



FIRST 5 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT



July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

October 2023

Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic

Program Description

The Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic (NDFCC) is an innovative, coordinated approach to address the neurodevelopmental needs of children age 0-5 in the foster care system. Nationally, almost one in five children face developmental disabilities or disabling behavioral challenges before age eighteen, but fewer than half of these children are identified before the age of five.²¹ On the other hand, research suggests that early detection and intervention for children with developmental disabilities can reduce the need for later interventions.²² We know early intervention works, yet children who have already endured abuse and neglect typically do not receive the early assessment and coordinated services they need. Children with disabilities are more likely to be abused and neglected and yet, once in the system designed to protect them, their needs may go unaddressed – thereby missing a critical window of opportunity to set a healthy life course.

The Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic is a collaboration between Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital Developmental-Behavioral Program, Santa Cruz County Children’s Behavioral Health, Santa Cruz County Family and Children’s Services, and First 5 Santa Cruz County, and is located at Stanford Children’s Health specialty services clinic in Capitola. The NDFCC takes a holistic approach to evaluate infants and children in the foster care system from 4 months to age 5, in a wide range of developmental and behavioral domains.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, the NDFCC integrates health information and trauma history with developmental assessment, evaluation of social skills, and consideration of environmental conditions. They assess children for delayed language, thinking, and social or motor skills, as well as children who have challenges with sleep, eating, behavior, discipline, or temperament. Their interdisciplinary team focuses on early intervention to address the needs of young children who have recently entered foster care, and to provide comprehensive services to these foster children, their families, and foster families.

To this end, all children in Santa Cruz County under the age of 6 who are in foster care or who are involved with Child Protective Services (CPS) are

One Client’s Story

Early intervention services are vitally important to help children overcome their developmental delays.

After birth, “Claire” spent a few days in the NICU receiving care for intrauterine drug exposure, and was then transitioned to a relative foster home. Her foster mother initially had no concerns about her development, but when Claire was 12 months old and had a developmental and behavioral assessment, she was assessed as having gross motor and language delays.

Claire was referred to Early Start for early intervention services, and worked with an occupational therapist and an early intervention therapist. She was re-assessed eight months later, and her developmental milestones were now in the average range.

- Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic, Annual Progress Report

²¹ American Academy of Pediatrics (2006). Identifying infants and young children with developmental disorders in the medical home: An algorithm for developmental surveillance and screening. *Pediatrics*, 118 (1), 405-420.

²² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Child Development: Using Developmental Screening to Improve Children’s Health,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/child/improve.htm> (accessed July 22, 2008).

referred to the program. For children with on-going needs, Stanford Children’s Health holds a developmental and behavioral assessment clinic in Capitola, once a week, for children ages 6-13.

The Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic provides the following services to children ages 0-5:

- A therapist from County Children's Behavioral Health meets with the child and foster family for a mental health assessment of the child (over the age of one).
- A Developmental-Behavioral Pediatric specialist (psychologist or nurse practitioner) evaluates the development and behavior of children and meets with the child, biological family, and foster family to discuss developmental and behavioral history and milestones.
- Standardized developmental and behavioral testing is conducted. The results of the testing and recommendations are provided to the biological and foster families at the end of the assessment.
- A follow-up consultative report is provided to all members of the interdisciplinary team, and the biological and foster families.
- A county Children's Behavioral Health therapist provides on-going counseling to those children needing therapy services.
- A Licensed Clinical Social Worker coordinates and case manages the program, and offers Triple P services to biological and foster clients.
- Children needing developmental services (e.g., occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, special education) are referred to local resources and the school district in which they reside.
- Any identified medical services (e.g., audiology, ophthalmology) are coordinated through the primary care provider.

