



Advancing the Agenda: Findings from an Evaluation of Policy and Advocacy Efforts in Monterey County

First 5 Monterey County: Year 3 Policy Evaluation Report

October 2014



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Introduction

Policy and advocacy efforts meant to promote optimal early childhood development (ECD) are gaining traction at local, state, and national levels. In fact, a growing number of ECD-focused policy proposals¹ are under consideration nationally, and elected leaders across the political spectrum increasingly agree on the importance of supporting early learning opportunities. Despite this progress, most current policy efforts still do not adequately address the full array of developmental and structural issues inextricably linked with ECD, such as social and emotional skills, third grade reading levels, drop-out rates, economic development, public safety, and many more.

First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) strives to educate local residents about issues that affect young children and their families. To that end, F5MC brings together key influencers, providers, parents, and other community members to support efforts that improve children's lives through prevention and early intervention efforts. In order to maximize the effectiveness of its policy and advocacy efforts, F5MC has asked its evaluation partner, Harder+Company Community Research, to explore the local policy landscape, identify opportunities to raise the prominence of ECD, and assess the impact of F5MC's efforts to promote change.

This Year 3 Policy and Advocacy Evaluation Report marks an important step forward from the first two years of the evaluation. It takes an in-depth look at how leaders in distinct sectors talk about and engage with ECD efforts. Data was collected via (1) interviews with key influencers (from local business, the public sector, nonprofits and philanthropies, faith-based organizations, and the media); (2) a survey of F5MC funded partners; and (3) a formal media tracking process; in order to answer the following key questions:

- **How have top policy issues in Monterey County changed over time, and how does ECD fit in?**
- **To what extent are Monterey County's leaders aware of and/or engaged in policy activities related to ECD?**
- **What is F5MC's role in advocating for policies related to ECD?**
- **What are the opportunities for F5MC to continue its policy and advocacy work in ECD?**

This report presents findings related to those questions and outlines areas of opportunity for moving forward. (A more detailed description of the evaluation approach and methods can be found in the Appendix.) The remainder of this report is organized into the following sections:

- **Policy Landscape in Monterey County**
- **ECD as a Policy Issue in Monterey County**
- **Stakeholder Engagement in ECD**
- **"Spotlights" (ECDI; ECD in the media)**
- **Opportunities (including an update from Year 2)**

¹ The Obama Administration recently announced new steps to help parents "Bridge the Word Gap," which follows on the heels of a bipartisan proposal ("Strong Start for America's Children Act") put forward to expand high-quality, early childhood education for children from birth to age five.

Policy Landscape in Monterey County

Developing and updating an understanding of the policy landscape helps organizations effectively engage in policy and advocacy efforts. Specifically, understanding the issues, how they are defined, and their relevance to other priorities can help organizations advance their own policy agenda. This section provides a description of Monterey County’s policy landscape; an analysis of how key business, community,² and public sector leaders describe the top policy issues; and an orientation of where ECD sits in relation to those issues.

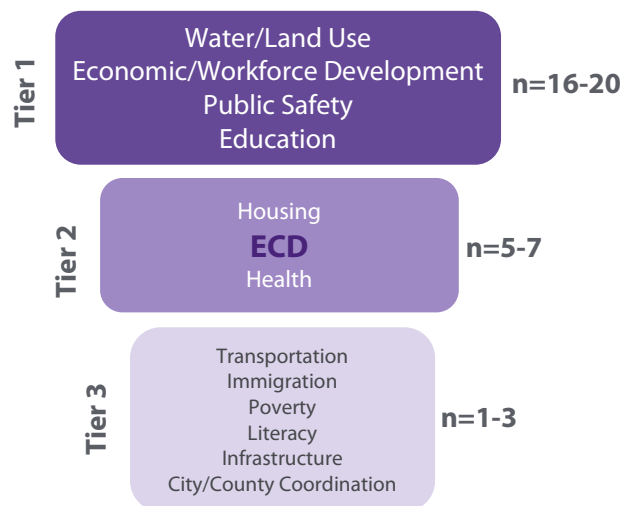
Water, economic development, and public safety remain high priority issues; this year, education was also identified as a top issue.

Similar to previous years of the policy evaluation, key stakeholders from the business, community, and public sectors were asked to identify the highest priority issues in Monterey County. As in past years, land use/water, economic development, and public safety are top policy issues in Monterey County.³ However, for the first time, nearly half of all respondents (47 percent) also reported education as a top tier issue this year. One public sector leader commented, “I’m putting more emphasis on the educational attainment issue...In order to have effective economic development, you need to have a competent workforce. If we’re not doing as well as we should in the K-12 system, a competent workforce will be hard to accomplish.”

“Education is at the top, because, to me, a lot of the other issues can’t be addressed unless we have an educated citizenry and workforce. And when I say education, I’m talking about preschool all the way up through college.”

