

# Contra Costa County

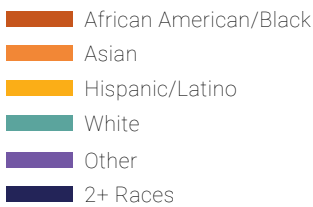


## The Opportunity Gap for Children Across Contra Costa County<sup>1</sup>

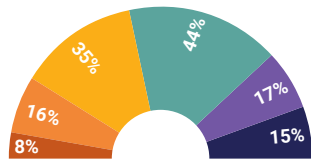
All communities and kids across Contra Costa County have strengths and talents, but opportunities for well-being and long-term success are not equally distributed. The ongoing pandemic and its varying impacts especially show that access to services and supports are not equitable – many families are feeling squeezed, but some are hurting more than others. Since countywide statistics can mask such issues, localized data disaggregated by race/ethnicity are useful for highlighting disparities in order to target resources. Disparities stem from unequal exposure to trauma, discrimination, and poverty, as well as inequitable access to wealth and resources. The statistics below demonstrate a whole-child approach, spanning many issues impacting a child's life. They also illustrate a life course trajectory, because what the county invests in to support kids makes a difference today and in their lives as adults, impacting the future of our communities.

### Demographic<sup>2</sup>

(0-17 years)

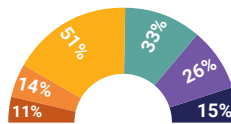


**Contra Costa**  
259,670 kids



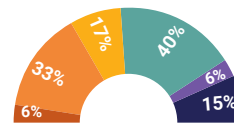
**West**  
55,586 kids

Hercules, San Pablo, Richmond



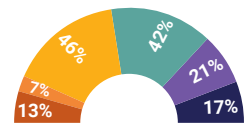
**Central**  
127,227 kids

Concord, San Ramon, Walnut Creek



**East**  
76,906 kids

Pittsburg, Antioch, Brentwood



**97%**

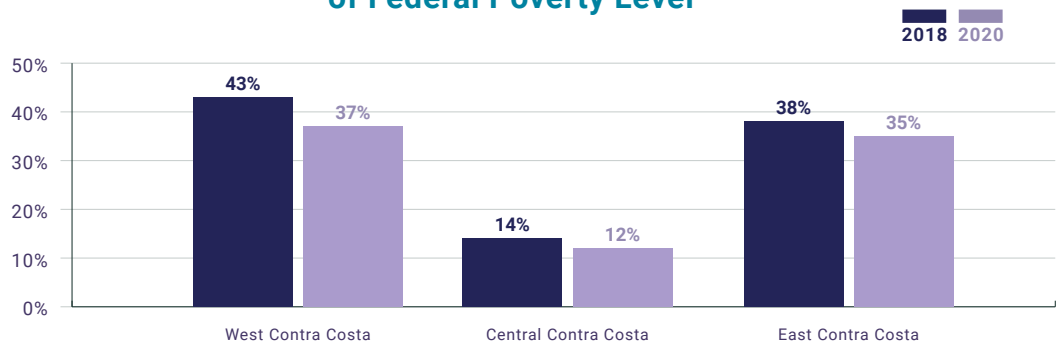
of Contra Costa families with children have at least one working parent<sup>8</sup>

The federal child tax credit, state young child tax credit, and earned income tax credit reduced child poverty despite the economic impacts of the pandemic.<sup>3,4</sup> Yet, disparities in child poverty across the county persist.<sup>5,6,7</sup>

### Children in Families Below 200% of Federal Poverty Level

**43%**

of Contra Costa kids have at least one immigrant parent<sup>9</sup>



At least

**13%**

of Contra Costa youth identify as LGBTQ+<sup>10</sup>

1 Notes: A) Children are defined as ages 0-17, unless otherwise specified (e.g., students, kindergartners, etc.) B) To highlight countywide disparities, Contra Costa County is divided into West, Central, and East regions, unless another grouping is specified (e.g., district, entire county, etc.) These regions can include the following: West: Richmond, San Pablo, El Cerrito, Kensington, Hercules, Pinole, Crockett, Rodeo. Central: Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Walnut Creek, Concord, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Alamo, Danville, San Ramon. East: Pittsburg, Bay Point, Antioch, Brentwood, Oakley, Knightsen, Discovery Bay, Byron, Bethel Island.

