

Introduction

Childhood seems to pass in an instant—the baby that nestles close in her mother's arms grows into an intent first grader puzzling through a book on her own for the first time, a nervous preteen anticipating the transition to middle school, a young woman dancing at her Quinceañera, a graduate, and then an adult facing the challenges of family and work life. But childhood is a journey, not an instant, and to reach her full potential, that child must be guided along every step by loving adults and a caring community. Parents, neighbors, service providers, educators and policymakers each see a child from a unique perspective, and sometimes in only a fleeting encounter at one time in a child's life, but they are all united in a common goal: to see children grow into healthy adults.

This report summarizes how children in Santa Clara County are faring with respect to three desired outcomes that capture the qualities and conditions that children need to thrive and grow into successful adults:

- I. Children Are Physically, Socially and Emotionally Healthy**
- II. Children Are Prepared for and Successful in School**
- III. Children Live in Safe and Stable Families and Communities**

The goal of this report is to document important issues affecting children, and to galvanize policymakers and service providers to address the most pressing concerns. The report can be used for a variety of purposes, such as policy development, strategic planning, resource allocation, coalition building, program planning, grantwriting, public education and advocacy. The report does not make specific recommendations for policies or programs (see inset box on the Children's Agenda).

This report differs from previous Children's Reportsⁱ in that it is a summary of trends related to children's well-being, rather than an extensive data book. Detailed statistics now can be found at www.kidsdata.org, an online resource that provides more than 250 regularly updated indicators of children's health and well-being in Santa Clara County, along with data for other Bay Area counties, statewide comparisons, and related information about community resources and research. For some indicators, www.kidsdata.org also reports data at the city or school-district level.

The report was overseen by the Children's Report Advisory Committee, made up of local organizations representing health, education, social services, community-based organizations and foundations that support the county's children. (See inside of back cover for a list of members.)

Children's Agenda

The 2005 Children's Reportⁱ was used to create a Children's Agenda for the county. The Agenda, led by Kids in Common, identifies a set of priorities and works toward policy and program changes in those areas.

For more information, see www.kidsincommon.org

i. See the 2005 Children's Report at http://www.kidsincommon.org/childrens_report.html.