

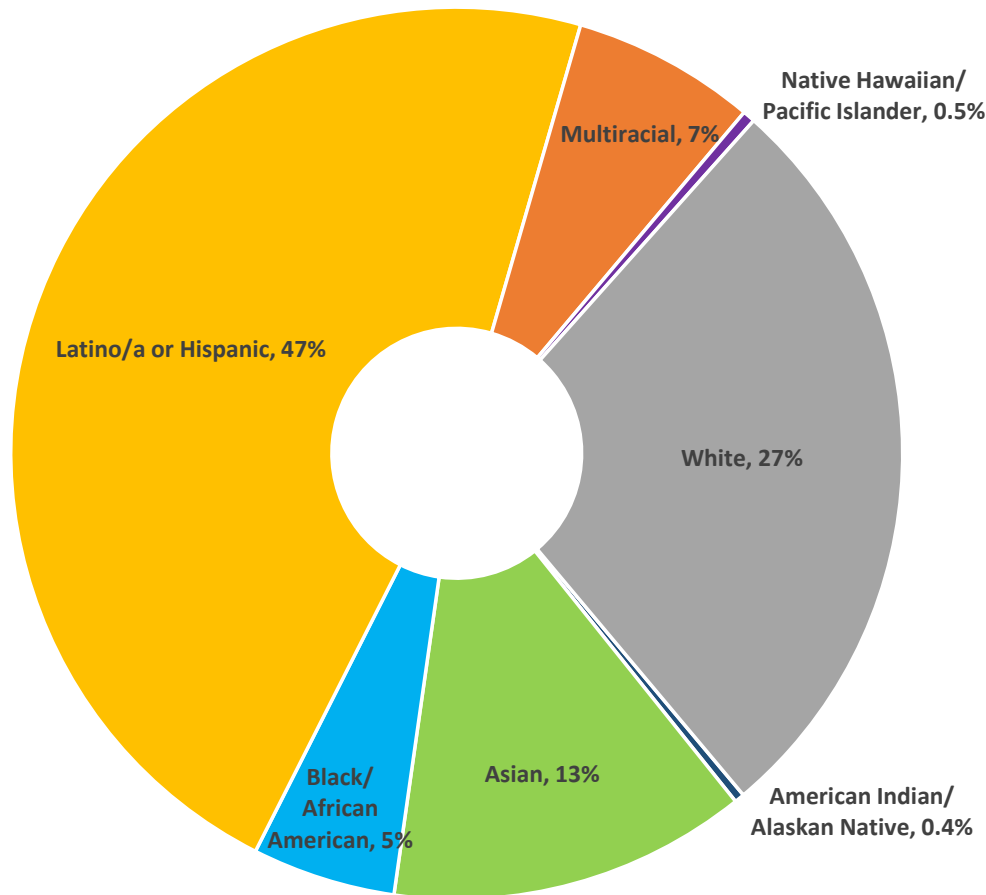
Children Now's 2024 Report Card

**Ted Lempert, President
Children Now
MVLALAH Challenge Team**

February 8, 2024



There are 13.7 million Californians ages 0-26.



HEALTH

- D Birthing Health
- C Environmental Health & Justice
- A- Health Insurance
- D+ Health Care Access & Accountability
- D Preventive Screenings
- D+ Supporting Mental Health
- D- Preventing Substance Abuse
- C Oral Health Care
- C- Relationships & Sexual Health

CHILD WELFARE

- C Stable Homes & Enduring Relationships
- C+ Health Care for Kids in Foster Care
- D Education Supports for Students in Foster Care
- D Transitions to Adulthood

FAMILY SUPPORTS

- C- Voluntary Evidence-Based Home Visiting
- B- Paid Family Leave
- B Income Assistance for Low-Income Families

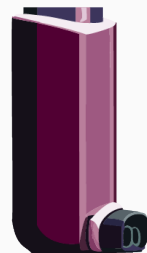
EDUCATION

- C- Child Care
- B+ Preschool & Transitional Kindergarten
- B- Early Care & Education Workforce
- D Early Intervention & Special Education
- C- Education for Dual Language & English Learners
- C+ Education Funding
- B Expanded Learning Programs
- D STEM Education
- C Educator Pipeline, Retention, & Diversity
- D School Climate: Connections with Adults on Campus
- C School Climate: Discipline & Attendance
- B- Higher Education

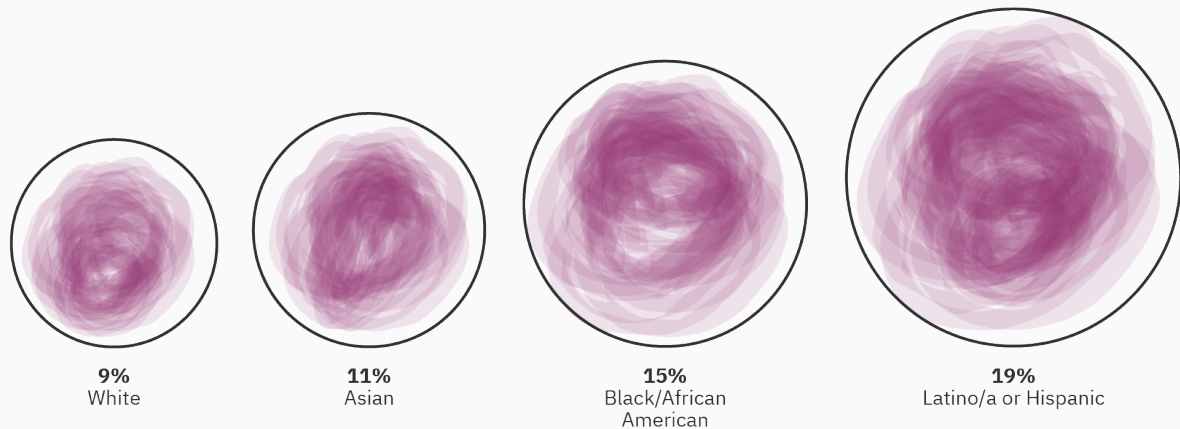
CROSS-SECTOR ISSUES

- D- Supports for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
- C+ Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth
- D+ Decriminalization of Youth
- B- Food Security
- B- Cradle-to-Career Data Systems

Health



Percent of California children with asthma who missed 3+ school days due to their condition