2 U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Children characteristics, 2016-2020 American community survey 5-year estimates. [Table S0901]. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S0901%3A%20CHILDREN%20CHARACTERISTICS&g=0500000US0601306013%24060000&tid=ACSTSY2020.S0901> Note: Percentages do not add to 100% because the categories are not mutually exclusive. Throughout this report, West Contra Costa is comprised of ACS West Contra Costa and Briones subdivisions; Central Contra Costa is comprised of ACS Central Contra Costa and Tassajara subdivisions; and East Contra Costa is comprised of ACS East Contra Costa and Antioch-Pittsburg subdivisions.

3 Franchise Tax Board. (n.d.). California Earned Income Tax Credit and Young Child Tax Credit. State of California. <https://www.ftb.ca.gov/file/personal/credits/california-earned-income-tax-credit.html>

4 Thorman, T., Malagon, P. (2021, March 23). How the expanded child tax credit reduces child poverty. Public Policy Institute of California. <https://www.ppic.org/blog/how-the-expanded-child-tax-credit-reduces-child-poverty/>

5 Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. (2020). Prior HHS poverty guidelines and federal register references. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines/prior-hhs-poverty-guidelines-federal-register-references> Note: In 2020, 200% of the federal poverty level translated to \$52,400 annual income for a family of 4.

6 U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Age by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months, 2014-2018 American community survey 5-year estimates. [Table B17024]. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B17024%3A%20AGE%20BY%20RATIO%20OF%20INCOME%20TO%20POVERTY%20LEVEL%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS&g=0500000US06013%24060000&tid=ACSTSY2018.B17024>

7 U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Age by ratio of income to poverty level in the past 12 months, 2016-2020 American community survey 5-year estimates. [Table B17024]. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B17024%3A%20AGE%20BY%20RATIO%20OF%20INCOME%20TO%20POVERTY%20LEVEL%20IN%20THE%20PAST%2012%20MONTHS&g=0500000US06013%24060000&tid=ACSTSY2018.B17024>

8 U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Employment characteristics of families, 2016-2020 American community survey 5-year estimates [Table S2302]. [https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Employment%20and%20Labor%20Force%20Status&g=0400000US06\\_0500000US06013&tid=ACSTSY2020.S2302](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=Employment%20and%20Labor%20Force%20Status&g=0400000US06_0500000US06013&tid=ACSTSY2020.S2302). Data analysis by Population Reference Bureau; families at or above 200% of the federal poverty level.

9 U.S. Census Bureau (n.d.). Age and nativity of own children under 18 years in families and subfamilies by number and nativity of parents, 2016-2020 American community survey 5-year estimates [Table B05009]. <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B05009%3A%20AGE%20AND%20NATIVITY%20OF%20OWN%20CHILDREN%20UNDER%2018%20YEARS%20IN%20FAMILIES%20AND%20SUBFAMILIES%20BY%20NUMBER%20AND%20NATIVITY%20OF%20PARENTS&tid=ACSTSY2020.B05009> Note: To get the total amount of children living with one or more immigrant parents, the following categories were combined: 1) both parents foreign-born, 2) one of two foreign-born parents 3) single parent foreign born.

10 California School Climate, Health and Learning Surveys. (n.d.). 2013-2019 Elementary and secondary student survey. Note: Data provided and prepared by CalSCHLS through a special request. Please note that all percentages are only representative of California students in 9th and 11th grade who took the CalSCHLS survey.

# Pandemic Impacts



Between 2020 and 2022, households using CalFresh increased by more than

## 40%

**More Contra Costa families got assistance from CalFresh to help buy food.** This is both a reflection of growing need due to job loss and other economic factors, as well as success in reaching more households that need help.<sup>13</sup> Over one-third of Contra Costa CalFresh recipients are children; kids need proper nutrition for developmental, health, and educational success.<sup>14</sup>

Nearly

## 1,000

kids in Contra Costa County (2/3 of whom are Hispanic/Latino children) have experienced the death of caregivers due to COVID

The pandemic continues to disproportionately impact communities of color. When children's caregivers die, it causes trauma, dislocation, and grief.<sup>11</sup>

Up to

## 2,000

child care slots were lost due to providers closing their doors

Almost 90 **child care providers closed permanently** due to the pandemic, resulting in up to 2,000 fewer available child care slots.<sup>12</sup> The reverberating impact is felt on early childhood education, parent workforce participation, and family finances.

