



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

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PRESS RELEASE

Date: September 20, 2019

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EARLY CHILDHOOD EXPERT TO VISIT BOARD

On Tuesday, Sept. 24th, the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors will hear an update on the Thrive by Three initiative, which will include an audience with Kris Perry, deputy secretary for early childhood development of the California Health and Human Services Agency.

Recognizing that the first three years of life provide the greatest opportunity to impact the lives of Santa Cruz County's youth, the Board of Supervisors established the Thrive by Three (TbT) initiative in 2017. In November, the TbT initiative will host its first graduating class for the Nurse Family Partnership, one of four TbT home-visiting programs.

"Santa Cruz County is a national leader in supporting young kids and their families. We look forward to partnering with Governor Newsom to do more locally and be a model for other communities around the country," Board of Supervisors Chair Ryan Coonerty said.

A partnership between the Human Services Department, Health Services Agency and the First 5 Commission, Thrive by Three transforms existing resources into an integrated prenatal to age 3 system of care, including expanding access to high-quality infant/toddler care.

The Thrive by Three initiative establishes several objectives for clients, including: Decreased rates of substantiated child maltreatment and entries into foster care among infants and toddlers; Increased percentage of young mothers getting prenatal care in the first trimester; Decreased percentage of babies being born preterm and low birth weight; Decreased percentage of mothers and fathers reporting hardships and emotional distress during pregnancy and the child's first three years of life; Improved parental confidence, parenting practices, and parent-child relationships; and Increased access to high-quality care and early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers.

A former child-abuse investigator and social worker, Perry is a former executive director of First 5 California and later helmed the First Five Years Fund in Washington, D.C., a bipartisan advocacy group supporting low-income children from birth through age 5.

A UCSC graduate, Perry is tasked with implementing Gov. Gavin Newsom's early childhood development initiatives, one of the key principles of Newsom's policy platform. She is also notable as a named plaintiff in *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, which established the right of same-sex couples to marry in California.