- Public Sector Leader

Exhibit 1. Policy Issues Identified by Interview Participants, Organized by Tier

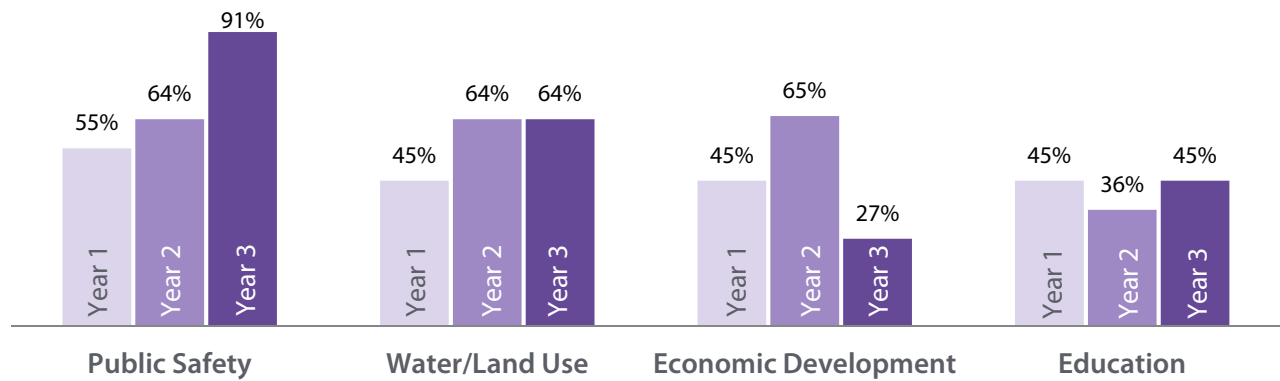


² “Community” leaders include representatives from local foundations, nonprofits, faith-based organizations, and advocacy groups that support children and families and are not funded by F5MC.

³ Responses were organized by the number of times an issue was mentioned.

Key stakeholders who participated in all three years of the evaluation (n=11) identified the same top policy issues as those reported by respondents overall (i.e., public safety, water, education, and economic development). However, the top issues for the smaller group of three-year respondents did shift in priority over time. From Year 1 to Year 3, the percentage of those three-year respondents who reported public safety and water as top issues *increased*, while the percentage who reported economic and workforce development as a top issue *decreased* (see Exhibit 2).

Exhibit 2. Top Policy Issues Identified by Participants Who Responded in Years 1, 2, and 3 (n=11)



Community partners and public sector leaders identified ECD as a second tier issue; none of the business leaders mentioned ECD as a top policy issue.

Although the order varied, the top four policy issues reported by groups of key leaders from all three sectors were the same. However, while community and public sector leaders each collectively identified ECD as a Tier 2 issue, none of the business leaders interviewed felt that it was among the top three top policy issues in the County.

Exhibit 3. Priority Policy Issues Identified by Sector Leaders



Several public sector and community leaders further articulated how ECD is connected to other key issues in Monterey County. One community partner observed, “I believe that if we start with children when they’re young, ensuring that they have a solid footing and a good education, the county is going to be able to attract more business because we will have a well-educated workforce, businesses would have jobs, and it would pull people out of poverty.” Meanwhile, a public sector leader noted, “As you start to look at meaningful impact on youth violence, we have to get serious about early childhood development. It is almost impossible to get youth out of gang violence. We need to shift our money upstream with efforts aimed at children 0-5 and early childhood development initiatives.”

Spotlight:

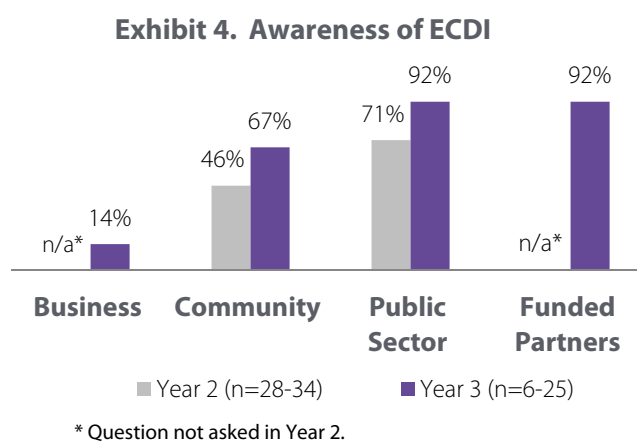
Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI)

In September 2012, the Monterey County Children’s Council launched the ECDI (a countywide effort grounded in the principles of Collective Impact) in order to encourage coordination and investment in early childhood development and assure that all young children in Monterey County have the supports they need to succeed in school and life.

A growing proportion of key leaders are aware of the ECDI.

