

2023 - 2028

# Strategic Plan



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## Message from Children and Families Commission



First 5 San Bernardino is excited to share the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, which outlines the Commission’s vision and goals for the next five years. The First 5 San Bernardino 2023-2028 Strategic Plan was developed with careful review of recent data, reflection and expertise from the First 5 San Bernardino Advisory Committee, commissioners, staff, funded agencies, county partners and families from our communities.

At the forefront of the revised Strategic Plan, the North Star identifies a continued focus on supporting and enhancing systems of care and support for young children and families. Our North Star statement is the guiding principle that drives our work, and these guiding principles maintain a priority in communities, collaboration, impact and sustainability. This work is further supported by our equity principles, approved by the Commission in September 2022, to address systems-level inequities through inclusive governance and participation, access to services, results-based accountability and legislative and regulatory mandates.

The First 5 San Bernardino 2023-2028 Strategic Plan continues a commitment to targeting three interrelated Strategic Priority Areas that are essential for promoting child well-being: child health, family support and quality early learning. The goals and objectives outlined build upon our past accomplishments and aim to address the county’s needs through a set of strategies and targeted systems work.

The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan will guide the Commission in its work and decision making to promote, support and enhance the well-being and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and their communities.

Sincerely,

**Elliot Weinstein, M.D. | Chair**  
Pediatrician

## Insight from Executive Director



Strategic planning is an ongoing organizational process of using available knowledge to document an intended direction. I am very excited about our new Strategic Plan. It supports a forward-focused vision and identifies actionable ways to meet our goals and objectives while exercising flexibility and appropriate response to changing landscapes and challenges. I believe that First 5 San Bernardino has done a wonderful job of utilizing input and voice from a diverse group of key stakeholders and incorporating valuable knowledge gained through experience and data to inform and build the platform for the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.

Aligned with the California Children and Families Act, which was adopted in November 1998 and known as Prop 10, the First 5 San Bernardino Commission continually demonstrates unwavering dedication to our mission to promote, support and enhance the well-being and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and their communities. This is now well known and shared throughout our county systems as the whole child, whole family, whole community approach.

In our last strategic plan period, we publicly adopted and committed to grounding an equity policy and practice into our work to ensure that all children and families, especially those furthest from opportunities and access, can reach their full potential. This commitment carries over to the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and embeds four equity principles into all systems, structures, strategies and practices to address identified systems-level inequities and strive towards equitable goals and aspirational targets for all children, community and providers.

Focusing our efforts through three strategic priority areas, the First 5 San Bernardino Commission remains committed to collaboration, coordination, thought leadership and ultimately development of new components (services, programs, partnerships, innovative funding, etc.), as well as support that strengthens existing components within our comprehensive system of care for children ages 0 – 5, to ensure that children are healthy, safe, nurtured and prepared to thrive.

Serving in many systems roles, including convener, connector and advocate, the First 5 San Bernardino Commission’s vision remains that community organizations, collective impact groups and the affiliated workforces will be equipped to effectively collaborate and serve children and families to improve the well-being of the whole child.

The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan framework provides the First 5 San Bernardino Commission a roadmap for how we will act as champions for children and families. This is continuously assessed, and we welcome input from our community and most especially from our parents! Please feel free to contact us at any time or take advantage of the opportunities to participate in parent/community surveys or serve on the First 5 Advisory Committee.

As First 5 San Bernardino prepares to embark on the celebration of 25 years of Prop 10, we take pride in the fact that tens of thousands of children and their parents, caregivers and childcare providers have been served through First 5 San Bernardino programs, services and partnerships. The early childhood years are the foundation for lifelong well-being. First 5 San Bernardino is committed to promote, support and enhance the health and early development of our children, prenatal through age 5, as well as their families and communities! We look forward to exceptional outcomes in the next five years!

Sincerely,

**Karen E. Scott**  
Executive Director, First 5 San Bernardino



## Background

### First 5 San Bernardino History

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 10, the “California Children and Families Act.” The Act placed a tax on tobacco products and mandated that funds from the tax be used to support programs and services for children prenatal to 5 and their families. Each California county established Children and Families Commissions, appointed by the County Board of Supervisors. First 5 San Bernardino was created to oversee San Bernardino County’s portion of the tax revenue. First 5 San Bernardino develops their strategic plans to guide funding allocations received from the tax to address three primary strategic results: improved family functioning, child development and child health.

