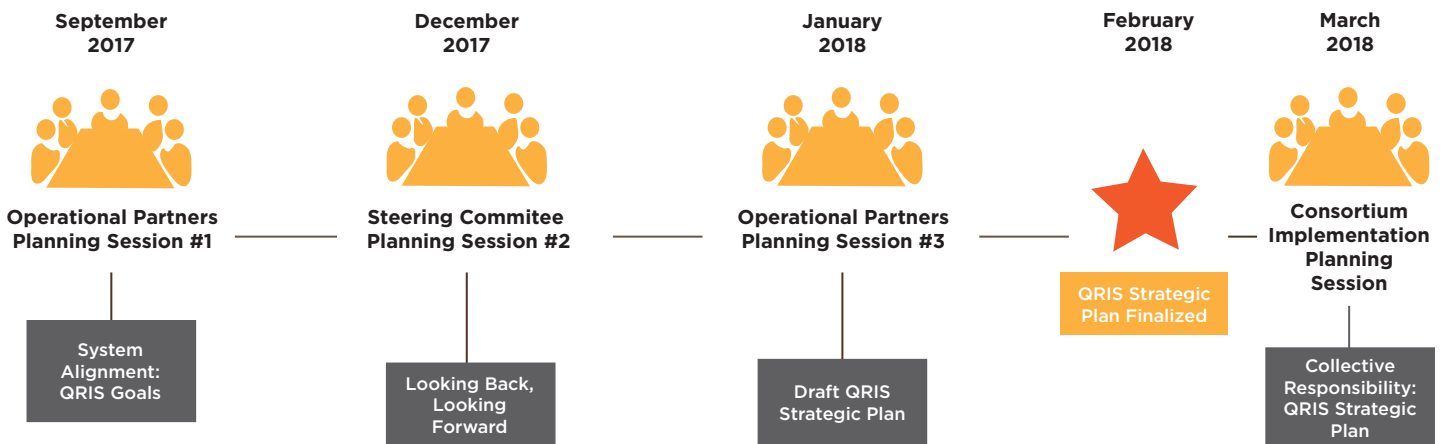
As we look to the future of our county, our community of stakeholders is gratified at the opportunity to increase awareness and support for high quality early care and education programs through the development and implementation of Quality Matters. This strategic plan is the result of months of thoughtful and inclusive planning by stakeholders and outlines the vision, values, goals and strategic objectives for Quality Matters. It begins to set the groundwork for the development of an early childhood system of care for all children in Monterey County.

To better support children’s development, we will strive to use this plan to strengthen existing partnerships and create new ones with public and private entities, including those who may be new to the field of early childhood education. Quality Matters stakeholders recognize that it is only through working together that we can build and sustain an early childhood education system that helps all children and families learn and thrive. The Quality Matters Strategic Plan is a bold new step we are taking in that direction.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Quality Matters Strategic Plan is a blueprint that Quality Matters will use to guide our work through the implementation of the goals and strategic objectives highlighted in the plan. The strategic planning process built on the work of many early learning stakeholders as they helped in the initial design of Quality Matters. The inclusive and collaborative planning process leveraged public research and data as well as focus groups and surveys of local constituents including members of the Quality Matters Consortium and family child care homes and center-based providers. The strategic plan was developed through a 10 month participatory process that engaged the Quality Matters Operational partners, Steering Committee and Consortium, as well as countless community partners and early care and education providers.