The majority of public sector leaders, funded partners, and community leaders reported that they were aware of the ECDI; however, this was true for just 14 percent of business leaders. Compared to the previous year, there was an increase in awareness of the ECDI among community and public sector leaders.⁴

Respondents who were aware of the ECDI were asked subsequent questions regarding successes and challenges. These 17 respondents provided the following insights about the ECDI’s work:



- Early Wins.** Most key leaders reported community engagement and growing awareness as the ECDI’s early wins. One public sector leader stated, “There is great energy and synergy at the ECDI meetings. It is great to watch the energy level in the room increase as people get engaged.” Other noted successes included the commitment from the Board of Supervisors, developing outcomes and indicators that will educate the broader community, and continuing the momentum from the Heckman event.
- Challenges.** Respondents reported several challenges of the ECDI, including a lack of resources, competing priorities, and a lack of short-term outcomes. “People know about the ECDI, but it’s hard getting people to move from knowing it’s important to action, and getting people to understand that they can do something,” said one public sector leader. Other challenges included the times of the ECDI meetings, difficulty in understanding the benefits of early childhood development, not knowing how to engage organizations, educating parents, and balancing the needs of the initiative with expectations and capacity.
- New Allies.** Many interviewees said that they would like to see more participation from funders and business leaders. “The business community is not as present as one would want them to be,” stated one respondent. Another added, “I would really like to see more funders at the table. Getting the businesses more involved would be great.” City Council, the faith-based community, various community organizations, education (i.e., educators, teachers, Migrant Education, Head Start), and parents were also identified as underrepresented ECDI members.

⁴ Question about awareness of the ECDI was not asked of funded partners or business leaders in Year 2.

ECD as a Policy Issue in Monterey County

ECD is a broad concept that is often associated with different things for different stakeholders. Therefore, uncovering exactly what ECD means to key leaders is just as important as knowing where it lies within the local policy landscape. This section provides a detailed look at how respondents defined what ECD means to them, described where they are most likely to hear about investing in ECD, and identified the primary advocates for ECD in Monterey County.

While most stakeholders from all sectors agree that ECD is important, business leaders had greater difficulty articulating its relevance to other top policy issues.

When describing what ECD means to them, many respondents from all three sectors referred to the services that aim to support children and families, such as preschool and parent education programs. A number of interviewees also mentioned the importance of cultivating both socio-emotional and cognitive skills in the early years, with some community and public sector leaders citing the rate of brain development during this stage of life. Interviewees from all three sectors were also aware that early exposure to reading is beneficial for young children. When speaking about “what children are exposed to early in life,” one business leader explained that “if they’re exposed to reading, that makes a difference; and if they’re exposed to violence, that’s another thing. Everything has an impact.”

While none of the business sector interviewees identified ECD as a top policy issue in Monterey County, some were able to provide concrete examples of how ECD is related to their work, primarily in the areas of public safety, education, and workforce development. Nonetheless, compared to public sector and community leader participants, business leaders articulated more tenuous connections and/or provided less detail in their explanations, as illustrated in the following examples from each sector:

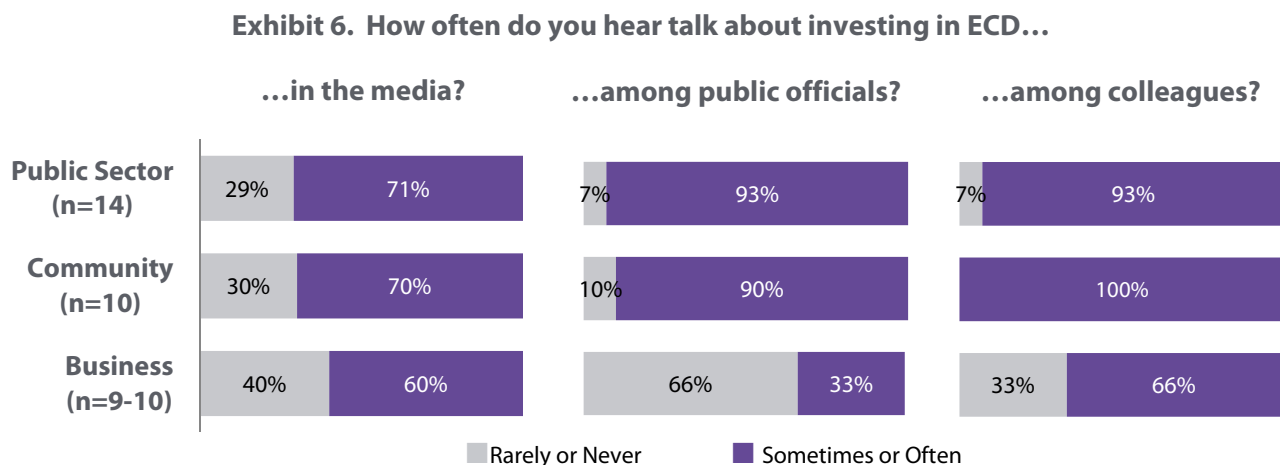
Exhibit 5. Sector Leaders Explain How ECD is Connected to Top Policy Issues