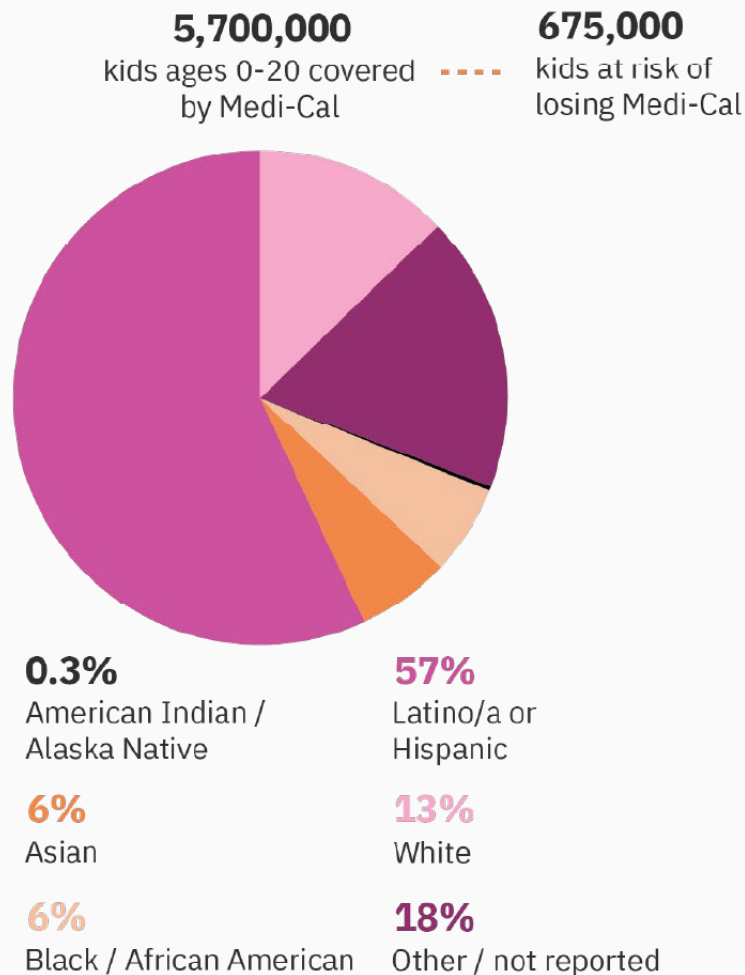


Available data may mask important differences between sub-groups.

Health Insurance

Grade A-

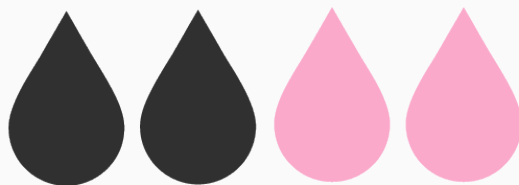
Due to the State's decades of success in expanding coverage, over half (55%) of all California children were enrolled in Medi-Cal health insurance during 2023



Environmental Health & Justice

Grade C

Environmental toxins
are especially
dangerous for kids.



53% of schools
tested had excessive
lead in their water



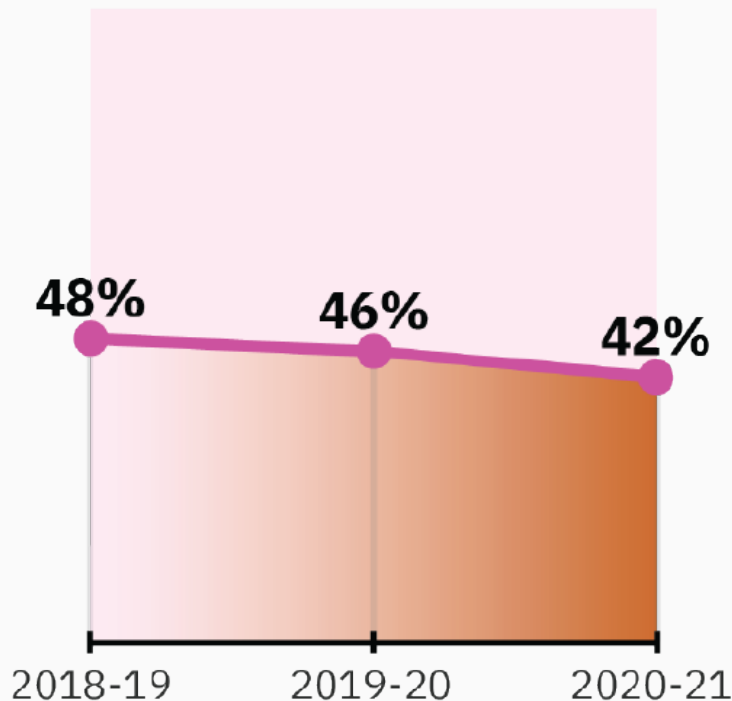
29% of child care
centers tested had
excessive lead in
their water

Health Care Access & Accountability

Grade D+

Too few kids are getting the health care they need to ensure that any problems are caught early, and they grow up healthy.

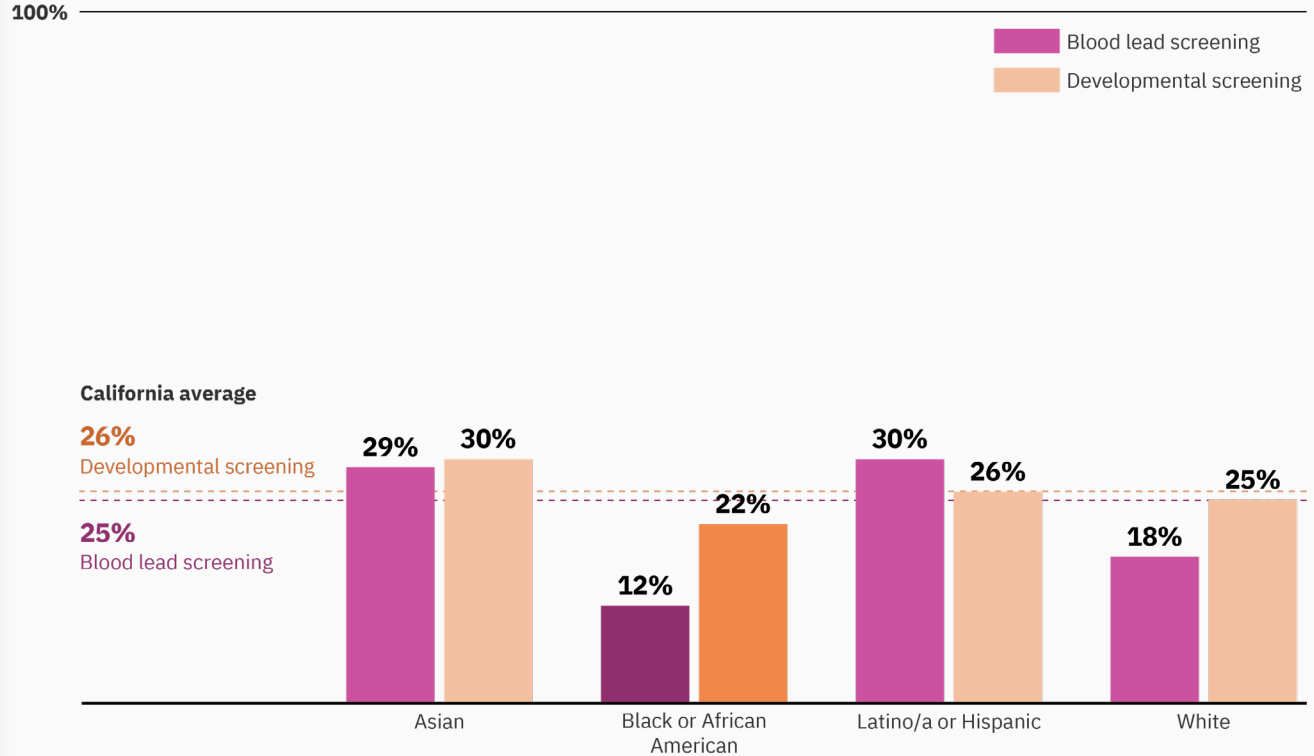
Just 4 in 10 kids in Medi-Cal received preventive health services in 2020-21



Preventive Screenings

Grade D

Only 1 in 4 California children in Medi-Cal receive important blood lead & developmental screenings.