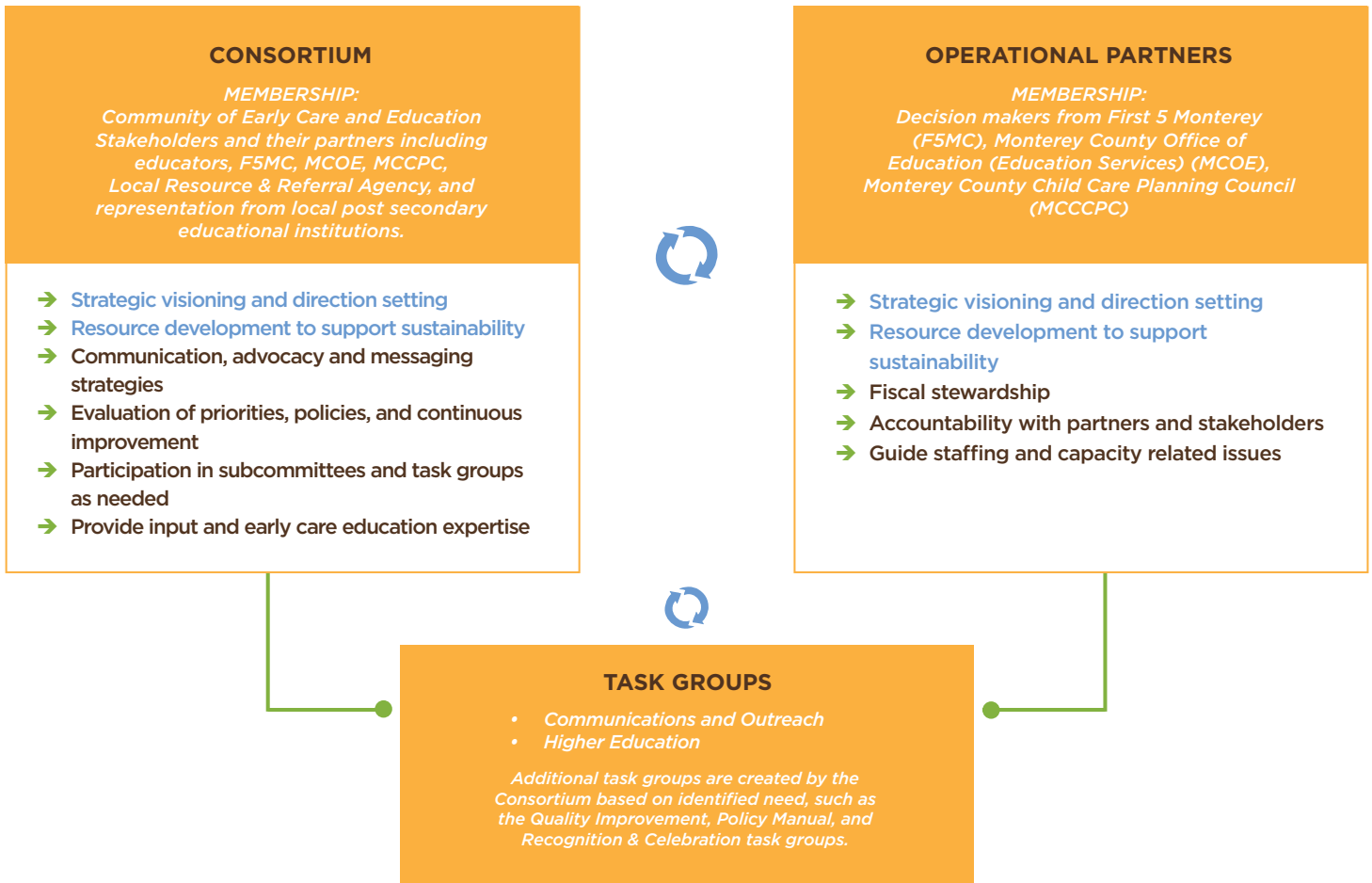
### QUALITY MATTERS MONTEREY COUNTY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS MAP



# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Having an operational QRIS with a partnership or “consortium” in place is a requirement for counties in California to access quality improvement funding. Stakeholders of Monterey County’s Quality Matters have agreed to work together to provide strategic direction and make decisions on the design and implementation of the local QRIS utilizing the Governance Structure outlined below:

