

# Triple P

Positive  
Parenting  
Program

Strengthening Families in Santa Cruz County  
5-YEAR REPORT 2010-2015



A PROGRAM OF



[triplep.first5scc.org](http://triplep.first5scc.org)



# Positive Parenting: It Works!

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) is a world-renowned, evidence-based parenting program that has been available in Santa Cruz County since 2010 for families with children from birth to 16 years old. We are excited to share key results from our first 5 years of implementation, which show that:

PAGE 13	Triple P is an effective and universal public health parenting intervention, reaching a broad population of parents.
14	Triple P's simple, practical parenting strategies are changing families' lives for the better.
16	Triple P is responsive to the needs of diverse families.
19	Brief, "light touch" Triple P services are effective.
20	Triple P has staying power, long after services have ended.

We look forward to continuously growing and improving Triple P in Santa Cruz County so that all families have the tools and support they need to raise happy, healthy children. We hope you will join us in making this vision a reality.

## Parenting Matters

**Raising children to become confident, capable, independent human beings is the hardest job many of us will ever face.** It's the only job that requires us to be on duty 24 hours a day, with no options for vacation time or sick days. Parenting can be a stressful, thankless job that takes over our every waking thought, and even our dreams. The responsibility of keeping children physically and emotionally safe can be overwhelming at times, especially when everyday media headlines about violence and tragedies stoke our fears about worst-case scenarios. It's a job that becomes even harder when we're faced with hurdles that seem impossible to change or overcome – unemployment, economic hardship, family violence, mental illness, homelessness, or substance abuse, just to name a few.

Even the most loving, patient, and educated parents and caregivers can find themselves at a loss about how to help their child or handle challenging situations.

Yet despite these stresses and worries, **raising children to become confident, capable, independent human beings is also the most important and fulfilling job anyone can have.** Becoming a parent or caregiver provides an opportunity to raise kind, helpful, resilient problem-solvers who will in turn raise the next generation of confident, capable, independent human beings. Although this job is frequently mastered through trial-and-error, none of us should have to learn on our own. Every "parent" – whether it's a biological, foster or adoptive parent, grandparent, other relative, or family friend raising a child – deserves to be surrounded by a village of other people who are ready to provide guidance, encouragement, and on-the-job training. It's the only way to succeed in this lifelong job.



**The importance of positive parenting cannot be underestimated.** Decades of research confirm that a child’s relationships and experiences in the earliest years of life affect the architecture of the developing brain and lay the foundation for future social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. In fact, the quality of parenting and caregiving throughout a child’s life is one of the most powerful predictors of long-term health and development. “The parenting that surrounds the child and the context in which parenting takes place have been found to be the best predictors of outcomes for children” and are “the ‘building blocks’ of children’s health and development.”<sup>1</sup>

**Parents help build healthy brains when they notice and respond to their children’s needs with warmth and affection.** The repetition of these “serve-and-return” interactions builds the neural connections that create a strong foundation for future learning, health

and behavior. While the early years of life are the most active period of brain development, the brain continues to change in response to experiences throughout life. With each new age and stage of development, children need responsive, nurturing caregiving in safe and engaging environments in order to learn, grow, and thrive. These are the experiences that teach children the skills to communicate with others, solve problems, regulate their emotions, and make healthy choices throughout life.

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1 Measuring What Matters: A Guide for Children’s Centres. Roberts, Donkin & Pillas, 2014.

**However, the reality is that not all children have the same opportunity to thrive.** A growing body of research tells us that children who are exposed to strong, frequent and/or prolonged adversity are at greater risk for developing a range of physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and learning problems in childhood and later in life. Exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – including physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, a caregiver’s mental illness or substance abuse, a parent in prison, exposure to family violence, or the accumulated effects of poverty – can create toxic levels of stress that disrupt children’s developing brains and impair healthy development.

**“Without adequate adult support [and] early intervention, exposure to ACEs and toxic stress can lead to an intergenerational cycle of instability and poor outcomes in core areas such as education, health and well-being, and economic security.”**

([HTTP://ASCEND.ASPENINSTITUTE.ORG/PAGES/EMERGING-BRAIN-SCIENCE](http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/pages/emerging-brain-science))

As the number of adverse experiences in a child’s life increases, so does the risk for developing poor health behaviors and outcomes later in life. A 1998 study conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found:

### **A PERSON WITH FOUR OR MORE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES IS:**

**12x**

more likely to attempt suicide

**10x**

more likely to use intravenous drugs

**7x**

more likely to be an alcoholic

**5x**

more likely to experience depression

**3x**

more likely to smoke

**2x**

more likely to have cancer

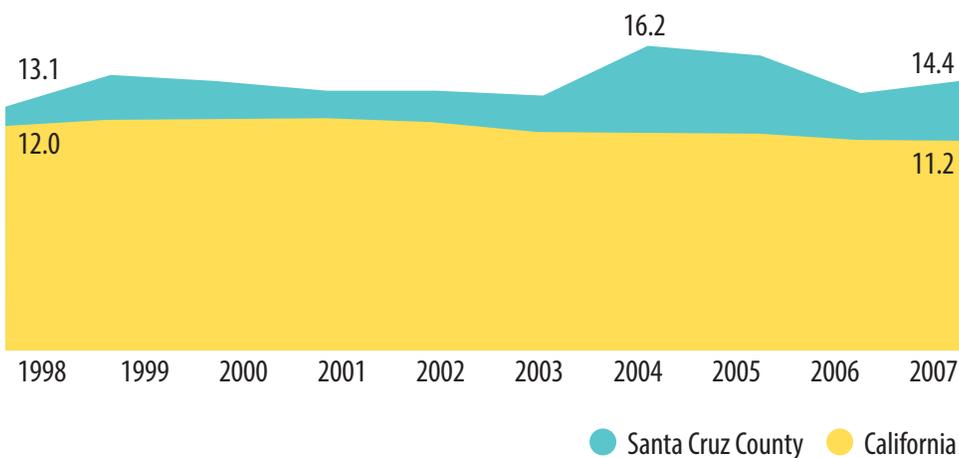
Newer research in the field of epigenetics indicates that childhood experiences not only affect health and development within a person’s lifetime, but the effects of those experiences leave a mark on a person’s DNA that can be inherited by his or her children. This means that physical, emotional, and behavioral responses to adverse experiences can contribute to generational cycles of substance abuse, depression, family violence, poverty, diseases, and other health problems.

**Awareness of the hazards of ACEs and the effects of toxic stress raises the stakes for all of us.** Although many children in our community are being raised in loving, stable homes, we know that many others are living with Adverse Childhood Experiences, and the effects of toxic stress often go unrecognized until costly, intrusive interventions are required. As parents, caregivers, family members, teachers, service providers, faith leaders, funders, policymakers, and community members, we have a chance to translate the science of risk and resilience into parenting programs and practices that make a tangible, meaningful difference for families and children – today, tomorrow, and for years and generations to come.

