



Annual Report

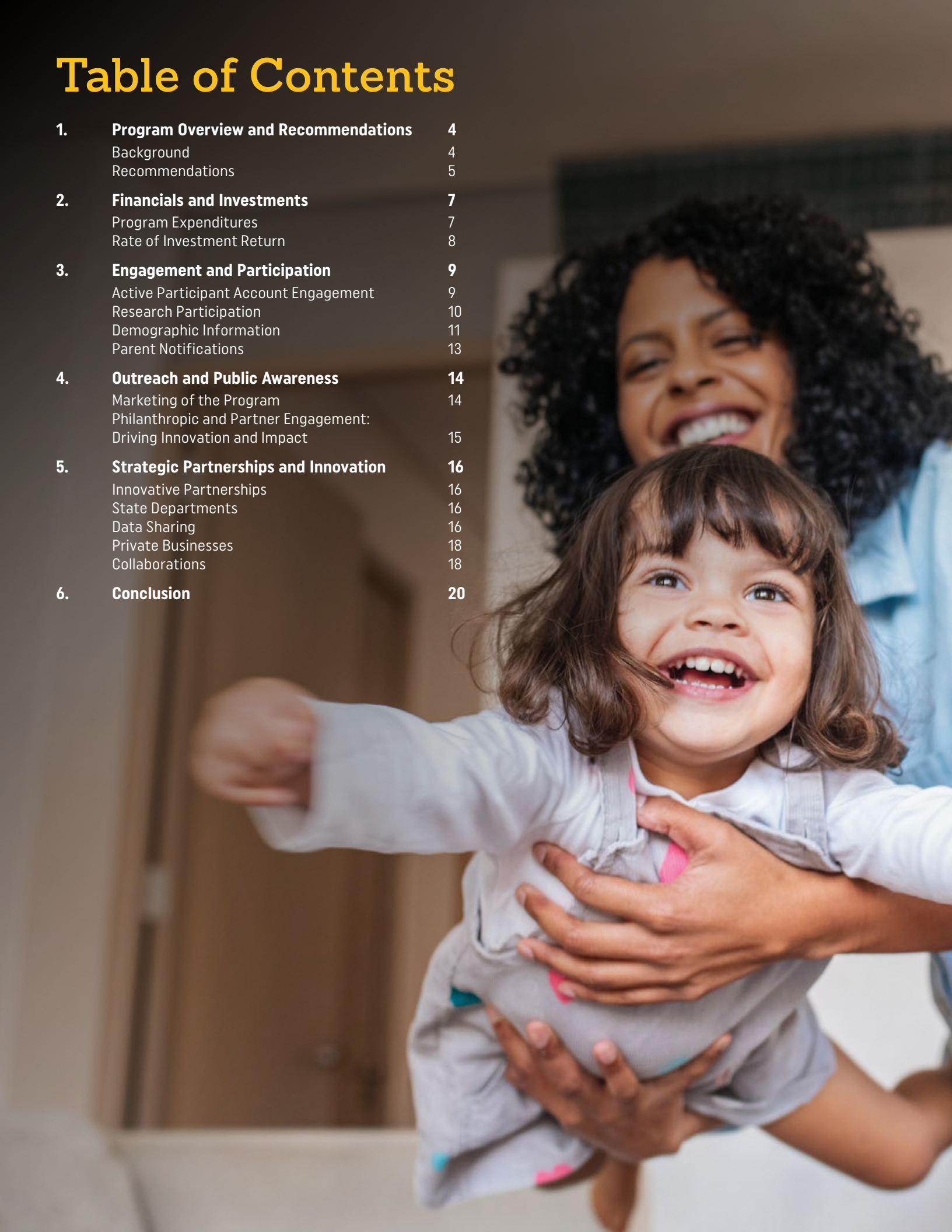
(Pursuant to CA Education section 69996 - 69996.9)

September 30, 2025



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September 30, 2025

California's Kids Investment and Development Savings Program (CalKIDS) is no longer just a promising idea, it is a proven, transformative engine for equity and opportunity. In just three years, CalKIDS has become the largest children's development account initiative in the nation, opening more than 5.1 million accounts and delivering over \$2.16 billion in state-funded deposits to California children and students.

The impact is clear and measurable:

- Families are engaging. More than 628,000 accounts have been claimed, with over \$53 million already distributed to help students pay for college and career training.
- Savings behaviors are changing. Since CalKIDS launched, 95% of linked ScholarShare 529 accounts are newly created, and balances in these accounts are growing, averaging \$4,538 per family, up from \$3,117 just one year ago.
- Equity is advancing. CalKIDS is reaching foster youth, unhoused students, and low-income families, populations historically left behind, ensuring that opportunity is not determined by zip code or family income.
- Partnerships are multiplying. From Covered California linking health milestones to early wealth building, to Riverside County's data-driven outreach, to philanthropic investment from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, CalKIDS is attracting outside capital and innovation to amplify the State's investment.