Community Partner	<i>“Kids have to be adequately nurtured, equipped, developed, and stimulated from the very beginning so that we create pathways for young people to avoid gangs and go to college. But if they haven’t had the proper development in their early days, there are statistically a much smaller percentage of these kids that are going to be in a frame of mind to pursue those opportunities.”</i>
Public Sector	<i>“I believe that ECD sets a course for an individual and it has implications for the individual’s success in school, in higher education, and the job market. Ultimately, it directly has an impact on the key issues affecting the jurisdiction.”</i>
Business Sector	<i>“I see a lot of kids out there that are up to about 3rd and 4th grade, and they seem like everyone else’s kids, and I’m amazed how five years later they end up in gangs and shooting people. I question whether it’s the start that gets them in trouble or somewhere in the middle where we lose them.... Early childhood development has to have an impact to where – at least up until to 3rd grade – is where they need the tools before they fall through the cracks.”</i>

Some business sector leaders also revealed a more immediate way that ECD relates to the workforce, in addition to serving as an investment in the future labor market. Those individuals recognized that ECD (broadly defined, and including “child care”) directly impacts their employees who are parents of young children, by potentially “making it easier for parents to be at work.” Similarly, one public sector leader also talked about ways that workplaces could help “maximize the time and energy that [parents] have to spend with their children,” including flexible work schedules, job sharing, and paid parental leave.

Public sector and community leaders were more likely to report hearing about investments in ECD than business leaders.

Compared to the public sector and community leaders, stakeholders from the business sector were more likely to report that they *rarely* or *never* heard about investing in ECD in the media, from public officials, and among their colleagues (Exhibit 6).



Overall, respondents said that **media coverage** of ECD largely consisted of public service announcements, marketing and advertisements from specific organizations (e.g., F5MC, United Way), and reports about local, state, and national events, such as the beginning of the school year, the opening of a new park in Salinas, and “[President] Obama’s push on early childhood development and things happening on a state level around kindergarten readiness.”


Several community and public sector leaders acknowledged the role of F5MC and other entities (e.g., Children’s Council, United Way, ECDI) in stimulating discussion about ECD among **public officials**, especially the Board of Supervisors. Many of those respondents were also involved in such efforts to varying degrees. On the other hand, business leaders tended to be less familiar with advocacy efforts. One characterized ECD as a “hot button” issue for some Supervisors, and another explained that “it’s not viewed as a local issue, but a school issue.”

Talk about investing in ECD among **colleagues** looked different for each stakeholder group. Public sector leaders referred to ECD being discussed in terms of policy, legislation, and/or cross-departmental meetings and initiatives. Community leaders said that ECD came up in relation to the type of work they are engaged in (e.g., mental health, juvenile justice, young parents), and also cited broader countywide initiatives such as the ECDI and Cradle to Career. Finally, business leaders said that talk about ECD among their colleagues usually stemmed from being parents themselves, involvement with boards or committees, and/or a concern for social issues such as underperforming public schools.

F5MC remains the most recognized advocate for ECD, especially among public sector and community leaders.

As in past years, respondents named F5MC as one of the most prominent advocates for ECD in the county (Exhibit 7). Compared to community and public sector leaders, a smaller proportion of business leaders were able to identify specific organizations or individuals that served as advocates for ECD (including F5MC), and one business leader was not able to name any advocates.

Exhibit 7. Top Five Named Advocates for ECD

	Business Leaders	Community Partners	Public Sector	Total (n=35)
F5MC				24
Office of Education/ School District				14
Board of Supervisors				11
Department of Health				11
Children’s Council	–			9

Spotlight:

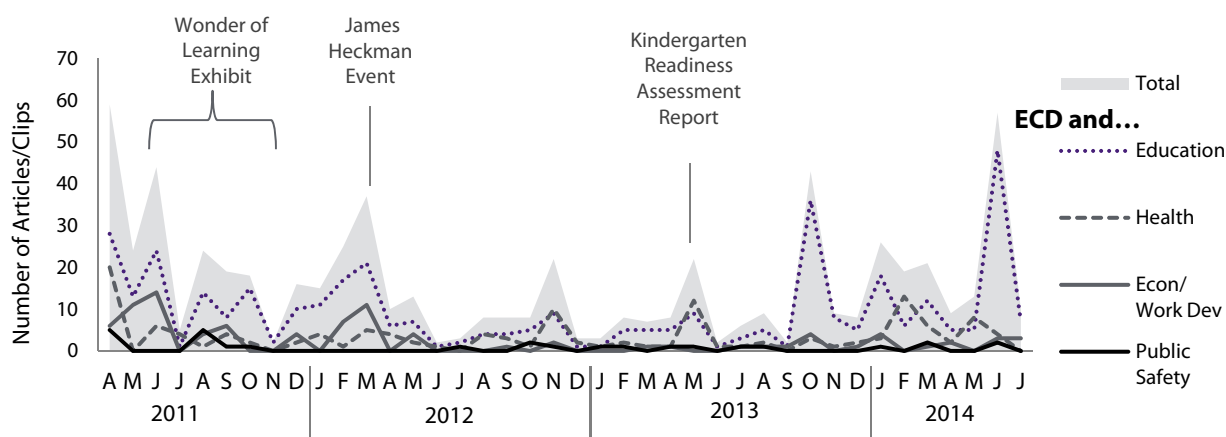
Early Childhood Development in the Media