## QUALITY MATTERS MONTEREY COUNTY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



## THE NEED FOR QUALITY MATTERS MONTEREY COUNTY

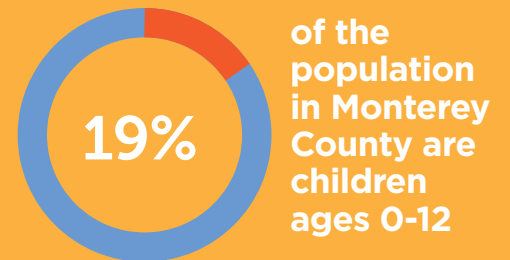
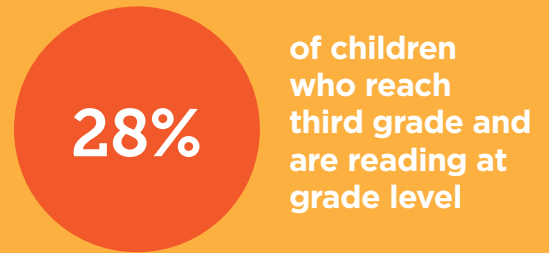
Monterey County is rich with history and diversity. Created in 1850, our county was one of the original counties of California. Our abundant agricultural lands and our world famous coastline are significant features of life in our county.

Yet, as we present our 2018-2021 strategic plan, we recognize that while the investment of our partners' time, energy, and resources are substantial, they are still inadequate to meet the needs of our County's families and children. For example, in Monterey County, only 25% of children are considered socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten and by the time they reach third grade, only 28% of children are reading at grade level. This is critically important because as the data shows, those children who are not reading proficiently by third grade, are four times more likely to drop out of high school.

Meanwhile, the demand for high quality child care continues to outpace the supply as more parents join the workforce to improve the economic conditions of their families. The task of improving these indicators is our responsibility as a community. That responsibility begins with and is driven by an understanding of the data of our early childhood landscape.



Only 25% of children are considered socially and emotionally ready for kindergarten<sup>1</sup>

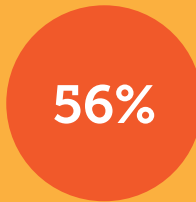


### Reasons Families Seek Child Care:



<sup>1</sup>) 2015 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment - Nurturing Success: A Portrait of Kindergarten Readiness in Monterey County.

## Child Care Demand

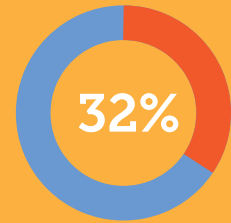


56% of working families in Monterey County seek early care and education<sup>2</sup>

whereas, **only**

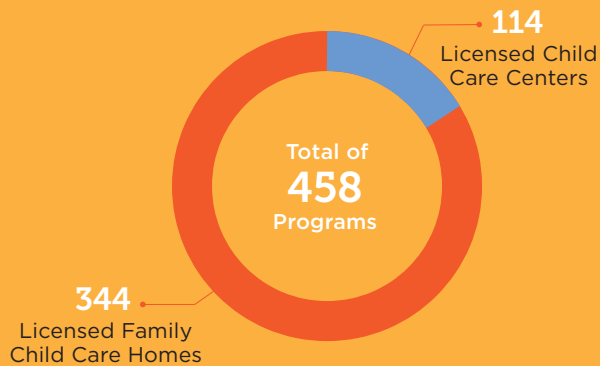


47% have access



32% 3-4 year olds who attend preschool in Monterey County<sup>3</sup>

## Child Care Supply



TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN THAT CAN BE SERVED	
Slots in Licensed Child Care Centers	Slots in Licensed Family Child Care Homes
5,879 available slots	3,808 available slots

### Centers with at least one staff speaking the following languages:<sup>4</sup>



### Family Child Care Providers speaking the following languages:



2) <https://brightfuturesmc.org/en/7-community-goals-2/> 3) 2017 California Child Care Resource and Referral Portfolio 4) 2017 California Child Care Resource and Referral Portfolio



## Quality Matters Values:

- 1 Shared Ownership**

All partners and community members will have a voice in the design and refinement of the system.
- 2 Collaboration and Integration**

