



Literacy & Kindergarten Readiness Project

Family & Youth Community Connector Program

PRESENTED BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DONINIQUE MELLION

(City of San Leandro Human Services Commission – May 2025)

FAMILIESUNITED.ORG

Meet Families United

- Community-rooted nonprofit, founded in 2023
- Offices in San Leandro & a Navigation Center in Stockton
- Multilingual staff representing the communities we serve:
- English, Spanish, Arabic, Tagalog, Laotian, MAM, ASL & more
- Committed to equity, advocacy, and access for all families



Our Mission

To bridge service gaps by providing culturally competent and community-centered supports for families.

Our Vision

Inclusive, empowered communities where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Community Roots & Partners

Our work is grounded in strong local relationships, including:

- School Districts
- San Leandro Public Library
- Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB)
- First 5 Alameda County
- 4C's of Alameda County
- San Leandro Police Department
- Local Businesses & Dedicated Volunteers

Collaboration fuels impact.





Our Program Pillars



Boost Children's Language & Literacy

Foundational skills from birth through early childhood

Equip Caregivers

Tools, resources, and support for parents & family members

Upskill Early-Care Providers

Training and coaching for quality, culturally responsive care



The Challenge in San Leandro

- **Book Deserts:** Limited access to age-appropriate books at home or in the community
 - **Language Barriers:** Many families speak languages other than English—resources don't always reflect that
 - **Limited Childcare & Preschool Access:** Many children don't attend preschool due to cost or availability
 - **Informal Caregivers:** Grandparents and family caregivers often lack early literacy tools
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- **Only 50% of children are kindergarten-ready**
 - **High rates of child poverty and under-resourced neighborhoods.**

Why Early Literacy Matters

- **Critical Window:** 90% of brain development happens before age 5—language exposure during this time shapes lifelong learning.
- **3rd Grade Milestone:** Reading proficiency by 3rd grade predicts graduation, employment, and health outcomes.
- **Equity Gap:** Children from low-income families hear up to 30 million fewer words and often lack access to books and quality early learning.

Invest early. Read often. Close the gap.



CAP-Funded Activities (2025–2027)

- **Weekly Storytimes & Book Giveaways**
- **Monthly Caregiver Workshops**
- **Quarterly Developmental Screenings**
- **Professional Development Circles for FFN (Family, Friend, Neighbor) caregivers**
- **Biannual Resource Fairs connecting families to local services**



Building strong foundations through consistent, community-based support.



Our Priorities

- Community-Driven Approach: Programs shaped with families, not just for them
- Language-Rich Experiences: Literacy embedded in everyday spaces, beyond classrooms
- Deep Neighborhood Roots: Trusted presence in under-resourced communities
- Equity Focus: Targeting underserved ZIP codes with limited early learning access

Rooted in community. Built for impact.

Reaching FFN Caregivers (Family, Friend, & Neighbor Caregivers)

- Tailored Outreach through community networks & multilingual materials
- Evening & Weekend Sessions to accommodate busy schedules
- Take-Home Literacy Kits with books, activities, and guidance

Empowering those who care outside the classroom.





**Meeting families
where they are—
literally.**



Delivery Settings

**Programs and services are offered in
trusted, accessible community spaces:**

- Families United Office
- Local Library Branches
- Family Resource Centers
- Neighborhood Parks
- Pop-Up Reading Oases

Expected Outcomes & Metrics:

- 1,000 books to 250 kids
- 80 screenings
- 12 workshops
- ≥ 85 % satisfaction
- 10 % boost in readiness scores
- 8 events/200+ attendees



Budget Snapshot (CAP Funds)

Total: \$35,000 over two years

- **Personnel** – Program coordination & facilitation
- **Books & Literacy Kits** – Take-home resources for families
- **Community Events** – Storytimes, workshops, fairs
- **Translations** – Multilingual access across materials
- **Evaluation** – Tracking impact & continuous improvement

Every dollar invested builds early literacy equity.





Join the Movement!

- **Take a Tour of our programs in action**
 - **Partner With Us to expand impact**
 - **Volunteer Your Time and talents**
- **Stay Connected – scan the QR code for contact info, events, and updates**



Together, we're building brighter beginnings.