Last year’s policy report revealed that the media – broadcast, print and electronic – is a powerful information source for many Monterey County residents. However, about half of this year’s interviewees said that they “sometimes” hear about investing in ECD in the media and another third said that they “rarely” do. In order to learn more about how ECD is covered in the media, this year’s media tracking efforts included analysis of the connection between ECD and top policy issues identified by key stakeholders, drawing on local print⁵ and broadcast⁶ news media. This section also features key indicators of F5MC’s electronic and social media.⁷

Among the top policy issues, education was the topic most frequently addressed in relation to ECD in local media.

The graph below (Exhibit 8) highlights the frequency of ECD broadcast and print media coverage from April 1, 2011 – July 31, 2014, and overlays key events such as the “The Wonder of Learning” exhibit at the National Steinbeck Center⁸ and the James Heckman event.⁹ The graph also displays the extent to which coverage of ECD occurred in conjunction with other top policy issues (presented in a preceding section, Policy Landscape in Monterey County). Just under three-quarters (74 percent) of ECD-related media pieces, articles, and clips discussed education, while each of the other four policy issues—health, economic development, public safety, and land use/water—received coverage in less than one third of all ECD-related media pieces.

Exhibit 8. Frequency of ECD-Related Media Coverage, April 2011-July 2014



⁵ Sources: news media archives and LexisNexis (Monterey County Herald, Salinas Californian, MC Weekly)

⁶ Source: Universal Information Services (KION, KSBW, KSMS-TV (Univision), KCBA-Fox, KMUV-Telemundo)

⁷ Sources: Google Analytics, F5MC Facebook Insights, ConstantContact

⁸ A traveling international exhibition from Reggio Emilia hosted by F5MC and other community partners that aims to inspire parents, educators, service providers, community leaders, policy makers, business, and other advocates for children to better understand the powerful learning that occurs in early childhood.

⁹ In March of 2012, F5MC and the Rotary Club of Monterey co-hosted an event at which Professor James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in economics, spoke about the impact of investing in ECD.

In addition, the ECDI indicators covered most frequently in ECD-related media pieces were “kindergarten readiness” (13 percent) and “child care” (12 percent). Less than ten percent of ECD-related media coverage discussed any of the other ECDI indicators.

Media stories and articles were also examined to look at tone—i.e., the extent to which they reflected a positive, negative, or neutral view of ECD. Sixty-one percent of media stories and articles reflected a neutral view of ECD. Over one third (39%) of coverage had a “positive” tone that highlighted a support for early childhood development and education. Less than one percent of articles and stories had a negative tone, resulting from controversial administrative/staffing issues and policies of early childhood programs.

Exhibit 9. Local Media Coverage of ECD and ECDI Indicators

ECDI Indicator	Percent of Media Pieces*
Kindergarten readiness	13%
Child care	12%
Prenatal care	7%
Parents reading with children	4%
Third grade reading level	4%
Mother’s level of education	2%

*Total n = 527 (128 print articles and 399 broadcast clips)

F5MC continues to expand its efforts in social media and electronic outreach.

In order to reach a larger audience and enable strategic communication about issues related to ECD, F5MC continues to cultivate an active social media and electronic outreach presence. F5MC’s eNewsletter currently has 681 subscribers, an increase of 16 percent since last spring.

F5MC’s Facebook page “Likes”¹⁰ increased by 63% over the past year. Exhibit 10 compares F5MC’s Facebook “Likes” with other First 5 agencies of similar size. F5MC’s Facebook community continues to be overwhelmingly female (82 percent) and between 25 and 44 years old (60 percent). The top three locations of people who “like” F5MC’s Facebook page lie inside Monterey County: Salinas (37 percent), Monterey (11 percent), and Marina (5 percent).

Exhibit 10. Barriers to Engaging in ECD Policy and Advocacy

First 5 Agency	2013 “Likes”	2014 “Likes”	Percent Change
First 5 Sonoma	114	1,534	1,246%
First 5 Fresno	889	1,081	22%
First 5 Monterey	114	186	63%
First 5 Santa Cruz	48	91	90%
<i>First 5 San Joaquin</i>		<i>No Facebook page available</i>	
<i>First 5 Santa Barbara</i>		<i>No Facebook page available</i>	

¹⁰ “Likes” are the number of unique people who “like” (or “follow”) a Facebook Page as of the last day of the selected date range (9/15/14).