Agencies and initiatives will work in partnership to support the early learning, health, and well-being of children 0-5.
- 3 Capacity Building**

The design and implementation of the QRIS and aligned services will focus on building the capacity of all participants, so that they feel competent and have the tools and opportunities to serve and nurture the whole child.
- 4 Inclusion**

Services will be coordinated and enhanced to engage and support all site types, partners, and children.
- 5 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity**

The system will honor, respect, and support the diversity of all participants, including their socio-economic status, family structures, individual abilities, beliefs, interpersonal styles, and language preferences.
- 6 Creativity**

The system design will be unique to our community and foster the interests, ideas, talents and curiosities of all participants as a central and integral part of our community's learning and collaboration for high quality early care and education.
- 7 Transparency and Consistency**

All administrators, educators, program staff, and families of children 0-5 will be informed about quality, the direction of the system, opportunities for involvement, and the benefits and expectations of participation.
- 8 Alignment and Articulation**

The system will work to create reciprocal alignment and articulation between early care and education and the K-12 system.
- 9 Family Engagement**

Parents and caregivers will be recognized as their children's first teacher and work in partnership with educators to support their children's early learning and to advocate for the needs of their children education and the K-12 system.
- 10 Relationship-based**

The supports and services offered by the system will be coordinated and delivered through a relationship-based approach and the K-12 system.
- 11 Non-competitive**

The system and its participants will be supportive of individual growth and will not emphasize comparisons between partners, programs or providers and the K-12 system.
- 12 Advocacy and Policy**

Throughout the development of the QRIS, local barriers and lessons learned will be utilized for ongoing system improvement and for coordinated advocacy on behalf of our early care and education workforce and children 0-5 and the K-12 system.



## Quality Matters Vision

*All children have access to quality early learning experiences that support their optimal development.*

## QUALITY MATTERS GOALS

<p><b>GOAL 1</b></p> 	<p><b>Improvement Focused</b></p> <p><i>To continually improve the quality of early care and education in Monterey County through the provision of supports and through collaboration with the community.</i></p>
<p><b>GOAL 2</b></p> 	<p><b>Collective Advocacy</b></p> <p><i>To create a shared advocacy agenda that prioritizes and gains public support for high quality early care and education.</i></p>
<p><b>GOAL 3</b></p> 	<p><b>Sustainable System</b></p> <p><i>To leverage and secure the needed resources for a sustainable Quality Rating and Improvement System in Monterey County.</i></p>
<p><b>GOAL 4</b></p> 	<p><b>Scalable Infrastructure</b></p> <p><i>To establish the needed infrastructure that supports the ongoing implementation of Quality Matters Monterey County.</i></p>
<p><b>GOAL 5</b></p> 	<p><b>Systems Alignment</b></p> <p><i>To integrate Quality Matters with other systems' efforts that impact the education, health and well-being of young children.</i></p>

# QUALITY MATTERS GOALS & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

## GOAL 1



### *Improvement Focused*

*To continually improve the quality of early care and education in Monterey County through the provision of supports and through collaboration with the community.*

### Background on Goal

The Quality Matters Consortium and Operational Partners recognized the momentum that had been built in the first year of implementation and wanted to capitalize on this momentum through the continued provision of strategic and intentional professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators and coaches to improve quality of care in Monterey County.

### Strategic Objective 1.1

By Q1 2019, develop an overarching professional development framework with partners to ensure that all QM participants have equitable access to high quality professional development opportunities as measured by the development of the framework.

### Strategic Objective 1.2

By Q2 2019, work with key partners to build awareness and the importance of parent engagement, so parents may access the needed tools and resources that increase parent involvement in Quality Matters, strengthen their understanding of quality, and deepen their capacity for supporting their children's life-long learning development as measured by how many sites are engaging parents to understand Quality Matters.

