



FIRST 5 SANTA CRUZ COUNTY



ANNUAL EVALUATION REPORT



July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

October 2023

Acknowledgements

First 5 Santa Cruz County would like to thank Nicole Young, of Optimal Solutions Consulting, for the thoughtful and comprehensive development and coordination of the Triple P program throughout our county, as well as her invaluable collaboration in the evaluation of this program.

In addition, First 5 Santa Cruz County would like to thank the staff and participants of the funded partner agencies, whose commitment to data collection has facilitated the gathering of the robust data included in this report.



First 5 Santa Cruz County Staff

David G. Brody
Vicki Boriack
Barbara Dana
Michelle Dodge
Alicia Fernandez
Irene Freiberg
Holly Maclure
Jeff Marquardt
Maribel Pedroza
Natalie Ramos
Meghan Reilly
Christine Sieburg
Laura Sotelo
Piper Vogt
Alicia Zenteno

First 5 Santa Cruz County Commissioners

Toni Campbell, Ph.D.
Jennifer Herrera
Bruce McPherson
Diane Muñoz
Kimberly Petersen
Dr. Faris Sabbah
Johanna Schonfield
Dr. Raelene Walker



Optimal Solutions Consulting

Nicole M. Young

VisionFirst

Program Description

The American Optometric Association recommends that infants should have their first comprehensive eye exam at 6 months of age, and then they should have additional eye exams at age 3, and just before entering kindergarten or the first grade.

“The preschool years are a time for developing the visual abilities that a child will need in school and throughout his or her life. Steps taken during these years to help ensure vision is developing normally can provide a child with a good ‘head start’ for school.”²⁰

In an effort to help identify vision problems early in life, VisionFirst was developed in Santa Cruz County as a way to provide children as young as 6 months old with a simple instrument-based vision screening right in their child care setting. First 5 VisionFirst Outreach staff were trained to use the Spot Vision Screener, a handheld portable device designed to quickly and easily detect vision issues. The Spot Vision Screener detects potential vision problems, such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, blurred vision, unequal refractive power, eye misalignment, and unequal pupil size.

The Spot Vision Screener does not replace a complete eye examination by an optometrist. Rather, it only identifies a potential vision issue. Parents of children who are found to be “out of range” (showing a potential vision problem) are encouraged and assisted in following up with a full vision exam from an optometrist. At this appointment, the optometrist can determine if the child requires glasses, needs to be monitored, or requires regular eye exam follow-up care.



Following the completion of a successful pilot program in summer 2015, VisionFirst was integrated into First 5’s Santa Cruz Reading Corps program, which increased the reach of the program. In 2016-17, VisionFirst was expanded to include all state-funded preschool programs in the County. In addition, because the Spot Vision Screener can provide screenings to children as young as 6 months old, First 5 piloted screenings in 19 infant and toddler classrooms.

Since the start of the program, vision screenings have been completed in 51 state-funded preschool and infant/toddler classrooms, 10 Migrant Seasonal Head Start classrooms, 4 state migrant classrooms, 4 Early Head Start classrooms, 13 Head Start classrooms, and 3 private preschool and infant/toddler classrooms, providing screenings at a total of **85** different classrooms in Santa Cruz County.

For children who are shown to have a vision issue, First 5 VisionFirst Outreach staff help parents find local optometrists if they don’t already have one, and also provide crucial information and resources to help parents encourage their children to wear their new glasses.

²⁰ American Optometric Association, *Preschool Vision: 2 to 5 Years of Age*, [Retrieved 8/24/16 from <http://www.aoa.org/>], 2016.