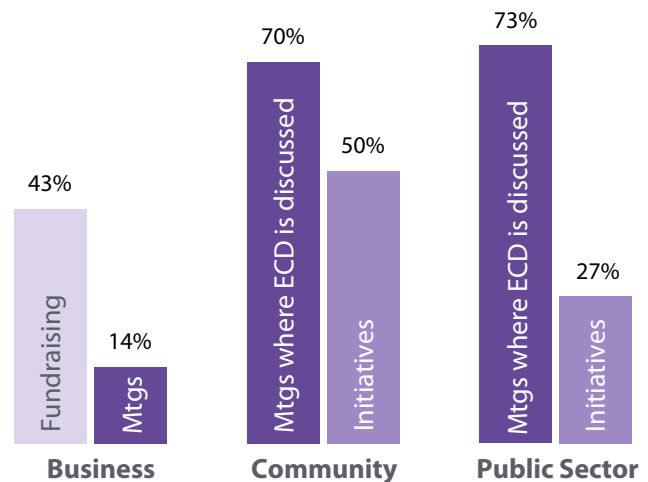
Stakeholder Engagement in ECD

As a leading advocate for ECD in Monterey County, F5MC is interested in learning more about how key leaders are currently engaged in this area and what opportunities exist for increasing both the depth and the breadth of their involvement. The following section examines the nature of stakeholders' participation in ECD-related efforts, the ways they would like to become more involved, and the barriers that get in the way.

Stakeholders engage with ECD in a variety of ways, and generally prefer focused, specific opportunities to get involved.

Key stakeholders in Monterey County were more likely to engage in efforts related to ECD when those efforts were tied to regular activities in their work and lives. Public sector and community leaders, who were more likely to be closely engaged in ECD-related efforts, often reported participating in meetings where ECD was discussed or becoming involved in initiatives such as the Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) or the Literacy Campaign as part of their jobs. Business leaders, on the other hand, were more likely to report being invited to fundraising events or participating in donation drives in support of ECD, but tended to participate in fewer meetings compared to community and public sector leaders (14 percent compared to 70 percent and 73 percent, respectively). Additionally, none of the business leaders reported being involved in an ECD-related initiative (e.g., Literacy Campaign, ECDI). “As an economic developer,” said one business leader, “we deal with people who are at the working age...There’s not much connection [to young children]. When your kids get out of school, you pretty much lose contact with anything that’s going on with any child that’s below 12th grade.”

Exhibit 11. Top Two Ways Key Stakeholders Engage with ECD



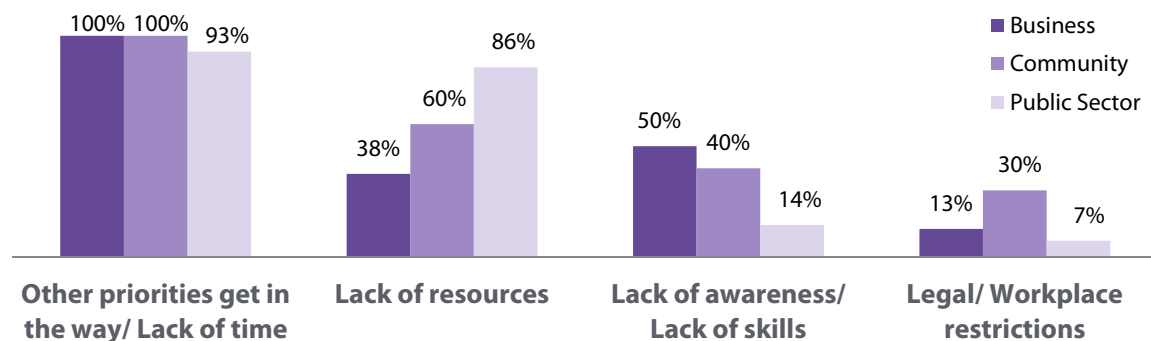
Interviewees offered a number of suggestions for increasing overall engagement in ECD work:

- Build deeper, more personal ties with the business community.** In order to better engage the business community, one business leader suggested that supporters and advocates build more personal relationships: “It’s all about the personal networks and the personal connections. An effective way to outreach to people like me would be if you had some lunch or breakfast and invited different community stakeholders to learn more about your organization and what you guys do.”
- Articulate a more direct link between ECD and specific policies.** While many respondents were interested in getting involved in ECD, some felt they did not know how. “The presentations are usually preaching to the choir and the issues aren’t usually new,” noted one community leader. “I don’t see a strong policy edge to it, so I don’t see where to be involved.”
- Attract new participants through their interests and areas of expertise.** According to one public sector leader, leveraging people’s strengths in concrete ways could encourage them to stay connected: “Provide opportunities where people’s skills can have some tangibility, something in the short term that they can work on but also an opportunity for being part of the resource base in the long term.”

Lack of time and competing priorities are the primary barriers to engaging more deeply in ECD advocacy; other barriers vary by sector.