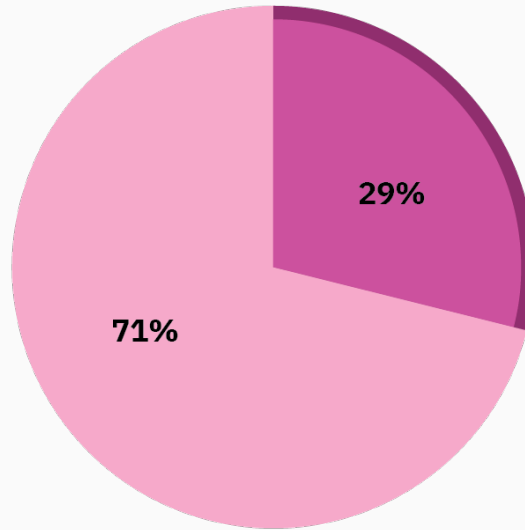


Preventive Screenings

Grade D

California ranked 51st (out of 50 states & D.C.) in percentage of kids with a timely visit to an eye doctor.

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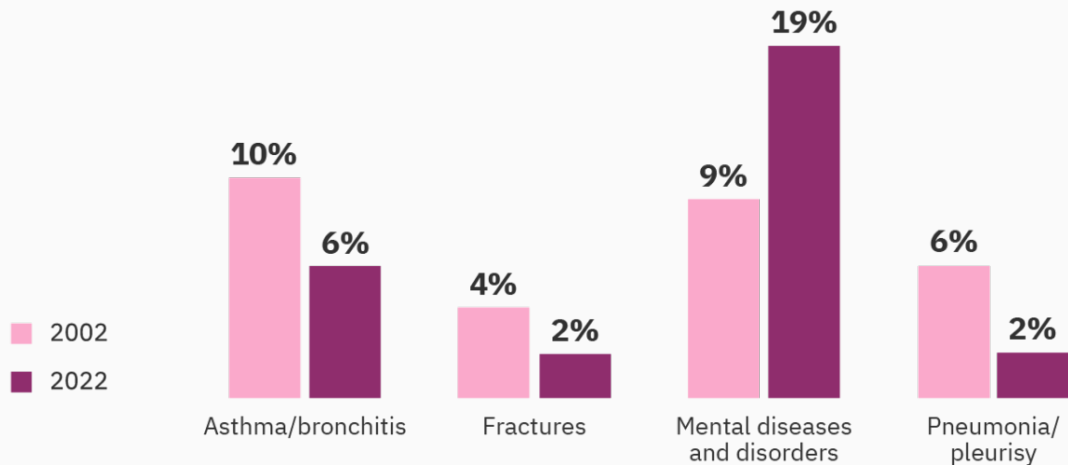
Less than a third of California's kids have had a timely visit to an eye doctor

Supporting Mental Health

Grade D+

Mental health issues are the #1 reason California kids are hospitalized.

Top diagnoses, as a percentage of all California child hospitalizations, 2002 vs 2022



Supporting Mental Health

Grade D+

California ranked 51st (out of 50 states & DC) for parents reporting it was not possible to obtain mental health care for their child. Denials by health plans are a major barrier to kids getting mental health care.

California parent-reported difficulty obtaining mental health care for their child



54%

Did not have difficulty



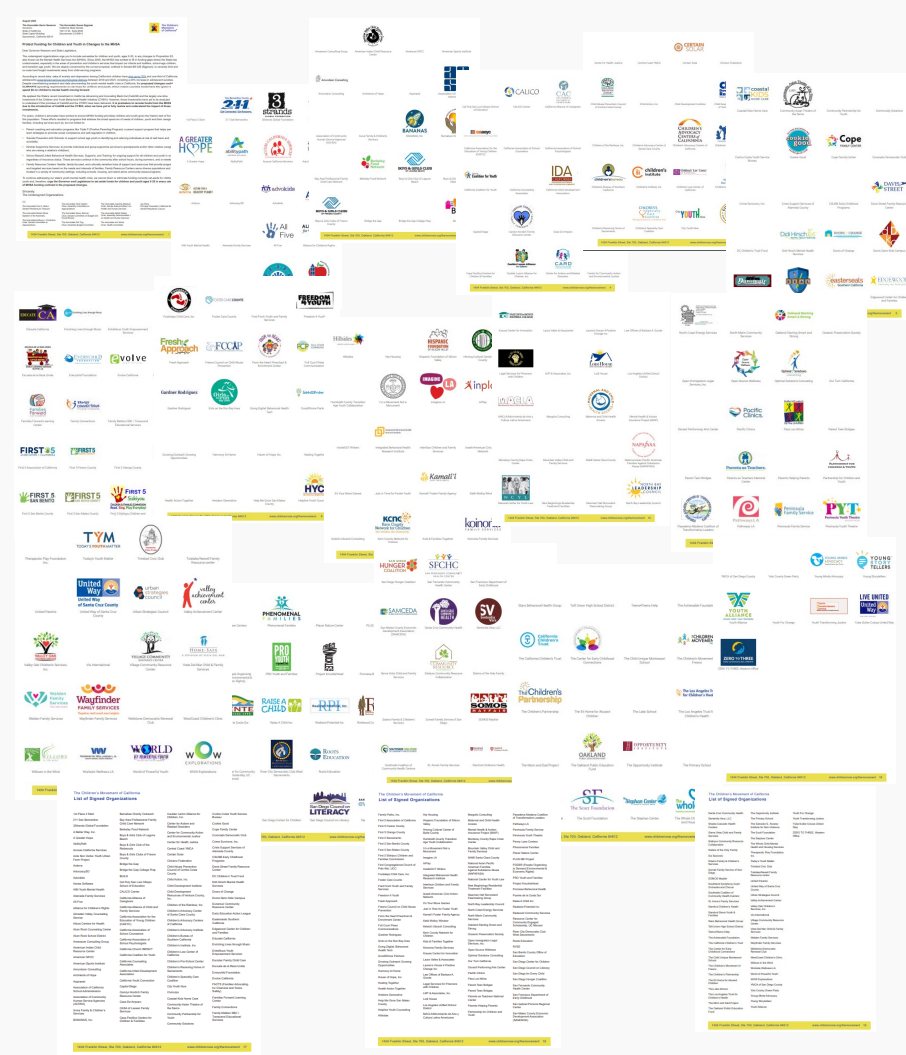
46%

Somewhat difficult, very difficult, or not possible to obtain care

Power Building Wins: Protecting Funding for Youth Mental Health (2023)

State leaders proposed changes to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA), which would reduce funding for children's mental health services by over \$300 million, in a time when anxiety and depression rates in California kids are on the rise.

