

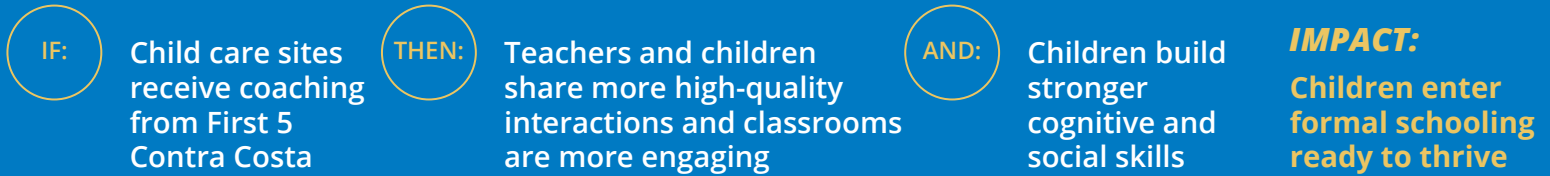
The Evidence is Clear: Coaching Works

Published research has found that professional development coaching improves child care settings, teacher practices, and child outcomes.¹ *But what makes coaching most effective?*

PROBLEM:

Child care sites struggle with quality due to high turnover, skill gaps, and shifting child needs.

THEORY OF CHANGE:



Coaching models with the strongest impacts are goal-oriented, sustained, high-dose, and reflective.² The First 5 Contra Costa coaching model reflects these key elements.

GOAL ORIENTED

Each site that receives coaching develops a quality improvement plan to guide the collaboration. Coaches meet providers where they are: visiting sites, observing child behaviors, delivering tailored training to staff, and providing the right guidance at the right time.

HIGH DOSE

First 5 Contra Costa coaches connect with sites at least once a month, but sometimes much more frequently. A typical site visit in our model lasts about 2 hours.⁴

SUSTAINED

Coaches work with sites over at least a full year, but often much longer. Of the 90+ sites enrolled in First 5 Contra Costa coaching, coaches have typically built trusting relationships with sites lasting 6 years or more.³

REFLECTIVE

First 5 Contra Costa coaches lead educators through reflections on their own practice. These flexible, insight-based approaches create the “a-ha” moments that lead to real, lasting change in teaching practices.



WHO ARE FIRST 5 CONTRA COSTA COACHES?

Our three full-time coaches are highly-trained, bilingual, quality improvement experts with 30+ years of combined experience as early educators working directly with children. Each year, First 5 Contra Costa coaches receive training on best practices in early childhood education and adult learning strategies.

¹ Bierman et al. (2008); Markussen-Brown et al., (2017); Schachter et al. (2026)

² Isner et al. (2011); Elek & Page (2019)

³ Based on currently enrolled, FY2526 sites

⁴ Based on currently enrolled, FY2526 site visits through Q3

Strong Results from First 5 Contra Costa Coaching

First 5 Contra Costa has seen strong improvement in child care sites receiving coaching through the Quality Matters program.

Quality Matters is a quality improvement program, operated by First 5 Contra Costa and the County Office of Education, for licensed child care providers that offers trainings, coaching and other supports.

Based on currently available evaluation data for last fiscal year, we found: ⁵



Improved use of evidence-based tools in day-to-day operations, like the Ages and Stages Questionnaire and Teaching Pyramid, and improved comfort with those tools



90+%

of sites report improvements to classroom environments



86%

of sites report more effective family engagement



2,154

Contra Costa children enrolled in sites coached by First 5 Contra Costa



98%

of sites report improved teaching practices as a result of First 5 Contra Costa Coaching



"[W]ith continued support and practice, I gained confidence and began to see the positive impact of these efforts on course quality and student engagement."

Site administrator receiving First 5 Contra Costa coaching



"Our coach is a lifesaver and wonderful expert... I don't know how I'd survive without [coach]!"

Site administrator receiving First 5 Contra Costa coaching

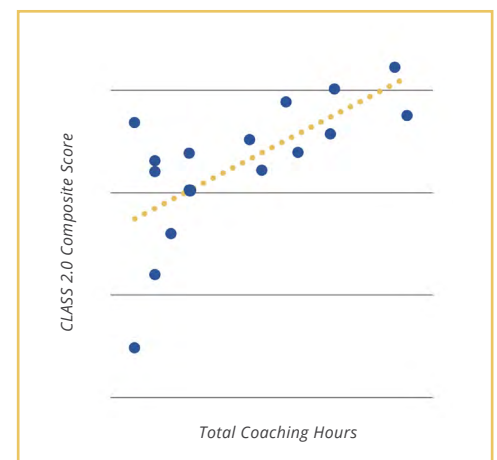
More First 5 Contra Costa coaching is linked to stronger classroom quality and expanded access to child care programs

Independent evaluation of classroom organization and teacher-child interactions in sites that receive First 5 Contra Costa coaching support tells a similar story.

The more First 5 Contra Costa coaching a site receives, the higher the site scores on a state-mandated, widely used assessment conducted by a certified outside observer. ⁶

The same trend exists across both domains of interaction quality (instructional support and emotional support) as well as classroom organization, where there is a particularly strong correlation with coaching dosage.

Sites who receive coaching also report success in recruiting staff, maintaining or increasing their hours of operation, and increasing enrollment capacity—**meaning more children in our county benefiting from access to high-quality early care and education.** ⁷



⁵ Based on FY2425 coaching logs, Start of Year Survey results, and End of Year Survey results

⁶ Based on FY2425 CLASS 2.0 Pre-K assessments. Classroom Assessment Scoring Systems, also referred to as CLASS 2.0, is the assessment framework required by the state.

⁷ Based on FY2425 End of Year Survey results

Learn more about how First 5 Contra Costa is strengthening early care and education:

First 5 Contra Costa partners with providers, educators, and communities to ensure young children enter school healthy, supported, and ready to thrive. To explore partnerships and opportunities, contact Stephanie Shieh, Early Childhood Program Officer, at sshieh@first5coco.org or call 925-655-0360.



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