### Development of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan

Under the guidance of the Children and Families Commission for San Bernardino and in collaboration with key stakeholders, First 5 San Bernardino crafted the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. The figure below depicts the strategic plan development process followed by First 5 San Bernardino.



### Commission Members

**Elliot Weinstein, M.D.** | Chair  
Pediatrician

**Gwendolyn Dowdy-Rodgers, Ed.D.** | Vice Chair  
Chief Executive Officer, Arrowhead United Way  
San Bernardino County Board of Education  
President

**Ted Alejandre**  
Superintendent  
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools

**Joe Baca, Jr.**  
Fifth District Supervisor  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

**Gary C. Ovitt**  
Retired Teacher and Principal;  
Former Fourth District Supervisor,  
San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

**Janki Patel**  
Acting Director  
San Bernardino County Public Health Department

**Gilbert Ramos**  
Human Services Assistant Executive Officer  
San Bernardino County Administrative Office



## 1. Data and Information Collection Phase: Fall-Winter 2022

A multi-method approach was used to gather data and information about the 1) current county context, 2) recent data trends related to young children and families, and 3) reflections on First 5 San Bernardino's current and past initiatives.

**Document Review:** Existing First 5 San Bernardino documents – such as past strategic plans and scopes of work – were reviewed to contextualize the organization's current efforts and priorities.

**Review of Publicly Available Data:** A data landscape analysis was conducted of publicly available data to better understand recent trends affecting young children and their families in San Bernardino County. Examples of data sources reviewed included data from the United States Census Bureau, California Department of Education and the California Department of Health Care Services.

**Stakeholder Engagement:** Over 65 stakeholders were engaged via listening sessions to better understand the past, current and future priorities of San Bernardino County's young children, their families and those that serve them. Participating stakeholders included:

- First 5 San Bernardino commissioners
- First 5 San Bernardino staff
- First 5 San Bernardino partners; including funded agencies, county partners and the First 5 San Bernardino Advisory Committee
- Community members; local families with young children

Findings from the stakeholder engagement efforts were summarized and shared back with all participating stakeholders, including First 5 San Bernardino commissioners and staff.



## 2. Strategic Plan Development Phase: Winter-Spring 2023

In collaboration with key stakeholders, First 5 San Bernardino developed the plan strategy, implementation plan and evaluation framework as components of the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan package.

**Strategic Plan:** A document communicating First 5 San Bernardino's strategic approach for 2023-2028. The document includes the organization's mission and other guiding statements and a strategic framework that specifies strategic priority areas and accompanying goals and objectives; strategies to achieve the goals; and roles that the organization plays in strengthening systems.



**Implementation plan:** A guide providing additional detail for First 5 San Bernardino staff on how to support the execution of the goals and objectives described in the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan.

**Evaluation framework:** A summary of the approach to measurement and evaluation of First 5 San Bernardino's 2023-2028 goals and objectives.

## 3. Feedback and Approvals Phase: Spring 2023

First 5 San Bernardino's Advisory Committee, strategic planning work group and staff were invited to provide feedback on multiple aspects of the strategic plan. Formal feedback and suggestions were gathered across several listening sessions and through an online survey. First 5 San Bernardino's executive team also provided guidance during strategic planning meetings. Feedback and suggestions from all sources were incorporated in an iterative process.



# San Bernardino County Landscape

Young children and their families living in San Bernardino County possess numerous strengths, and also experience challenges related to children’s health, family functioning and early learning opportunities. The information presented below highlights demographic data and key metrics related to outcomes for young children in San Bernardino County. When possible, San Bernardino metrics were compared to data for the state of California to contextualize outcomes. The data presented below was considered by First 5 San Bernardino as they developed and prioritized the 2023-2028 goals and objectives described later in this plan.