Children Now swung into gear, mobilizing nearly 300 organizations from the Children's Movement and employing our government relations team in Sacramento to urge Governor Newsom and state legislators to protect this funding. Our game changing connector strategy was successful, as the proposal was amended to protect the funds for kids!

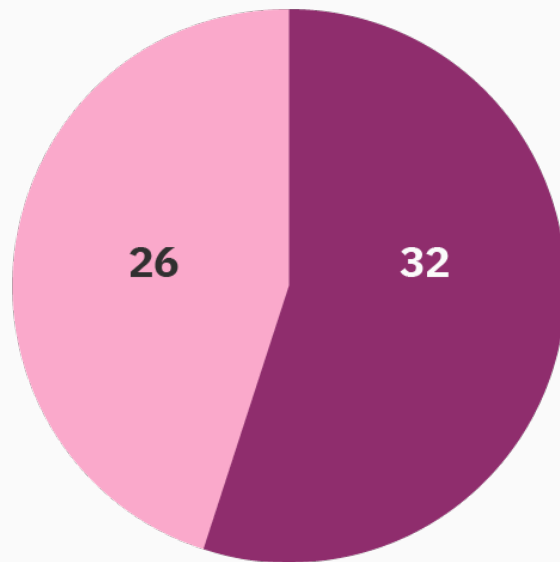


Oral Health Care

Grade C

There are many “dental deserts” in California, where there are no or too few dentists to serve the Medi-Cal population.

45% of California's 58 counties have NO pediatric dentists accepting Medi-Cal

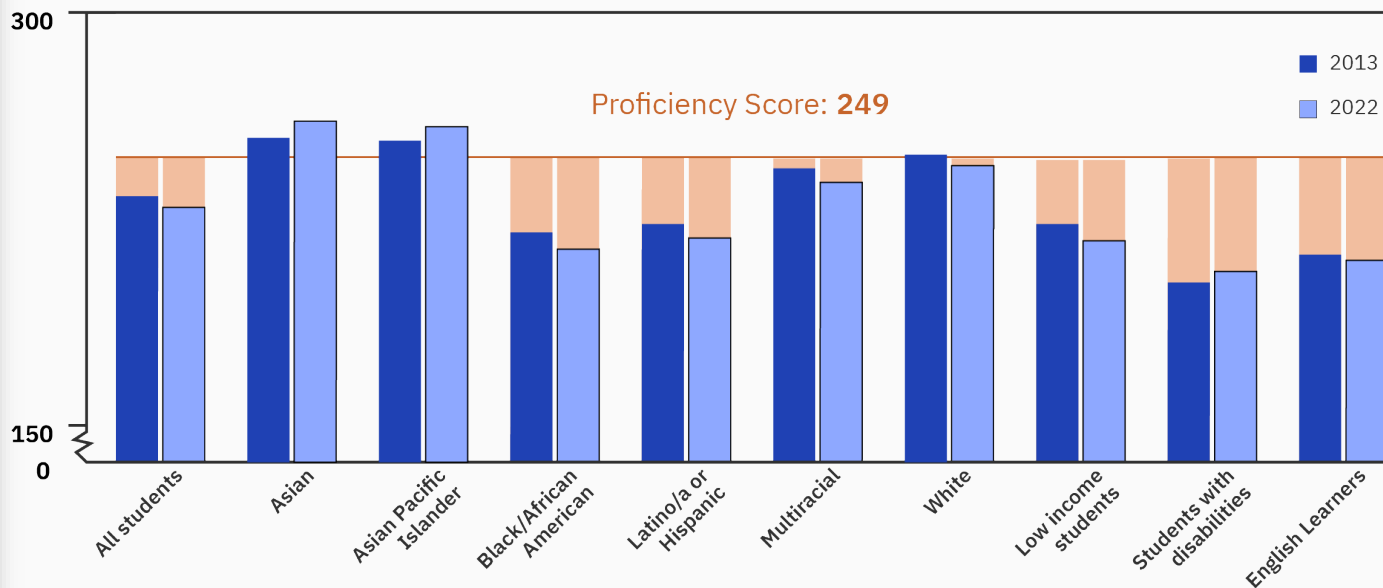


Counties with no pediatric dentists accepting Medi-Cal

Counties with at least one pediatric dentist accepting Medi-Cal

Education

Most California 4th graders score below proficient in math, with large disparities between groups & no progress over the past decade



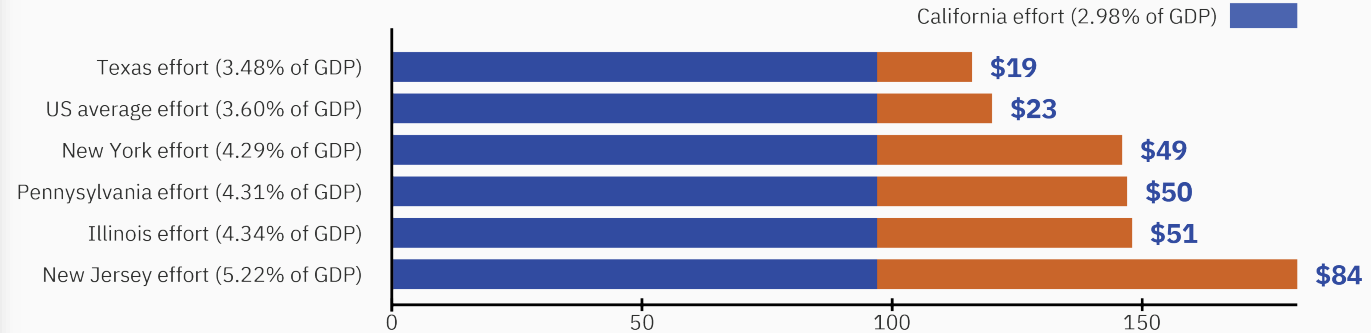
Available data may mask important differences between sub-groups.

Education Funding

Grade C+

State spending on the TK-12 school system has increased over time, but still represents only 3% of state wealth.

Additional annual spending for the California TK-12 education system if the state increased funding effort to match other large states (2020, \$ in billions)



Educator Pipeline, Retention, & Diversity

Grade C

There was a sharp increase in already numerous teacher vacancies as California emerged from the pandemic.