Supervisory District	March 2020 CalFresh Households	May 2022 CalFresh Households	Change (2020 to 2022)
District 1 (West)	9,601	13,383	39%
District 2 (Central)	1,101	2,062	87%
District 3 (East)	7,678	10,376	35%
District 4 (Central)	4,871	7,454	53%
District 5 (West & East)	10,336	14,006	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,587</b>	<b>47,281</b>	<b>41%</b>

## The county and community partners harnessed resources and supports to meet families' needs during the initial crisis. Examples include:

### 1

**Schools distributed food, laptops, COVID tests, and more** when school buildings were closed.<sup>15</sup> Other partners distributed diapers, infant formula, masks, and other supplies.<sup>16</sup>

### 2

**Nearly 600** children of Contra Costa's essential workers participated in **emergency child care** between March-June 2020. State funded emergency child care subsidies were provided for over 400 essential worker families.<sup>17</sup>

### 3

**97%** of county households that applied for the **COVID Rent Relief Program** received assistance – a total of over **16,500** households.<sup>18</sup>

### 4

The **Contra Costa Child Care Relief Fund** provided nearly **\$800,000** in relief to over **100** licensed family child care homes who experienced pandemic-related financial hardship.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Global Reference Group on Children Impacted by COVID-19. (2022, February 17). COVID-19 associated orphanhood and caregiver death in the United States. Imperial College London. [https://imperialcollegelondon.github.io/orphanhood\\_USA/](https://imperialcollegelondon.github.io/orphanhood_USA/)

Note: Primary/secondary caregivers are co-residing parents or grandparents responsible for some or all basic needs for the child. Figure should be interpreted as a minimum estimate. The estimate was derived by calculating the proportion of children in California who reside in Contra Costa and multiplying this figure by the estimate of children in California who lost a caregiver due to COVID-19.

<sup>12</sup> CoCoKids, personal communication, August 24, 2022.

<sup>13</sup> Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department. (2022, July 25). Employment and Human Services Department CalFresh report. [http://64.166.146.245/docs/2022/FHS/20220725\\_1993/50395\\_EHS-D%20FHS%20CalFresh%207-25-22RD%20Updated%207.13.22%20FINAL.pdf](http://64.166.146.245/docs/2022/FHS/20220725_1993/50395_EHS-D%20FHS%20CalFresh%207-25-22RD%20Updated%207.13.22%20FINAL.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> Hunger and Health. (n.d.). Children and families. Feeding America. <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/explore-our-work/programs-target-populations/children-and-families/>

Note: Information about CalFresh food assistance can be found here: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/calfresh>.

<sup>15</sup> Tadayon, A. (2020, March 18). Grab-and-go and drive-up allow families to pick up food at closed California schools. EdSource. <https://edsource.org/2020/grab-and-go-and-drive-up-allow-families-to-pick-up-food-at-closed-california-schools/626088>

<sup>16</sup> First 5 Contra Costa, personal communication, November 17, 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Contra Costa County Childcare Taskforce. (n.d.). COVID-19 emergency childcare response. [https://ehsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COVID-19\\_Emergency\\_Child\\_Care\\_Response\\_2020\\_report.pdf](https://ehsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/COVID-19_Emergency_Child_Care_Response_2020_report.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency. (n.d.). California COVID-19 rental relief program dashboard. State of California. [https://housing.ca.gov/covid\\_rr/dashboard.html](https://housing.ca.gov/covid_rr/dashboard.html)

<sup>19</sup> Low Income Investment Fund. (2021, August). LIIF report to First Five Contra Costa.

# Wellbeing



## One

child maltreatment case was reported every hour in Contra Costa County in 2021<sup>20</sup>

This is despite the fact that children had less contact with teachers, doctors, and others who could detect and report maltreatment during the pandemic.<sup>21</sup>

Reported survivors of child maltreatment  
**8,553**

Survivors of verified child maltreatment  
**678**

Child maltreatment fatalities  
**2**

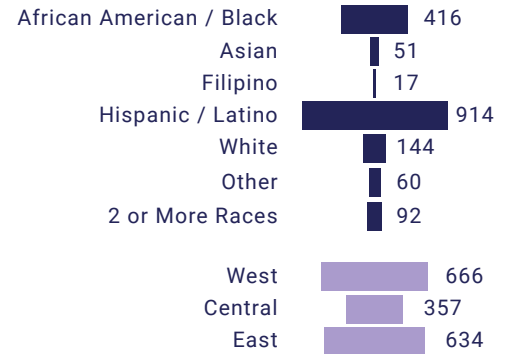
Financial impact of child maltreatment  
**\$320,000,000**

# 1,694

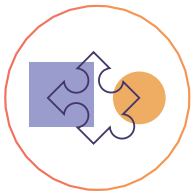
youth experienced homelessness in Contra Costa

Students disproportionately experienced homelessness in West and East county and Black and Latino families.<sup>22</sup> The pandemic exacerbated barriers faced by youth experiencing homelessness, such as lack of access to food, health care, and Wi-Fi.