### Strategic Objective 1.3

By Q2 2020, Quality Matters will have 127 (23%) sites participate in the quality rating and improvement system to provide children access to quality early learning experiences.

### Strategic Objective 1.4

By Q2 2019, work with providers to prioritize the institutionalization of learning at their sites that teachers have received through coaching, technical assistance and training supports.

## GOAL 2



### Collective Advocacy

*To create a shared advocacy agenda that prioritizes and gains public support for high quality early care and education.*

#### Background on Goal

The Quality Matters Consortium and Operational Partners recognize Quality Matters as an opportunity to elevate the conversation about high quality early care and education and to amplify the collective advocacy voice on behalf of children and families in Monterey County. Research, data, communication collateral and stories about providers and families who are benefiting from the system offer opportunities for further advocacy at the local and state level.

#### Strategic Objective 2.1

By Q2 2018, leverage existing written communication materials to build the capacity of stakeholders to effectively advocate for Quality Matters as measured by increased community awareness, website and social media traffic.

#### Strategic Objective 2.2

By Q4 2019, work with the Consortium to create a shared advocacy agenda that has as a key priority the support for and sustainability of Quality Matters as measured by shared advocacy activities such as a possible sales tax bond measure.

## GOAL 3



### Sustainable System

*To leverage and secure the needed resources for a sustainable Quality Rating and Improvement System in Monterey County.*

#### Background on Goal

The Quality Matters Consortium and Operational Partners worked off of the premise that they can't rely on a single source of funding to support, scale, and sustain Quality Matters. Doing so would require the participation of the entire community including public and private sources of funding that are effectively integrated and leveraged. Sustainability also requires a strong public will and strategic advocacy to build awareness and momentum for high quality care.

#### Strategic Objective 3.1

By Q2 2019, develop a long-term sustainability plan to support Quality Matters that includes public and private partnerships, revenue generation strategies and policy changes that address quality early care and education in Monterey County.

#### Strategic Objective 3.2

By Q1 2020, work in coordination with the school district to develop a plan that ensures greater alignment between Quality Matters sites and K-12 efforts as measured by preschools becoming more vertically linked with primary schools.

**GOAL 4**



**Scalable Infrastructure**

*To establish the needed infrastructure that supports the ongoing implementation of Quality Matters Monterey County.*

**Background on Goal**

The Quality Matters Consortium and Operational Partners understand that infrastructure development may involve building capacity in several areas including planning, operations, workforce development, funding, collaboration, communication, community and political support and program evaluation. They also recognize that infrastructure is not just about ‘bricks and mortar.’ It is also about lasting relationships with providers, well-trained support staff (Coaches, TA providers etc.), and high quality supervision of programs that support the overarching goals and objectives to scale and serve larger numbers of providers, families and children.

**Strategic Objective 4.1**

By Q4 2018, build the capacity of program ambassadors to help spread the message of Quality Matters as measured by the number of ambassadors who are trained in Quality Matters messaging.

**Strategic Objective 4.2**

By Q4 2019, develop an expansion plan that ensures an equitable and strategic distribution of resources such as incentives and coaching to enable greater participation.

**GOAL 5**



**Systems Alignment**

*To integrate Quality Matters with other systems' efforts that impact the education, health and well-being of young children.*

**Background on Goal**

The Quality Matters Consortium and Operational Partners are working to develop closer and continued alignment with other system components that support the educational, health and well-being of young children and their families. This includes intentionally working to increase the alignment between ECE and K-12 systems and using an equity lens to align the entire continuum from cradle to college and career.

**Strategic Objective 5.1**

By Q3 2020, work in partnership with other systems (e.g. Regional Center, school district special education departments, mental health system) to provide referrals and services for children identified with developmental concerns.