Teacher vacancies nearly doubled in one year



School Climate: Connections with Adults on Campus

Grade D

California has consistently ranked near the bottom of all states in staff-to-student ratios.

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Fall 2021 school staff ratios:

California rank (50 states & DC)

Total staff

46th

Teachers

49th

Principals & assistant principals

48th

Guidance counselors

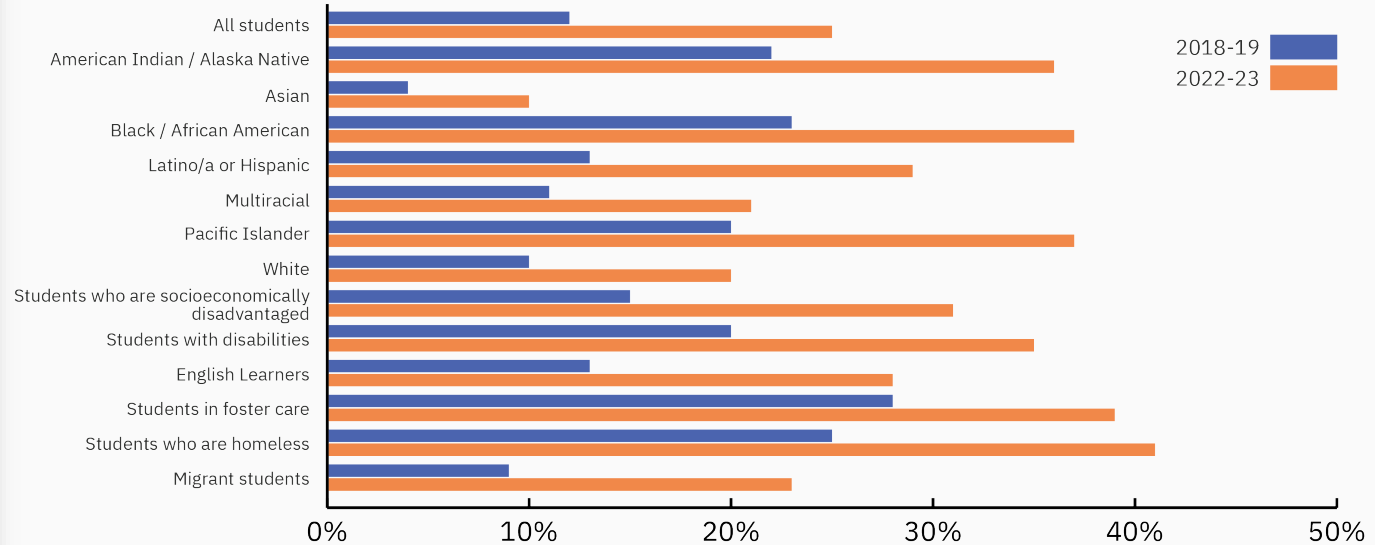
45th

Student support staff

47th

School Climate: Discipline & Attendance Grade C

Chronic absence ballooned during the pandemic and remains very high, especially for historically disadvantaged groups.



Available data may mask important differences between sub-groups

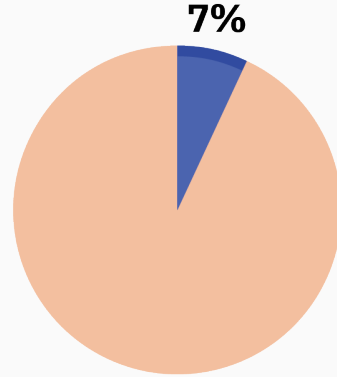
Child Care

Grade C-

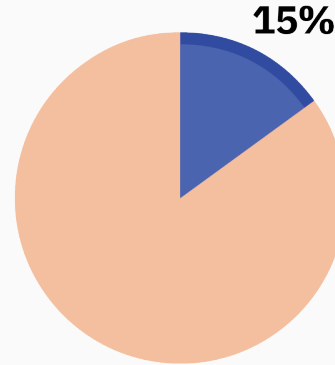
Child care affordability is a major concern for California's families.

Child care is not affordable for most families
(percent of median income devoted to child care, 2021)

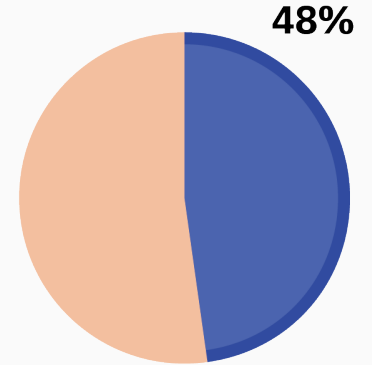
Federal standard
for affordability



Actual cost for a
2-income family in CA



Actual cost for single-
income family in CA

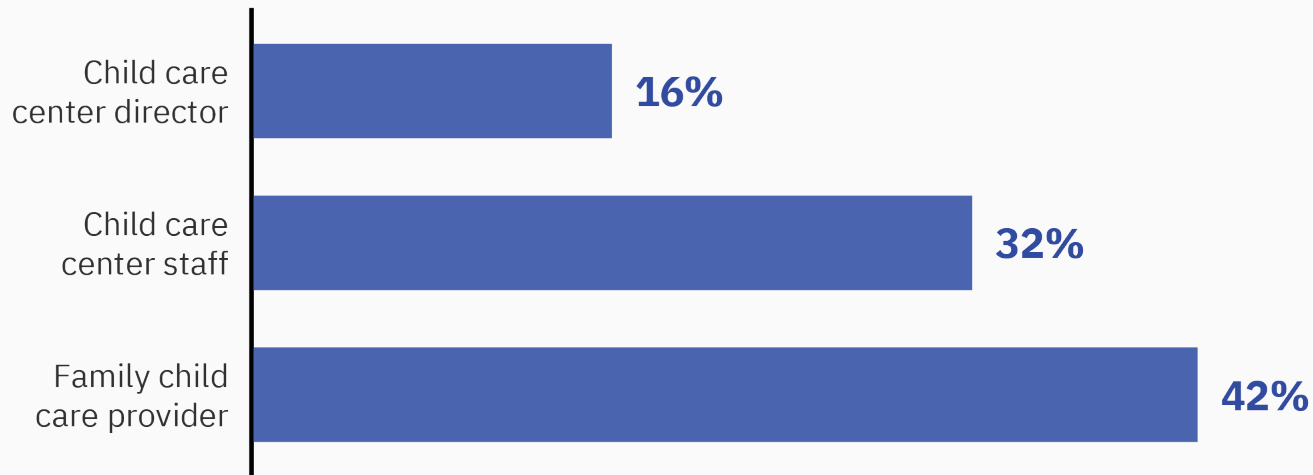


Early Care & Education Workforce

Grade B-

Child care workers are paid very low wages, so many rely on public assistance programs to make ends meet.

