

# Bill of Rights for Children & Youth

The Bill of Rights for Children and Youth is a bold, public agreement that all children and youth are entitled to certain fundamental elements.

The United Nations proclaimed an International Children's Bill of Rights in 1990, and the State of California passed its own in 2009 modeled on the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth of San Mateo County.

It is time for Santa Clara County to join in this public agreement. Specifically, all children and youth have a right to:

- ◆ *A healthy mind, body and spirit that enables them to maximize their potential.*
- ◆ *Develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian, or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.*
- ◆ *Have their essential needs met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care, and accessible transportation.*
- ◆ *A safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.*
- ◆ *Access to a 21st century education that promotes success in life, in future careers and a love of life-long learning.*
- ◆ *Training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient and contribute to their community.*
- ◆ *Employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.*
- ◆ *Freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.*
- ◆ *A voice in matters that affect them.*
- ◆ *A sense of hope for their future.*



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### WHY SHOULD WE ENDORSE?

Leaders and citizens of Santa Clara County who believe children and youth have fundamental rights can now go on record. A formal and written agreement provides local leaders, officials and funders with a framework to formulate decisions, develop policies, and make investments that impact children and youth.

Unfortunately, thousands of children in Santa Clara County are not realizing the promise of the Bill of Rights for Children & Youth:

- Each year, nearly 3,000 students in grades 9 - 12 drop out of high school. 3000 students could fill 2 mid-size high schools.
- More than 1 in 4 children have significant developmental needs in either self-regulation, language development, or both when they enter kindergarten.
- Only 8 % of our middle and high school students have the developmental assets needed to thrive.
- Nearly 25,000 students who are eligible for free or reduced cost lunches are not receiving this support.
- Only 50% of our third grade students perform at grade level on reading tests and only 24% of those who are economically disadvantaged students perform at this level.

Santa Clara County is enriched by the diversity of its children and youth. In order to benefit from this diversity, we must ensure all children and youth realize the same rights, regardless of their culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or developmental abilities.

At all times, but especially during times of political change and financial upheaval, a Bill of Rights helps our community stay focused on children and youth as a priority. Importantly, it keeps the spotlight on all children, from all racial and cultural backgrounds, income levels, family structures, and developmental abilities.

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### HOW WILL A BILL OF RIGHTS CHANGE ANYTHING?

As a public agreement, adoption of the Bill of Rights for Children & Youth is a first step in ensuring that leaders are keeping the needs of children and youth in the forefront when decisions are made regarding policies, budgets and government practices.

The Santa Clara County Children's Agenda, developed by hundreds of community partners under the leadership of Kids in Common, provides the community with an explicit set of goals and methods for measuring the well-being of our children. The Children's Agenda is a highly selective and thoroughly researched set of 13 indicators of children's health and well-being. The data from these 13 indicators is collected and monitored over time to track progress in assuring that children and youth are safe, healthy, successful in school and successful in life.

By tracking the progress of the 13 indicators of the Children's Agenda, we will be able to track our progress towards fulfilling the Bill of Rights for Children & Youth. Furthermore, public agreement on the Bill of Rights for Children & Youth and the Children's Agenda as a plan for action to assure those rights is a rigorous and reliable way to attract and maximize partnerships, resources and policies that will lead to positive change on behalf of children and youth.



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## A PATHWAY TO ACTION

The Santa Clara County Children's Agenda is the pathway to action for fulfilling the Bill of Rights for Children and Youth. The agenda states community goals and thirteen data outcomes to track our progress in achieving those goals:

- Access to Health Care
- Healthy Lifestyle
- Early Childhood Social and Emotional Development
- School Readiness
- Third Grade Reading Proficiency
- Eighth Grade Math Proficiency
- Children in the Thriving Zone (Developmental Assets)
- Children Fluent in 2 + Languages
- High School Graduation Rates
- Children Living in Safe and Stable Families
- Children Experiencing Hunger
- Juvenile Arrest Rates
- Children & Youth Reporting They Feel Valued by the Community



**CHILDREN'S AGENDA**  
Santa Clara County



## Mission:

Santa Clara County Children's Agenda has identified community goals for our children and thirteen data outcomes to track our progress in achieving those goals. The Children's Agenda provides a basis for action, makes it easier to seek and allocate resources, and allows our stakeholders to develop powerful strategies for change. It provides a framework to build meaningful and deep partnerships and provides a common language that helps us to align public and private investments, coordinate and align resources, assess and improve quality and increase reach and impact across sectors.



### **Santa Clara County Children's Agenda**

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San Jose, CA 95126

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[www.kidsincommon.org](http://www.kidsincommon.org)



**CHILDREN'S AGENDA**

**Santa Clara County**

# Bill of Rights for Children & Youth

## Santa Clara County

All children and youth have a right to be safe, healthy, successful in learning and successful in life regardless of their language, culture, race, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, religion or developmental abilities. Santa Clara County is enriched by the diversity of its children and youth. In order to benefit from this diversity, we must ensure all children and youth realize the same rights. Therefore we resolve to support Santa Clara County children and youth so that:

- ◆ *They have a healthy mind, body and spirit that enables them to maximize their potential.*
- ◆ *They develop a healthy attachment to a parent, guardian, or caregiver and an ongoing relationship with a caring and supportive adult.*
- ◆ *Their essential needs are met – nutritious food, shelter, clothing, health care, and accessible transportation.*
- ◆ *They have a safe and healthy environment, including homes, schools, neighborhoods and communities.*
- ◆ *They have access to a 21st century education that promotes success in life, in future careers and a love of life-long learning.*
- ◆ *They have training in life skills that will prepare them to live independently, be self-sufficient and contribute to their community.*
- ◆ *They have employment opportunities with protections from unfair labor practices.*
- ◆ *They have freedom from mistreatment, abuse and neglect.*
- ◆ *They have a voice in matters that affect them.*
- ◆ *They have a sense of hope for their future.*

Signature ..... Date .....

Name .....

Representing ..... Self ..... Organization .....

Organization Name .....

Email ..... Phone .....



**CHILDREN'S AGENDA**  
Santa Clara County

**Please return signed Bill of Rights to:**

*Dana Bunnett*

**Kids in Common**

1605 The Alameda

San Jose, CA 95126

**FAX:** 408-882-0909 (No cover sheet needed)



**CHILDREN'S AGENDA**  
Santa Clara County