



Assessing the Needs and Assets of San Bernardino County Families

Colton – Central Valley Region

December 2013



Between March and November 2013 Harder+Company Community Research

conducted eight community asset-mapping sessions throughout San Bernardino County with the goal of better understanding the needs, assets, resources, and gaps in services that families with young children in San Bernardino County face. Each session consisted of interactive activities for parents, community residents and local service providers that focused on a broad range of topics, from early education and medical resources to places where children can be active and community sources of pride. This report presents the findings from the Colton Asset Mapping session conducted on April 11, 2013.

The Approach: Asset Mapping

For this project, First 5 San Bernardino and Harder+Company Community Research adopted asset mapping as an approach to understanding community needs. Asset mapping has at least two important advantages over other traditional needs assessment approaches that made it well-suited to meet First 5 San Bernardino’s goals: it is **strengths-based** and **inclusive**.

Asset mapping focuses first on what is available and working in a community. These resources can then be leveraged to help address the needs of that same community – allowing for a strengths-based approach to problem solving. Simply put, being aware of both the resources and needs of a community allows for the development of more strategic solutions that have a higher likelihood of achieving outcomes. Traditional needs assessment focuses primarily on what’s missing from a community.

Second, asset mapping is inclusive – the technique makes it possible for a diverse group of people to work together to describe and understand the community. First 5 San Bernardino was eager to include a strong parent perspective in this project alongside the professional knowledge that service providers and leaders bring. Anyone who lives in a community is well-positioned to participate in asset mapping regardless of education, literacy level, language spoken or prior experience with this type of activity. Asset mapping truly allows a seat at the table for anyone with firsthand knowledge of the community.

















Asset mapping sessions resulted in lively discussions and debates about every community we conducted them in. We hope the information in this brief report conveys the passion that community members brought to the session. We are indebted to them for their time and participation in this process.

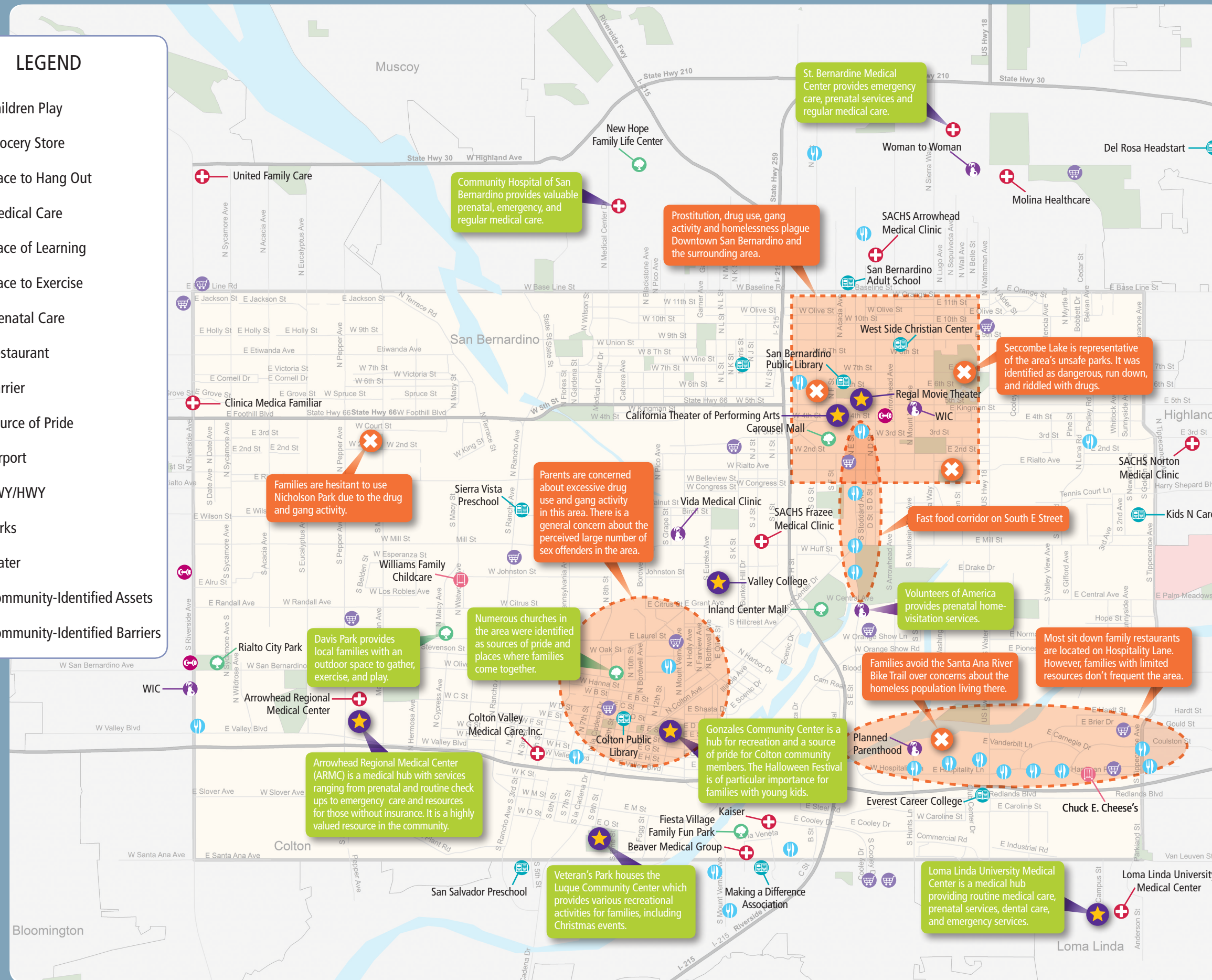
About this report:

The fold out map to the right provides an overview of the *mappable* assets and needs in Colton. The report that follows provides more detailed information about the community-identified assets and needs.

MAPPING SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY'S NEEDS AND ASSETS

LEGEND





-  Children Play
-  Grocery Store
-  Place to Hang Out
-  Medical Care
-  Place of Learning
-  Place to Exercise
-  Prenatal Care
-  Restaurant
-  Barrier
-  Source of Pride
-  Airport
-  FWY/HWY
-  Parks
-  Water
-  Community-Identified Assets
-  Community-Identified Barriers



Colton Asset Mapping

This summary map shows community-identified assets and needs in the Colton and San Bernardino City Communities. During the asset mapping workshop a mix of about 40 local parents, residents, and service providers worked together to identify current community strengths and challenges. Participants discussed a broad range of assets including schools, child care, food outlets and health care facilities. Although this is not an exhaustive list, First 5 San Bernardino and key community partners can use this map to identify existing resources that can be built upon to strengthen the foundation of services for children 0-5 and their families.

Key Findings:

-  There is a need for affordable and healthy food options in Colton. Outside of Hospitality Lane, only fast food restaurants were identified. Most parents with young children see fast food restaurants are their only eating out option as they are more affordable and often times conveniently located.
-  Participants identified multiple churches in the area as sources of pride and places where families gather/congregate.
-  Families see numerous areas in Colton and San Bernardino City as dangerous. They are concerned about the rampant crime and drug use associated with gangs. And although many take pride in Colton Parks, San Bernardino City Parks are perceived as run down and filled with dangerous activities.
-  Homelessness was identified as a large problem in Colton and San Bernardino City.

APRIL 2013

What does everyday life look like for parents and community members in Colton?

The City of Colton is a small predominantly Latino¹ community located just south of the City of San Bernardino in the Central Valley Region of San Bernardino County. This community is mostly comprised of families with young children², and while many of those who attended the asset mapping session live in Colton, daily activities such as grocery shopping, work, and childcare, often take place outside of Colton. Many Colton residents spend time each day in surrounding areas such as Redlands, Loma Linda, and San Bernardino. The lack of basic resources such as affordable childcare, jobs, food and a perceived lack of recreational activities in the area has led families to seek these resources outside of Colton.



There is limited access to affordable and healthy food options.

Most Colton families are very conscious of where they buy their family's food, seeking places that provide high quality food and are conveniently located within their community. However, cost is the most important factor when deciding where to shop and what to buy. Some parents find themselves driving outside of Colton or utilizing multiple grocery stores to meet their family's food needs within budget. Many parents reported they are often forced to sacrifice healthy food for less expensive food. As can be seen on the map, there are a number of markets where families regularly shop, including *Stater Brothers*, *Cardenas*, *Food 4 Less*, *Superior* and *El Super*. Some of the most conveniently located grocery stores, such as *Stater Brothers*, are perceived to be too expensive to meet the regular shopping needs of many families. While participants were aware of numerous farmer's markets in Colton and surrounding cities as places to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables, few parents reported actually utilizing these markets. Based on discussion among participants, it seems that these markets may not be utilized because parents lack information about what farmer's markets are and the benefits of shopping at

Colton families may benefit from education and information about the cost and health benefits of shopping at local farmer's markets.