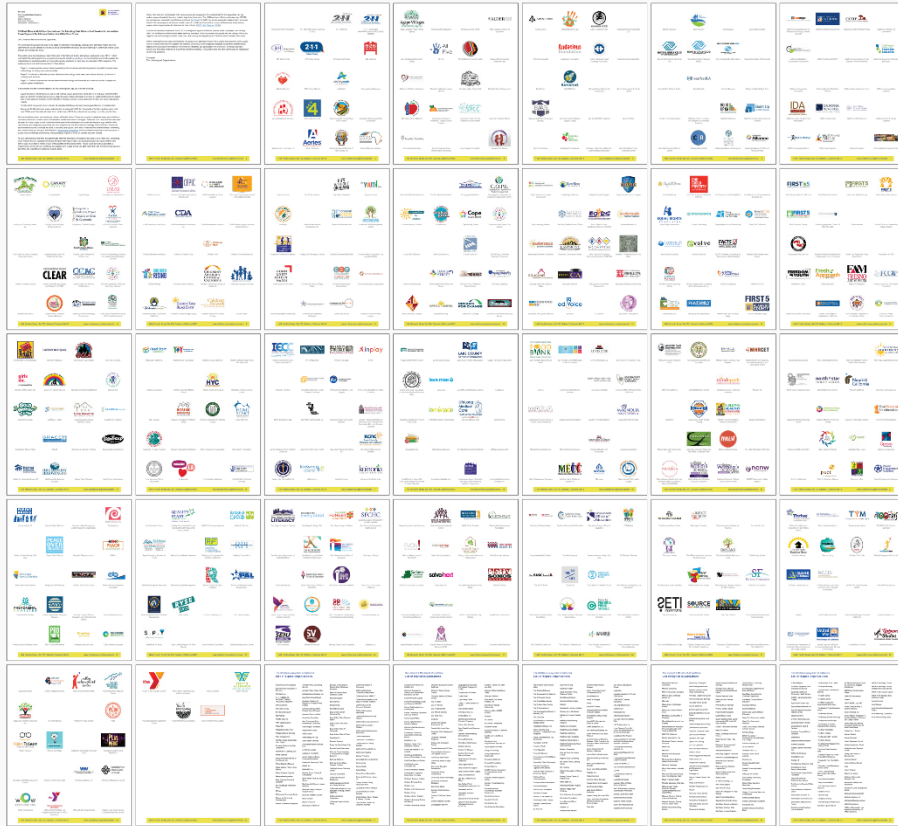
Percentage of early childhood educators who relied on one or more public assistance programs, 2020



Power Building Wins: Supporting Child Care (2023)

The Children's Movement coordinated a letter with [over 1,160 member organizations](#) signed on, resulting in over \$1.4 billion to support child care providers and a new equitable family fee system to make child care more affordable.

This was an unprecedented advocacy effort, both in terms of the number and diversity of organizations participating. The [LA Times](#) and [Politico](#) highlighted the Children's Movement campaign, including the fact that both the State Chamber of Commerce and SEIU signed on.



Preschool & Transitional Kindergarten

Grade B+

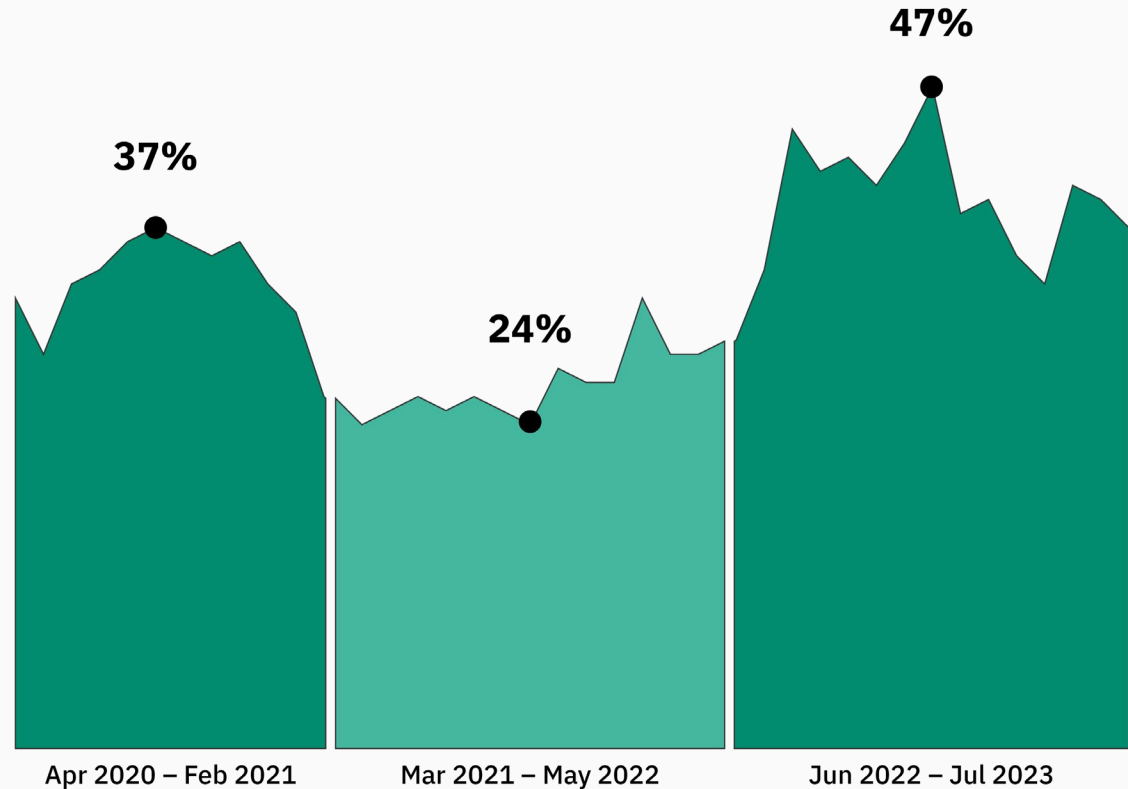
California's TK program policies fail to meet major national quality benchmarks.