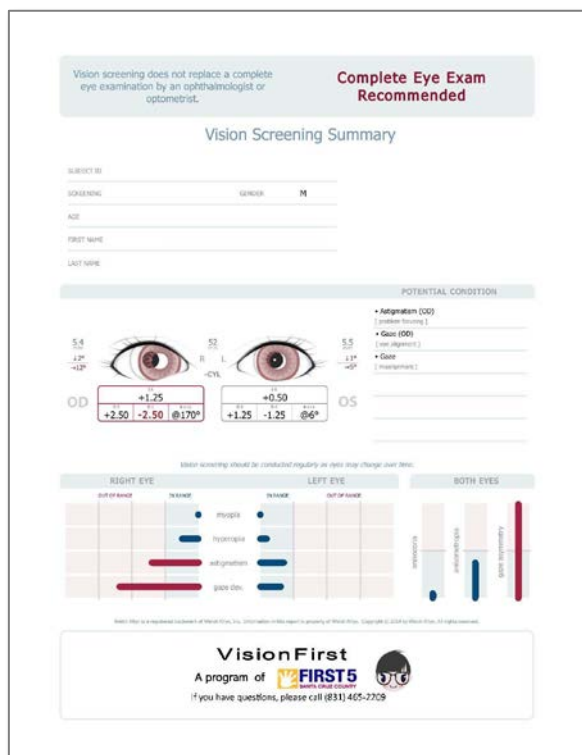
- The First 5 website includes a entire section about VisionFirst, and provides videos and read-aloud books about eyeglasses. Some answer key questions for children such as, “How do you know if you need glasses?”, “How does an eye doctor check your eyes?” Other books help build children’s confidence in wearing their glasses.
- All parents are given a flyer, “Tips to encourage your child to wear their glasses.”

The VisionFirst program believes that the more activities and books teachers read in the classroom about vision health and screenings, the more comfortable children will feel when getting their eyes checked and seeing others with glasses. To assist with this, First 5 developed a bilingual *VisionFirst Dramatic Play Kit* that is given to child care sites.

Due to the success of the VisionFirst program, some local partners (including Migrant & Seasonal Head Start, Early Head Start/Head Start sites, and Santa Cruz Community Health Centers) have purchased their own Spot Vision Screeners to provide on-going screening.

The following two images are examples of what the screening results look like using the Spot Vision Screener. The image on the left shows screening results that indicate that the child may have vision issues. The image on the right shows the screening results for the same child wearing glasses, which shows the vast improvement in his vision. This shows how the Spot Vision Screener camera can identify potential vision problems, and how easily these results can be shared with the child’s parents for discussion.