Despite their interest in ECD, key stakeholders face a number of barriers to engaging in policy and advocacy work (see Exhibit 12). Across all sectors, local stakeholders said other priorities competed for their time and attention. “I’m on thirteen boards,” remarked one business leader, “so I’m stretched pretty thin. [Any involvement] would have to be something that is so aligned with my skillset that I could come in and help and get back out.” Community and public sector leaders were more likely to cite a lack of resources as a barrier (“We are strapped for resources. We are strapped to respond to day-to-day emerging issues.”), while business leaders were more likely to report a lack of awareness or skills in this area.

Exhibit 12. Barriers to Engaging in ECD Policy and Advocacy

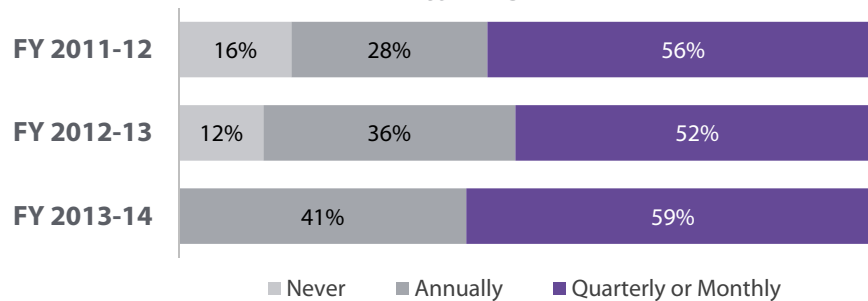


F5MC funded partners reported similar barriers, but noted an increase in their frequency and capacity for advocating for policy change.

Lack of time (76 percent) and lack of resources (64 percent) were also the top barriers to engaging in policy and advocacy work among funded agencies. However, compared to last year, funded partners were less likely to report that legal restrictions posed a barrier to that work (16 percent versus 30 percent last year). This may indicate that partners are developing a better understanding of how to conduct advocacy work within the restrictions often placed on nonprofit organizations.

Funded partners also reported an increased frequency of engagement in policy activities at the local and state levels over past years (Exhibit 13). Activities included organizing and mobilizing grassroots constituencies, serving as a voice for early childhood policies and concerns at the local level, gaining visibility and credibility with key policymakers and influencers, and developing talking points and messages for diverse target audiences.

Exhibit 13. Frequency of Advocating for Policy Change at the Local or State Level, FY11-12 to FY13-14



Update on Year 2 Recommendations

This section summarizes the progress that has been made in each of the areas identified as opportunities in the Year 2 Policy Evaluation report.

- ✓ **When advocating for early childhood development, continue to link it to other top policy issues in the county.** As revealed through this year’s media tracking efforts, the top policy area most commonly addressed in conjunction with ECD is education. Moreover, respondents from all three sectors were able to articulate how ECD is related to other top policy issues – not just education but also economic and workforce development, public safety, health, and others. Many community partner and public sector respondents described these connections directly and succinctly and, especially when asked to do so, a number of business sector leaders were also able to explain how ECD is linked with other policy priorities.
- ✓ **Reach out to media outlets, including electronic media, to raise the awareness of early childhood development investments and importance.** In the past year, F5MC began posting more regularly to its Facebook page (experiencing a 63 percent increase in the number of “likes”) and tracking engagement with its website via Google Analytics. F5MC also continues to cultivate and maintain relationships with key local media outlets.
- ✓ **Continue to expand community education about the policy priorities of F5MC.** As in past years, interviewees from all three sectors identified F5MC as the most prominent advocate for ECD in Monterey County. Through its involvement with local and countywide initiatives such as the ECDI and efforts related to the local funding control formula, F5MC continues to define and prioritize its policy goals and make others aware of what those goals are.
- ✓ **Reach out to and convene current and potential partners to work toward creating policy change for early childhood development.** F5MC’s involvement with the ECDI appears to be fostering progress in this area as well. Supporting and participating in the ECDI meetings across the county allows F5MC to communicate with established and emerging allies on a regular basis, thereby deepening those relationships. Such partnerships are an important first step towards building momentum for broader policy changes.
- ✓ **Support organizations to engage in policy-related activities.** Lack of time and resources continue to be substantial barriers to deeper engagement in policy-related activities, especially among funded partners, community organizations, and public sector leaders. F5MC appears to be making progress in this area among funded partners, as evidenced by the decreasing percent of agencies that reported a lack of awareness and understanding about the local policy landscape (from 41 percent last year to 32 percent this year) and legal restrictions (from 30 to 16 percent) as barriers. F5MC should consider expanding the supports it offers to funded partners to non-funded organizations and individuals in the public and business sectors.