## Demographics

Across San Bernardino County, there are 2,214,281 people, of which 133,178 (6%) are under the age of 5 years<sup>1</sup>. The highest percentage of the county population identifies as Hispanic or Latino (56.4%), followed by identifying as white only (23.0%)<sup>1</sup>. When compared to the state of California, San Bernardino County is home to a higher percentage of:

	San Bernardino County	California Average
Children under the age of 5 years. <sup>1</sup>	6.0%	5.3%
People identifying as Hispanic/Latino. <sup>1</sup>	56.4%	40.8%
People speaking Spanish at home. <sup>2</sup>	36.6%	28.8%
Households earning less than \$50,000 per year. <sup>2</sup>	28.1%	25.4%

## Child Health

The child health data summarized below primarily comes from state databases, which allows for relative comparisons of San Bernardino County data to the state overall.

Better than California Average	Similar to California Average	Worse than California Average
<p><b>Developmental screening rates:</b><sup>3</sup> San Bernardino County developmental screening rates are 23.6% - 34.5%</p>	<p><b>Prenatal care:</b><sup>4</sup> 83.5% of women begin prenatal care in the 1st trimester</p> <p><b>Birth weight:</b><sup>4</sup> 91.7% of children are normal birth weight</p>	<p><b>Well-child visits:</b><sup>3</sup> Less than 28% of children receive 6+ well child visits by 15 months of age</p> <p><b>Low birth weight:</b><sup>4</sup> 6.9% of births are low birth weight</p> <p><b>Infant mortality:</b><sup>5</sup> 6 per 1,000 live births overall; 11 per 1,000 live births for Black/African American population</p>



## Early Learning

Overall, San Bernardino County has 1,169 licensed child care facilities that offer a total of 23,350 licensed child care spaces to children<sup>8</sup>.

Better than California Average	Similar to California Average	Lower than California Average
<p><b>Percent of licensed childcare centers:</b><sup>8</sup> 35.8% of licensed facilities are childcare centers</p>	<p><b>Percent of licensed childcare spaces by age:</b><sup>8</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less than 24 months: 6.2%</li> <li>2 - 5 years: 76.5%</li> <li>6 years+: 17.3%</li> </ul>	<p><b>Percent of children 3+ enrolled in preschool:</b><sup>2</sup> 6.2% are enrolled in preschool</p> <p><b>Family childcare homes:</b><sup>8</sup> 64.2% of licensed child care facilities are family childcare homes</p>

## Family Support

Family support data is mainly derived from county reports, which does not allow for state comparisons, but does allow for understanding recent county trends.

Improving Trends	Stable Trends	Worsening Trends
<p><b>Increase in children receiving mental health services:</b><sup>7</sup> The number of children 0-5 served by the Public Mental Health System has grown 160% since 2010/2011</p> <p><b>Decrease in child maltreatment allegation rates:</b><sup>6</sup> San Bernardino County child maltreatment allegations have dropped 29% from 2015 to 2021</p>	<p><b>Children entering foster care:</b><sup>6</sup> Since 2015, the overall percent of child foster care entries has stayed consistent at 0.5% of all children in San Bernardino County</p>	<p><b>Disparity in child maltreatment allegation rates for black children:</b><sup>6</sup> Black children have double the rate of child maltreatment allegations compared to the overall population</p>



## Mission, North Star and Guiding Principles

Our mission and North Star set the direction for our work. Our guiding principles define how we make decisions and prioritize our work. Our commitment to equity guides how we work with others – our partners, our community and the families of San Bernardino County.

### Mission

Promote, support and enhance the well-being and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and their communities.

### North Star

First 5 San Bernardino's North Star is a cohesive and complementary system that enables communities, organizations and families to ensure that all children in San Bernardino County are healthy, safe, nurtured and prepared to thrive.

### Guiding Principles

These principles represent our core values, which guide our priorities and decision making for all our work. These guiding principles will also support the way we engage with communities and systems, enabling First 5 San Bernardino to follow its mission and achieve its North Star.



### Community, Systems and Context

- Use strategic engagement with communities.
- Be attuned to the changing context in which First 5 San Bernardino works; including local, state, national and the First 5 network comprised of representation from multiple county commissions.
- Support and respond to emergent and changing needs and system-wide issues.
- Integrate approaches that improve equitable outcomes across child and family serving systems in San Bernardino County.