Screening results indicating vision issues



Screening results after receiving eyeglasses

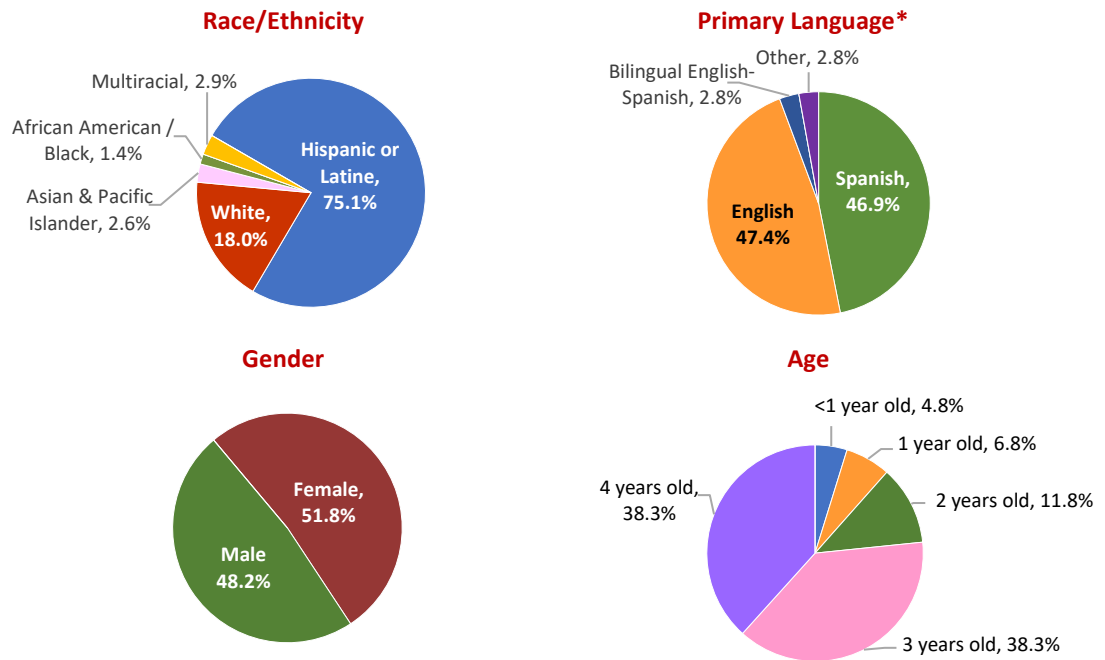


Population Served

	2022-2023
Children	355

Source: First 5 Santa Cruz County, VisionFirst records, 2023.

Figure 22: Demographics of Children (ages 0-5) participating in VisionFirst (2022-23)



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

* "Other" language options may include Multilingual, Bilingual-Other, and other languages.

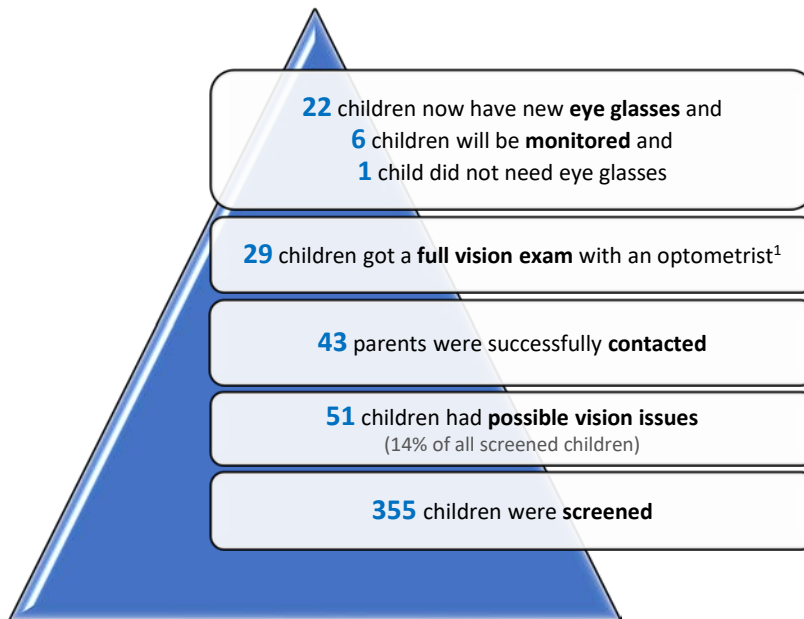
N=(Race)=350; (Language)=352; (Gender)=355; (Age)=355.

Outcomes

VisionFirst helped identify children who might have vision problems, many of whom then had full vision exams at an optometrist. First 5 VisionFirst Outreach staff reported these screening results:

- Of the 355 children screened, 51 had possible vision problems identified (14% of all children screened).
- First 5 VisionFirst Outreach staff were able to contact the parents of 43 of these children about their children’s results.
- 29 of these children have followed up with a full vision exam at an optometrist (to date).
- Of those children who had a full vision exam, 22 were prescribed eye glasses, 6 will continue to be monitored for possible vision issues, and 1 child did not need eye glasses.

Figure 23: VisionFirst results – Santa Cruz County (2022-23)



Source: First 5 Santa Cruz County, VisionFirst records, 2023.

¹ Full vision exams were conducted either for the first time, or with the child’s current optometrist.