Population Served

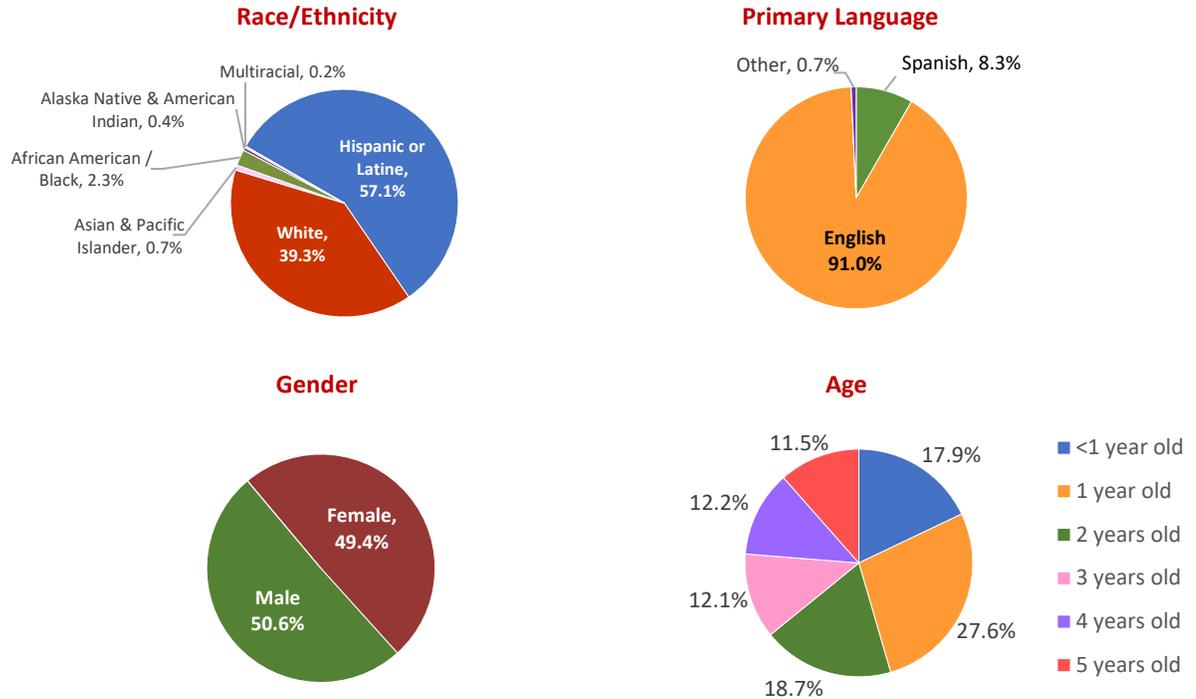
	THIS FUNDING CYCLE 2022-2023	CUMULATIVE TOTALS* 2011-2023
Children	<i>(ages 0-5)</i> 49	<i>(ages 0-5)</i> 965 <i>(ages 6+)</i> 19

Source: (Population) First 5 CCD database for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023.

* Due to the increased confidentiality requirements of this partner, it is not possible to track clients who may be duplicated across fiscal years for this agency. Therefore, these cumulative totals likely include some duplicated clients.

In the following results, data from all the years of this program (2011-2023) have been aggregated in order to present a more robust profile of the children served.

Figure 25: Demographics of Children (ages 0-5) participating in NDFCC (2011-2023)



Source: First 5 Santa Cruz County, Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic records, 2023. N=965.

Outcome Objective: Ensure that all children within the dependency court system age 0-5 in Santa Cruz County receive early developmental and mental health services

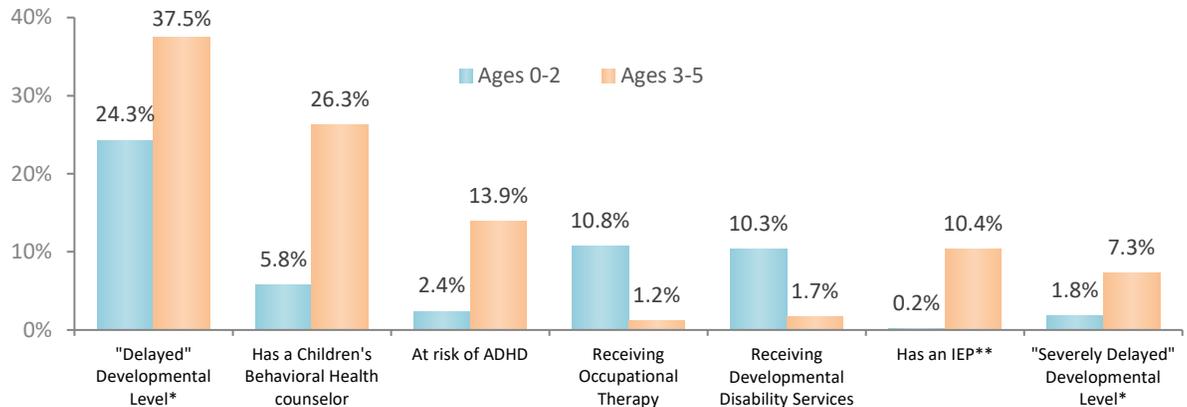
Measurable Objectives	2022-2023
By June 30, 2023, up to 100 children will receive comprehensive developmental and behavioral evaluations.	49 children
By June 30, 2023, 90% of children referred for therapy, Early Start, educational services, or Triple P will receive the services that were recommended.*	Over 90%

Source: Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic, Annual Progress Report, 2023.