Yet, significant work remains and the ScholarShare Investment Board recommends bold but practical next steps to help more Californians claim their designated CalKIDS Account:

- Expand early access points so every parent learns about CalKIDS at birth and every student can easily access their Statewide Student Identifier.
- Strengthen data linkages to ensure continuity of accounts from birth through school enrollment, enabling timely deposits of enhanced benefits.
- Incentivize family savings by enacting a state tax deduction for ScholarShare 529 contributions, bringing California in line with 46 other states that already provide this support.
- Deepening the support and engagement from partners across the state, including schools, local agencies, businesses, and trusted community organizations to scale outreach opportunities.

The Administration, State Treasurer's Office and Legislature's continued leadership is critical. CalKIDS is more than an account, it is a promise that California makes to children: that college and career training are within reach. By increasing awareness, sustaining investment, and embedding CalKIDS into the state's broader equity and workforce agenda, California can cement its role as the national leader in building early wealth and future opportunity.

CalKIDS is a movement with momentum. With every account we fund and every family we engage, we are not just reducing barriers to education, we are building the foundation for a stronger, more resilient California economy and a more equitable society for generations to come.



Cassandra DiBenedetto
Executive Director
ScholarShare Investment Board



1. Program Overview and Recommendations

Background

The California Kids Investment and Development Savings Program (CalKIDS or Program) is a program administered by the ScholarShare Investment Board (SIB or Board) designed to expand access to higher education for students, especially those from disproportionately marginalized communities, by establishing a starting point to build savings for higher education. CalKIDS formally launched in summer 2022 as the largest child development account program in the nation with three unique groups for eligible participants in the Program:

1. All children born in California on or after July 1, 2022.
2. Eligible students in 1st-12th grade identified as an unduplicated pupil per the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) in the 2021-2022 academic year.
3. Eligible students in 1st grade identified as an unduplicated pupil per LCFF in the 2023-2024 academic year, and each academic year thereafter.

CalKIDS participants can use their funds for higher education expenses starting at age 17 until age 26. Below is a breakdown of the deposits funded by the State of California and allocated to CalKIDS Accounts opened by SIB for eligible participants.

Children Born in California on or After July 1, 2022

- \$25 initial deposit if born between July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023
- \$100 initial deposit if born between July 1, 2023–onwards
- \$25 additional deposit for claiming the CalKIDS Account
- \$50 additional deposit for linking a CalKIDS Account to a ScholarShare 529 Account



Eligible Students

- \$500 initial deposit
- \$500 additional deposit if identified as a foster youth
- \$500 additional deposit if identified as unhoused



In just a few years, CalKIDS has already grown to include more than 5 million participants, ranging from newborns to college students. The Program continues to expand every year, adding newborns and new first-grade cohorts across the state.

By offering significant, publicly funded investments in the future of California's children, CalKIDS is transforming the way families plan for higher education, making college and career training more accessible, more affordable, and more achievable for children, regardless of background.

The table below shows the number of CalKIDS Accounts created and the investments created for the Program participants through June 30, 2025:

	Newborns & Young Children Born After July 1, 2022	Students	Total
Number of CalKIDS Accounts Opened	1,165,092	3,932,998	5,098,090
Total State Contributions to CalKIDS Accounts	\$89,997,775	\$2,076,557,000	\$2,166,554,775
Total Non-State Contributions to CalKIDS Accounts	\$65,700	\$34,700	\$100,400

Note: Information provided through June 30, 2025. Non-state contributions refer to funding provided by 1) the ScholarShare 529 Plan Manager—TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. as part of a pilot project to provide a \$50 financial incentive for students who register their CalKIDS and link a new or existing ScholarShare 529 Account for the same CalKIDS and 2) a project with Covered California to provide additional funds into accounts for children completing specified health milestones. SIB is exploring additional opportunities for increased non-state contributions.

SIB is statutorily required to provide an annual report to the California Department of Finance and the Legislature on specified information pertaining to the program's implementation by September 30th. SIB presents in this report expenditure information, account information, participation results, marketing efforts, and recommendations to improve the Program. This report includes Program information and data through June 30, 2025.

Recommendations

As California looks to maximize the impact of CalKIDS, the Board has identified several opportunities to expand access, simplify participation, and encourage long-term savings. These recommendations build on existing successes and address critical gaps in outreach, data, and policy support:

Increasing SSID Access

For students, claiming a CalKIDS Account hinges on access to a Statewide Student Identifier (SSID). Currently, access varies by district: some local educational agencies (LEAs) post the SSID on online portals or transcripts, but there is no statewide uniformity on how to access this for students. SIB recommends LEAs ensure SSID are accessible to students, which would align with the state's efforts to increase CalKIDS participation. Similarly, this will support LEAs in meeting the newly created requirement imposed by AB 123, 2025 for LEAs to share information about CalKIDS as students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a California Dream Act Application (CADAA). **SIB recommends a legislative mandate to ensure LEAs make SSIDs consistently and uniformly accessible to students.**

