Key Recommendations

1. Provide additional state and county funding for child care subsidies to working parents and child care providers.
2. Provide more affordable housing for low-income residents, teachers, child care providers and other workers who provide essential services.
3. Expand the guaranteed income program started by former Congresswoman Jackie Speier and San Mateo County Supervisors Noelia Corzo and Ray Mueller to offer more funds to more families in need.
4. Provide assistance to eligible working families raising children so they may claim the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).
5. Create a new San Mateo County department like Santa Clara County's Department of Family and Children's Service to evaluate and improve services that support children and families, especially those with limited incomes. It would facilitate coordination across entities that serve this population to address overarching issues such as policy analysis, collaboration and strategic initiatives.

Sustainable San Mateo County
Economy. Equity. Environment.

SUSTAINABLE SAN MATEO COUNTY is making our county more sustainable with 4 Key Initiatives:

1. Our **Awards Celebration** honors sustainability champions and Green Building Award recipients each spring.
2. Our **Indicators Report**, produced annually since 1997, takes a deep dive into one critical sustainability issue each year.
3. Our **Sustainability Dashboard** tracks sustainability progress by local cities and San Mateo County.
4. Our **Sustainability Ideas Bank** shares programs and policies that have been successfully implemented that cities and businesses can easily replicate.

SSMC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Learn more at sustainablesanmateo.org. Contact us at info@sustainablesanmateo.org or 650-918-1992.

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Full Indicators Report is available at sustainablesanmateo.org/home/indicators/2023report

The Well-Being of Children, Youth & Families in San Mateo County

2023 Indicators Report

Executive Summary

Creating a sustainable society entails meeting the social, economic and environmental requirements of the present community while safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their needs. For families with children—34% of San Mateo County's households—sustainability depends on having access to a complex and interconnected network of services and supports, including child care, education, and physical and mental health care access, all within a safe and healthy environment that includes secure housing and income opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic revealed many vulnerabilities of the county's support system for families and children. It also has given us the chance to demonstrate our resilience and resolve.

Sustainable San Mateo County's 2023 Indicators Report on the Well-Being of Children, Youth and Families provides an overview of many components of this support system. By examining historical data trends and comparing San Mateo County's performance with state and national metrics, this report sheds light on progress made and challenges that persist. To this end, this report not only offers an analysis of various indicators but also provides real-world examples of successful initiatives and programs that have made a positive impact. These examples serve as inspiration and models for future programs. Providing children and families with a secure, healthy environment now through education, health, housing and child care programs ensures that they have the capabilities, knowledge and resilience to build and support a sustainable society in the future. When children thrive, the whole community benefits.

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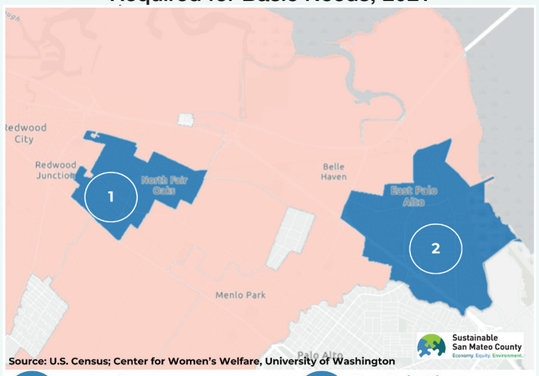
Our Vision: A sustainable future for everyone in San Mateo County
sustainablesanmateo.org

The Well-Being of Children, Youth & Families

Areas with Median Income Below Minimum Required for Basic Needs, 2021



Source: U.S. Census; Center for Women's Welfare, University of Washington

1 North Fair Oaks
Median Income: $104,107

2 East Palo Alto
Median Income: $97,340

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Overall, the population in San Mateo County has higher median household incomes, a higher minimum wage and lower unemployment rates than California as a whole. However, the high cost of living means these factors are not sufficient to guarantee economic stability. As of 2019, a third of households did not earn enough to cover the cost of basic needs, and 26,200 K-12 students (31%) qualified for free or reduced-price meals for the 2022-23 school year. To sustain the real cost of living, the hourly rate for a family of two working adults with one to three children should be in the range of $29.83 to $48.77. A family of two adults with one preschooler and one school-age child would require a minimum annual income of $160,617.

HOUSING

When children don't have a secure place to live, their education and futures suffer. Students experiencing housing insecurity are six times more likely to be chronically absent from school, and have higher suspension rates and lower graduation rates than their securely housed peers. A total of 2% of K-12 students in San Mateo County public schools (more than 2,600 children) have experienced housing insecurity at some point within the 2016 to 2019 school years. Over 80% of those students were living temporarily in a single residence with two or more families (i.e., doubled up in housing). Among housing insecure students, 70% were Latinx, and almost 50% were English learners. Chronic absenteeism and out-of-school suspensions among housing-insecure high school students are five times the rate of their housing- and income-secure peers

Students Experiencing Housing Insecurity in San Mateo County

Source: John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities

Support our work helping families!

