Data + Goals
Draft for Launch (Updated, May 2018)

HOW WILL WE MEASURE PROGRESS?

A critical part of our collective impact approach is the commitment of all partners to monitor and evaluate the results of their work using shared measures. This allows the community to track short term progress – and make improvements. Data and evaluation supports are one of the key ways the Bright Beginnings Initiative supports community change efforts. We use the findings to track our collective progress in achieving our overall community-level goals, and to scale up solutions.

When it started, Bright Beginnings identified six core indicators that have been guiding community work for the past several years. In this new strategic framework, we have incorporated those indicators into a broader frame and clarified how different indicators and data points are meant to be used.

25%

By 2025, DOUBLE the number of children ready for kindergarten

50%

Our "north star" - the overall indicator that will capture our collective impact - is a holistic measure of children's development at age 5. The best available data we have currently for this is from the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) studies previously carried out every three years by First 5 Monterey County (see below).

Tracking kindergarten readiness is just one of the ways we measure collective progress. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this strategic framework and the priority strategies annually. We also monitor and evaluate the systems changes we are directly influencing, and the results of strategies and specific change projects using "strategy-level measures." These measures are developed by the action teams and community members implementing specific projects and strategies. These capture many of the indicators Bright Beginnings has already been using, including indicators related to access to affordable, quality early care and education, shared with Bright Futures Goal 1.

Many of these indicators are imperfect, but can still be useful for learning and accountability. We are constantly working to develop better indicators and more reliable data sources. As new measures and better data become available we will use them and revisit our targets accordingly.

MEASURING KINDERGARTEN READINESS

There are a number of measurement challenges related to capturing a countywide snapshot of "kindergarten readiness," a term we use to indicate a child's overall well-being, health and development. A key challenge in the early childhood development field is the lack of consensus on how to appropriately measure "kindergarten readiness" of individual children, in ways that are holistic, unbiased, and accurately reflect individual development trajectories. There are also challenges with capturing the community-wide systems that do or do not support children and families to be "ready" for kindergarten, given the fragmentation in the early years space.

To address these challenges, and in response to a growing interest from schools and community organizations to have more consistent data available for all children, we are currently revisiting the tools used to assess kindergarten readiness. We are also working to improve how these data are gathered and analyzed across the county. Our goal is to have a more comprehensive system for gathering key information on each child's development in place by 2020.

A Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Data Systems Pilot project is underway. For more information on that project please contact Tamara Hamari: tamara@first5monterey.org

For more information and updates please visit our website: brightbeginningsmc.org

Best Available Local Data

In setting our community level goals and analyzing local factors affecting kindergarten readiness, the Early Childhood Development Advisory Group used the best available local data which comes from studies commissioned by First 5 Monterey County in 2009, 2012 and 2015. For the 2015 Monterey County Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), 124 kindergarten teachers completed child observations for nearly 2,500 students. This represented almost 35% of the county's incoming kindergartners. Similar to all incoming kindergarten students in Monterey County public schools, the students were mostly Latino (73%), and spoke Spanish and English (38%) or Spanish only (34%). Their families frequently had incomes below the Federal Poverty Level (61%).

	DRDP-SR Domain	What it Measures	Items in the Domain
	Self + Social Development	Ability to form relationships and have positive interactions with peers and adults	• Identity of self in relation to others • Recognition of one's own abilities • Relationships and social interactions with adults • Relationships and social interactions with peers • Social and emotional understanding • Conflict negotiation • Curiosity and initiative in learning
	Self Regulation	Ability to control emotions, persist when things are challenging, and share	• Self-control of behavior and feelings • Engagement and persistence • Responsible conduct • Shared use of space and materials
	Language + Literacy Development	Comprehension and use of language to engage in conversations, to express needs and feelings, and to follow along when text is presented by adults	• Understanding of language (receptive) • Follows increasingly complex instructions • Communication of needs, feelings and interests (expressive) • Reciprocal communication and conversation • Comprehension and analysis of age-appropriate text, presented by adults • Letter and word knowledge • Phonological awareness • Emergent writing
	Mathematical Development	Early forms of numeracy such as counting, pattern recognition, shapes, and measurement	• Number sense of quantity and counting • Number sense of mathematical operations • Shapes and measurement • Patterns and classification • Problem solving
	English Language Development	The progress of children who speak a language other than English at home	• Comprehension of English (receptive English) • Self-expression in English (expressive English) • Understanding and responding to English literacy activities • Symbol, letter, and print knowledge in English