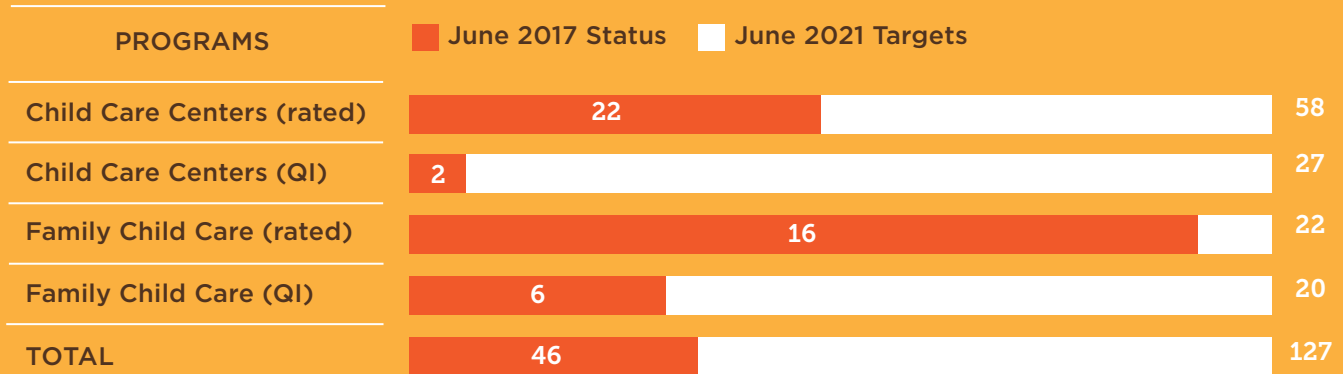
## IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic plan addresses the **what** and **why** of activities Quality Matters activities. A separate but related Implementation Plan will address the **who, where, when,** and **how** of implementing the goals and strategic objectives outlined in this plan. Both pieces are critical to success. Strategic plans work when implemented through a thoughtful process but often fail when there is a lack of ownership, accountability, or empowerment to act on the plan. This is where the Implementation Plan comes into play. In addition, planners of Quality Matters have staggered the implementation of the strategic objectives over several years to ensure success. The following table captures priority objectives by year:

2018	2019	2020
<p><b>Strategic Objective 2.1</b> Leverage existing written communication materials to build the capacity of stakeholders to effectively advocate for Quality Matters as measured by increased community awareness, website and social media traffic.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 1.1</b> Develop an overarching professional development framework with partners to ensure that all Quality Matters participants have equitable access to high quality professional development opportunities as measured by the development of the framework.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 1.3</b> Quality Matters will have 127 (23%) sites participate in the quality rating and improvement system to provide children access to quality early learning experiences.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 2.2</b> Work with the Consortium to create a shared advocacy agenda that has as a key priority the support for and sustainability of Quality Matters as measured by shared advocacy activities such as a possible sales tax bond measure.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 1.2</b> Work with key partners to build awareness and the importance of parent engagement, so parents may access the needed tools and resources that increase parent involvement in Quality Matters, strengthen their understanding of quality, and deepen their capacity for supporting their children’s life-long learning development as measured by how many sites are engaging parents to understand QM.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 3.2</b> Work in coordination with the school district to develop a plan that ensures greater alignment between Quality Matters sites and K-12 efforts as measured by preschools becoming more vertically linked with primary schools.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 4.1</b> Build the capacity of program ambassadors to help spread the message of Quality Matters as measured by the number of ambassadors who are trained in Quality Matters messaging.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 4.2</b> Develop an expansion plan that ensures an equitable and strategic distribution of resources such as incentives and coaching to enable greater participation.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 5.1</b> Work in partnership with other systems (e.g. Regional Center, school district special education departments, mental health system) to provide referrals and services for children identified with developmental concerns.</p>
<p><b>Strategic Objective 1.4</b> Work with providers to prioritize the institutionalization of learning at their sites that teachers have received through coaching, technical assistance and training supports.</p>	<p><b>Strategic Objective 3.1</b> Develop a long-term sustainability plan to support Quality Matters that includes public and private partnerships, revenue generation strategies and policy changes that address quality early care and education in Monterey County.</p>	

# ANNUAL SERVICE TARGETS

## Targets & Progress



## FOCUS ON EXPANSION AND SUSTAINABILITY

The feedback from Quality Matters participants has been overwhelmingly positive. They feel valued as professionals and recognized for their efforts. They are invested and engaged in the program and are proud to be Quality Matters participants. There is a consistent interest and desire to have Quality Matters continue and to grow to reach their peers. However, there is currently no guaranteed funding source for QRIS in California. An important focus for the coming years will be to work in close coordination with local and state leaders to look at how to sustain what is currently working and to look at how to expand to reach more educators and children.