¹ 77% of residents identified as Latino or Hispanic in 2010 Census.

² 52.3% of households have children under 18 living with them (2010 Census).

them. Some families expressed a preference to do their shopping at big-box stores like *Costco*, *Wal-Mart* and *Sam's Club*. Other families mentioned that while they knew they could save money at big-box stores, they lacked transportation to get to them and take "bulk" purchases home.

An additional barrier to ensuring children and families eat healthy food is the prevalence of fast food restaurants in the area.

Although participants identified a variety of sit-down family restaurants (mostly on Hospitality Lane), most participants with children reported they only dine out at fast food chains because they are affordable and oftentimes located within their neighborhoods.



Community members utilized stickers to identify places they utilize.



Local parks, community centers

and churches play an important role in

the social life of Colton. Colton residents take pride in the parks and community centers located in their city, especially facilities like the *Gonzalez Community Center*, which provide a variety of classes, exercise equipment and community events. They identified parks as well as churches as hubs for social gatherings and physical activities for their families.

Participants identified a variety of other places where they congregate. Some of those included the Carousel Mall and Inland Center Mall in San Bernardino, local movie theatres, the Highland Dog Park and New Hope Family Life Center. These places were identified as assets because they provide families with activities and community events that are safe, affordable and promote a sense of community.



Residents rely on local parks as places to exercise.

Veterans Park, Davis Park, Rialto City Park and Citrus Park were among the most common local parks that families rely on as spaces to exercise. Other community members shared that their go-to place for exercising is oftentimes their own backyard or walking around their neighborhood. Few participants identified official gyms as places they use to exercise. Some participants also utilize their local high school's facilities and Norton Air Force Base's track.

"Around my neighborhood (near the airport) I can't walk my kids in the stroller, it doesn't feel safe."

~Colton Resident

How do parents care for their families' health?



There are several highly valued medical care providers in the area, but most of them are located outside of Colton. Most

community members identified medical providers such as *St. Bernardine Medical Center*, *Community Hospital of San Bernardino*, *Arrowhead Regional Medical Center (ARMC)* and *Loma Linda University Medical Center* as great resources for regular medical care, prenatal care and emergency care. Community members noted the quality of care they receive, helpfulness of medical staff, and special programs (for example programs for the uninsured) as great assets. As can be seen on the map, all of these facilities lie outside of the City of Colton. Given that many young families rely on public transportation, accessing care at these facilities poses a challenge for many families. *Beaver Medical Group*, located in Colton, and *Vida Medical Center*, located in San Bernardino, were identified by some participants as more accessible options for medical care. However, some participants expressed concern about limited staff, lack of Spanish speaking staff, and long waits at *Vida Medical Center*.

While excellent medical care is available in the Region, poor public transportation can make it challenging for families with young children to utilize these facilities.

Parents reported that they typically use regional hospitals such as *Loma Linda Medical Center*, *St. Bernadine's Medical Center*, *Arrowhead Regional Medical Center*, *Corona Regional* and *Redlands Community Hospital* for emergency care for their families, however they wish there were more accessible options closer to home.



Women rely heavily on community clinics and WIC centers for prenatal services. Community members seeking prenatal care often frequent

clinics in their neighborhoods such as *Clinica Familiar (Rialto)*, *Woman to Woman*, and *Vida Medical Clinic* (San Bernardino), and the various *Social Action Community Health Systems (SACHS)* clinics located in the area. In addition, community members also identified WIC centers as a great resource for pregnant women and mothers with young children.



Practicing good oral health is important to parents, but the cost and the need for pediatric dentists in the area make it a challenge. All

participants indicated that practicing good oral health is a priority for them and their families, this included brushing their teeth, using mouthwash, flossing and regular visits to the dentist. Most parents reported getting information about their child’s dental health from WIC, schools, community events and friends. For many participants, the biggest challenge to keeping up good oral health habits was the cost of dental care and a lack of dental insurance. Although all parents agreed about the importance of practicing good oral health, many felt the cost of regular dentist visits was too much for them to maintain as a regular habit. For families with limited resources, regular dental check-ups were more likely to happen when “we can afford it,” as opposed to a routine practice. In many families dentist visits are more likely to occur on an emergency basis, suggesting that many children may not have regular access to preventative care. When parents prioritize dental care for their children, there is a perceived lack of affordable and accessible pediatric dentists in the area.