# From Patchworks to Systems: A New Paradigm

Parent education and support programs have been a staple in Santa Cruz County for many years. Prior to 2008, several parenting programs were offered by a number of organizations serving children and families. While many of these programs were beloved and shared an overarching goal of strengthening families, a fragmented funding and service delivery system resulted in a patchwork of parenting programs with varying levels of reach and results, making it difficult to measure the impact. Meanwhile, Santa Cruz County's rate of substantiated allegations of child abuse and neglect remained higher than the statewide rate, and was on an upward climb.

**RATE OF SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT (PER 1,000)**



Prior to 2008, the rate of substantiated allegations of child abuse and neglect in Santa Cruz County showed an upward trend.

This persistent and troubling trend concerned leaders of First 5 Santa Cruz County (First 5), the county's Human Services Department (HSD), and the county's Health Services Agency (HSA). As major funders of parent education, family support, and mental health services in the county, the leaders of these organizations felt a shared sense of responsibility and urgency to invest wisely in what works in order to "turn the curve" on children's health and well-being.

At the same time, preliminary results of a groundbreaking research study in South Carolina began to circulate. In this CDC-funded study, researchers randomly assigned 9 counties to implement the Triple P – Positive Parenting Program countywide (Triple P counties), and another 9 counties to provide parenting "services as usual" (control counties). Results of this study showed that compared to the control counties, **Triple P counties had significantly lower rates of substantiated child abuse reports, foster care placements, and child abuse injuries treated at hospitals and emergency rooms.**<sup>2</sup>

2 Prinze, R.J., Sanders, M.R., Shapiro, C.J., Whitaker, D.J., & Lutzker, J.R. (2009). Population-based prevention of child maltreatment: The U.S. Triple P system population trial. *Prevention Science*, 10(1), 1-12.



## WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

“I really liked how I was **always offered ‘tools’** to work with my child. I would learn and practice at home with my child. I have gotten great results and **my child has greatly improved in her behaviors!**”

“I feel like **the Triple P program has ideal solutions to everyday family problems.** It’s pretty much ‘right on’ with the difficulties our family has.”

**The CDC Triple P study was the first of its kind to demonstrate that treating parenting as a public health issue could improve child outcomes at a countywide, population level.** The idea of building an integrated system of prevention, early intervention, and treatment services to strengthen parent-child relationships represented a major shift in the existing – and fragmented – paradigm for funding and providing parenting programs. The potential benefits of adopting Triple P also aligned with the First 5 Commission's strategic framework and decision to invest in evidence-based programs and practices. First 5, HSD and HSA were eager to explore how making such a shift could benefit local families and yield better outcomes for Santa Cruz County families overall.

Beginning in late 2008, the three funders hosted a series of facilitated community discussions. Key stakeholders were invited to share their perspectives about parent education needs within the county, learn about existing parenting programs, develop a deeper understanding of the evidence and structure of Triple P, and explore the potential for implementing Triple P in Santa Cruz County. In the spring of 2009, after extensive exploration and discussion, First 5, HSD, and HSA agreed there were enough interested partners and enough evidence to launch a local pilot of Triple P. The funders agreed to start small, evaluate both the process and outcomes, and strive to implement the full suite of Triple P programs in order to achieve a population-level impact. In addition, they shared a commitment to maintain fidelity to the model to the greatest extent possible, in order to determine whether implementing Triple P in Santa Cruz County would yield results that were comparable to results of international research studies.

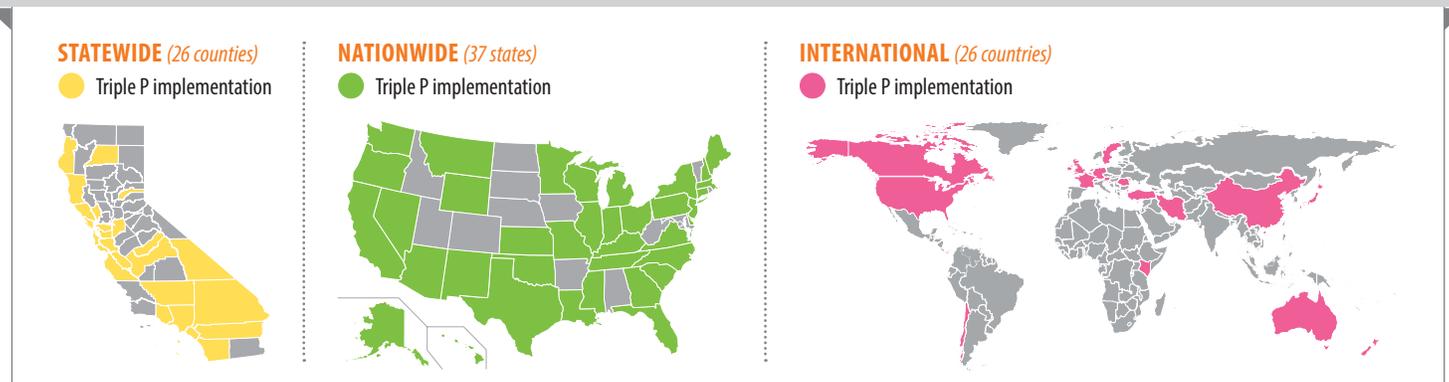
# The Triple P System

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is a comprehensive, evidence-based support system for parents and caregivers designed to:

- Strengthen families by promoting positive relationships;
- Teach parents simple strategies for preventing and handling parenting challenges; and
- Increase access to parenting information and support.

Originally developed as a home visiting program in Australia, Triple P is now an internationally acclaimed program used in 26 countries. In the United States, California is one of 37 states where Triple P is available, and Santa Cruz County was one of the first counties in California to adopt Triple P. Of the 26 counties where Triple P is present, Santa Cruz County is one of the few that is implementing the full suite of programs with the goal of achieving a population-level impact.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF TRIPLE P WORLDWIDE

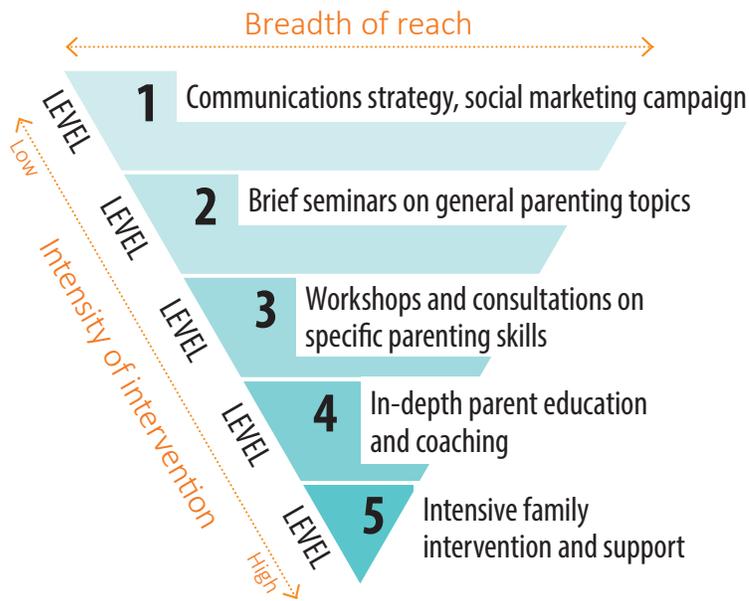


Over 30 years of international research has led bodies such as the World Health Organization, CDC, and the United Nations to cite Triple P as an effective, evidence-based intervention. The endorsement of these agencies is based on evaluation outcomes such as: increases in confidence and emotional well-being of parents and caregivers, increased use of positive parenting practices, reductions in emotional and behavioral problems among children and teens, and decreased conflict between partners over parenting issues.