At the state level, Quality Counts California (QCC) (formerly CA-QRIS) is utilizing evaluation results and information from regional and local counties to inform policy and funding priorities, to align funding around core QRIS elements that need to be sustained long term, and to seek additional new funds based on information about needs and scaling plans. This includes working in partnership with local counties to ensure strong data infrastructure, peer learning networks, standards and systems alignment and ultimately a policy and advocacy framework that can ensure sustainable funding, as well as brand building, communications, and outreach planning.

Importantly, both Quality Counts California and Monterey County Quality Matters will be engaging in cost modeling to ensure funding is aligned to a scaling plan and annual service targets that are realistic and position growth responsibly. The charts above were developed with these considerations in mind so that Quality Matters continues to be a source of quality improvement for educators already in the QRIS system while growing to serve the needs of all early care and education providers in Monterey County.



## **ALIGNMENT WITH STATE AND REGIONAL QRIS EFFORTS**

Successful implementation of the Quality Matters Strategic Plan is reliant on a variety of factors, both internal and external. Another significant external factor to be accounted for is that Quality Matters is situated in a context of regional and statewide efforts including Quality Counts California. The Quality Counts California Consortium strives to improve the quality of early learning and the sustainability of QRIS through a network of regional and county QRISs. Monterey County Quality Matters staff continue to monitor and participate in at both the regional and statewide level off Quality Counts California to ensure that their activities are in alignment and that available opportunities are monitored and used to support Quality Matters.

## **ALIGNMENT WITH LOCAL INITIATIVES, SYSTEMS & PROGRAMS**

The strategic planning process engaged many stakeholders who represent and are involved in other Monterey County initiatives, systems and programs. The importance of both staying focused on the unique focus that Quality Matters has on the quality of early care and education and of working with others who are addressing complementary areas of focus will continue through the implementation of this strategic plan.

### **QUALITY MATTERS MONTEREY COUNTY**

**Monterey Peninsula Unified School District**

**California State University Monterey Bay**

**Mexican American Opportunity Foundation**

**Salinas City Elementary School District • Monterey Peninsula College**

**Monterey County Child Care Resource and Referral**

**Bright Beginnings Early Childhood Development Initiative**

**North Monterey County Unified School District • Pacific Grove Unified School District**

**Monterey County Children’s Council • Gonzales Unified School District**

**Community Action Partnership San Luis Obispo • Greenfield Union School District**

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**Santa Rita Union School District • Dr. Nancy Kotowski**

**Carmel Unified School District**

**Soledad Unified School District**

**United Way Monterey County**

**Hartnell College**

**First 5 Monterey County**

**Head Start Program**

**Bright Futures**

**GOKIDS**



## CONCLUSION

Quality Matters Monterey County is committed to promoting public policy that seeks to achieve equity and high quality early care and education for all. This requires the strategic and creative use of our investments, programs, partnerships, engagement with parents and communities, and our collective advocacy for policy and systems change.

Moving forward, we will work in partnership with the community to achieve collective impact and to ensure that the services and supports established over the last year through the implementation of the initial phase of Quality Matters will be sustained. Most importantly, we will ensure that providers and families have what they need in order to help children succeed. The continued evolution of this effort will require new collaborations, new partnerships, new resources, and new ways of thinking to ensure that not only the quality of early care and education is increased but that the quality of life is enhanced for all residents in Monterey County.



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