### Students Experiencing Homelessness in Contra Costa County, 2021-22



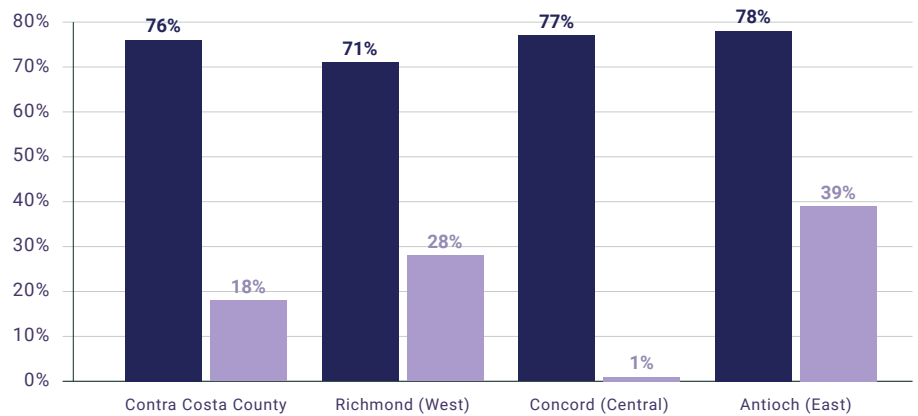
# Early Learning



## 1

**Child care** can be very difficult for families to find, especially for infants & toddlers, and particularly in the West & East parts of the county.<sup>23</sup> Even when it is available, child care is often too expensive for families, with the state reimbursement rate for infants/toddlers at \$16-23,000/year depending on provider type, and the "true cost" of care at least \$40,000/year which includes the high cost of maintaining facilities.<sup>24, 25, 26</sup>

### Projected Unmet Demand for Child Care in Contra Costa County in 2027



**Percent of Infant/Toddler Child Care Demand NOT Met**

**Percent of Preschool Child Care Demand NOT Met**

<sup>20</sup> Safe and Sound. (2022). Impacts in your county, 2021. The Economics of Child Abuse: California and its Counties. <https://economics.safeandsound.org/>

Note: "Reported" child maltreatment has not yet been substantiated by an investigation that concludes the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment was supported or founded by state law or policy. Calculation of cumulative costs includes: higher incidence of chronic health problems, decreased earning potential, child welfare intervention services, higher school absenteeism rates, and more; more detail is included in the technical appendix: [https://economics.safeandsound.org/static\\_reports/SafeSound-.2021.EconomicsReport-.Technical.Appendix.pdf](https://economics.safeandsound.org/static_reports/SafeSound-.2021.EconomicsReport-.Technical.Appendix.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Note: See, for example, the decrease in the number of child maltreatment reports from mandated reporters (school staff, medical professionals, therapists, and others), shown in the chart on page 5 of Contra Costa County Social Service Impact & Response to the COVID-19 Crisis, [https://ehsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/External\\_Dashboard\\_2020\\_June.pdf](https://ehsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/External_Dashboard_2020_June.pdf). Maltreatment reports by mandated reporters during the week of April 7, 2019 were almost 70% higher than during the week of April 5, 2020.

<sup>22</sup> DataQuest. (n.d.). 2021-22 Enrollment by ethnicity with district data, Contra Costa report, homeless population subgroup [Table]. California Department of Education.

Note: The California Department of Education definition of homelessness can be found here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/sg/homelessyouth.asp>.

<sup>23</sup> Brion Economics, Inc. (2018, August). Contra Costa County comprehensive countywide child care needs assessment—2017 to 2027. Contra Costa County Local Planning and Advisory Council for Early Care and Education (LPC), First 5 Contra Costa, Contra Costa County Office of Education, and Contra Costa County Conservation and Development Department. [https://cdn5-ss16.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_1077313/File/2017LPCNeedsAssessment\\_PDF.pdf](https://cdn5-ss16.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_1077313/File/2017LPCNeedsAssessment_PDF.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Haspel, E. (2022, July 23). America's child-care equilibrium has shattered. The Atlantic. <https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2022/07/us-childcare-programs-expensive-underfunded/670927/>

<sup>25</sup> California Department of Social Services. (2022). Reimbursement ceilings for subsidized child care. <https://rscsc.adm.dss.ca.gov/index.aspx>.

