

Children & Youth

I am the only candidate in this race with young children. While my children are very fortunate, but for fate they could be facing the considerable hardships which so many of the children in our county must live with every day. As an elected official and a parent, I am committed to ensuring that the county is as supportive as possible of our children and families.

The county plays a critical role in supporting children and youth, particularly from lower income families. The county spends more than \$320 million on programs benefiting its children, youth and families. Even in these times when the county funds are more limited than ever before, such an investment in children must be a priority. With fully one third of the students in San Mateo County public schools economically disadvantaged, there is much the county can do.

Of particular importance are programs that support children before the age of five. Quality preschool and childcare, school readiness programs and child health care all provide a foundation for success in school and later in life. The “achievement gap” in education is evident on the first day of kindergarten, and the County can help change that.

The county can also play an important role in supporting our schools. One approach to county/school collaboration that has proven successful in both the Redwood City and Cabrillo school districts is the “community school” model. A community school brings a wide range of health and social services to the school site to support students and their families.

In addition, the county can help our schools by establishing after-school homework centers at county maintained libraries, and by promoting programs and facilities that help keep children active and prevent childhood obesity.

Finally, it is critical that the county health system continue to provide quality health care to our children whose families do not have health insurance and are unable to access the private medical system. Children cannot learn and succeed in school if they are not healthy.