

Success for Every Child



SPOTLIGHT ON SUCCESS:



Opening Doors for Children at Puente de la Costa Sur

All children in San Mateo County deserve to learn in nurturing, safe and affordable child care, staffed by qualified child care professionals. Knowing that early childhood education is one of the most critical factors to future success, organizations like First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC) are working hard to make that a reality.

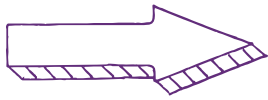
An exemplary catalyst of creating solutions for local families is Puente de la Costa Sur (Puente), an active part of San Mateo County's rural community. In 2016, Puente opened one of the area's first bilingual parent cooperatives, "Sueños Unidos" ("United Dreams"). This co-op model allowed local volunteers—such as parents, grandparents and aunts—to access affordable child care while assisting Early Childhood Education professionals. With guidance from professional teaching staff, volunteers come one day a week and provide care on a rotating basis.

With the help of F5SMC, the co-op's childcare center was able to obtain the funding necessary to fully support program operation within months of opening. Looking forward, Puente has its sights set on becoming a licensed early



childhood education provider. In the meantime, they ensure quality programming by providing professional development opportunities for staff through F5SMC and the San Mateo County Office of Education, along with additional programs for children ages 0-5.

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One of these programs is “Abriendo Puertas” (“Opening Doors”). This special program gives support to parents as leaders with a ten-session curriculum delivered through popular education tools in partnership with the La Honda-Pescadero School District and community parents. In addition, Puente provides home visits to families with children ages 0-3. The program also gives parents and children access to safety net services, health and wellness services and developmental education.

It was through Abriendo Puertas that Puente staff first met 1-year-old Eddie*. From the very beginning, they were concerned about Eddie’s health, as he appeared very thin and low energy, with little language skills for his age. When he joined the childcare co-op, teachers referred Eddie’s parents to a pediatrician but were unable to obtain enough information from them to truly help. Puente staff then decided to accompany Eddie’s parents to one of his appointments and later determined that he was extremely anemic. With the help of a variety of vitamins and iron-rich foods, Eddie was back on the road to a healthy start. Eddie has not only gained weight, but he now laughs, runs, and even plays with other kids.

**Names changed to protect privacy.*



First 5 San Mateo County is entrusted with the strategic investment of nearly \$7 million public dollars each year specifically earmarked to help children and families in our county succeed. We work on behalf of the more than 53,000 children ages zero to five living here to ensure their every need is met, their families are supported and their future is a priority.