Data Linkage

SIB will develop a process with our partner state departments to ensure data matching between newborn and student participants will be achievable in the coming years. Pursuant to statute, SIB is to provide each eligible first grader an "enhanced deposit" in a new or existing CalKIDS Account. This means that SIB will need to eventually place an additional \$500 to \$1,500 in accounts that were already created for children who were added into the Program as a newborn. A challenge remains since eligibility for newborns (universal) is different than eligibility for low-income public school students (LCFF-based), and unique data sets are provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and California Department of Education (CDE), respectively, to create these accounts. **While SIB will support the development of this process, SIB recommends the state consider legislation creating unique identifiers that stay associated with the child from birth to their time in public school.**

Leveraging Early Access Points

CalKIDS has already partnered with local agencies to include Program information when parents pick up their child's birth certificate, and a handful of medical providers and birthing hospitals have begun sharing materials with new parents. These efforts work—but they are limited. Because CalKIDS is universal for newborns, expanding these touchpoints statewide would ensure that virtually every family learns about their child's account at one of the earliest—and most trusted—moments in their lives. This would include baby's birth, entry into daycare or pre-kindergarten, as well as when families apply for support services such as the California Women Infants & Children Program (WIC) or CalFresh.

SIB recommends state departments, local government agencies, daycares, hospitals, and birthing centers across the state identify opportunities to integrate CalKIDS in their communications to families. SIB also recommends that the Legislature mandate the sharing of CalKIDS information at these critical life milestones.

Incentivize Savings Through 529 Tax Deduction

While CalKIDS participants are not required to save on their own, SIB encourages families to continue saving for higher education through California's official college savings plan, ScholarShare 529 (Plan). Many states offer a tax incentive, such as a deduction or credit, for contributing to the state's own 529 plan. Unfortunately, California is one of four states nationwide that does not offer a tax incentive. SIB recommends the Administration and Legislature consider a 529 tax incentive as an additional tool to help families, especially low-income families prioritize saving on their own. SIB believes this change will improve participation in CalKIDS by better fostering opportunities for families to continue saving on their own, aligning with the original intent of the Program. This incentive can be achieved through legislation or the budgetary process. **SIB is requesting support of this initiative from both the Legislature and the Administration.**



2. Financials and Investments

Program Expenditures

Program expenditures for the previous five fiscal years (2020-2021 through 2024-2025) are outlined in the table below. Please note certain amounts may slightly differ when compared to prior reports due to potential reclassification of expenditure categories.

Expenditure Item	Expenditure Totals				
	FY 2020-2021	FY 2021-2022	FY 2022-2023	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025
Staff	\$51,595	\$145,890	\$361,832	\$459,576	\$553,900
Recordkeeping Platform	\$ -	\$286,534	\$485,054	\$435,520	\$453,732
Notifications	\$ -	\$ -	\$2,516,741	\$499,867	\$684,594
Service Contracts	\$ -	\$91,563	\$1,093,911	\$1,189,726	\$1,215,911
Marketing and Outreach	\$ -	\$ -	\$59,248	\$1,383,922	\$1,930,544
Miscellaneous	\$ -	\$60,385	\$16,448	\$7,130	\$25,509
TOTAL	\$51,595	\$584,372	\$4,533,234	\$3,975,741	\$4,864,190

Observations related to expenditure trends in fiscal year 2024-2025 as well as general background on other expenditures since Program launch.

- Staff expenditures increased year-over-year as personnel grew, and more recently, as a result of a fully-staffed program in the most current fiscal year.
- Recordkeeping costs did not commence until the second half of fiscal year 2021-2022.
- Program notifications were highest in fiscal year 2022-2023 compared to subsequent and future years due to SIB's requirement to notify the 3.4 million students initially enrolled into the Program. In comparison, SIB enrolls approximately 400,000 newborns and 270,000 eligible students in ongoing years.
- Service contracts represent the Program's call center, and SIB's administrative services and rent and security contracts with the California State Treasurer's Office (STO). Expenses increased over time as services were utilized.
- Marketing expenses increased year-over-year after the Program's launch following one-time allocations for that purpose that began in fiscal year 2022-2023.
- Miscellaneous costs over time have shifted as some of these expenses were one-time in nature, along with fluctuating expenses from year to year like new equipment and/or increased or reduced travel.

Rate of Investment Return

The rate of investment return for the current fiscal year and prior two (2) fiscal years for each CalKIDS Account is provided in the table below. These CalKIDS Accounts include Master Holding Accounts, which hold Program funds to be allocated as deposits or incentives for Program participants, and Cohort Accounts, which hold Program funds allocated to each CalKIDS participant/ population group based on their age and/or grade level. In addition to the rate of investment return, the account type and investment portfolio is provided for each CalKIDS population group. Returns reflect individual portfolios and do not reflect the experience of individual CalKIDS beneficiaries.

