

Spotlight on Latinx Youth

KiC Priority for Latinx Youth

In support of the published 2025 **Latino Health Assessment** (LHA),⁴² as well as the declaration of the Public Health Crisis for Latino Residents of Santa Clara County (SCC)⁴³ determined on Sept 16, 2025, Kids in Common's (KiC's) 2026 Policy and Advocacy Agenda includes the prioritization of championing policies that specifically support SCC Latinx youth, as they represent a significant part of the youth population in SCC and also demonstrate some of the highest disparities in the County regarding basic needs, health, and education support.

According to the LHA, **the Latinx community makes up 25% of the total population in SCC**, almost half of whom are youth under the age of 25 residing in South County and the East Side of San Jose. Among children, **Latinx youth represent 28%, the second-largest ethnic group**, which highlights the significant presence of Latinx youth in SCC and the need for targeted resources and support.

The following highlights include data gathered for the **2026 Kids in Common Children's Data Book** and findings from the **2025 Latino Health Assessment**.

Every Child Safe & Stable

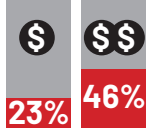
Latinx youth in SCC face significant challenges related to economic stability, housing, and food security. These disparities impact their ability to thrive academically and socially.



Data retrieved from the:

- ▶ 2026 Kids in Common Children's Data Book
- ▶ 2025 Latino Health Assessment.

1. Real Cost Measure

- ▶  of Latinx households earn a **median income below the Real Cost Measure (RCM)**.
- ▶  of Latino families live below the RCM, meaning they cannot afford basic necessities.
- ▶  A family with **two full-time minimum wage earners meets only 46% of RCM**, while a single earner meets just 23%.
- ▶  of Latino children live below the federal poverty level.
- ▶  of yearly expenses cover housing, child care, and taxes, creating severe financial strain.

2. Housing Instability

- ▶ Overcrowded and unstable housing conditions hinder academic focus and participation in extracurricular activities.



3. Food Insecurity

- ▶ Black, Latinx, and multiracial children are at **significantly higher risk for food insecurity**.
- ▶ Many are **ineligible for benefits despite need**, increasing vulnerability.
- ▶  of CalFresh recipients are Latino. (March 2024)



Photo courtesy of Santa Clara County Office of Education.



Photo courtesy of NSU-Valley Palms Unidos.

Every Child Healthy

Latinx youth in SCC experience significant health disparities, including limited access to affordable healthcare, mental health services, and prenatal care. These gaps affect overall well-being and educational success.



1. Prenatal Health

- ▶  One-third of Latinx mothers in SCC do not receive early and regular prenatal care.

2. Healthcare Access

- ▶ Accessible healthcare is often perceived as an **unaffordable luxury**. 
- ▶  **52%** of individuals receiving medical services from Santa Clara Valley Healthcare were **Latino patients**. (2023)
- ▶  of Latinx children and youth on Medi-Cal (ages 0-21) did not have the recommended number of routine check-ups. (2023)
- ▶ Half of Latinx children on Medi-Cal (ages 3-18) did not have an annual routine dental appointment in 2023. 

3. Mental Health

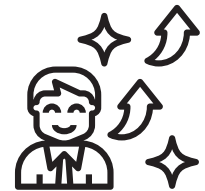
- ▶  **47%** of all clients receiving mental health services from the County of Santa Clara Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) were Latino.
- ▶  **44%** Among these, **44% were children under 16 years old**.
- ▶ Mental health stigma persists, and youth report **few structured, positive outlets** and limited access to safe community spaces. 

4. Social Emotional Well-being (SEW)

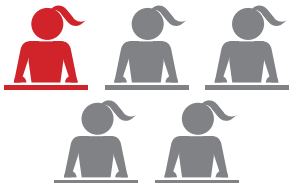
- ▶ Community voices highlight the **lack of safe, welcoming spaces** for youth to gather.
- ▶  Increased investment is needed in **after-school programs, sports, green spaces, and creative outlets** to support emotional health.