### **Triple P is unique in its focus on improving family functioning and child outcomes at a population level.**

Historically, many parent education programs have focused on serving families identified as “high risk,” or those whose children already exhibit significant behavioral and emotional problems. Triple P utilizes a public health approach to make parenting information and support universally available to every family, regardless of socioeconomic status or risk level. This enables communities to impact a broader segment of the population and reduces the social stigma that often prevents parents from seeking help before a crisis occurs.

The Triple P system is designed to reach an entire community as well as individual families by offering **five “levels” of services and support**<sup>3</sup>:



Lower levels (1 – 3) reach a wider audience and offer brief or “light touch” support for parenting. Higher levels (4 – 5) typically reach a smaller, more specific audience, as not every parent needs or wants intensive support.

**Program variants** are available for families with children birth–12 years old (Core Triple P), families with teens (Teen Triple P), and families with children who have special needs (Stepping Stones Triple P). Services are offered to individual parents or groups of families in a wide variety of settings such as health care organizations, schools, family resource centers, counseling centers, and other government- or community-based agencies. **This multi-level, multimodal framework provides**

**the ability to offer Triple P as a universal, preventive program to an entire community, while offering direct services that match individual families’ needs and interests.**

Researchers and economists alike agree that Triple P is effective and produces long-term benefits for children, families, and communities. Multiple economic analyses cite Triple P as a cost-effective intervention. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy’s 2015 analysis of evidence-based policies estimates that **every \$1 invested in the full Triple P system in Washington yields nearly \$8 in social and economic benefits associated with improved outcomes** (e.g. increases in participants’ future wage earnings and decreases in publicly-funded program costs due to improved physical, mental and behavioral health). **Offering Level 4 Triple P as a stand-alone children’s mental health intervention yields approximately \$3 for every \$1 invested.** In the CDC-funded study, the research team estimated that the cost to implement the full Triple P system (\$12 per participant) could be recovered within one year by achieving a 10% reduction in the rate of child abuse and neglect.

**“High-quality parenting can be available to a child even when the family is in adverse financial circumstances. While higher income facilitates good parenting, it doesn’t guarantee it. An economically advantaged child exposed to low-quality parenting is more disadvantaged than an economically disadvantaged child exposed to high-quality parenting.”**

JAMES HECKMAN, NOBEL PRIZE WINNER IN ECONOMICS

3 Graphic based off of the Triple P Pyramid from the U.S. Triple P Training Guide, Triple P America, 2014.



## A PARENT'S STORY:

“Before Triple P, my son was out of control. Everything was a fight or a tantrum. Anytime I asked him to do anything, it would turn into a screaming match. Nothing I did worked. The worst part about it was that I started to notice my younger daughter imitating his behaviors.

After participating in Triple P, everything is so much better! I feel so much more relaxed now. I feel like I am the parent I wanted to be. We now have [family] rules posted on the wall, and I think it helps the kids to see the rules. I am much calmer when I give them instructions. I used to yell at them all the time. Now I use descriptive praise a lot. I had no idea that such a simple thing would change so much. And the best part is that the strategies worked on my daughter as well.

I am much more affectionate now. I felt like before, I was always angry at them and that stopped me from being affectionate.

I would tell [other parents] to really consider Triple P. I know a lot of the time we are afraid to ask for help because we think people will judge us, but this program is really worth it. This experience was a blessing.”

WHAT PARENTS  
ARE SAYING:

“I’m a first-time dad  
and I was really  
concerned. **Triple P**  
has helped me with  
my family and  
being a good dad.”



# Triple P in Santa Cruz County

In late 2009, First 5, HSA and HSD launched the local Triple P system in partnership with other agencies that serve children and families. The program has been implemented in phases, starting with in-depth services for families with children birth-12 years old (*Core Triple P*), and incrementally adding the brief, “light touch” services, other program variants (*Teen Triple P and Stepping Stones Triple P*), and the additional intensive family interventions. A small social marketing campaign was implemented in 2011, then expanded in 2012 to promote the availability of Triple P and reduce the stigma often associated with seeking help for parenting.

As the sponsoring agencies, First 5, HSD and HSA contribute and leverage their respective resources to fund the countywide coordination, training, direct services, social marketing, and program evaluation.

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**First 5 Santa Cruz County (First 5)** serves as the lead agency, providing the backbone organizational support needed to implement and evaluate a large-scale, evidence-based initiative with fidelity. **First 5** coordinates all required trainings, oversees the countywide implementation and evaluation, implements the social marketing campaign, serves as the central contact point for referrals, and funds a portion of the direct services provided by independent practitioners and agencies.

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**Human Services Department (HSD)** contracts with the Parents Center to provide parenting classes, therapy, and supervised visits for families who are involved in the child welfare system. The Parents Center adopted Triple P as its parent education model when the pilot was launched in 2009. **HSD** also contributes funding for Families Together, the differential response program operated by Encompass Community Services. Families Together has integrated Triple P into the services it offers to families when a risk for child abuse or neglect has been identified.

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**Health Services Agency (HSA)** contributes funding for Triple P coordination and services through a contract with First 5, funded by the Mental Health Services Act – Prevention and Early Intervention plan. In addition, **HSA** incorporates Triple P services into a selected number of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) contracts, while **First 5** provides the required matching funds. Children’s Mental Health staff also includes a number of accredited Triple P practitioners who incorporate positive parenting strategies into their work with children, youth, and families.

This partnership among the three organizations enables First 5 to play a central role in building a local Triple P system that is available to all families with children from birth–16 years old, including children with special needs.

# Making a Lasting Impact

Within months of beginning implementation, local evaluation results provided early signs that adopting Triple P had been a worthwhile investment. Parents reported significant increases in their use of positive parenting styles, improvements in child behavior, increased levels of emotional well-being, and reduced levels of conflict with their partners over parenting. In the 5 years since then, Santa Cruz County's Triple P evaluation outcomes have remained strong and consistent with findings from other national and international research studies. The persistence and diligence of First 5's partners has demonstrated that it is possible to translate gold-standard research into **everyday practice that benefits local children and families when the research-based model is implemented with fidelity.**

The tangible, lasting impact of Triple P can be summarized by these five key findings, described in further detail in this report:

1. Triple P is an **effective and universal public health parenting intervention**, reaching a broad population of parents.
2. Triple P's simple, practical parenting strategies are **changing families' lives for the better.**
3. Triple P is responsive to **the needs of diverse families.**
4. Brief, "light touch" Triple P **services are effective.**
5. **Triple P has staying power**, long after services have ended.

## WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

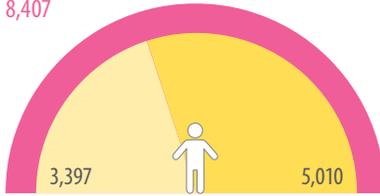
"I feel as though I've grown up even more as a father and have strengthened my bond with my son."



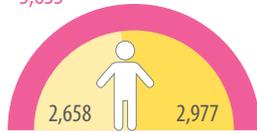
# Triple P is an effective and universal public health parenting intervention, reaching a broad population of parents.

## TRIPLE P'S REACH AND PARENT PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

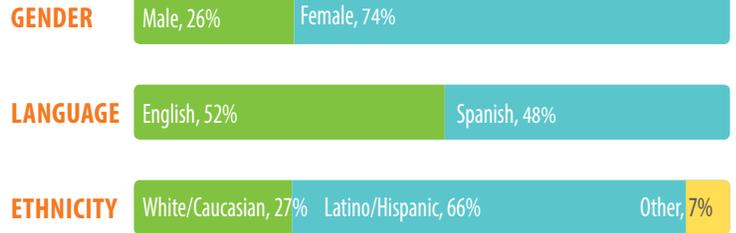
**Children** (all ages)  
8,407



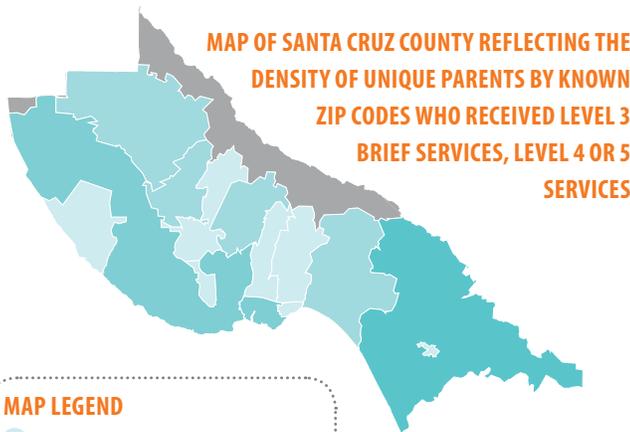
**Parents/Caregivers**  
5,635



● Individual or Group Services ● Seminars & Workshops ● Total



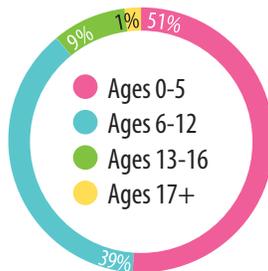
## TRIPLE P PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE COUNTY



### MAP LEGEND

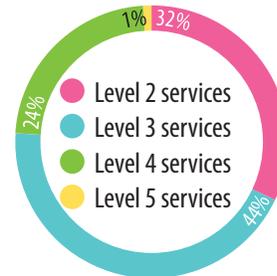
- 0-30 parents (zip codes: 95007, 95010, 95017, 95018, 95041, 95064, 95065, 95073)
- 31-75 parents (zip codes: 95003, 95005, 95006, 95019, 95066)
- 76-249 parents (zip codes: 95060, 95062)
- 250-792 parents (zip code: 95076)

Parents are **seeking support** for raising children of all ages.



First 5 and its Triple P partners have stayed true to the vision of building a local system offering "something for everyone." Triple P reaches a broad and diverse population of parents and caregivers.

## TRIPLE P SERVICES ACCESSED



Families are accessing the **full array of Triple P services** available.

## PARTICIPANTS WHO FIRST HEARD ABOUT TRIPLE P FROM MEDIA AND ADVERTISEMENTS

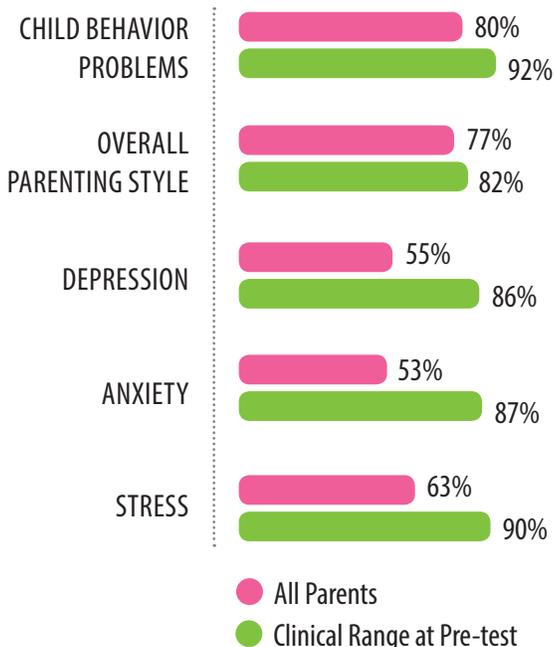
The Level 1 social media marketing campaign is important for increasing awareness about the availability of Triple P and reducing barriers to seeking parenting support.



# Triple P's simple, practical parenting strategies are changing families' lives for the better.

Many parents who participate in Triple P describe the changes in their families as “a miracle.” Some children ask Triple P practitioners, “What are you doing to my mom/dad? It’s like magic.” While this may sound as though the Triple P program or practitioners are responsible for creating these changes in families, the truth is that **the simplicity of the parenting strategies and the way they are taught leads parents to discover their own solutions.** In the process of learning and trying strategies to prevent or manage their children’s challenging behaviors, parents are building or repairing relationships with their children, partners, and other family members. That is where the real magic happens — and why it lasts.

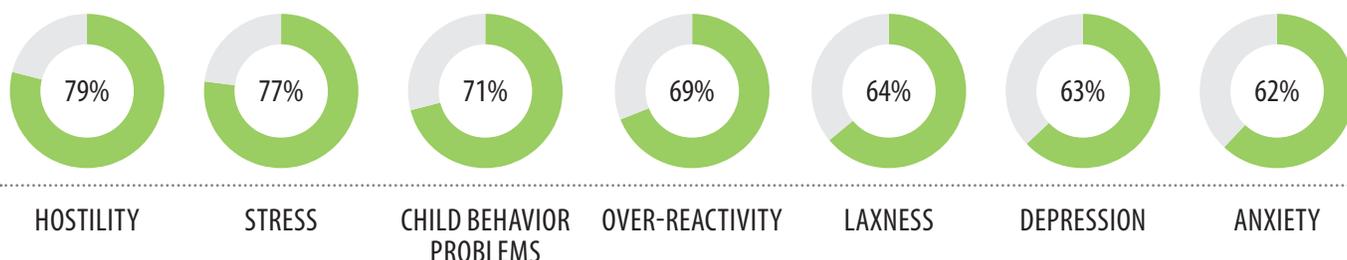
## PARENTS WHO DEMONSTRATED IMPROVEMENT IN THESE KEY PARENTING ISSUES 2010-2015



**Parents who complete Triple P services are reporting improvements in multiple dimensions of their families’ lives.** This is particularly evident among parents receiving in-depth services, many of whom report high levels of distress related to parenting at the beginning of the program. First 5’s evaluation results consistently show that the majority of All Parents who complete in-depth services report improvements in their children’s behavior, overall parenting style, depression, anxiety, and stress.