### Collaboration

- Promote collaboration at every level.
- Coordinate and leverage resources across agencies and systems.
- Support work that leverages resources through partnerships at the county, state and federal levels that focus on areas of greatest need countywide.

### Impact and Sustainability

- Use evidence-based strategies with measurable impact.
- Evaluate initiatives and their outcomes.
- Focus on sustainability to ensure long-term impact and lasting change.



## Commitment to Equity

First 5 San Bernardino is committed to grounding an equity policy and practice into its work to ensure that all children and families, especially those of color and those furthest from opportunities and access, can reach their full potential. In September 2022, the First 5 San Bernardino Commission approved **four equity pillars** which will be embedded into all systems, structures, strategies and practices to address identified systems-level inequities and strive towards equitable goals and aspirational targets for all children, community and providers.



### 1. Inclusive governance and participation

Obtain meaningful participation and input of the families and other caregivers of children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities throughout all program development and implementation phases.

### 2. Access to services

Ensure that all parents and caregivers have access to services and resources that are created and supported with humility, with no assumptions or judgment, with the intent of meeting families where they are, respecting diversity and understanding lived experience and individual need.

### 3. Results-based accountability

Use an outcomes-based accountability including transparency in information gathering and reporting to support the benefit of all children, their families and caregivers and service providers.

### 4. Legislative and regulatory mandates

Adhere to all legislative and regulatory mandates governing program participation, receipt of funds and service provisions for children and families from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities.



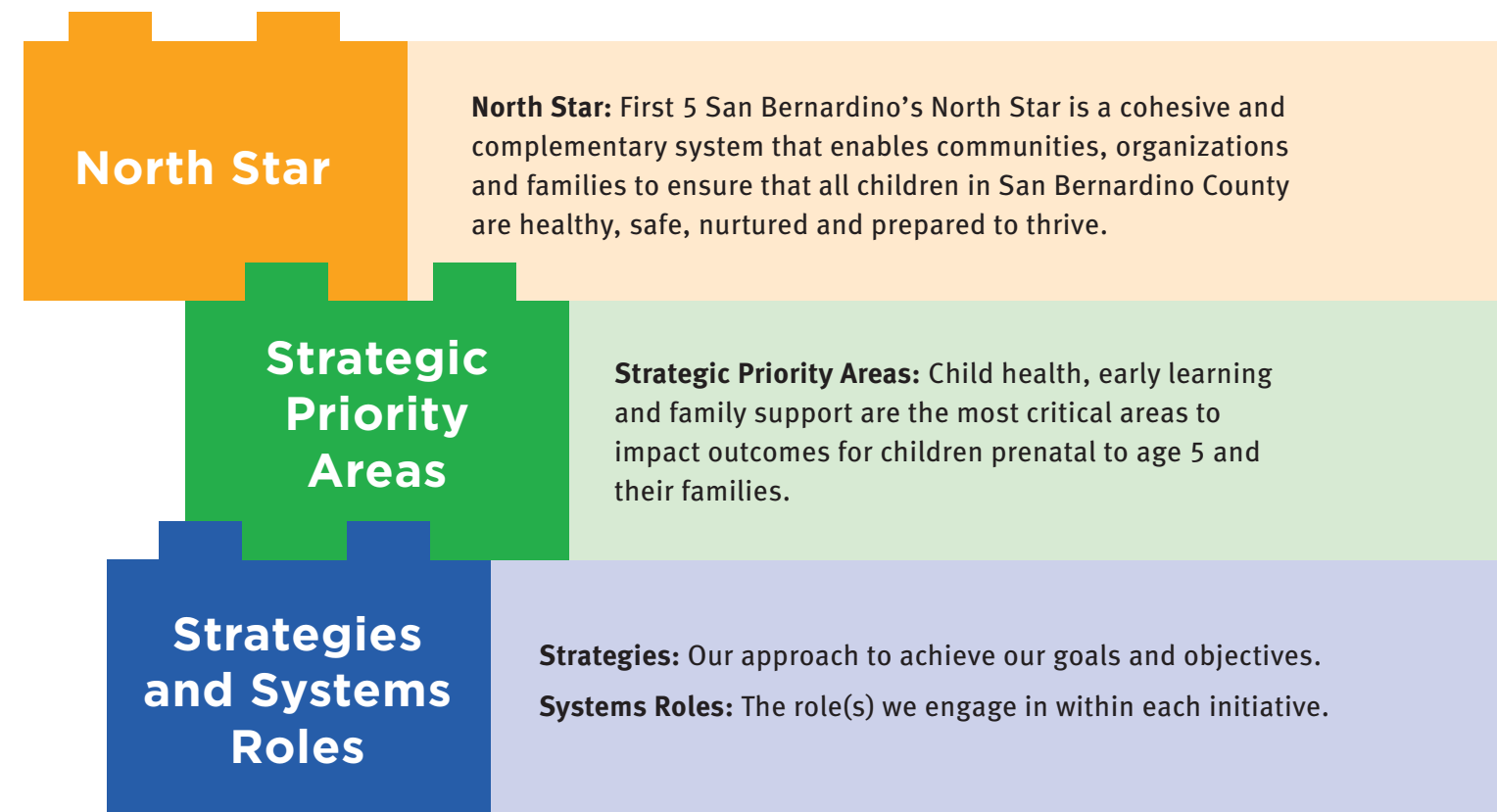
## Our Work: Strategic Priority Areas, Strategies and Systems Roles

