

NEXT STEPS

A core set of partners has committed to working together to achieve the goal of transforming systems to reduce inequities in kindergarten readiness and increase the number of children ready for kindergarten by 2025. Following the “soft launch” in May 2018 we will continue to build support for the plan among a broader group of stakeholders and invite different communities, organizations, schools, and families to step forward in implementing one or more strategies.

*We invite you to join us! In doing so, you will be demonstrating your commitment not only to improving the lives of children and families – but to making the entire county a better place!*

*Visit [www.brightbeginningsmc.org](http://www.brightbeginningsmc.org) today to read the full document, and find out how you can get involved.*

The concepts and principles described in this strategic framework represent our shared understanding of how children develop in the context of their families and communities, and how we can work together to better support them – and ultimately make Monterey County a better place for everyone.



Together, preparing every child for life and school

A strategy for Monterey County to better support *all* children and their families, from the prenatal stage through age 8

Summary | (2018-2025)



This strategic framework lays out a consensus on what is needed to transform systems and achieve tangible results for the 64,500 young children ages 0-8 in Monterey County and their families. It highlights our shared vision for how change must happen to better support early childhood development, and outlines ten strategies we are prioritizing for implementation.

With this strategic framework, we aim to increase the scale and efficacy of aligned action.

Our goal is to transform systems to better support every child and family in Monterey County. If we succeed, the result will be seen in improved health and wellbeing for children and their families.

Over time, these community-level efforts will be reflected in reductions in maltreatment and abuse, and in improvements in children’s holistic development. By changing systems, policies and programs, we are working towards two community-wide objectives:

- **By 2025, double the number of children who** are holistically supported so that they are healthy, their development is on track, and they **are well prepared for kindergarten\***
- **Significantly reduce gaps in kindergarten readiness between children in low-income households and children in non-low income households by 2023\***

THIS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK WILL HELP US:

- Think in different ways about children, families and systems
- Hold each other accountable for achieving tangible improvements
- Focus on the most important drivers that impact child development
- Coordinate services and policies to support families holistically
- Understand the research and evidence base
- Support efforts in Monterey County to measurably improve outcomes for children and families