CalKIDS Population	CalKIDS Account Type	ScholarShare 529 Investment Portfolio	7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023 Return as of 6/30/23*	7/1/2023 - 6/30/2024 Return as of 6/30/24*	7/1/2024 - 6/30/2025 Return as of 6/30/25*
Newborns	Master Holding Account	Principal Plus Interest Portfolio	1.91%	2.89%	2.98%
Newborns (2022-23)	Cohort Account	2038/2039 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	13.05%	15.12%	13.93%
Newborns (2023-24)	Cohort Account	2040/2041 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	N/A	13.6%**	14.17%
Newborns (2024-25)	Cohort Account	2040/2041 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	N/A	N/A	14.17%
Students	Master Holding Account	Principal Plus Interest Portfolio	1.91%	2.89%	2.98%
Students (Grade 1, Census Day 2021)	Cohort Account	2032/2033 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	11.17%	13.23%	12.50%
Students (Grade 2, Census Day 2021)	Cohort Account	2032/2033 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	11.17%	13.23%	12.50%
Students (Grade 3, Census Day 2021)	Cohort Account	2030/2031 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	10.06%	11.84%	11.57%
Students (Grade 4, Census Day 2021)	Cohort Account	2028/2029 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	10.06%	11.84%	11.57%
Students (Grade 5, Census Day 2021)	Cohort Account	2034/2035 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	8.17%	10.16%	10.09%
Students (Grade 1, Census Day 2022)	Cohort Account	2034/2035 Enrollment Portfolio Passive	11.76%	13.92%	13.16%
Students	Cohort Account	Non-ScholarShare 529 Funding Agreement	2.10%	2.94%	3.04%
Students (Grades 6-12, Census Day 2021)	Master Holding Account	Non-ScholarShare 529 Funding Agreement	2.10%	2.94%	3.04%

Note: Returns are presented net of fees and reflect the reinvestment of dividends and other earnings. Net of Fee returns are calculated net of investment advisory fees and net of underlying fund expenses and transaction costs.

*Returns are those of the portfolio in which CalKIDS invests and does not reflect the experience of any individual participant.

**The inception date of the 2040/2041 Enrollment Portfolio Passive was 7/14/2023. Return reflects performance from July 14, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

3. Engagement and Participation

Active Participant Account Engagement

Active participant account engagement in the Program is measured by claims (also known as registrations), ScholarShare 529 linkages, and distribution requests. A description of each activity is described below.

- **Claims:** The eligible CalKIDS participant has logged into the Program's online portal to claim their CalKIDS Account.
- **ScholarShare 529 Linkages:** The eligible CalKIDS participant has claimed their account and has linked an individual ScholarShare 529 Account to view both the CalKIDS Account balance and their own savings in one place. CalKIDS participants cannot contribute money directly into their CalKIDS Account. However, they are encouraged to save on their own through ScholarShare 529, also administered by SIB.
- **Distribution Requests:** The eligible CalKIDS participant has claimed their account and requested the distribution of funds to pay for eligible expenses at an institution of higher education. Distribution requests are only available for students 17 years of age or older who are enrolled at an institution of higher education.

Data for these actions, as of June 30, 2025, are outlined in the table below.

	Newborns & Young Children Born After July 1, 2022	Students	Total
Claims	107,456	520,900	628,356
ScholarShare 529 Linkages	30,280	20,822	51,102
Distribution Requests	N/A	103,723	103,723
Number of Participants Who Requested a Distribution	N/A	99,978	99,978
Amount Distributed	N/A	\$53,485,734	\$53,485,734

Research Participation

During the reporting period, SIB worked with academic researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles' (UCLA) CalKIDS Institute to survey students who have used their CalKIDS funds. An online questionnaire fielded responses from 296 students, with additional follow-up interviews with 24 students. Overall, students reported a positive impact on the CalKIDS funds supporting their higher education experience, aspirations, and expenses, as shown in the participant testimonials provided below. Students authorized the use of their responses for SIB use and inclusion in reports.

“Having a CalKIDS Account has helped me. I felt hopeful and it made me see how many people and organizations want to help students. Even though graduating college seemed to be so far it made me realize that it won’t be impossible.”

—Grace, student at Whittier College

“Having a CalKIDS Account has helped me fund leftover expenses related to school without having to take overtime shifts, which has allowed me to focus on my academics.”

—San, student at University of California, Los Angeles

“Having a CalKIDS Account has been an immense help when it comes to paying for my books and school supplies.”

—Sofia, student at University of California, Berkeley

“As someone who is supporting themselves through school any kind of financial contribution means the world to me.”

—Nathalie, California State University, Fresno

“Having a CalKIDS Account allows me to feel secure and stress free.”

—Tyanna, student at De Anza College

SIB is partnering with a University of Washington PhD candidate to study college-aged students who have claimed CalKIDS Accounts and are eligible for distributions but have not yet used their funds. Early findings show these students are not deterred by technical barriers or the size of the award. Instead, they are making deliberate choices such as holding their funds for when financial needs are greater. Notably, one-third of the 212 respondents plan to use their CalKIDS money after transferring to a four-year institution. These insights highlight that many students may not need immediate support upon college entry, reinforcing the importance of maintaining flexibility. State law appropriately allows access to CalKIDS funds through age 26.

Demographic Information

Outlined below is a summary of specific available demographic information, as of June 30, 2025, for eligible CalKIDS Account recipients, which includes gender and ethnicity. The demographic information in this section is provided by the CDE (for eligible students) and CDPH (for parents of the children born on or after July 1, 2022).

Categories and/or nomenclature for the demographic information presented are based on the data source. For example, CDE provides information on a child's gender, whereas CDPH provides information on a child's sex.