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CHILD CARE

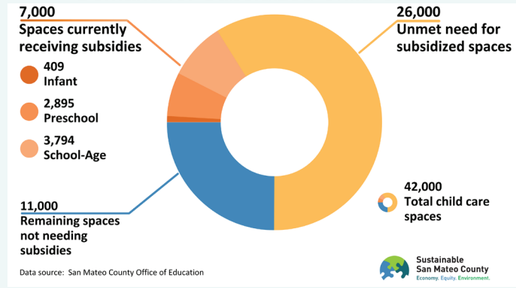
Child care lays the foundation for a child's lifelong development and also plays a pivotal role in enabling working parents to maintain their careers. Despite the benefits to children, parents and society, it is a challenge for many families to access and afford child care. San Mateo County is striving to improve this complex system. **Space Shortfall**: In 2022, approximately 110,000 children under the age of 12 lived in San Mateo County (13% of the population) and the demand for child care was 58,505 spaces. Given the 2022 supply, 17,157 children were not accommodated

Continued

Child Care, continued

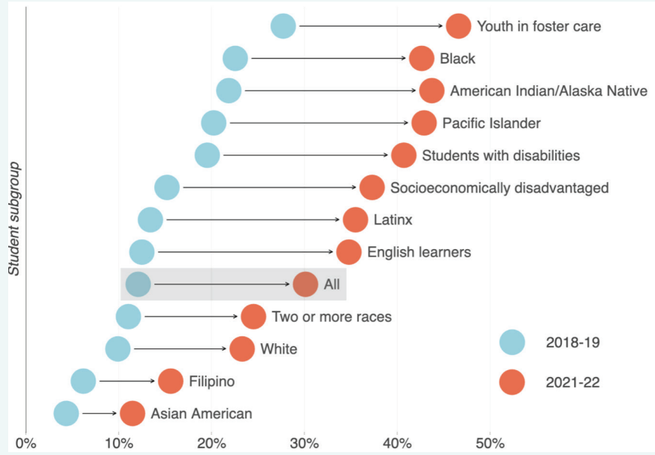
(30% of the demand was unmet). The San Mateo County Child Care Partnership Council expects that in 2032, supply will meet just 66% of demand. One of the factors that contributes to the child care shortfall is the high cost of leased and/or rented space. **Workforce**: For the 5,331 child care workers in San Mateo County in 2022, the average hourly wage ranged from $20 to $31 per hour ($41,000 to $65,000 annually), which is lower than a living wage. The average annual salary for a child care worker was $49,000, while the self-sufficiency standard for a single adult with no children was more than $68,000. **Affordability**: According to the San Mateo County Child Care Needs Assessment, 65% of respondents said affordable child care was hard to find. The demand for subsidized child care is estimated at 33,000 spaces, but only 21% (7,000) are currently subsidized.

Demand for Subsidized Child Care



Data source: San Mateo County Office of Education

Change in Student Absenteeism by Student Subgroup in California



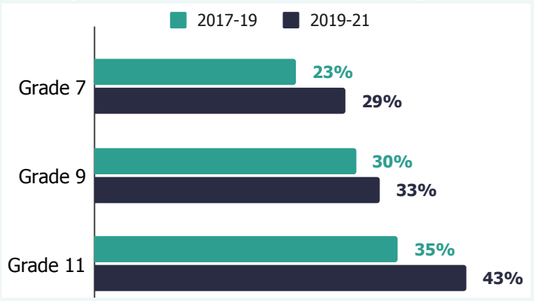
EDUCATION

Regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's academic progress and overall development. In 2019, 10% of students in San Mateo County were chronically absent from school. Chronic absenteeism increased to 23% in 2022. However, large differences were observed among student subgroups. The students that exhibit higher rates of chronic absenteeism are those who are economically disadvantaged, English learners, students of color, students with disabilities and those in foster care. COVID-19 impacted attendance significantly in 2020 and 2021, and preliminary indicators suggest attendance challenges may persist.

Source: Policy Analysis for California Education

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health challenges are the leading cause of disability and poor life outcomes among young people in the U.S. One in five children ages 3–17 has a mental, developmental, emotional or behavioral disorder. National youth surveys show an increase in mental health symptoms even before the pandemic, and the situation has worsened since then. In 2020, across the state, 37,787 people ages 5–19 were discharged after hospitalization for mental health issues. Females and LGBTQ+ youth disproportionately report depression-related feelings.

Source: CalSCHLS

Depression-Related Feelings by Grade Level in San Mateo County