Parents who begin the program with an elevated or “clinically significant” level of parenting concerns (Clinical Range at Pre-test) tend to report even greater improvements by the end of the program. In fact, by the end of the program, most of these parents report improvements that move them out of the clinical range of concern in several key parenting issues. Taken together, these data suggest that **Triple P is particularly effective for parents who are experiencing more serious parenting challenges.**

## PARENTS WHO MOVED OUT OF THE "CLINICAL RANGE" IN THESE KEY PARENTING ISSUES 2010-2015

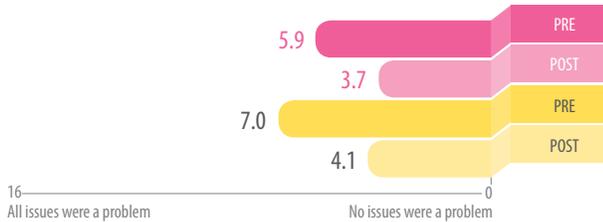


**Parents of teens and parents of children with special needs are among those showing the greatest gains by the end of the program.** A small but growing number of parents are participating in both Teen and Stepping Stones Triple P. Early results for both of these program variants are already showing significant progress. Parents participating in Teen and Stepping Stones Triple P tend to report more serious parenting issues than parents in Core Triple P, particularly in the areas of parenting styles, conflict with their partners over parenting (Teen), and their levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. These parents also tend to demonstrate a greater degree of improvement by the end of the program.

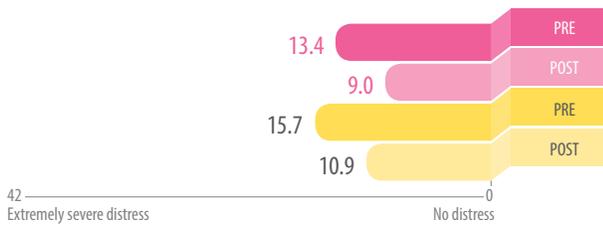
## IMPROVEMENTS IN SELECTED PARENTING ISSUES 2010-2015

### Comparison of Clients in CORE TRIPLE P and TEEN TRIPLE P

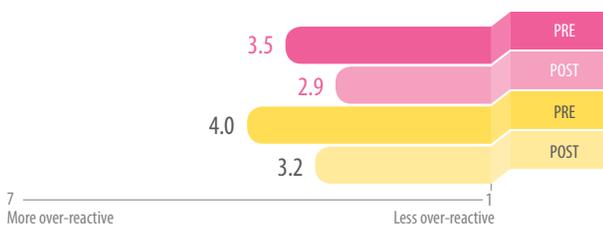
#### NUMBER OF PROBLEMS WITH THEIR PARTNERS OVER PARENTING



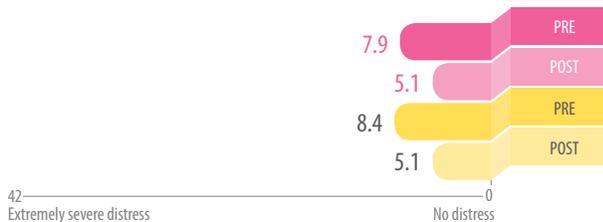
#### STRESS



#### OVER-REACTIVE PARENTING STYLE



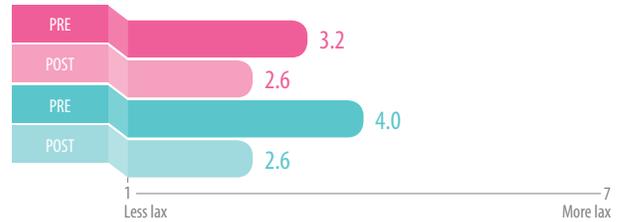
#### ANXIETY



LOWER IS "BETTER" →

### Comparison of Clients in CORE TRIPLE P and STEPPING STONES TRIPLE P

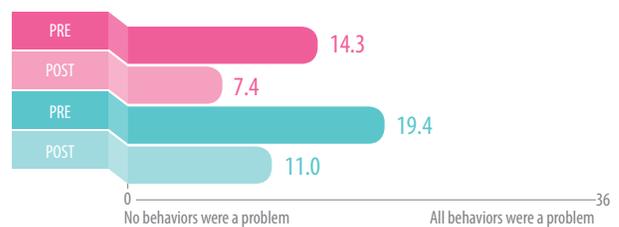
#### LAX PARENTING STYLE



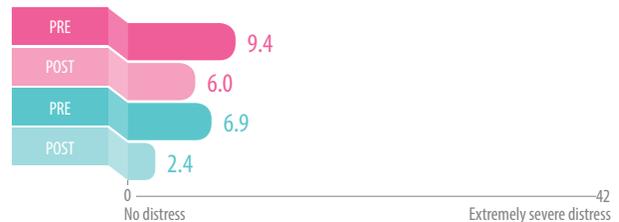
#### STRESS



#### NUMBER OF CHILD BEHAVIORS PERCEIVED TO BE A PROBLEM



#### DEPRESSION



← LOWER IS "BETTER"

● Core Triple P: Families with children 0-12 ● Teen Triple P: Families with children 13-16 ● Stepping Stones Triple P: Families with children who have special needs

# Triple P is responsive to the needs of diverse families.

Santa Cruz County is a relatively small community that embraces diversity. As such, providing culturally responsive services is a high priority for First 5, HSD, HSA and the many partners that provide Triple P services. Year after year, the results of our rigorous evaluation confirm that Triple P works for many types of parents in Santa Cruz County.

We are particularly interested in understanding how the program affects certain categories of parents who receive in-depth individual or group services, as these are the participants who provide the most information about their parenting circumstances and receive the greatest exposure to Triple P. Analyzing evaluation results by category of parent (Males, Females, Latinos, Caucasians, Spanish-speakers, English-speakers, and Child Welfare Participants) shows us that:

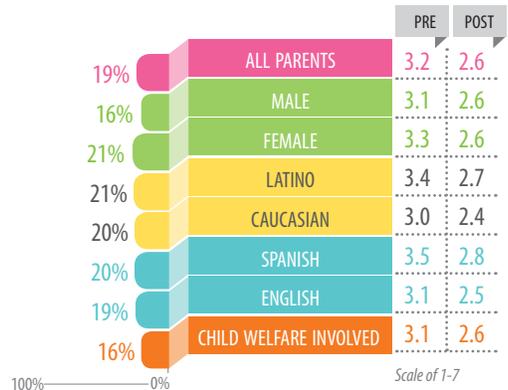
- Every category of parents is making statistically significant improvements in every aspect of parenting that is measured (Parenting Style, Child Behavior Problems, Parental Depression, Anxiety and Stress, Level of Conflict Over Parenting)
- Every category of parents is experiencing a moderate to large degree of improvement (effect size) in their parenting style and child’s behavior.

## WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

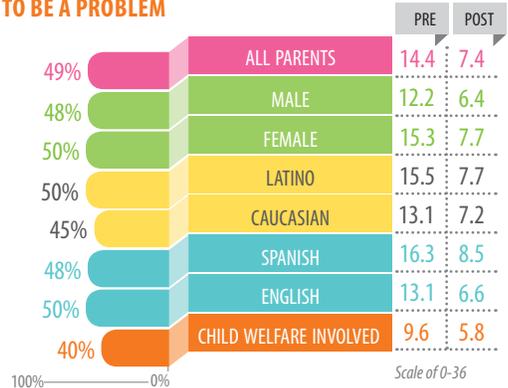
“This program was very helpful and understanding. It gave me hope that things are okay and we’ll have a good future.”

### PERCENT IMPROVEMENT IN SELECTED PARENTING ISSUES 2010-2015

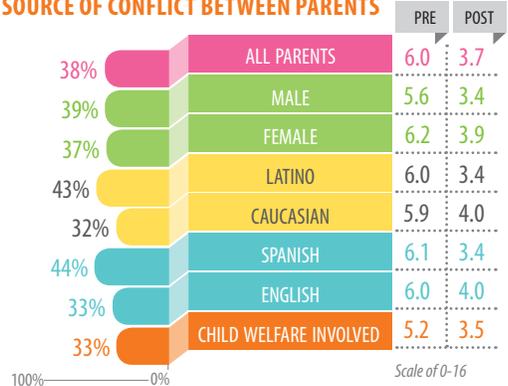
#### PARENTS' USE OF NEGATIVE PARENTING STYLES



#### NUMBER OF CHILD BEHAVIORS PERCEIVED TO BE A PROBLEM



#### NUMBER OF PARENTING ISSUES THAT HAVE BEEN A SOURCE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN PARENTS



Data scales varies (see above). In all cases, a LOWER Pre/Post score is better.

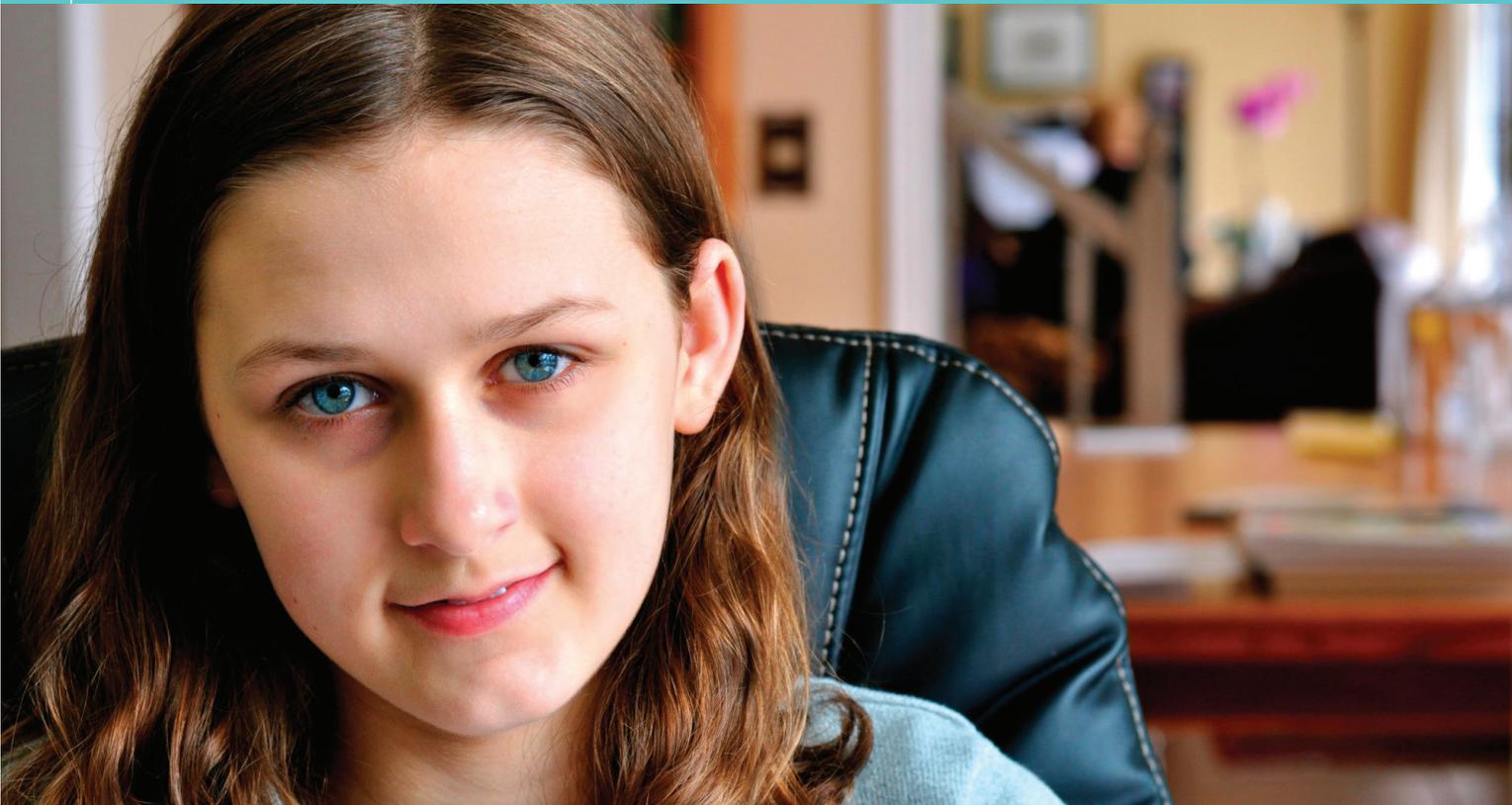
## A PARENT'S STORY:

“My wife died when my daughter was born, so I’ve been a single dad. I love my daughter, but have always been afraid to discipline her. I’ve felt guilty about my daughter not having a mom, so I let her do whatever she wanted. I thought that if I punished her, she would think I didn’t love her. But I knew I needed help with her behavior.

[After participating in Triple P], my life has completely changed. She listens to me now, and I feel we have a better relationship. I can take her to the store, the park, and to visit friends. I really liked how the simple strategies helped us.

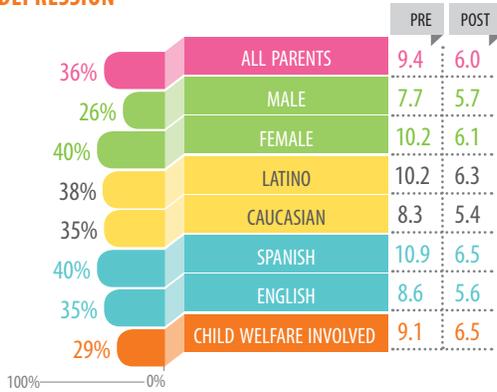
And I learned the difference between discipline and punishment. That was important because it helped me not be afraid to set limits. Now I know that discipline can be done in a nurturing way.