Every Child Successful in Learning and Thriving in Life

Latinx students in SCC face educational gaps starting in early childhood. Low kindergarten readiness, poor literacy and math proficiency, and high chronic absenteeism highlight systemic barriers that significantly impact long-term academic success and equity. Limited school resources and uncertain postsecondary pathways impact academic success and long-term opportunities.



1. Education Support

- Kindergarten Readiness: **22%** **37%** Latinx students Countywide
- Early Literacy: **28%** Latinx students meeting or exceeding the 3rd Grade English Language Arts (ELA) standard.
- Math Proficiency:
 - 3rd Grade: **23%** **59%** Latinx students Countywide.
 - 8th Grade:
 Only one in five Latinx students met this standard vs. 51% countywide.

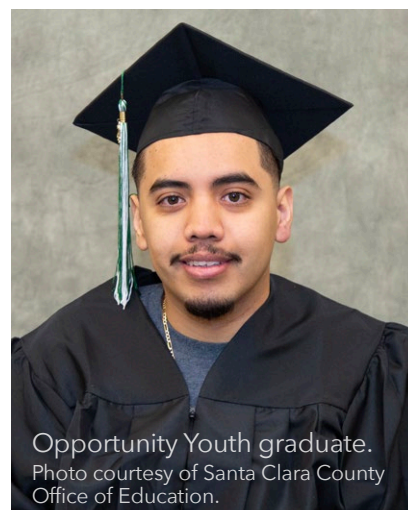


2. Schools as Community Hubs

-  Schools are trusted spaces for support but are **stretched thin**, limiting their ability to provide comprehensive services beyond academics.

3. Uncertain Futures After High School

- Many Latinx youth struggle with **planning for life after graduation**, facing challenges in navigating the transition into adulthood.
- Financial pressures lead to **uncertainty about whether college is a realistic option.** 
- One in five Latinx students did not graduate on time. 
- One in three Latinx students were not enrolled in post-secondary education within one year of graduation. 



Latinx Youth - Conclusions & Recommendations

Latinx youth in SCC face interconnected challenges that hinder academic and social success. Economic instability, housing insecurity, food scarcity, and health disparities—such as limited access to prenatal, mental health, and routine care—combine with low kindergarten readiness, poor literacy and math proficiency, and high absenteeism. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions to improve early learning, healthcare access, and basic needs, while expanding safe spaces and programs to support well-being and postsecondary opportunities.

SCC's Latino Health Assessment calls for urgent action to close gaps in education, health, and basic needs for Latinx youth. Key priorities include creating safe cultural spaces, investing in early learning, expanding healthcare access, addressing housing and food insecurity, and promoting affordable, culturally competent postsecondary education.

KiC endorses these recommendations to emphasize safe spaces and academic improvements in order to ensure holistic well-being and long-term success for Latinx youth and families in SCC.



Latino Health Assessment - Conclusions & Recommendations:

Provide Opportunities for Latino Children and Youth to Succeed:

- ▶ Develop strategies to reduce juvenile justice involvement for vulnerable Latino youth
- ▶ Improve coordination of services for Latino children living with foster families
- ▶ Designate and develop a South County Latino Cultural Community Center as a safe space for youth and local communities. The facility would serve as a resource hub for integrated and accessible social and human services, recreation, and cultural enrichment activities. The Center would be youth-centered, welcoming, conveniently located, and filled with murals and artwork.
- ▶ In partnership with FIRST 5 and educational entities, perform a rapid assessment of all local investments in Early Childhood Education for pre-school-aged Latino children and set performance metrics for future investments. Future investments must focus on understanding and improving kindergarten readiness among Latino boys, with the goal of having at least 40% of Latino children ready for kindergarten by 2030.
- ▶ Improve educational opportunities and skills training for Latino youth.



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