

BACKGROUND



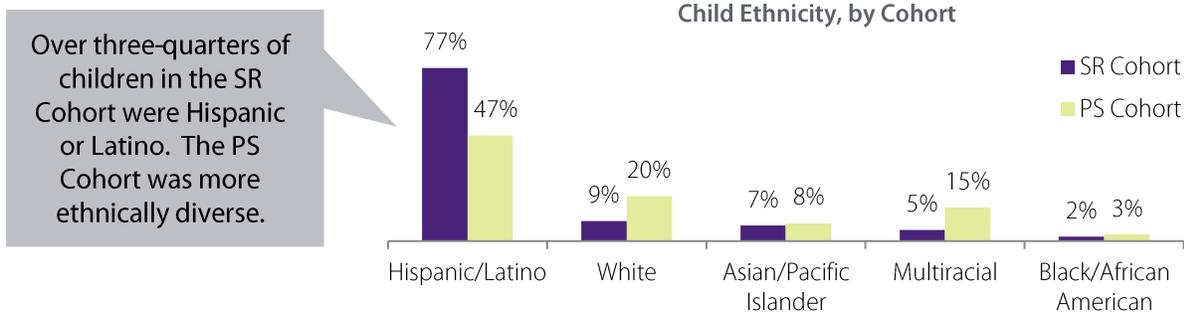
- + In 2007, First 5 San Joaquin commissioned Harder+Company Community Research to conduct a five-year longitudinal study of the short- and long-term benefits of its School Readiness and Preschool investments including improved school readiness skills, increased parent involvement in their child’s learning, increased parent participation in home educational activities, and positive school performance.
- + After the longitudinal study concluded in 2012, the evaluation team continued to follow the children in the School Readiness and Preschool Cohorts and conducted a two-year follow-up report.

- **School Readiness Cohort (SR Cohort):** A randomly selected, representative sample of children from birth to three years of age who were enrolled in a First 5 funded School Readiness program in spring 2008.
- **Preschool Cohort (PS Cohort):** A randomly selected, representative sample of children three to five years of age enrolled in a First 5 funded Preschool program in spring 2008.
- **Comparison Group:** A group of peers in San Joaquin County who did not attend preschool.

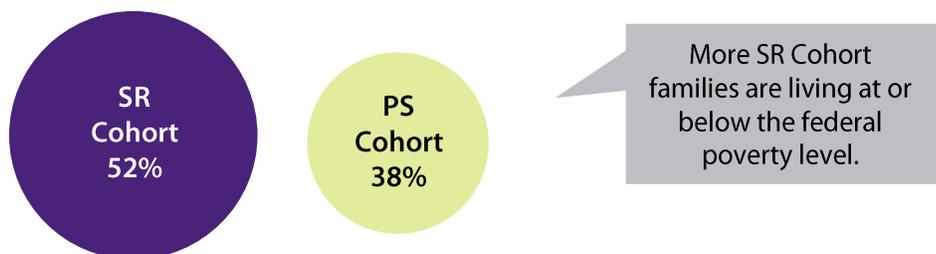
PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS



Participant characteristics were an important part of the study, as research shows that they can be factors associated with a child’s school participation and success. Child ethnicity and family poverty data at the beginning of the study is included below.



Families Living At or Below Federal Poverty Level, by Cohort



KEY FINDINGS FROM *FIVE YEAR STUDY*



- + Parents in both cohorts reported high levels of participation in home-based educational activities and over time, became more involved in their child's school.
- + School readiness assessment data show that preschool and positive social and emotional skills may be valuable for school readiness.
 - Although the SR Cohort showed the highest needs based on their socioeconomic characteristics, they demonstrated the greatest gains between preschool and kindergarten in their cognitive skills. Based on these findings, it appeared that two key factors for school readiness were preschool attendance and positive social and emotional skills.
- + School-based data suggest that children who attended a First 5 preschool are performing better than, or at the same level as, similar students in the county.
 - Compared to children who did not attend preschool, they have lower rates of absenteeism in school and lower overall rates of grade retention.
- + Children in special subgroups appear to have benefitted the most from participating in a First 5 preschool program.
 - When looking at key subgroups, including students who qualify for free/reduced priced meal participation and English Language Learners, they outperformed similar students in the Comparison Group on the California Standards Test (CST) in English Language Arts and Math.



KEY FINDINGS FROM *TWO-YEAR FOLLOW-UP STUDY*



- + Once children in the SR Cohort entered elementary school, they demonstrated fewer average days of being absent and a lower percentage of ever being retained one or more grades compared to the Comparison Group.
- + Children in the SR Cohort with the highest needs (free/reduced priced meal students and English Language Learners) appear to have benefitted the most from First 5 funded school readiness programs, as they outperformed their peers in the Comparison Group on the CST in English Language Arts and Math.
- + Over time, children in the PS Cohort have demonstrated improved and positive proficiency across key academic indicators compared to their peers in the county.
 - By the 4th grade and continuing on into 5th grade, children in the PS Cohort had fewer Individual Education Plans (IEPs), fewer average number of days absent, a lower percentage of ever being retained one or more grades, more English Language Learners re-designated as English proficient, and a higher proficiency in CST English Language Arts and Math (in 4th grade).

Findings indicate that attending a First 5 San Joaquin funded quality preschool has long-term benefits of success in school.

For more information, go to sjckids.org