I never imagined how much my life would change [because of Triple P].”

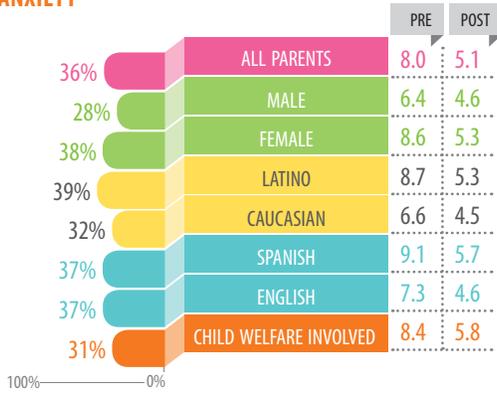


## PERCENT IMPROVEMENT IN PARENTAL DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND STRESS 2010-2015

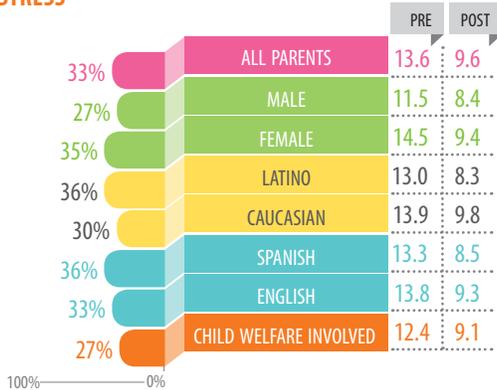
### DEPRESSION



### ANXIETY



### STRESS



The pre/post data for depression, anxiety, and stress are based on a scale of 0-42, where a LOWER Pre/Post score is better.

These evaluation results assure us that local, diverse parents are finding the Triple P strategies relevant and helpful for their families. We believe these strong results reflect the inherent strength of the Triple P model, with parenting strategies becoming tools that gain traction and usefulness through a continuous process of assessing, learning, practicing, and self-evaluation. It is this parent-driven process that enables practitioners to tailor an international, evidence-based, manualized program to the needs of individual parents in Santa Cruz County.



### WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

“I just wanted to thank you for this Triple P class. It taught us how to talk to our teens.”

## Brief, "light touch" Triple P services are effective.

Triple P promotes the public health principle of "minimal sufficiency," providing as much help as parents need without fostering dependence on the program or service providers. This promotes parents' self-efficacy and self-sufficiency. This principle is also based on the observation that across an entire community or population of parents, most are likely to only need or want brief assistance as specific parenting questions or challenges emerge. A smaller percentage of parents may seek in-depth assistance for more serious or complex parenting issues. All parents can benefit from Triple P, especially because their needs may change over time.

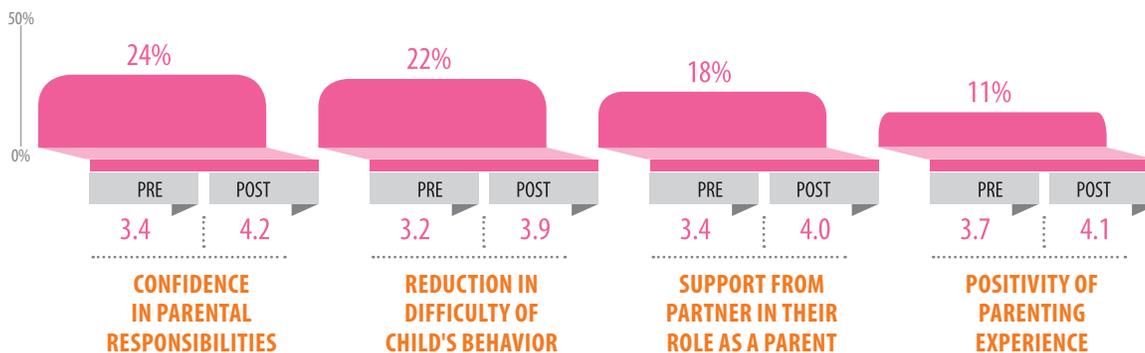
**Brief services are an effective way of getting parents initially engaged in the program, and parents who attend Seminars and Workshops frequently request follow-up services.** Among parents who participate in multiple services, those who begin with one or two brief consultations for specific parenting concerns are likely to return later for in-depth consultations and multi-session programs.



On average, parents feel that the Seminars and Workshops answer their questions about parenting and report that they are likely to use the parenting strategies they learn in these brief classes. Indeed, results from a recent phone survey show that 54% of respondents who participated in a Workshop and 45% of respondents who participated in a Seminar continue to use Triple P parenting strategies daily or almost daily.

Brief consultations about specific parenting concerns also result in increased positive parenting experiences. Parents who participate in 3-4 individual or group consultations report increases in their confidence as parents, more support from their partners, less difficulty with their children's behaviors, and more positive feelings about their parent-child relationships.

### PERCENT IMPROVEMENT IN POSITIVE PARENTING SURVEY SCORES 2010-2015



The pre/post data for increases in positive parenting are based on a scale of 0-5 where a HIGHER number is better.

## Triple P has staying power, long after services have ended.

Parents consistently report high levels of satisfaction with Triple P immediately after completing both brief and in-depth services. On average, parents rate the quality of Triple P services very highly, noting that they received the help they wanted, were dealing more effectively with problems in their family, and were able to apply the skills they learned to other family members.

### PARENT'S SATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE TRIPLE P PROGRAM 2010-2015

How would you rate the quality of the service you and your child received?



Has the program helped you to deal more effectively with problems that arise in your family?



Has the program helped you to deal more effectively with your child's behavior?



Has the program helped you to develop skills that can be applied to other family members?



**95%** of survey respondents reported they continue to use the Triple P strategies they have learned.

Now, newer data provides compelling evidence that **Triple P has tremendous staying power**, long after services have ended. In a recent follow-up phone survey, **95% of respondents reported they continue to use the strategies they learned**. This survey was conducted an average of 10 months after parents had participated in Triple P services. Not surprisingly, parents who participated in in-depth individual and group services were the most likely to report using Triple P strategies "Every day" or "Almost every day" (63% Individual, 54% Group). However, parents who had participated in Workshops and Seminars were almost as likely to report using Triple P strategies "Every day" or "Almost every day" (54% Workshops, 45% Seminars). This provides further evidence that brief Triple P interventions are both useful and effective.

### SURVEY PARTICIPANT INTEREST IN REMAINING INVOLVED AND HELPING TRIPLE P GROW

**98%** would recommend Triple P to their family and friends

**81%** said they were likely to participate in another Triple P service

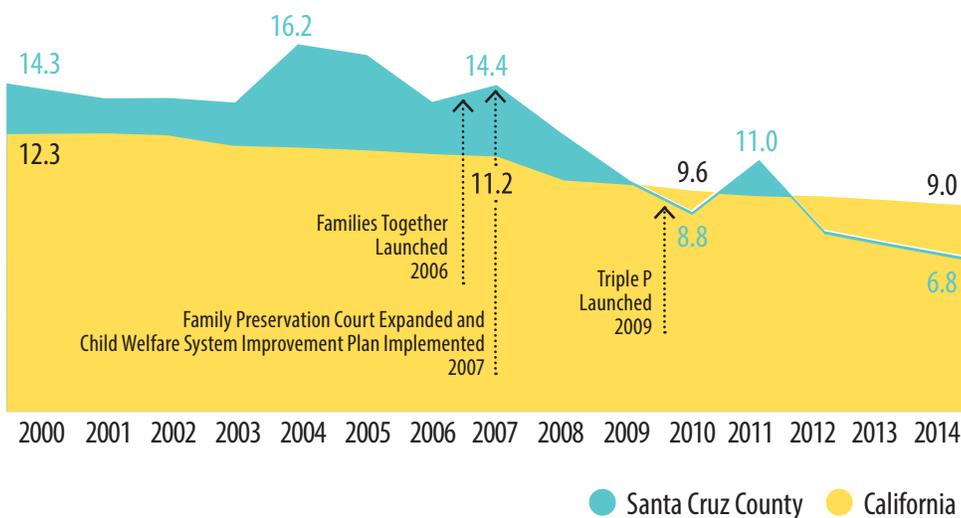
**59%** showed interest in spreading information about Triple P

**51%** were interested in learning more about becoming a Triple P practitioner

# Turning the Curve

Our data from the last 5 years confirms that Triple P is an effective intervention that is **helping to “turn the curve” on children’s health and well-being at a population level**. In the time since Triple P was launched, Santa Cruz County’s rate of substantiated allegations of child maltreatment has decreased and remained well below the state rate since 2012. While this dramatic change is attributable to multiple programs and policies that ensure children live in safe and stable families — including the Family Preservation Court expansion and implementation of the 2007 System Improvement Plan — the Triple P partners have no doubt that the **widespread availability of the evidence-based Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is a vital piece of the puzzle**.

## RATE OF SUBSTANTIATED ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD MALTREATMENT (PER 1,000)



The rate of substantiated allegations of child abuse and neglect in Santa Cruz County is on a downward trend, and is now lower than the state rate.

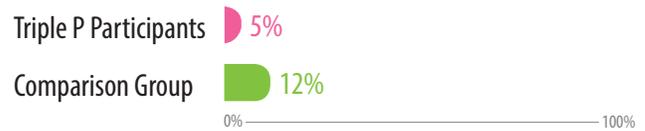


Results from our 2011 Special Study to Assess Child Welfare Outcomes suggest that Triple P may be associated with reductions in future child abuse and neglect. This study compared outcomes for two groups of parents involved with the child welfare system: (1) parents who participated in the Triple P program; and (2) parents who participated in a parenting program offered prior to the initiation of Triple P (comparison program). Both programs were offered by the Parents Center, a local community-based organization.

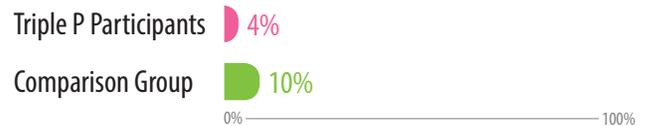


The study showed that **parents in the Triple P program were less likely to have another substantiated child abuse report or a child placed in foster care** within a year of beginning the program, **compared to parents in the comparison program**. Although this study was limited in size and scope, and there are likely to be other variables that contributed to these outcomes, these results provided tangible and compelling evidence that local investments in Triple P yield tremendous benefits for participants, and potentially significant cost savings for the child welfare system.

### PARTICIPANTS WITH A SUBSTANTIATED CHILD ABUSE REPORT WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER PROGRAM ENTRY



### PARTICIPANTS WITH A FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT OCCURRING WITHIN 1 YEAR AFTER PROGRAM ENTRY



## WHAT PARENTS ARE SAYING:

“I very much enjoyed the positive parenting feedback and learning to be specific about what you are praising your child for, to be calm around them, and to be sure you take time for yourself. Having charts around to remember little things helped, and I was able to focus on good behavior and his helping out, and making sure my stress wasn’t affecting him. **It was also pretty helpful for me seeing people who were also going through things like me, and bouncing things off of them.**”

# Looking to the Future

Like the original CDC study that caught the attention of First 5 Santa Cruz County and its partners, Santa Cruz County's experience with the first 5 years of Triple P implementation suggests that population-level changes in parenting practices are an achievable goal. Because Triple P is designed to reach a broad population of parents while responding to different levels of need, it embeds the science of child development in the lives of parents and children across the economic and demographic spectrum. This universal approach is essential if we are going to truly and permanently "turn the curve" on child health and well-being in Santa Cruz County.

As we look ahead, we are encouraged by these early and promising results, but recognize that there is still work to be done to ensure that Triple P remains accessible to as many parents as possible, at the level of intensity that is most suitable and responsive to their needs. We invite parents, community partners and policymakers to join us in our next steps to achieve a population-level impact, including:

- Refining our outreach and social marketing strategies;
- Integrating Triple P into existing programs with established funding streams;
- Identifying untapped or underutilized partnerships or sources of public funding;
- Blending and braiding public and private funds to create "no wrong door" into the local Triple P system; and
- Advocating for policies and systems changes that would institutionalize the Triple P system on a large scale.

As Triple P becomes part and parcel of multiple systems serving families with children, we have unprecedented opportunities to interrupt inter-generational cycles of parent-child interactions that have led to adverse childhood (and adult) experiences in the past, but need not become a script for the future.

**Strengthening the positive bonds within families, for all families, is our best investment in the health, happiness, and quality of life we value for everyone in Santa Cruz County.**

## 2010-2015 KEY PARTNERS (PARTIAL LIST):

### Organizations:

- Community Bridges -  
La Manzanita Community Resources,  
Mountain Community Resources &  
Nueva Vista Community Resources
- Easter Seals Central California
- Encompass Community Services -  
Families Together
- Health Services Agency -  
Children's Mental Health
- Human Services Department -  
Family & Children's Services
- Monarch Services
- Parents Center
- Special Parents Information Network
- Stanford Children's Health -  
Neurodevelopmental Foster Care  
Clinic

### Independent Practitioners:

- Lourdes Barraza, PsyD
- Andrew Castro
- Maria Rodriguez-Castillo
- Dr. Heather Thomsen, PhD
- Dr. Deborah Vitullo, Licensed Clinical  
Psychologist

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Optimal Solutions Consulting

#### Marketing:

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#### Report Graphic Design:

- Applied Survey Research



# Triple P

Positive  
Parenting  
Program

**Strengthening Families in Santa Cruz County**

**5-YEAR REPORT 2010-2015**

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This program is made possible through a partnership between First 5 Santa Cruz County, the County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency (MHSA-Prop 63) and the County of Santa Cruz Human Services Department

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Complete source information for data presented in this report are found in the First 5 Santa Cruz County Annual Evaluation Report, July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015 (published October 2015) available online at [first5scc.org/community-impact](http://first5scc.org/community-impact).