Opportunities

F5MC is committed to contributing to policies that support young children and their families at the local, regional, and state level. This evaluation explored ways in which the visibility of ECD has changed over time and examined F5MC's role advocating for ECD-related policies. The preceding sections of this report documented a number of successes related to F5MC's policy and advocacy efforts; this section sets forth some opportunities for F5MC to consider as it moves forward:

Develop strategies to engage the business community in ECD. Community partners and public sector leaders identified ECD as a second tier issue, yet none of the business leaders who were interviewed did. Compared to public sector and community leaders, business leaders were not as aware of how closely ECD is connected to key priority issues. Therefore, F5MC may want to consider the following strategies to further engage the business community in ECD:

- Clearly articulate ECD in ways that are meaningful and relevant to business leaders (e.g., ECD as an investment with high returns, the economic and social benefits of ECD)
- Further explore how the business community wants to be involved in supporting ECD-related policies (e.g., increase awareness among colleagues, participate in fundraising events, participate in meetings/initiatives, engage in policy efforts) and provide concrete action steps for their involvement
- Establish personal connections with key business leaders
- Research community involvement strategies that have effectively engaged the business community

Continue to increase and deepen the involvement of public sector and community leaders. In addition to identifying ECD as a high priority issue in Monterey County, public sector and community leaders were able to clearly articulate the connection of ECD to top tier issues and also reported engaging with ECD in a variety of ways. Furthermore, public sector and community leaders noted that key leaders often require targeted, tangible ways to be involved in ECD. To that end, F5MC may consider providing more education about specific ECD-related issues in Monterey County, creating opportunities for leaders to collaborate, and developing more targeted outreach strategies to engage specific stakeholder groups.

Identify opportunities for F5MC funded programs to participate in policy efforts and provide resources to support their involvement. F5MC funded partners reported frequently participating in policy activities related to ECD and an increased capacity for advocating for policy change. F5MC may want to explore more deeply how programs are engaging in policy efforts, define expectations for how they would like them to participate, and ensure that appropriate resources are provided to support their efforts.

Develop and establish media outreach strategies to raise awareness about ECD and its connection to other top policy issues. Given that many stakeholders continue to learn about policy issues from the media, F5MC can develop media outreach strategies to raise awareness about the importance of investing in ECD and its connection to other top policy issues (e.g., public safety and economic development), such as:

- Establish clear and consistent messaging about ECD and F5MC that is aligned with the agency's values
- Develop targeted press releases to help increase visibility of F5MC events and others related to ECD; these could also emphasize ECD's connection to other top policy issues, such as public safety and economic development
- Continue to submit opinion editorials that capitalize on events related to ECD, targeting local news outlets (e.g., Monterey County Herald, Salinas Californian, and KSBW and KION television stations)

Continue to build presence in social and electronic media. F5MC can continue improving its outreach and engagement by regularly posting on its Facebook page and consistently sending eNewsletters to subscribers, with a focus on relevant and timely content. This will help F5MC reach larger audiences and foster strategic communications about ECD-related issues. F5MC should also consider developing a social media and electronic outreach plan that includes targeted activities, outlines the frequency of posts and mailings, and establishes metrics and benchmarks grounded in the available tools (i.e., Facebook Insights, Constant Contact reports, and Google Analytics). In addition to gauging the effectiveness and reach of these efforts, this will help F5MC understand who its online audience is and how they interact with the content.

Appendix: Evaluation Methods

Similar to the previous two years, the Year 3 policy evaluation used a number of methods to gather information about early childhood development policy and advocacy in Monterey County:

Document review/meeting attendance. Harder+Company staff conducted a review of ECDI regional meeting minutes, attended ECDI regional meetings, and tracked F5MC and ECDI policy and communications activities and outreach efforts. This provided the team with an in-depth understanding of the range of policy activities administered directly by F5MC and/or through ECDI. In addition, findings from these activities informed stakeholder interviews and the evaluation as a whole.

Stakeholder Interviews. Thirty-five stakeholders in Monterey County were interviewed. Respondents included key leaders from the public sector (43 percent; n=15), community partners (29 percent, n=10), and local businesses (29 percent; n=10). Of these respondents, 11 were interviewed in all three years; nine were interviewed in both Year 2 and Year 3; and 15 were new interviewees. Interview questions covered topics such as knowledge about ECD policy activities, awareness of local advocates for ECD, and engagement in ECD activities. Content analysis was employed to identify, code, and quantify themes that emerged from these interviews using Atlas.ti software.

Funded Partner Survey. As part of an annual agency survey, First 5 Monterey County funded partners were asked about their involvement in policy and advocacy work, their comfort level engaging in policy and advocacy work, their awareness of the ECDI, and any challenges or barriers they face in engaging in policy and advocacy work. The survey also included questions related to funded agencies' experiences and understanding of First 5 Monterey County's role with policy and advocacy work (n=49).

Media Tracking. The media tracking component of the policy evaluation gathered information related to the quantity and content of local coverage about ECD and First 5 Monterey County in print, broadcast, and electronic media. A total of 169 key search terms, including both English and Spanish-translated terms, were used to analyze media coverage of ECD from April 1, 2011 to July 31, 2014.

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