Major quality benchmarks for TK that California does NOT meet

1. Maximum class size of 20
2. Staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 or better
3. Teacher specialization in pre-K and child development
4. At least 15 hours of staff professional development per year
5. Vision, hearing, & health screenings with follow-up referrals
6. System of quality improvement informed by data

Family Supports

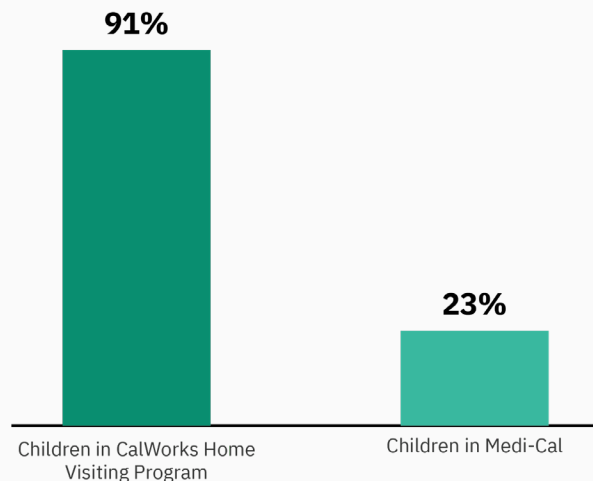
Percent of US households with young kids that had difficulty paying for one or more basic needs like food, housing, and child care



Voluntary Evidence- Based Home Visiting Grade C-

Despite research proving the benefits of home visiting programs, they do not reach enough California families.

Children in CalWORKS Home Visiting Program were far more likely to receive at least one developmental screening



In FY 2022, the Department of Public Health California Home Visiting program reported that:

81% of parents/caregivers were screened for depression.

70% of people who gave birth received a postpartum visit with a health care provider within 8 weeks of delivery.

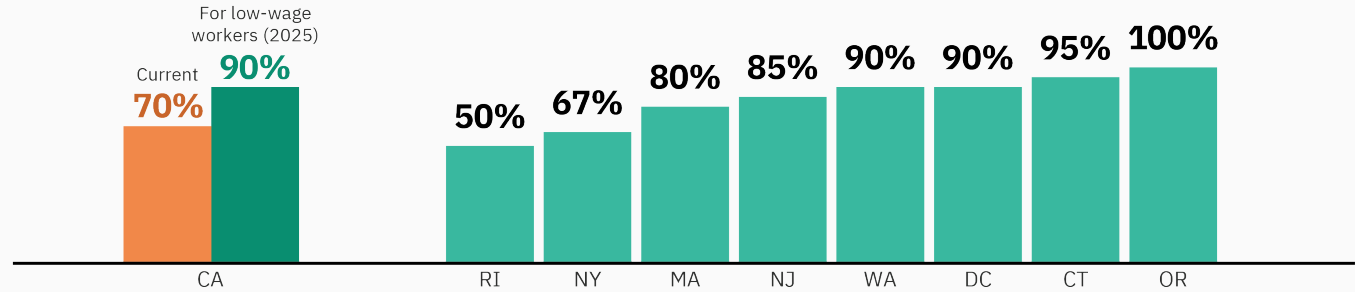
70% of children enrolled in California Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) received their well child visits.

Paid Family Leave

Grade B-

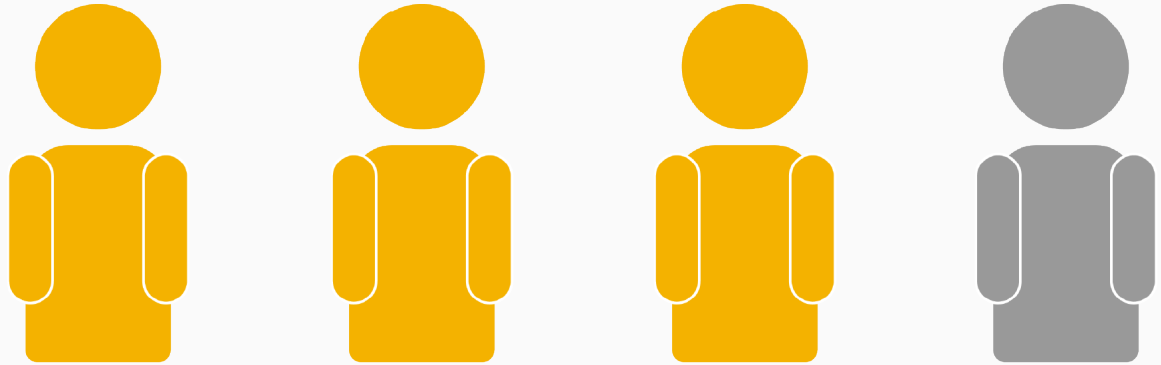
California's PFL wage replacement rates have improved, but continued work is needed to keep up with the handful of peer states that lead the nation on PFL policies.

Paid Family Leave wage replacement by state



Child Welfare

1 in 4 California children experience an investigation for maltreatment

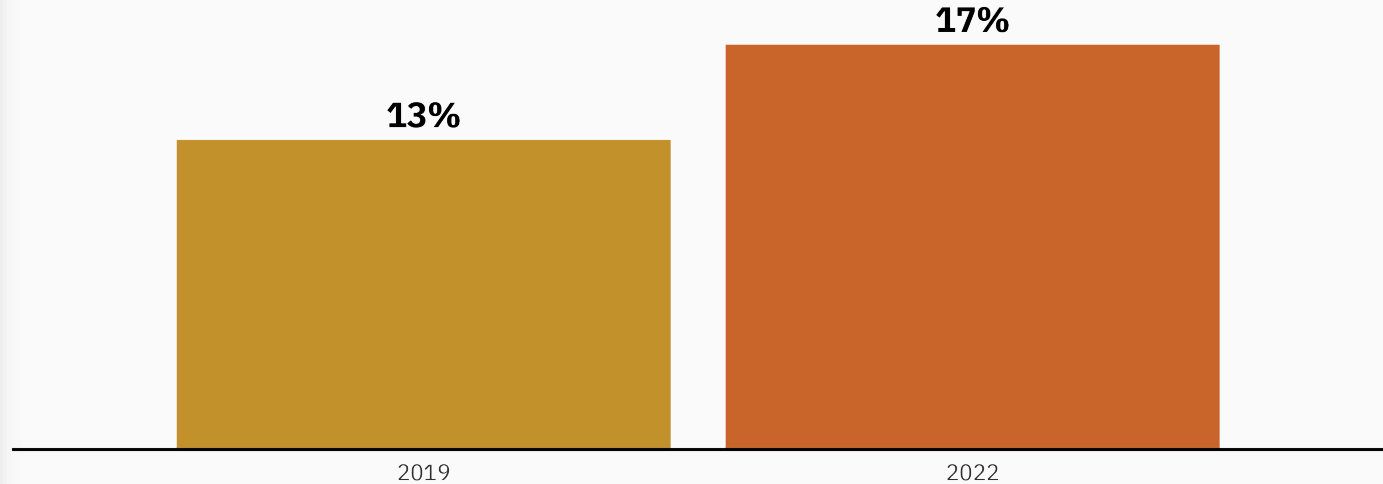


Stable Homes & Enduring Relationships

Grade C

Nearly one-fifth of youth are aging out of foster care without finding a permanent home.

Percent of foster youth who never find permanent homes



Transitions to Adulthood

Grade D

Many youth who have spent time in foster care experience housing instability & homelessness.

More than 1/2

of respondents in a study of youth formerly in foster care reported experiencing homelessness between ages 17 and 21.