Student Participants

Ethnicity

Race Ethnicity	Students (#)	Students (%)
Hispanic or Latino	2,751,093	69.9%
White	445,501	11.3%
Asian	332,141	8.4%
African American	233,075	5.9%
Two or More Races	100,811	2.6%
Not Reported	33,577	0.9%
American Indian or Alaska Native	19,034	0.5%
Pacific Islander	99,978	0.5%

*Asian includes Filipino which is listed as its own category in the CDE data file. Race Ethnicity means Students are placed in a specific race/ethnicity category based on their most recent California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) record at the school/local educational agency (LEA). This information is derived from the student information file and:

- Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity Indicator
- Race Category Code

Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth decimal.

Gender

Gender	Students (#)	Students (%)
Female	1,907,373	48.5%
Male	2,023,982	51.5%
Nonbinary	1,643	0.0%
Unknown	0	0.0%

*Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth decimal.

Family Income of Students

CDE does not collect family income information on students. Low-income student participant eligibility is determined by the LCFF. SIB is exploring opportunities to gather this information in the future.

Newborn and Young Children Born After July 1, 2022 Participants

Ethnicity

Multi-Race Status*	Parent Giving Birth (#)	Parent Giving Birth (%)	Parent Not Giving Birth (#)	Parent Not Giving Birth (%)
Hispanic	568,914	53.7%	513,191	51.9%
White	295,609	27.9%	296,341	29.9%
Asian	109,012	10.3%	89,952	9.1%
Black	51,271	4.8%	56,263	5.7%
Two or more races	28,747	2.7%	27,676	2.8%
American Indian / Alaskan Native	3,241	0.3%	2,784	0.3%
Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	1,704	0.2%	1,952	0.2%
Other	1,285	0.1%	1,475	0.1%

*Multi-Race status is calculated based on information from Hispanic Origin in the DPH data file. This field provides a single race value for all individuals, including those who reported more than one race. Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth decimal.

Sex

As noted above, CDE provides information on gender while CDPH provides information on sex.

Sex	Newborns (#)	Newborns (%)
Female	495,371	48.8%
Male	519,313	51.2%
Nonbinary	4	0.0%
Unknown	17	0.0%

*Note: Percentages are rounded to the nearest tenth decimal.

Family Income of Newborns

CDPH does not provide family income information on newborns. Newborn participant eligibility is universal, regardless of the family's income status. SIB is exploring opportunities to gather this information in the future.

Parent Notifications

Every eligible CalKIDS participant with a mailing address on file receives a personalized notification letter. This letter does more than confirm eligibility—it highlights the award amount, explains how to access the account, and encourages families to continue saving through ScholarShare 529. The letter also includes information on how a family can opt out from the Program. To ensure accessibility, the letter is provided in both English and Spanish and features a QR code that connects families directly to the CalKIDS website. Each letter also contains a unique claim code, making it simple for participants to activate and view their CalKIDS Account online. For those who may not receive the letter, alternative secure identifiers are available—such as the Local Registration Number (LRN) for children born on or after July 1, 2022 or the Statewide Student Identifier (SSID) for students—so that every family has a clear path to claiming their child's account.

Mailing of notification letters to participants commenced in November 2022. As of June 30, 2025, notification letters have been mailed to the parents/guardians of 1,195,393 newborns and 4,056,930 students.

- Notification letters to newborn participants are sent monthly based on birth data SIB receives from the CDPH.
- Notification letters to student participants are mailed annually over the span of 2-3 months, generally in the summer or early-fall, following the receipt of the student participant data from CDE near the end of the academic year.

In July 2024, SIB sent 167,265 notification letters to recent high school graduates who had not yet claimed their CalKIDS Accounts. With no other paid media running and schools on summer break—limiting outreach support—the campaign still led to approximately 45,000 CalKIDS Accounts claimed, demonstrating the strong impact of direct mail engagement.

Notification letters continue to be a powerful outreach tool for CalKIDS. From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, about 36% of all claimed accounts were activated using a unique code found only on mailed letters—a strong indicator of their impact. Notably, this success came from a targeted mailing to select new and existing participants.

In addition to direct mail, SIB uses email outreach for a specific group: newborns enrolled in CalKIDS. CDPH provides parent email addresses when voluntarily shared during birth registration—roughly 17% of cases. SIB regularly emails these parents with information about their child's CalKIDS Account.

For K-12 students, CDE does not collect parent email addresses, limiting email outreach.

SIB also engages in community-based efforts to raise awareness and increase parent notifications—detailed in the next section.

4. Outreach and Public Awareness

Marketing of the Program

SIB has launched a wide range of targeted marketing strategies designed to boost both awareness and participation in the Program. These efforts go beyond traditional advertising, combining community-based partnerships with a mix of earned media coverage and paid media campaigns to reach families where they are. Below are key examples of the strategies and tactics SIB is deploying to ensure California families know about, understand, and engage with the Program.