<sup>26</sup> For more information about the "true cost" of child care, referring to the "cost of operating a high-quality program with the staff and materials needed to meet quality standards and provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for all children," please see Capito, J., Fallin Keryon, K., & Workman, S. (2022, August). Understanding the true cost of child care in California: Building a cost model to inform policy change. Prenatal to Five Fiscal Strategies. [https://www.prenatal5fiscal.org/\\_files/ugd/8fd549\\_748c33ac7a8d4dfcb72eb5dc904d47c0.pdf](https://www.prenatal5fiscal.org/_files/ugd/8fd549_748c33ac7a8d4dfcb72eb5dc904d47c0.pdf)

# Education



## 1

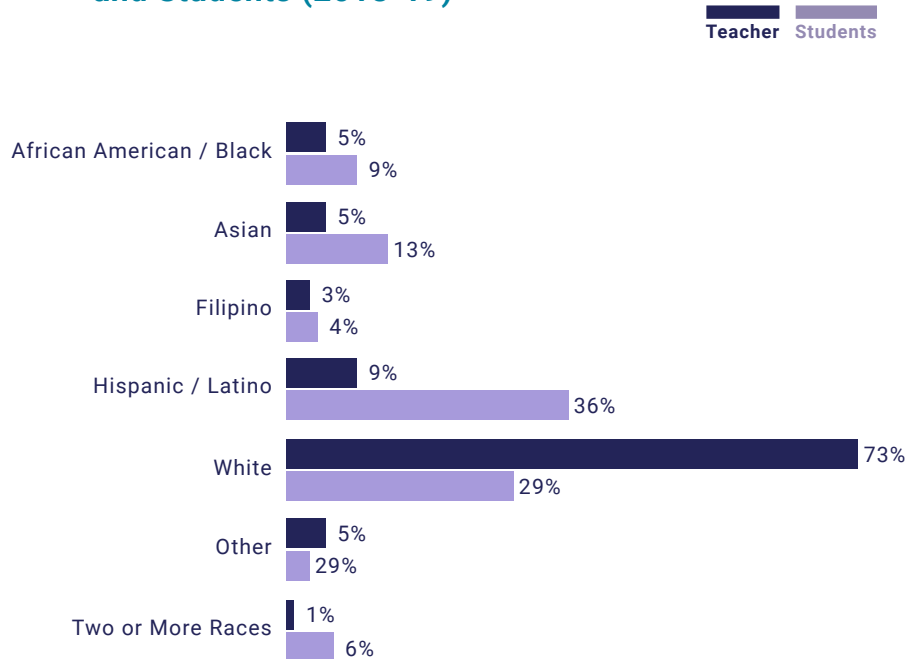
**Teachers were some of our most essential workers during the pandemic**, providing quality education to children. However, Contra Costa's teacher workforce does not reflect the diversity of its student population. Research shows that all students perform better academically when they have more diverse teachers, and are more likely to graduate high school if they have a same-race teacher in grades K-3.<sup>27,28</sup>

## 2

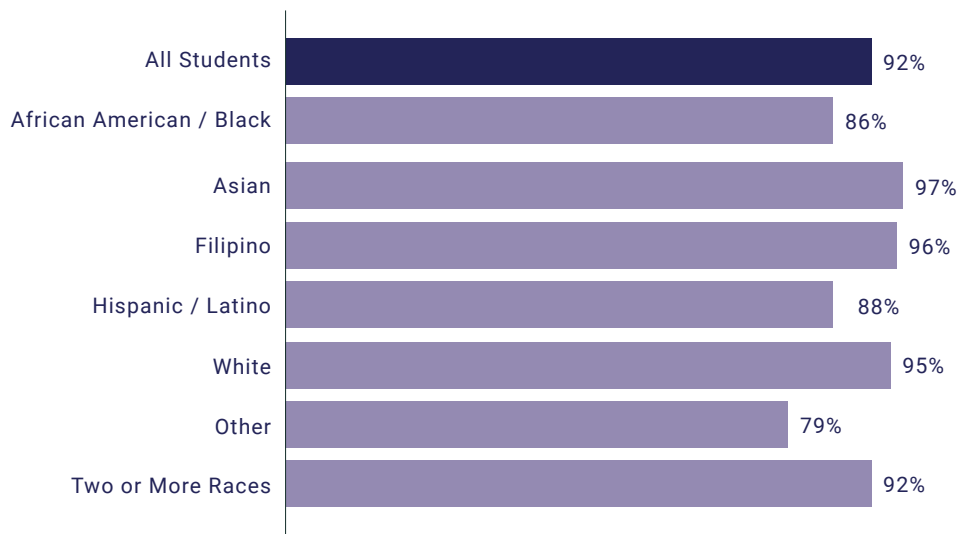
**High school graduation rates show that many districts need to do more to support Black, Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Pacific Islander students.**

However, countywide 53% of graduates met UC/CSU requirements and 18% earned a Seal of Biliteracy; each of these percentages were higher than the state average.<sup>29</sup>

### Race and Ethnicity of Contra Costa County Teachers and Students (2018-19)



### Contra Costa High School Graduation Rates, 2021-22



<sup>27</sup> DataQuest. (n.d.). 2018-19 Certificated staff by ethnicity, Contra Costa report [Table]. California Department of Education. DataQuest. (n.d.). 2018-19 Enrollment by ethnicity, Contra Costa report [Table]. California Department of Education.