Image. *A summary of the domains covered by the tool currently used to measure kindergarten readiness, the Desired Results Developmental Profile – School Readiness© (DRDP-SR©) (Source: First 5 Monterey County, 2015)*

Data on Equity + Kindergarten Readiness

Our goal is to close the equity gaps between children living in poverty[1] and children whose families are above the federal poverty line. We are currently crunching the numbers to develop a suitable indicator and target for this goal.

Poverty is a factor that has a particularly strong association with school readiness. One study that examined the school readiness of children living in poverty found that, even when adjusting for demographic, health, and behavioral differences between poor and moderate- and higher-income families, poverty alone remained an important influence on school readiness.

CLOSING the **EQUITY GAP**

between children who grow up in a low-income household and children that grow up in a non-low-income household

According to a report published in 2015 by the Economic Policy Institute, additional socioeconomic disadvantages that can hinder children's cognitive and behavioral outcomes include unemployment and low wages, housing instability, irregular work schedules, and inadequate access to primary and preventive health care.

From the 2015 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA), parents who reported an annual household income above the federal poverty level were more likely to have children who displayed comprehensive mastery (were well prepared in all domains). This finding is consistent with past KRA results and mirrors broader national trends.

Other equity gaps seen though the cradle to career spectrum can be linked back to household incomes. For example, English Language Development measures the emerging English skills of children that have another home language (in Monterey County the largest language groups are: Spanish, Tagalog, Korean, Arabic, Mixteco, Triqui and other indigenous languages of Mexico). English Language scores on the KRA show statistically significant differences between children living in poverty and those not. This means that children who speak a language other than English and whose families are economically poor, are getting less support and fare less well than children who speak a language other than English and aren't poor. Speaking another language is not in itself a risk factor - on the contrary - research shows learning multiple languages has many advantages for young children's development. It is the barriers faced by families living in poverty --including high levels of stress and fewer options for quality early education -- that are having a detrimental impact.

Summary of factors correlated with kindergarten readiness (First 5 Monterey County, 2015):
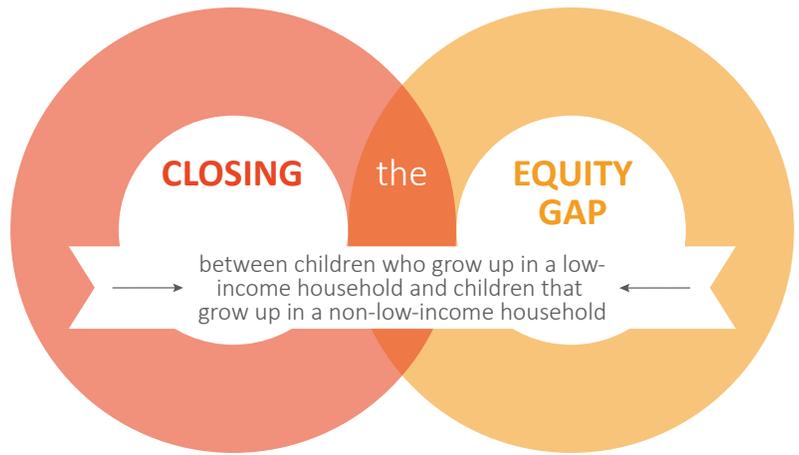
Comprehensive mastery associated with...
Families above poverty level*
Parent education level more than high school*
Better reported health status*
Greater parent knowledge about child development*
*Indicates a statistically significant association with comprehensive master with p < .01.

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[1] We are using the terms poverty, poor and low income to signify families that have self-reported that their income is below the federal poverty line.