Supporting healthy & thriving FAMILIES!

Tells us about yourselves :

Age: _____ How many children live with you? _____ How many are under 12? _____
 Are you a: _____ Parent _____ Grandparent _____ Service Provider
 _____ Foster Parent _____ Other: _____

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What kinds of dental health activities does your family practice regularly?
 Ex: Brushing teeth daily, flossing, etc.:

What are some of the difficulties to maintaining good dental health?

To keep my family healthy, the three most important things are:

Where do you get information about your child's dental health? Ex: Community events, mobile clinics, dentist, family, etc.

harder+company FIRST5

Identifying parent’s practice and knowledge:

Community members utilized “placemats”, like the one pictured here, and worked in teams to identify dental health practices, challenges, and gaps in services.

What learning opportunities are available for young children and their families?



Parents value learning opportunities in the area but there is a need for affordable childcare and preschools.

Colton parents place a high value in the early education of their children. All parents reported they promote educational activities with their children such as reading, singing, counting, and visiting museums and libraries. Parents utilize local resources. They shared that they provide their children with educational opportunities by visiting the *San Bernardino County Museum, San Bernardino Public Library, Colton Public Library, Smiley Library* and *Highland Library*. Parents who have children in preschool expressed gratitude and appreciation for the educational opportunities provided. However, for many families, finding low-cost accessible preschool presents a major challenge. Most parents mentioned the small number of local preschools have long waiting lists and are not affordable. Families seeking childcare for their younger children experience these same barriers (i.e., costs, limited quantity and long waiting lists). As a result, Colton families turn to grandparents, other family, friends, and neighbors to provide affordable childcare. **Affordable childcare and accessible preschools are among the highest needs for parents in Colton.**



Parents desire more learning opportunities. Parents would like more learning opportunities for themselves such as parenting classes, including those that focus primarily on teen parents, self-improvement classes and jobs programs. By having access to such opportunities, parents felt they would gain confidence and become stronger parents for their children. In addition, parents mentioned their interest in more parent and child classes like *Mommy and Me* workshops and activities for children disabilities.

Community Desires for the City of Colton and the Central Valley Region

This word cloud illustrates resources participants most desire for Colton.

Participants were asked to name some things they would like to see in their community. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Overall community members desire more **safety** and **police** in their community.



Summary of community-identified needs in Colton and the Central Valley Region

- There are limited healthy and affordable food options for families in Colton and the Central Valley Region. Due to the convenience and affordability of fast food chains, most parents view this as their only choice for eating out with their families. Farmer’s markets may be an underutilized source of healthy and affordable food.
- Safety is a major concern for the families in Colton. Many residents identified issues such as public drug use in parks and schools, gang activity, prostitution and homelessness as concerns. These concerns in combination with poor public transportation in the area contribute to families traveling outside of the area for recreation.
- Children’s oral health needs are likely to be unmet. While most parents understand the need for regular preventative care, family budgets cannot cover the cost.
- Affordable childcare and preschools are a priority for most Colton families with young children. Currently, there is a scarcity of affordable childcare facilities in the area. As a result, many children are cared for by family members, friends and neighbors while their parents work.

Summary of needs in the Central Valley Region*



*Community members were asked to name some things that families with young children need that currently are not available in the region. The “word cloud” to the right illustrates their responses. Words appearing in larger type appeared more frequently in their responses. Overall **childcare** and **healthcare** appear to be the largest needs for families in the Central Valley Region.

Summary and conclusions

The community of Colton cares deeply about the well-being of young children and their families. Parents understand the importance of healthy foods, preventative dental care and early learning opportunities for their children's future. However family budgets are extremely tight and many parents struggle to meet basic needs. The strong sense of community in Colton can serve as an important asset to building the network of services and resources available to children zero to five and their families.

THANK YOU!

Many thanks to the community residents who attended this event and worked diligently to identify their community's needs and assets. We also want to thank local non-profits and churches that helped recruit community members and provided their knowledge and support every step of the way.



First 5 San Bernardino was created in December, 1998 in order to realize the benefits of Proposition 10 (California Children and Families Act) for the County's youngest residents and their families. The act created a program for the purpose of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age.

Vision – All children in San Bernardino County are healthy, safe, nurtured, eager to learn and ready to succeed.

Mission – Promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age five and their families and communities.



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