



Local Nonprofit Uses Technology to Support Parents

San Jose, CA, March 4, 2020 – Grail Family Services, a San Jose nonprofit that has served thousands of families with young children over the past 20 years, announced today the launch of its Building Blocks of Parenting™ (BBP) App, an innovative tool that gives parents anywhere/anytime access to information and resources to help them promote their children’s success and well-being.

GFS is launching the App in partnership with FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Office of Education/Head Start.

“Parenting is one of the most challenging and most important jobs there is,” says Veronica Goei, GFS Executive Director. “Parents can benefit from all the support they can get, especially here in our fast-paced Silicon Valley environment. Having easy access to the latest child development information and supportive connections to other parents is a win for both parents and children.”

The early years in a child’s life are critical. Research shows that 90% of a child’s brain develops by age 5. Their early experiences, relationships, and environment all factor into that development. The BBP App builds parents’ capacity to support their child’s healthy development through easy access to:

1. The latest research in child development and family-strengthening information
2. The ability to connect with other parents to create a supportive community
3. A checklist of research-based child developmental milestones

“Accessible and equitable technology for families has a lasting impact on a child's development. The partnership between FIRST 5 Santa Clara County, the Santa Clara County Office of Education/Head Start, and Grail Family Services to bring this valuable tool to our community is a big win for our county's youngest residents,” said Supervisor Susan Ellenberg, District 4.

“Silicon Valley is the epicenter of people with bold and forward thinking educational minds. Couple that with our cutting edge technology and it’s a winning combination for Santa Clara County’s children,” said Supervisor Cindy Chavez who represents East, Central & South San Jose children.

The BBP App is an engaging, easy-to-use interactive tool that is community-developed and research-informed. It was created by Grail Family Services with input from parents of young children, using the Human-centered Design Methodology. GFS is one of the first nonprofits in Silicon Valley to use technology to more effectively serve families.

“Parents and caregivers are continually seeking better access to information and knowledge of available resources to meet the needs of their developing child. The BBP App is an exciting and innovative technology-based resource for both parents and caregivers that will provide them with instant access to child development information and resources,” added Jolene Smith, Chief Executive Officer, FIRST 5 Santa Clara County.

Parenting can be isolating at times. One of the goals of the BBP App is to create an online community where parents can share experience and provide support to each another.

“Studies show that parent engagement helps children develop self-confidence, improves behavior and decreases chronic absenteeism,” said Dr. Mary Ann Dewan, County Superintendent of Schools at the Santa Clara Office of Education. The BBP App is a tool that supports families, teachers and the community by making it easy for parents to access information. When parents feel supported, children thrive,” Dr. Dewan added.

The BBP App was developed with financial support from private foundations. It is being implemented through a partnership with FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Office of Education/Head Start, who will promote the App through their Family Resource Centers and Head Start sites, respectively.

The BBP App is available in English and Spanish on both the iOS and Android platforms.

About Grail Family Services (GFS)

Grail Family Services partners with families, schools and communities to promote children’s success and well-being. They have been serving families with young children in East San Jose for 20 years. GFS serves more than 2000 families annually through programs at their Family Resource Center and in elementary schools in the Alum Rock Union School District. They serve an additional 2000 families through their Family Engagement Professional Development Program for childcare providers and teachers. www.gfsfamilyservices.org

About FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County is committed to the healthy development of children in their first five years. Research shows that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life.

Established in 1998 through funding from California’s Proposition 10, the “tobacco tax,” FIRST 5 Santa Clara County distributes approximately \$20 million annually to programs and services that positively impact the lives of children and families in Santa Clara County. For more information on FIRST 5 Santa Clara County and its programs, please call (408) 260-3700 or visit www.first5kids.org

About the Santa Clara County Office of Education

Working collaboratively with school and community partners, the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) is a regional service agency that provides instructional, business, and technology services to the 31 school districts of Santa Clara County. The County Office of Education directly serves students through special education programs, alternative schools, Head Start and State Preschool programs, migrant education, and Opportunity Youth Academy. The SCCOE also provides academic and fiscal oversight and monitoring to districts in addition to the 22 Santa Clara County Board of Education authorized charter schools. www.sccoe.org

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