To achieve our North Star, we created a strategic framework for the 2023-2028 Strategic Plan. This framework includes three strategic priority areas, defined by goals and objectives, strategies and systems roles to support these efforts.

### Strategic Framework

First 5 San Bernardino's strategic framework provides a roadmap for how the organization will act as champions for children and families.

The strategic framework is aligned with the organization's North Star, mission and guiding principles. It places the North Star at the top of the framework as the goal. The strategic priority areas include child health, early learning and family support and – all which are topic areas that have significant influence on children's well-being and long-term outcomes. Goals and objectives are identified for each of the strategic priority areas that best align to our North Star. To support and enhance the implementation of the strategic priority areas goals and objectives, we identified strategies to achieve the goals, objectives and systems roles in which we will engage.



## Strategic Priority Areas

First 5 San Bernardino efforts are categorized into three Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs): child health, early learning and family support.

Each SPA has a goal and corresponding set of objectives. The goals represent the desired conditions for all children and families in San Bernardino County. The objectives specify how First 5 San Bernardino can focus its efforts within each SPA. Each objective can be evaluated so that progress within and across the SPAs can be monitored, and when necessary, adjustments can be made to initiatives based on incoming data and information.

The SPAs are presented as distinct areas of work, but for young children, there are strong connections and interactions between their health, family and early learning environments. As such, initiatives can and will often support multiple goals and objectives across the SPAs.



### Child Health

Children and their families can access and utilize the full spectrum of health services to enhance their well-being.



### Early Learning

Promote a system of quality early learning in educational, childcare and other sectors that supports the needs of children and families.



### Family Support

Families are strengthened through resources and opportunities that supports them in nurturing, caring and providing for their children's well-being.



## Child Health Goals and Objectives



### Child Health goal:

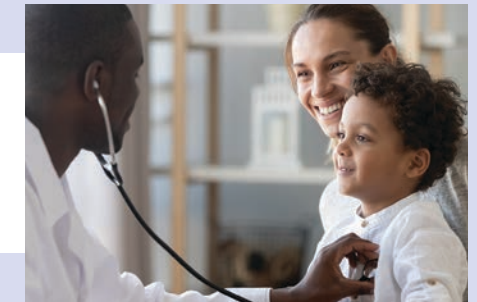
Children and their families can access and utilize the full spectrum of health services to enhance their well-being.

### Child Health objectives



Children are screened and connected to appropriate developmental services.

Children's health is promoted through community education about local health issues.



Maternal health is promoted in the county through trainings and education for providers and families.

Health care providers are aware of and able to connect children and families to existing mental and behavioral supports and services.