Local partner activities

The PVUSD Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) program and Head Start, Early Head Start, and State Preschool sites have adopted this program and purchased their own Spot Vision Screener devices. In 2022-23 these sites conducted their own screenings and follow-up, and reported these significant results:

Figure 24: Local partners’ vision screenings using the Spot Vision Screener (2022-23)

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN SCREENED	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WITH POSSIBLE VISION ISSUES	NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO GOT A FULL VISION EXAM WITH AN OPTOMETRIST	RESULTS
PVUSD Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) program	156	24 (15% of all children screened)	5*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 were prescribed glasses • 3 will be monitored
Head Start, Early Head Start, and State Preschool sites	237	39 (16% of all children screened)	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 were prescribed glasses • 6 will be monitored

* Out of the 24 children with possible vision issues at MSHS, this is the number of children with full vision exams at the time these data were provided. At that time, 8 additional children had pending appointments, and 11 had parents who were working to find an available appointment.

One VisionFirst Story

We know that vision exams are essential at an early age, but how successful are these young children at wearing their eyeglasses once they obtain them? The feedback usually varies from “My daughter adapted to wearing her eyeglasses fast.” “My son has been wearing them daily since he got them.” To, “My child has been struggling with wearing his eyeglasses.”

The flyer “*Tips to Encourage Your Child to Wear Their Glasses*” encourages families to see obtaining eyeglasses from a different perspective: “It’s a Superpower.” It gives clear tips to help guide families in overcoming the obstacles that may keep children from wearing their new eyeglasses.

First 5 VisionFirst Outreach staff screened a 4-year-old who obtained eyeglasses this year, whose mother indicated that he was struggling with wearing them. The mother loved the flyer with tips! Tip 5, “Connect with your child’s Teacher,” provided the vital support her child needed. His teacher was able to encourage him to keep on his eyeglasses by encouraging other children in the class to wear fake eyeglasses during certain activities. The teacher turned wearing glasses into something fun!

We know that true success comes from children wearing their eyeglasses. This mother initially worried that her son would be unable to leave on his eyeglasses, but was surprised at how changing her attitude and celebrating his first pair of eyeglasses made the difference. Her son now keeps his eyeglasses on and is providing his eyes with the help they need to see clearly.

- First 5 VisionFirst program

VisionFirst
A program of **FIRST5**
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

Tips to encourage your child to wear their glasses

- 1. Talk About it**
Start a conversation with encouraging words and a positive attitude.
- 2. Read Books**
Reading books that talk about wearing eyeglasses can be a good way to start a conversation with your child regarding how they feel about going to the optometrist and getting glasses.
- 3. Let your child choose the frame**
This will help your child get excited about wearing glasses. Make sure that the glasses fit well. Durable and light frames are recommended for young children.
- 4. Build confidence one step at a time**
If your child is struggling with wearing their glasses, try having them wear them for short periods. Start with periods of 10 minutes and add time as they get more comfortable.
- 5. Connect with your child's Teacher**
Let your child's teacher know that your child has been prescribed glasses. Teachers can play a vital role in this transition and provide tips to encourage your child to wear their glasses during school.
- 6. Pretend**
Wear fake glasses to help your child have a smoother transition.
- 7. It's a Super Power**
Refer to glasses as a superpower or magical tool that will help see the world differently.
- 8. Point out people your child knows or has seen on tv that wear glasses**
If anyone you know wears glasses, encourage them to share their experience with your child.
- 9. Create a Daily Routine**
Make wearing glasses part of your child's fun and exciting daily routine. Prevent glasses from getting lost or broken by having a special box and place for them.
- 10. Celebrate your child's first pair of glasses**

Created by: <https://www.visionfirst.org/>
"Vision: Encourage Young Kids to Wear Their First Pair of Glasses." *Phonics & Literacy*. <https://www.visionfirst.org/2019/08/01/encourage-your-child-to-wear-their-first-pair-of-glasses/>
"10 Tips to Get Your Child to Wear Their Glasses." *Parents*. <https://www.parents.com/health/child-development/0-5-years-old/10-tips-to-get-your-child-to-wear-their-glasses/>

The impact of the VisionFirst program—and at agencies that adopted this program—may be even greater, as it’s likely that these efforts may also lead to families getting vision exams for their other children as well. Future work by the VisionFirst program will focus on continuing to provide these services to existing VisionFirst sites, expanding these screenings to additional child care sites, and helping more families follow up with full vision exams.