Note: At the time of publication, the most recent demographic data available for certificated staff was from 2018-19. Although it is unclear whether these gaps widened or narrowed during the pandemic, we do know that the gap between Latino teachers & students and between white teachers & students was the same magnitude in 2015-16 as in 2018-19.

<sup>28</sup> Gershenson, S., Hart, C., Hyman, J., Lindsay, C., & Papageorge, N. (revised 2021). The long-run impacts of same-race teachers. National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w25254>

<sup>29</sup> DataQuest. (n.d.). 2020-21, Five-Year cohort graduation rate, Contra Costa report, non-charter schools subgroup [Table]. California Department of Education.

Note: Information about five-year cohort graduation rate methodology is here: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/ad/fyogrinfo.asp>. District-specific graduation rates for racial/ethnic groups are also available through the DataQuest tool.

# Health

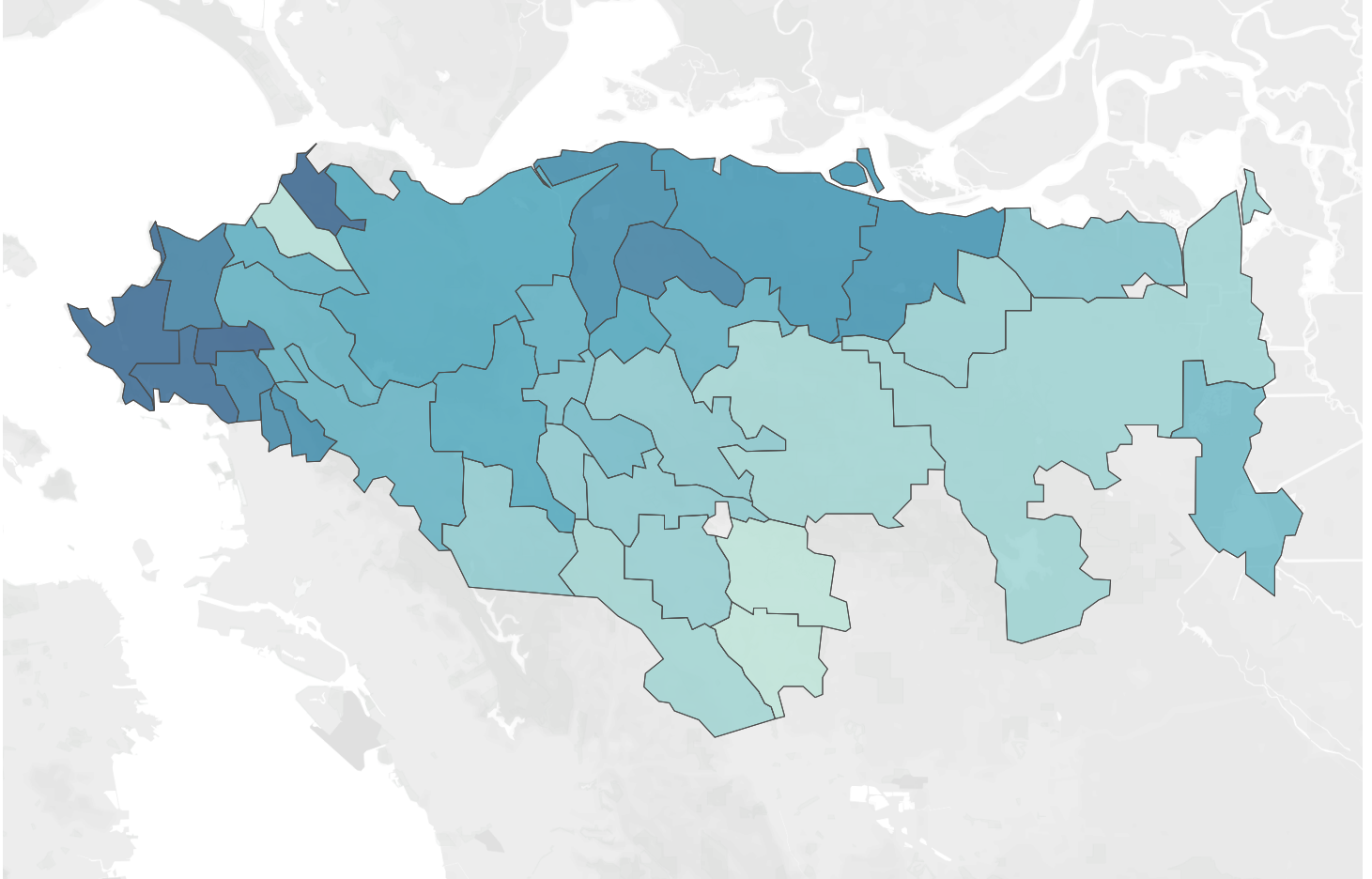


## 1

**Environmental pollution** impacts developing children through lead poisoning, increased risk of developing asthma, low birth weight, and other mechanisms. Communities with the highest lead risk for children are concentrated in the West and East parts of the county.<sup>30</sup>



### Children's Average Lead Exposure Risk from Housing in Contra Costa County



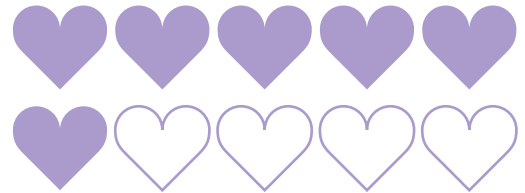
## 2

Infant well-child visits are critical for catching developmental delays, vision or hearing impairments, and other issues.

Only