April 23, 2019

The Honorable Richard Pan, Chair
Senate Budget & Fiscal Review Sub. 3
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Eloise Gómez Reyes, Interim Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee 1
State Capitol, Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 95814



The Children's
Movement
of California®

Re: Family Urgent Response System – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pan and Assembly Member Gómez Reyes,

We are writing in support of the Family Urgent Response System, a \$15 million budget proposal in 2019-20 and \$30 million ongoing, to support children and youth in foster care and their caregivers and help strengthen their relationships. The purpose of this Response System is to provide children and youth in foster care and their caregivers with the immediate trauma-informed support they need when issues arise, in order to preserve the family unit and link youth and families to longer-term, community-based supports and services needed to support them and foster a healing environment. This Response System supports the goals of the Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) to provide timely, in-home supports and services to help families thrive.

Children and youth in the foster care system have been removed from their homes and placed in new environments with caregivers that are often unfamiliar to them. Adapting to a new home can be challenging, especially for youth who are struggling to process their entry into foster care, and can make bonding difficult. As a result of their maltreatment, trauma, and loss, both children and youth in foster care and their caregivers may not be equipped with the skills and knowledge that will allow them to easily adapt to their new living situation. Children, youth and caregivers may quickly feel alone, confused and overwhelmed. This threatens the family unit and presents a barrier to providing loving care for traumatized youth. A placement disruption would have profound, negative consequences for the child or youth, resulting in feelings of abandonment and deepening the trauma. Moreover, in critical moments, caregivers may contact law enforcement because they lack other, more appropriate options for immediate help, resulting in the inappropriate criminalization of traumatized youth.

The Family Urgent Response System would provide current and former foster youth and their caregivers with immediate supports, by: (1) establishing a statewide hotline available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for caregivers and youth who are experiencing emotional, behavior or other difficulties and need immediate help. The hotline will be staffed with operators who are trained in conflict resolution and de-escalation and can provide immediate assistance to preserve the family unit and determine whether mobile, in-home support is needed; and (2) requiring counties to establish mobile response teams to provide face-to-face, in-home support on a 24/7 basis to help stabilize the living situation, assess the caregiver's and child's needs, and develop a plan of action. Counties will then connect the family to ongoing services through the existing local network of care.

CCR envisions that all children and youth in foster care and their caregivers receive immediate and timely supports and services regardless of the placement setting, to support long-term permanency and improved outcomes. The Family Urgent Response System for current and former foster youth and their caregivers provides these needed services to help keep families together and to promote a healing environment that allows children, youth and families to grow and thrive. Importantly, the Response System will reduce the likelihood of re-traumatization of children and youth, reduce law enforcement calls and needless criminalization of youth, and prevent placement disruption.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned, support the Family Urgent Response System.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned Organizations

cc: Members and Staff of the Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and
Human Services

Members and Staff of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee No.1 on Health and
Human Services

1404 Franklin Street, Ste 700, Oakland, California 94612

www.childrennow.org/themovement/

Power Building Wins: Secured Crisis Hotline for Kids in Foster Care (2019)

With the united advocacy of over 730 Children's Movement Members, we established the Family Urgent Response System, a 24/7 statewide hotline and county mobile response system that will help ensure youth in foster care and caregivers can access trauma-informed supports when they need them.

Cross-Sector Issues



Supports for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Grade D-

There are almost 5x more unaccompanied homeless youth than there are beds dedicated to them.

Many unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are unable to find safe places to sleep

28,994



Number of unaccompanied
homeless youth

5,994



Number of youth
dedicated beds

Supporting LGBTQ+ Youth

Grade C+

In a country rife with LGBTQ+ discrimination, California has some of the strongest legal protections nationwide. However, California LGBTQ+ youth still experience discrimination that impacts their daily lives, including their health.

70% experienced discrimination based on their gender identity or sexual orientation

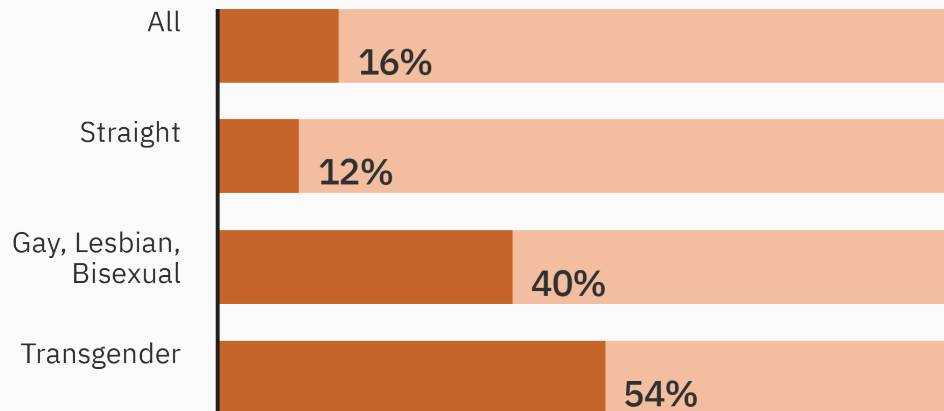
32% experienced physical threats or harm

69% reported symptoms of anxiety

58% reported symptoms of depression

62% of those who wanted help with their mental health did not receive care

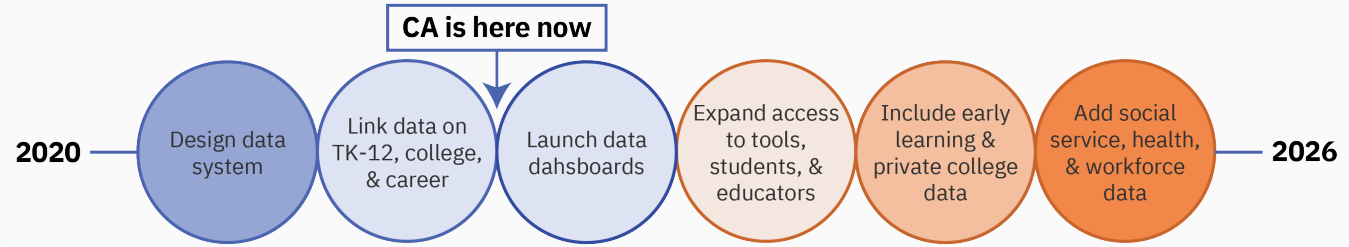
California 11th graders who reported considering suicide, 2019–2021



Cradle-to-Career Data Systems

Grade B-

The Cradle-to-Career data system is in the early phases of implementation. Connecting education data to social services, health, & workforce data is what makes the C2C system unique & particularly valuable.



Learn more and get involved:

The California Children's Report Card

<https://go.childrennow.org/2024-california-childrens-report-card>

County Scorecard of Children's Well-Being

<https://scorecard.childrennow.org>

Join The Children's Movement™

www.childrennow.org/thechildrensmovement/

Follow us on social media:

