

CHILDREN'S



BILL OF RIGHTS

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

As the adults of San Luis Obispo County... One of our greatest hopes as a community is that our children grow up with healthy minds, bodies and spirits that enable them to maximize their potential.

As endorsers of the Children's Bill of Rights, we collectively pledge to work together toward this vision. May we, together, demonstrate daily that *our youth are our highest priority*, as evidenced by our collective commitment of time, money, sustained effort and unified support. May we cultivate our understanding of child development and use it to nurture, guide, challenge, and encourage our children along their many paths.

As the children and youth of San Luis Obispo County, may we each...

- 1 Live in a stable, comfortable home surrounded by parents, family and other caring adults who nurture us throughout childhood.
- 2 Eat healthy and plentiful meals every day.
- 3 Have the basics for our daily life – clothing, transportation, and supplies for school, outside interests, and activities.
- 4 Be and feel safe, everywhere we go.
- 5 Enjoy daily physical activity and time outdoors.
- 6 Visit a doctor, dentist or counselor when needed to help us stay physically and mentally healthy.
- 7 Learn and master ideas and skills in and out of school that inspire us, help us understand and be ready for our place in the world.
- 8 Explore a variety of experiences – in arts, nature, culture and music – that illuminate the world's natural beauty, richness and human creativity.
- 9 Make and keep healthy relationships with friends.
- 10 Know that adults and peers listen and support us as individuals while we grow, and respect our diverse cultures, backgrounds, circumstances, talents, sparks, and passions.
- 11 Have opportunities to contribute in meaningful ways to our community by voicing our ideas, sharing in decisions and offering service to others.
- 12 Be encouraged to dream big, to grow through challenge and mistakes, and to always live with hope and aspiration.



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Youth Should Be a Community's Highest Priority

During the 2011-15 strategic planning process, First 5 San Luis Obispo County kept this goal in mind, and formulated the idea for a SLO County Children's Bill of Rights. After the initial decision, a Steering Committee comprised of adult and youth members alike began constructing the Bill of Rights. Their meetings consisted of discussion on themes, strategies, and other basic aspects of the document, group meetings to provide direction for community input, as well as a final meeting to approve the completed Bill of Rights.

Many local organizations contributed to this effort including:

Collaborative Partners

Early Learning for All (ELFA)
Asset Development Network
San Luis Obispo County Child Abuse Prevention Council
Partnership for Excellence in Family Support
Local Childcare Planning Council
HEAL-SLO
San Luis Obispo County School Nurses
SLO Oral Health Coalition
Oceano and Georgia Brown School Readiness Neighborhood Teams
First 5 Funded Partners
District 24 PTA
San Luis Obispo County United Way Youth Board
YouthWorks Paso Robles
CAPSLO Youth Advisory Group
Boys and Girls Club Keystone Club
Bakari Project
4-H Regional Board
Montessori Children's School San Luis Obispo
Parent Representatives from North and South County
San Luis Obispo County Community Foundation
San Luis Obispo County Office of Education
San Luis Obispo County Administrative Office
South County Family Resource Center
Paso Robles Housing Authority
San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services
San Luis Obispo County Probation Department
Youth in Action South County
Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County

Leading Endorsers

San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors
First 5 San Luis Obispo County
Children's Services Network
San Luis Obispo County Board of Education
San Luis Obispo County Health Commission
San Luis Obispo County United Way Youth Board



With their help, and the help of the community, The SLO County Children's Bill of Rights has been created to provide specific rights for children, 0-18, based on their age and developmental status. These rights honor children's value to the community as well as their dignity as fellow individual human beings.

Key Contacts for more information:

First 5 San Luis Obispo County: (805) 781-4058

Asset Development Network:

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Parents and caregivers can

Build Positive Relationships and Self-Confidence by helping their children develop self-respect and showing them that they enjoy being with them

- Talk with their children about their day
- Acknowledge their accomplishments
- Stay calm when their children are upset so they feel safe

Foster a Love of Learning

- Help their child get a library card and start using it.
- Read or look at books together for at least 15 minutes each day.

Early Childhood Educators can

Encourage Parent Involvement and Support

- Hold parent meetings outside of school hours and provide child care during meetings to allow working parents to participate.

Engage in activities that improve the quality of early learning environments, teacher practices, and curriculum.

- Participate in local professional development and quality support programs

Schools (Pre-K-3) can

Collaborate in the planning for children's school success

- Promote and support expanded investments in high-quality early learning programs that prepare children and their parents for a successful transition to elementary school.

Business leaders can

Advocate for the benefits of preschool and support employees with young children

- Adopt policies and practices to support working parents with young children such as part time schedules, telecommuting, lactation (breast feeding) support, paid sick time, and paid parental leave time.
- Support health & wellness, education, and other services for employee's children and families (e.g., provide workshops on flexible spending accounts, counseling, health services, flu shots for employees and families, and nutrition classes).

Support Early Childhood Education

- Meet with state and local officials about the positive long-term effects of high-quality early childhood care and education as a valuable return on investment, helping society, including businesses and the economy (e.g., reduced welfare use, increased incomes and more taxes generated)
- Adopt a preschool site through financial and in-kind support.

Local government and service agency leaders can:

Advocate for policies representing the interests of young children

- Incorporate the values of the Children's Bill of Rights into their organization's Strategic Plan and Quality Improvement processes.
- Create environments that support healthy children and families.
- Encourage the development of community gardens and healthy food choices.

State policy makers can:

Acknowledge the benefits of investing in quality early childhood development

- Support funding for statewide child care or preschool facilities.
- Highlight an issue that affects children in public remarks or constituent newsletters.

Last but not least **YOUTH** can be advocates for utilizing the Rights in policy and decision-making and educating others about their importance.

ALL OF THE ABOVE LINK BACK TO, IMPACT, OR AFFECT THE 12 RIGHTS BY MAKING CHILDREN OUR COMMUNITY'S HIGHEST PRIORITY.

If today's children of all races, ethnicities, and income levels are not adequately prepared, are not well educated, and their health needs are not addressed, they will not have the capacity to contribute productively to the future workforce.

Children's issues are everyone's issues and we see The Children's Bill of Rights for San Luis Obispo County as a lens whereby county residents can share a common vision of **SUCCESS** for all children and youth.