# 6 in 10

infants in Contra Costa County enrolled in Medi-Cal had 2+ well-child visits before they turned 6 months old<sup>31</sup>



<sup>30</sup> California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. (2021, October 20). California communities environmental health screening tool: CalEnviroScreen 4.0. <https://oehha.ca.gov/calenviroscreen/report/calenviroscreen-40>

<sup>31</sup> California Department of Health Care Services. (2022). Percent of Medi-Cal children who had 2+ well-child visits with a primary care provider (PCP) by the time they turned 6 months old January 2020 – January 2022 [Data set]. <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/Pages/QualityMeasurementAndReporting.aspx>

Note: The Department of Health Care Services has prioritized improving the rate of infants receiving well-child visits; more info here: <https://www.childrennow.org/blog/meecoccl/>

# Health (continued)



## 3

### Some Areas of the County are Too Far From Fresh Groceries

**Limited access to grocery stores** can be a major problem for families trying to find healthy and affordable food. Areas of low-income and low foodstore access are concentrated in Richmond, San Pablo, Martinez, parts of Concord, Pittsburg, Antioch, and Oakley.<sup>32</sup>



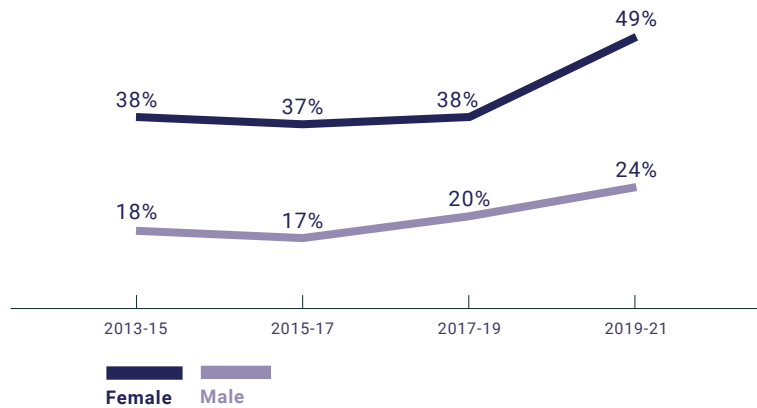
# Mental Health



## 1

**Too many Contra Costa students reported depression-related feelings**, especially female students. Male and female students reported an increase in sadness/hopelessness in 2019-2021.<sup>33</sup>

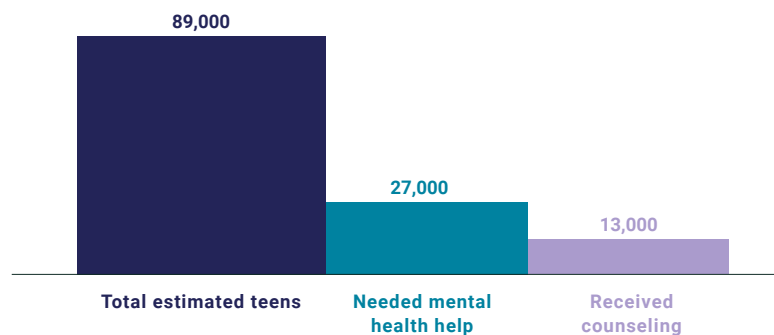
### Self-Reported Chronic Sadness/Hopelessness Among Contra Costa's 9th Graders