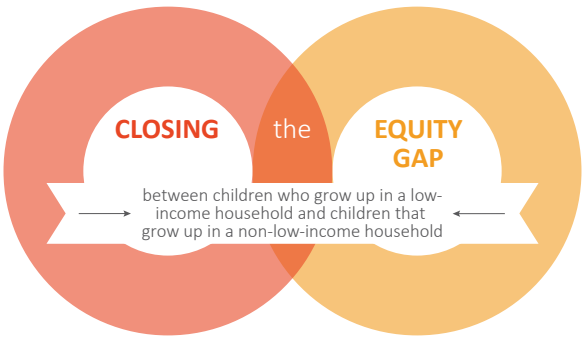


By 2025, **DOUBLE** the number of children ready for kindergarten

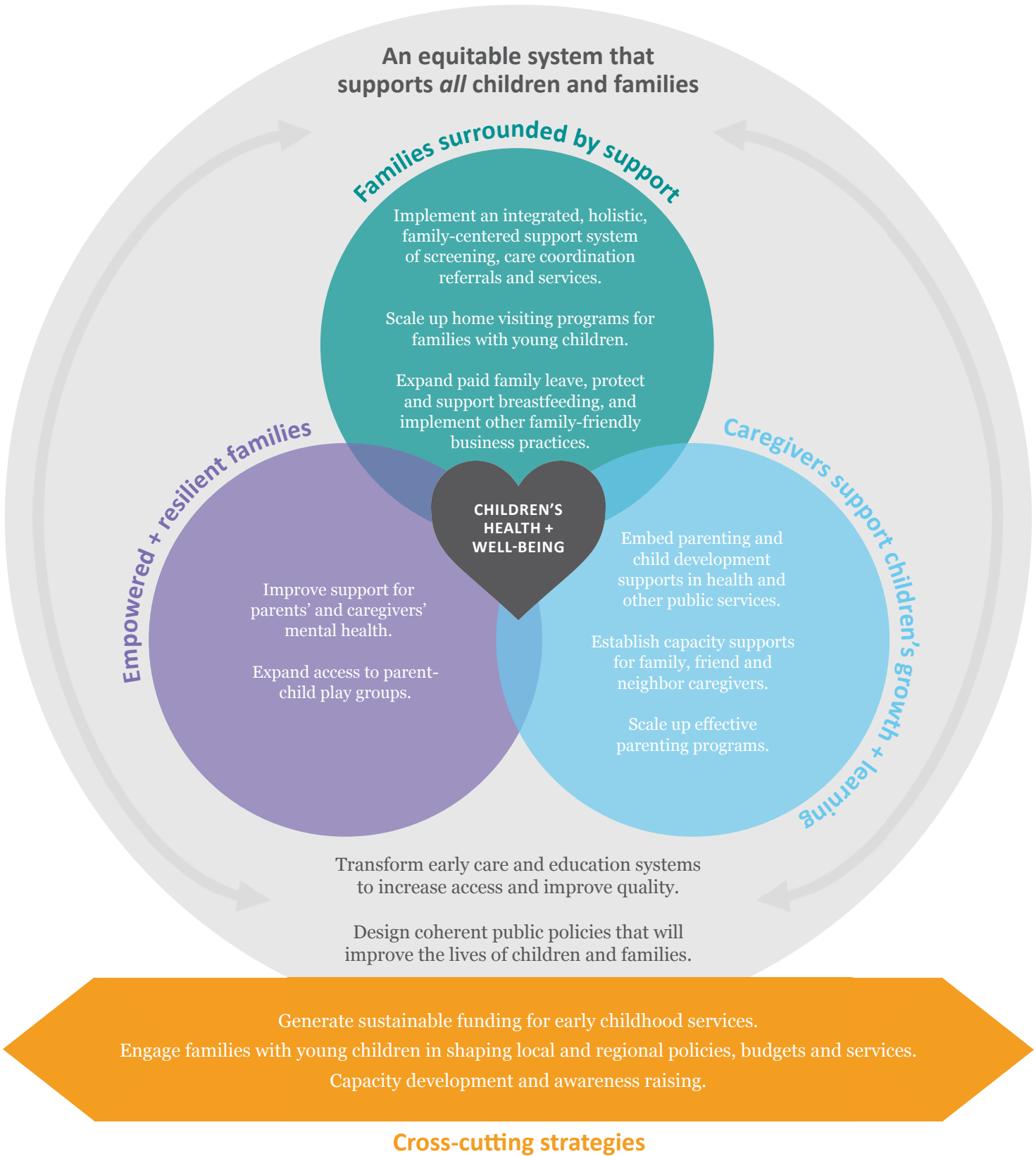


Our goal is to transform systems to better support every child and family in Monterey County.

We will use these two goals to reflect on the systems changes that are needed – and to evaluate whether our strategies are achieving their desired results. They will also inform our efforts to make sure our health, education and social service systems are ready for – and responsive to – children and families.



\*These are preliminary targets and we expect to refine them as new data become available and measurement tools improve. For more information and data sources, visit: [brightbeginningsmc.org](http://brightbeginningsmc.org)



In this strategic framework, the core values that inform how we will pursue change are equally as important as the strategies we pursue. These Principles define how each strategy should be designed, implemented, and evaluated, to ensure they achieve sustainable impact, while shifting power dynamics so that everyone has a place at the table.

TO IMPROVE SYSTEMS THAT SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, WE COMMIT TO WORK TOGETHER IN WAYS THAT VALUE:

- A holistic view of children and families:** The physical, cognitive, linguistic, and socio-emotional development of children are all connected and all important. Success for our children is dependent on and interrelated to their family and community context, and the relationships that surround them.
- The power of interconnected community systems:** We will work together – not in silos. By implementing strong cross-agency/ organization collaboration, coordination, and integration we can meet the entire range of needs of families in an effective and responsive manner. We will hold ourselves accountable for achieving community-level outcomes.
- The rights of *all* children to access equitable opportunities:** Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society where all can participate, prosper and reach their full potential. It is not enough to understand that there are disparities among children and families, we must actively pursue transformative change (in policies, practices, and resource flows) to eliminate inequities, including those created by structural racism, sexism, able-ism, poverty, and other forms of systemic exclusion and discrimination. We know that a more equitable society will be better for everyone, and is necessary for creating a healthy, safe, thriving County.
- Culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices:** High levels of trauma affect individual children, families, and neighborhoods. We will use child and family focused approaches to care and services in which the cultural strengths of the child, parent, and family are identified and nurtured to promote the well-being of children, families, and communities. Culturally responsive and reflective practices will be implemented at the personal, institutional, and policy level.
- Co-creating solutions:** We believe in working with, for and by children and families – creating systems and practices that enable authentic community leadership of individual and community-wide change processes. We believe it is essential that community voice is at the table while programs are being designed, implemented, and evaluated to ensure they are effective in meeting their needs and are sustained. All strategies will reflect our local context and respond to local priorities, cultures, and needs.
- A tenacious focus on results:** About 20 babies are born each day in Monterey County – this means 20 new people and families whose life outcomes we are committed to supporting and whose rights we will defend! We measure our success not in terms of dollars spent or actions taken, but by real change in families' lives that have a tangible impact on children's well-being.
- Informed by research:** Good intentions are not enough! We will use the best available research, evidence and local data to identify needs, evaluate change, and accelerate growth.

We measure our success not in terms of dollars spent or actions taken, but by real change in families' lives that have a tangible impact on children's well-being.