## Early Learning Goals and Objectives



### Early Learning Goal:

Promote a system of quality early learning in educational, childcare and other sectors that supports the needs of children and families.

### Early Learning objectives



Quality early learning can be accessed and utilized by families.

Early learning providers receive training and support to provide high quality learning opportunities to children.



School readiness is promoted through increasing access to early literacy support and materials.



## Family Support Goals and Objectives



### Family Support goal:

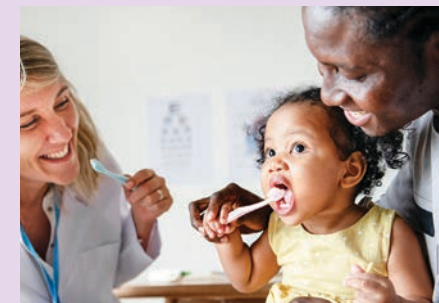
Families are strengthened through resources and opportunities that support them in nurturing, caring and providing for their children's well-being.

### Family Support objectives



Families are connected to services that support children's development and parent/caregiver resiliency.

Families are connected to resources that support their caregiving skills and social/family engagement.



Families and providers are aware of and know how to access existing county support and resources.

First 5 San Bernardino partners with agencies throughout the county to promote prevention and early identification of child abuse and neglect.



## Strategies

Common strategies will be used to support the work towards each objective across the Strategic Priority Areas. These strategies enhance the strategic framework by providing direction on how an objective may be achieved. Multiple strategies may be employed within objectives or initiatives.



### Capacity building and workforce support

Trainings and education provide support to both the early care workforce and families.



### Connecting families to existing county resources, support and services

Encourage connections of families and early care providers to existing support and resources through county partnerships.



### Promoting community knowledge

Families and providers are aware of existing services and support across the county.



### Prevention, screening and early intervention

Screening and early identification for children and families to support preventative and early intervention efforts.



### Provision of resources

In some instances, providing specific tangible resources, such as early learning materials, will be employed to address child and family needs.



### Partnership

Underpinning all of the Commission's strategies, partnership with others enhances our capacity, knowledge and connections.

## Systems Roles

First 5 San Bernardino champions and facilitates for children, families and their needs. First 5 San Bernardino actively promotes and enhances connections among systems, providers and families.

First 5 San Bernardino maintains its commitment to strengthening the systems that support children and their families. Systems change efforts were first highlighted in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan and expanded in the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan. The 2023-2028 Strategic Plan continues to recognize systems change as foundational to all of First 5 San Bernardino's efforts.

The current Strategic Plan delineates and defines six roles for First 5 San Bernardino. The roles are not mutually exclusive – First 5 San Bernardino may choose to employ a single role or multiple roles across the course of an initiative, to best align with and achieve the desired objectives.

### Collaborator

Partner with child and family serving organizations across the county, state and the First 5 network.

### Connector

Bridge families, providers and organizations throughout early childhood systems.

### Convenor

Bring others together to enhance early childhood systems.

### Advocate

Elevate and bring attention to the work, contributions and expertise of others, including the First 5 network, among local, regional and state policy and other efforts.

### Leader

Organize and direct system-strengthening efforts including sharing of research and data, information and expertise.

### Funder

Provide time-limited funding for innovative initiatives or emerging needs, when uniquely positioned to do so.

## OUR MISSION

*Promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age 5 and their families and communities.*



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**First5SanBernardino.org**

### References

- <sup>1</sup> 2024 US Census Bureau American Community Survey Demographic and Housing Estimates
- <sup>2</sup> 2024 US Census Bureau American Community Survey Selected Social Characteristics
- <sup>3</sup> 2024 US Census Bureau American Community Survey Household Income in the Past 12 Months
- <sup>4</sup> California Department of Public Health 2021 Birth and Death Statistical Reports
- <sup>5</sup> CDC WONDER Underlying Cause of Death, San Bernardino County 1999-2020
- <sup>6</sup> San Bernardino County Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Needs Assessment 2022
- <sup>7</sup> San Bernardino County 2021 Community Indicators, Behavioral Health
- <sup>8</sup> California Child Care Resource & Referral Network Child Care Data Tool, 2021 Licensed Child Care Supply

