



The Child and Family Benefits of SOCIAL CAPITAL

There is a growing body of evidence on the impact of **Social Capital** on children and communities. **First 5 Sacramento's Community Building Initiative was created based on this science.**

Social Capital: refers to connections among individuals – the social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.¹

Strong connections in a community encourage residents to help one another.

An increase in **Social Capital**

- decreases isolation, increases trust and resource sharing
- empowers parents and improves advocacy
- creates stronger networks and informal groups

Social Capital is most crucial for families who

- have fewer financial and educational resources
- children most at risk for poor developmental outcomes²

Connected communities create social norms and expectations that can impact behavior.

Research shows **Social Capital**

- reduces community violence
- improves educational outcomes
- increases the effectiveness of prevention efforts
- improves health conditions and health care delivery³

Social Capital decreases the reliance on government and safety net services. It makes it easier for residents to mobilize and tackle an issue of public concern.⁴

Social Capital results are proven

- Families live in safer neighborhoods and parents rely on each other for support
- Evaluation data is being collected, however, previous surveys indicate Community Building Initiative participants report higher levels of **Social Capital**⁵
- Child development is powerfully shaped by social capital⁶
- Social isolation is associated with health problems and shortened life; a 10% higher level of trust was associated with an 8% lower death rate⁷

The **Community Building Initiative** involves local families, supports new and creative vehicles to building relationships and strengthening the communities for children 0-5.

¹ Smith, M. K. (2007) 'Social capital', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm.

² Runyan, D.K., Hunter, W.M., et al. (1998). Children Who Prosper in Unfavorable Environments: The Relationship to Social Capital. <http://www.pediatrics.aappublications.org>.

³ The World Bank. Social Capital Topics. <http://www.web.worldbank.org>.

⁴ Vella, V. and Narajan, D. (2006). Building indices of social capital and its outcomes. *Electronic Journal of Sociology*. http://www.sociology.org/content/2006/tier1/venanzio_social_capital.html.

⁵ Harder + Company Community Research. (2007). First 5 Sacramento FY 2006-2007 Evaluation Report and Overview of the FY 2004/05-2006/07 Funding Cycle.

⁶ Smith, M. K. (2007) 'Social capital', *the encyclopedia of informal education*, www.infed.org/biblio/social_capital.htm.

⁷ Harvard School of Public Health Press Releases (1997). 'Breakdown in Social Trust Linked to Higher Mortality Rates in States'. <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/archives/1997-releases/index.html>.