

The logo for Santa Monica Cradle to Career is centered within a light blue rectangular box. The text "SANTA MONICA" is on the top line and "CRADLE TO CAREER" is on the bottom line, both in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The box is surrounded by a grid of small blue squares, and a red dashed border is visible inside the light blue box.

## SANTA MONICA CRADLE TO CAREER

[Home](#)[About](#)[Early Childhood](#)[School Age](#)[Older Youth](#)[Program Finder](#)

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[What is smC2C?](#)[Who is smC2C?](#)[Youth Wellbeing Report Card](#)

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## Santa Monica Youth Wellbeing Report Card

This Youth Wellbeing Report Card is more than a report. It is a call to action. Report card findings have resulted in 4 key goals: Increase kindergarten readiness. Strengthen youth connectedness and mental health. Engage vulnerable youth and their families in supportive services. Improve college and career readiness.

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### Overview, Key Findings & Demographics



The youth wellbeing report card brings together data shared by community partners to provide a multifaceted view of the wellbeing of the children in our community in **4 key areas**:

- **Learning & School Achievement**
- **Physical Health & Development**

- **Social Skills & Confidence**
- **Emotional Maturity & Mental Health**

2014 data is consistent with data released in 2012/13, verifying that these first years will serve as a good baseline for the future.

The Youth Wellbeing Report Card is a key component of smC2C's collective impact approach to ensuring that children & families in our community thrive.

**New for 2014** is more detailed data about kids entering kindergarten, which is a critical transition point in one's development.



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## Learning & School Achievement

**School preparedness, consistent access to quality education, and critical thinking skills are the keys to success in school.**

**On the whole, Santa Monica children are doing well** in this area. 84% of children entering kindergarten in Santa Monica are 'on track' in communication skills and general knowledge. Santa Monica's literacy and graduation rates are higher than the state average.



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**However, there are areas of concern** at the kindergarten, high school, and college levels. Students living in the Downtown and Pico neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to literacy challenges in the early years of school. African American and Latino students graduate at lower rates than students of other ethnicities.

When it comes to college prep, 10% more of Santa Monica's young women complete college admission requirements than young men. At the college level, only 18% of Santa Monica high school graduates who attend Santa Monica College actually place in college-level English and Math, and their median grade point average is equivalent to a C.

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## Physical Health & Development



Access to healthcare and good nutrition, strong physical fitness levels, and low youth crime rates are key indicators of physical wellbeing.

**Overall, the physical health & development of young people in Santa Monica is strong.** We have high immunization rates, low teen birth rates, and good levels of physical fitness.



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**But some children - especially boys and children who live in the Pico Neighborhood - are vulnerable in terms of physical readiness for kindergarten**, with kindergarten teachers reporting that 24% of our children are not physically on track when they start school. Some children in Santa Monica need extra help when it comes to nutrition. 25% of Santa Monica's students use the Reduced & Free Lunch program, and families living in the 90404 and 90405 zip codes have higher rates of food stamp use.

## Social Skills & Confidence



**Developing the ability to build and maintain healthy social connections is critical for success in school, at work, and in life.**

81% of children entering kindergarten in Santa Monica are 'on track' in terms of being socially ready for school. In the middle and high school years, nearly 90% of Santa Monica's young people have a caring adult outside of school and home, and three-quarters are involved in structured out-of-school activities.

Yet, when it comes to



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feeling secure and confident at school, there are several areas of concern. 44% of 7th graders and 40% of 9th graders report being harassed at school, and one-quarter of middle and high schoolers say they don't feel safe at school.

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## Emotional Maturity & Mental Health



**Mental health directly impacts all other wellbeing factors.** While many of our children have high levels of emotional security, there are a few areas of concern, especially among children entering kindergarten and among high school students.

77% of incoming kindergarteners are 'on track' as being emotionally ready to start school, yet boys have significantly lower rates of readiness in terms of emotional maturity.

Among older youth, there are serious concerns regarding alcohol and substance use, as well as feelings of extreme sadness and hopelessness. Half of 11th graders surveyed reported substance or alcohol use over the previous month, a rate above the county average. Furthermore, 33%



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of 11th graders reported 'binging' during the past month - consuming 5 or more drinks in a row. When it comes to feelings of depression, 26% of middle and high school students reported experiencing significant periods of extreme sadness, and 17% of high school students surveyed reported having suicidal thoughts.

## Using Data to Drive Change

Based on the Report Card finding, smC2C partners are working together to address critical areas of concern.

This has resulted in on-the-ground projects like the *Building Blocks to Success* kindergarten readiness awareness and education campaign, and the Youth Resource Team's 'Whatever It Takes' approach to coordinated services for our most vulnerable older youth and their families.



**NEXT STEPS: 4 KEY GOALS**

Based on this report card, smC2C partners are working to:

- Increase kindergarten readiness awareness and education
- Strengthen youth connectedness

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### Related Links

- [Explore the Data](#)
- [2014 Report Card \(pdf\) - English](#)

- [2014 Report Card \(pdf\) - Spanish](#)
- [2012 Report Card \(pdf\)](#)
- [2011 Data Snapshot \(pdf\)](#)
- [Report Card FAQs](#)
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*Santa Monica Cradle to Career: Working Together to Help Children & Families in Santa Monica Thrive*

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