Program Rebrand (Fall 2024)

In fall 2024, SIB rebranded CalKIDS from a "college savings account" to a "scholarship" to better meet families where they are in understanding the opportunity the program provides. This was not a departure from the early asset-building movement, but rather a strategic decision grounded in listening and learning. SIB found that "scholarship" resonated far more strongly than "college savings account." SIB is re-positioning CalKIDS as a Program that promotes a positive college-going sentiment in a way that is safe, familiar, and aspirational for both students and parents. The term "scholarship" also brings with it the understanding that it is educational funding that does not need to be repaid. SIB messaging has built on this concept by referring to CalKIDS as "the easiest scholarship in the state of California," since there are no essay, GPA, or letter of recommendation requirements.

It is also important to note that referring to CalKIDS as a "college savings account" may create certain misperceptions. For example, families cannot deposit their own money in a CalKIDS Account as they would in a typical college savings account. Families have the option and are encouraged to save on their own in ScholarShare 529 Account. At the same time, the post-claim experience continues to emphasize that these accounts are more than a one-time award; they are a cornerstone of California's broader early wealth-building initiative. Families are encouraged to build on the CalKIDS foundation by saving in their own ScholarShare 529 accounts, reinforcing the dual message of immediate opportunity and long-term investment.

Back-to-School Campaign (Fall 2024)

In fall 2024, SIB launched a campaign consisting of paid media and grassroots efforts centered around back-to-school time. The paid media efforts, which ran from August 19th to October 13th, consisted of search, display, audio and visual, and social media and utilized fresh ads and messaging. Other key components of the campaign included e-communications, limited direct mail, and targeted outreach to colleges and school districts. Grassroots outreach started in July with SIB staff reaching out to parents, students, and school counselors through communication efforts and on-site and virtual events held by LEAs, statewide associations, and colleges with the primary goal of increasing awareness of the Program and assisting students and their families with claiming their CalKIDS Accounts.

SIB intentionally directed the majority of its paid media efforts to reach older audience groups as there was a greater urgency for them to claim and distribute the funds. Therefore, the campaign resulted in:

- 94,313 claimed CalKIDS Accounts for all grade levels between July 1st to October 14th, increasing the total number of claimed accounts for all grade-level student participants by 30% (312,693 at the end of June 2024 to 407,006 by mid-October 2024).
- 69,540 of these new claims (73%) were from the targeted population of high school and college students.
- The percentage of total claimed accounts for the college freshman population increased by 78% since June 30, 2024 (55,094 total claims at end of June 2024 to 98,084 total claims by October 14, 2024), with one-third (32%) of expected eligible college freshman participants having claimed their account by October 14th as compared to 18% as of June 30th.

Onboarded New Marketing Firm (Fall 2024 – Winter 2024)

During the reporting period, CalKIDS onboarded the full-service marketing firm, BARÚ Advertising (BARÚ), to support a \$7.5 million marketing campaign through May 31, 2026 with the option to extend the agreement for an additional year. The scope of the agreement includes marketing support for strategy, paid media buys, content and production, public relations, research, and other agreed upon project work. Within the reporting period, BARÚ supported a paid media campaign from April – June 2025, which included paid search (Google advertisements), paid social media, digital video, connected TV (CTV), display, mobile, and audio, as well as native advertising. SIB saw website traffic increase by 30% and 47,782 claims generated over the course of the paid media campaign. In addition, SIB and BARÚ also conducted 104 interviews solicited through a research poll to better understand current Program awareness levels and messaging to help inform future campaigns.

Public Relations Push (Spring 2025)

In 2025, the Board strategically focused on earned media outreach in counties with the highest concentrations of eligible participants. Media activities were aligned with pivotal moments—such as the college decision-making season—to maximize relevance and impact. By amplifying student testimonials and engaging trusted community partners, SIB strengthened both awareness and credibility. These efforts generated significant visibility, including 158 press-release pick-ups through Newswire, 57 earned media placements (with 11 in ethnic and cultural outlets), and 18 third-party pickups within just two months (March–May 2025).

Philanthropic and Partner Engagement: Driving Innovation and Impact

Philanthropic engagement is a new but rapidly expanding frontier for the SIB, and CalKIDS is at the center of this effort. These partnerships are not only bringing additional resources into the Program but also elevating its visibility, credibility, and long-term sustainability.

Catalyzing Early Investment

Even before launch, SIB engaged the philanthropic sector to lay the foundation for collaboration. Initial outreach to eight organizations positioned CalKIDS as a national model for Children's Savings Accounts (CSAs). This work led to one of the Program's most important early milestones: securing direct philanthropic investment.

Transformational Support from the Mott Foundation

In December 2021, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (Mott Foundation) awarded a \$750,000 grant to accelerate awareness and education efforts for CalKIDS. These funds were fully leveraged by the end of 2024 to drive statewide visibility and participation. Recognizing the impact, the Mott Foundation deepened its commitment with an additional \$500,000 investment for 2025–26. This sustained partnership not only strengthens CalKIDS outreach, but also underscores the Program's national leadership in advancing educational opportunity.

Strategic Contributions from TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc.

