

# City Council OKs San Diego's first-ever child and youth plan

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By [JERRY WU](#) | The San Diego Union-Tribune  
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The San Diego City Council unanimously approved the city's [first-ever child and youth plan](#) this week to create a raft of new programs and services advancing young people's wellness.

"Every child in San Diego deserves to grow up with an opportunity to be happy, healthy, and prepared to reach their potential," said Council President Sean Elo-Rivera. "This strategic plan, developed in partnership with the community, provides a framework to better support the holistic development of our young residents."

Just over a year ago, the Office of Child and Youth Success and the nonprofit Social Advocates for Youth had begun carving out the two-year framework.

The final plan is the result of youth input gathered through a series of focus groups and steering committee meetings to ensure young voices were heard. In March, San Diegans even had the opportunity to glimpse and help refine the draft.

"Our office is grounded in youth voices, and I feel like this plan truly encompasses that," said Andrea O'Hara, the office's executive director.

The decision builds on previous efforts to prioritize youth engagement, including with the city's 2022 creation of the Office of Child and Youth Success to uplift the needs of children from historically disadvantaged communities.

The office is now working to revitalize the city's Youth Commission, an appointed body of teens and adults that advises the Mayor and City Council on issues affecting youth.

Mayor Todd Gloria first reactivated the commission almost three years ago. Since then, members say that low meeting turnout and insufficient funding have contributed to stymied progress.

O'Hara applauded her team of youth staffers for helping bring the plan to fruition. Many of the interns had more freedom to determine the plan's focal points through their own research, covering topics such as youth criminal justice, civic engagement and child care, she said.

The plan the city approved focuses on five main areas: education and career pathways, economic and workforce opportunities, youth empowerment, engaging activities and child care. Each focus area outlines different objectives and potential partners to achieve its goals.

To assess the plan's impact on the community, news programs and services will be continually monitored and their metrics compared with overall city data.

The youth plan also aligns with many of the city's other initiatives on equity, mobility and affordable housing, which the city says will open up new opportunities for collaboration with city departments to develop other programs that benefit youth wellness.

Councilmember Raul Campillo, who championed the creation of the city's youth office, said he expects the plan to have lasting impacts for the community in the years to come.

"This is the investment that will pay off 20, 25 and 30 years from now on," Campillo said. "The community and organizers that put this together, their lives will simply be better."

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