* This analysis only includes children who were referred by NDFCC to services and does not include children who had previous referrals to services from their pediatricians. Note that some children who haven't yet received services may be on Wait Lists for these services, so their referral is still in progress.

In the analyses of the following diagnoses, services, and referrals, all the data since the commencement of NDFCC have been aggregated (2011-2023) in order to present a more robust portrait of the extent to which NDFCC is helping children in the dependency court system obtain comprehensive developmental and behavioral evaluations to identify early intervention, mental health, or educational needs.

Figure 26: Percentage of Children in NDFCC (ages 0-5) with these diagnoses and services, at Intake (2011-2023)



Source: Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic, Data Template, 2011-2023.

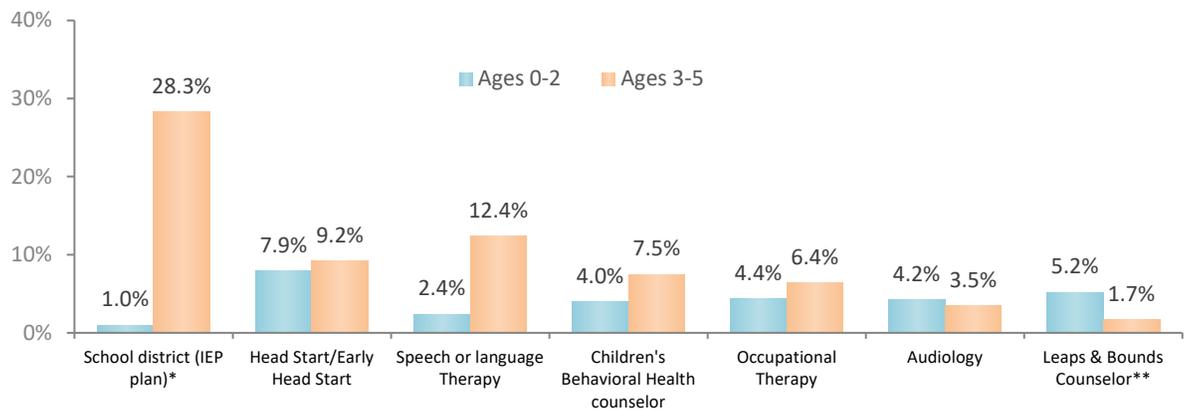
Note: Data for different diagnoses and services were not always collected every year. Therefore, the number of children analyzed for each diagnosis and service may vary. Only diagnoses and services with percentages higher than 4% for at least one age group are shown.

* Children's developmental levels were assessed using one of two standardized assessments, depending on the age of the child: the *Bayley Scales of Infant and Toddler Development* or the *Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scales of Intelligence, 3rd edition*.

** IEP = Individualized Education Program

N: (Ages 0-2) 608-619; (Ages 3-5) 344-346.

Figure 27: Percentage of Children in NDFCC (ages 0-5) provided with these referrals (2011-2023)



Source: Neurodevelopmental Foster Care Clinic, Data Template, 2011-2023.

Note: Data for different referrals were not always collected every year. Therefore, the number of children analyzed for each referral may vary. Only referrals with percentages higher than 4% for at least one age group are shown.

* IEP = Individualized Education Program

** The Leaps & Bounds program is designed to support the healthy development of children ages 0-5 whose parents are recovering from methamphetamine or other drug use and who are participating in the County's Dependency Drug Court Program.

N: (Ages 0-2)=619; (Ages 3-5)=346.

Outcome Objective: Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)* services will be provided for biological parents of children served in the NDFCC

Client Outcome Objective	2022-2023
By June 30, 2023, up to 50 biologic and foster parents will participate in Triple P Level 2 seminars. By June 30, 2022, up to 75 biologic and foster parents will receive one-time Triple P Level 2 individual consultations.	56 (unique) parents participated in Level 2 Individual consultations

Source: First 5, Triple P Master Client Data Collection Template, 2023.

* See the section on Triple P in this report for more information about this program.