Through its ongoing role in supporting ScholarShare 529 as Plan Manager, TIAA-CREF Tuition Financing, Inc. (TFI) provides \$1 million annually to sustain CalKIDS' marketing and outreach infrastructure. This commitment enables the creative campaigns, digital engagement, and community outreach necessary to reach millions of families. In 2023, TFI also funded a \$34,700 incentive campaign that spurred new ScholarShare 529 Account openings. Building on that success, SIB secured critical regulatory changes in 2024 that expanded flexibility to deploy financial incentives—an innovation that is now fueling multiple new engagement campaigns.

A First-of-Its-Kind Partnership with Covered California

In 2025, SIB launched an unprecedented collaboration with Covered California, connecting health milestones to future savings. Families with children under two years old enrolled in Covered California now receive additional CalKIDS deposits when children complete essential health benchmarks, such as well-child visits and vaccinations. Funded through Covered California's Quality Transformation Initiative, the partnership has already provided \$65,700 in new deposits to 156 families as of June 2025. This initiative not only incentivizes healthier starts in life but also grows savings for education—delivering a double impact for California's youngest residents. The partnership will continue through spring 2026, with the potential to last longer.

Positioning for the Future

While early fundraising efforts in 2021 were set aside as the state prioritized General Fund support, CalKIDS has since proven its ability to attract and sustain major outside investment. With strong philanthropic partners like the Mott Foundation, institutional support from TFI, and groundbreaking collaborations with Covered California, the Program is demonstrating that public-private partnerships can expand both the reach and effectiveness of state-led initiatives.

CalKIDS is not just a child development account program—it is a catalyst for innovation, equity, and opportunity. These high-impact partnerships ensure that California's investment in its children is amplified, sustained, and transformative.

5. Strategic Partnerships and Innovation

Innovative Partnerships

Since launching in summer 2022, SIB has actively partnered with statewide associations, nonprofits, community organizations, public agencies, and key LEAs. These efforts focus on engaging stakeholders—including county offices of education, school districts, and individual schools—to support outreach and boost awareness of and participation in the Program.

SIB has promoted CalKIDS through both in-person and virtual presentations to students, families, and community members. Since launch, monthly webinars have reached 4,262 attendees, and outreach has expanded through innovative partnerships across the state.

Below are highlights of key partnerships during this reporting period.

State Departments

California Department of Social Services

From mid-February to mid-April 2025, SIB partnered with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to increase awareness of CalKIDS to CalWORKS and CalFresh participants. During this period, a total of 3,256,286 notifications were sent through text messages or emails (combined total) to CalWORKS and CalFresh participants. Early results demonstrated a 171% increase in website traffic and 141% increase in unique users visiting the CalKIDS website compared to right before the campaign's launch. This collaboration demonstrated an important opportunity to engage recipients of state social service programs.

California Department of Public Health

SIB has strengthened its partnership with CDPH's Center for Health Statistics and Informatics unit, which supplies SIB with data of newborns. As of July 2024, SIB staff have participated in each of CDPH's Quarterly Local Jurisdiction Meetings during the 2024–25 fiscal year to promote the CalKIDS program to local vital records and county clerk offices statewide. This collaboration is essential, as CDPH brings together the local agencies that issue birth certificates—documents that include the LRN required for families to access CalKIDS Accounts for children born on or after July 1, 2022. These offices also serve as key partners in reaching newborn families with timely information. Local agencies in Fresno, Sonoma, Imperial, Los Angeles, San Benito, Riverside, and Berkeley have incorporated CalKIDS materials when families physically pick up their birth certificates. It's possible that additional jurisdictions across the state have also supported similar outreach efforts without SIB's knowledge.

Covered California

SIB and Covered California have partnered to include non-state funds into CalKIDS Accounts for select participants. The collaborative effort provides additional incentives in a child's CalKIDS Account for completing important health milestones, including attending well-child visits and receiving vaccinations. As of mid-June 2025, the program has helped 156 Covered California enrollees both claim their CalKIDS Accounts and receive a combined total of \$65,700 in additional deposits in CalKIDS Accounts for completing these important healthcare milestones.

Data Sharing

While SIB receives data from CDPH and CDE for the purpose of creating CalKIDS Accounts, SIB has entered into an additional data sharing partnership described below for the purpose of increasing Program participation.

Riverside County Office of Education

In 2023, a statutory change charged SIB to form a data sharing partnership with the Riverside County Office of Education (RCOE) and its schools to improve participation efforts for the Program. A data sharing agreement was executed in April 2024. While originally intended to expire on July 1, 2025, the Legislature extended the agreement until 2030 as part of the 2025-2026 State Budget. Education Code 69996.9 stipulates specific reporting requirements from this agreement which are reflected below in this report. One requirement is for SIB to report on a description of outreach strategies employed by RCOE to increase participation in the CalKIDS Program. These strategies are reflected in the italicized bullets below.