## 2

Many youth need access to an array of mental health services, including peer mentoring, counseling, and coping skills workshops. Data from 2018-2021 **suggest that less than half of the teens who said they needed some kind of mental health help received counseling** within the past 12 months.<sup>34</sup>

### Too Few Contra Costa Teens Who Needed Mental Health Help Received Counseling, 2018-2021



<sup>32</sup> Economic Research Service (ERS). (n.d.). Low-income and low foodstore-access Census tracts, 2015-19, EIB-236, U.S. U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-access-research-atlas/>

Note: "Low-income and low foodstore access" is defined as (A) a census tract that (1) has a poverty rate of 20% or greater, (2) is at or below 80% of the greater Metropolitan Statistical Area median family income or the State's median family income, or (3) has a median family income at or below 80% of the State's median family income if outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area, and (B) the census tract has a significant number (at least 500 people) or share of the population (at least 33%) that is more than 0.5 miles from the nearest supermarket, supercenter, or large grocery store if in an urban area or more than 10 miles if in a rural area.

<sup>33</sup> California School Climate, Health, and Learning Surveys. (n.d.). 2013-2021 Secondary student survey, Contra Costa County, trends over time, 9th graders disaggregated by gender. <https://catschis.org/reports-data/public-dashboards/secondary-student/>.

<sup>34</sup> UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Los Angeles, CA. AskCHIS 2018-2021. "Teen needed help for emotional/mental health problems" and "Teen received psychological/emotional counseling in past year" (Contra Costa County). <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>.

Note: Data from 4 years (2018-21) were pooled for a more reliable estimate. For "Teen needed help for emotional/mental health problems" (31.9%), the 95% confidence interval was 19.2% to 44.7%; for "Teen received psychological/emotional counseling in past year" (15.8%), the 95% confidence interval was 8.0% to 23.6%.

# Recommendations

The County must urgently deploy all available resources and supports to close opportunity gaps for children, since such disparities have historically widened over the life course,<sup>35</sup> creating additional barriers to well-being for Contra Costans. In addition, the County should invest more resources in a coordinated, holistic way, as these issues are all interrelated. In doing so, the County should follow these tenets:

## 1

### Meet all families where they are

Rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, the well-being of all children will improve when different families receive the specific targeted resources they need. For example, the home visiting program allowed hundreds of new and expecting Contra Costan parents to receive targeted, one-on-one support on their child's healthy development.<sup>36</sup>

## 2

### Focus on root causes

Opportunity gaps develop due to systemic, longstanding forces – not individual behavior. Similarly, closing such gaps will require a permanent commitment to anti-racism<sup>37</sup> and sustained funding to policies that improve the well-being of children and their families.

## 3

### Take a whole child whole family approach

The pandemic has highlighted an ongoing, relentless squeeze on parents and caregivers trying to make ends meet while caring for their kids.<sup>38</sup> Research shows that protective factors (such as concrete supports for parents, social connections, and knowledge of child development) can promote the health and well-being of kids and families.<sup>39</sup>

## 4

### Recruit and support a diverse and qualified workforce

Building infrastructure includes ensuring a robust and healthy workforce through just wages, health insurance, mental wellness, work-life balance, and other supports. More workers are needed within child care, education, mental health, and other child-serving sectors; teacher vacancies across the county are especially staggering. Children are best served with a better paid, better supported, and more diverse workforce.<sup>40</sup>

## 5

### Invest in infrastructure and facilities

In addition to supporting the workforce, we must invest in the infrastructure that contributes to quality care. With facility expansions and upgrades, many child care providers could offer more slots and many public schools could more comfortably serve their students.

Created through a collaboration of:



35 See, for example: Odgers (2015), Income Inequality and the Developing Child: Is It All Relative? <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4784260/> & Urban Institute (2015), "Child Poverty and Adult Success," <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/65766/2000369-Child-Poverty-and-Adult-Success.pdf>.

36 First 5 Contra Costa. (n.d.). Home visiting. <http://www.first5coco.org/funded-programs/home-visiting/#:~:text=WHAT%20WE%20DO,parental%20employment%2C%20and%20children's%20development>.

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