- Prior to CalKIDS' launch, RCOE developed a Financial Literacy Initiative with age-appropriate lessons around financial literacy topics. RCOE has folded CalKIDS into these lessons to help students identify their SSID and claim their account, using CalKIDS as an interactive tool for financial concepts.
- RCOE provides workshops for families and educators in English and Spanish. These sessions include hands-on webinars and community events that demystify account claiming, explain the significance of early savings, and foster a college-going culture across the county. RCOE also helps families open and link a ScholarShare 529 Account.
- RCOE has developed a robust system for tracking CalKIDS participation each month via its online CalKIDS Scorecard—a public dashboard listing eligible students and claim rates by school and district. As of June 2025, Riverside County students have claimed 67,356 accounts. This data-driven transparency allows educators and community partners to identify schools with lower participation, tailor targeted workshops and webinars, and intensify support efforts where needed, helping to increase access to college savings and financial literacy across the county.
- RCOE takes pride in celebrating schools that achieve 100% CalKIDS Account claims, honoring their success with vibrant custom banners to display the school's achievement schoolwide and lively and spirited pep rallies to recognize students, staff, and families. These celebrations not only spotlight collective accomplishments but also build school pride, reinforce the importance of financial literacy, and motivate other schools to reach the same milestone. By publicly acknowledging this achievement, RCOE fosters a supportive, goal-oriented culture across the county—turning data into community pride and tangible momentum toward universal financial empowerment.

Additional metrics are provided below to quantify outcomes of this partnership.

CalKIDS Participants	CalKIDS Student Participants (Riverside County Office of Education)	CalKIDS Participants (Statewide*)
Number of Participants who Claimed Accounts	88,617 (27.8% of eligible population)	628,356 (12.3% of eligible population)
Number of Participants who Linked CalKIDS Accounts to ScholarShare 529 Account	1,539 (1.7% of claimed accounts)	51,102 (8.1% of claimed accounts)
Number of Participants who Requested a Distribution of Funds	8,654 (22.7% of claimed accounts eligible for distribution)	99,987 (36.0% of claimed accounts eligible for distributions)
Total Amount of Distributions	\$4,566,814	\$53,485,734

*Statewide includes all CalKIDS participants as directed by state law, including newborn participants.

Note: Program data demonstrates that the majority of participants with linked ScholarShare accounts are concentrated in the younger child cohorts. Accordingly, the linkage rate observed in Riverside does not portray a 1:1 comparison to statewide linkage rates. All statewide information is inclusive of Riverside student participation.

SIB is exploring additional data sharing partnerships with state agencies and LEAs beyond RCOE pending statutory authority and approvals from partnering state agencies to ensure compliance with state and federal laws.

Private Businesses

Golden 1 Credit Union

In addition to working with traditional educational partners, SIB is working closely with Golden 1 Credit Union (Golden 1) to promote CalKIDS. SIB and Golden 1 hosted events at branches across Northern California (Fresno, Oakland, Sacramento, and Madera), bringing over 150 participants together to help families check eligibility and claim their CalKIDS Scholarships. Local school districts in each location assisted in promoting the events, furthering SIB's relationships in the region. Golden 1 also provided families with another \$50 incentive for opening up an account with the credit union. This event marked the second year of this collaboration.

EVERFI

EVERFI is an international technology company providing K-12 schools in the U.S. with access to financial education resources at no cost. EVERFI and SIB are working together to increase CalKIDS participation among students at Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD). EVERFI currently works with LAUSD schools to provide online financial literacy lessons to students. Information about CalKIDS has been incorporated into EVERFI lessons for select classrooms at 40 active LAUSD schools since the partnership began in late-March. As students learn about financial literacy, they are provided with their SSID to check if they are eligible for a CalKIDS Scholarship. EVERFI and SIB are working with LAUSD to expand these opportunities to more schools in the next school year, building a stronger bridge between CalKIDS and financial literacy education.

Collaborations

California Early Wealth Account Systems Summit

In April 2025, SIB hosted the inaugural California Early Wealth Account System (CEWAS) Summit (Summit), a landmark convening designed to advance California's leadership in children's savings and early wealth-building initiatives. The Summit brought together policymakers, educators, researchers, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners to align strategies, share best practices, and accelerate the impact of CalKIDS and other early asset-building programs.

The Summit was developed in coordination with the California Child Savings Account Coalition and the UCLA CalKIDS Institute. SIB leveraged these statewide networks of stakeholders committed to embedding wealth-building opportunities for children and families into California's cradle-to-career pipeline to create an event that spoke to the opportunity ahead. Through this collaboration, SIB and its partners desired to elevate California as a national model for leveraging children's savings accounts to reduce wealth inequality, promote college-going identities, and strengthen long-term economic mobility.

This partnership played a critical role in ensuring the Summit reflected the diverse needs and perspectives of California's families. Together, SIB and other members identified opportunities to:

- Expand outreach to historically underserved communities;
- Strengthen program alignment across state agencies, local governments, and community-based partners;
- Build philanthropic partnerships that extend the reach and sustainability of early wealth-building programs; and
- Share research and evaluation findings that inform policy and practice at the state and national levels.

The Summit unveiled the CEWAS Plan, a set of strategies to expand awareness and engagement in CalKIDS, HOPE, and local CSA plans statewide. In partnership with the organizations behind the summit, SIB has subsequently established the Early Wealth Partnership, whose mission is to raise and re-grant philanthropic resources to implement the strategies of the plan.

By convening the Summit and leveraging the expertise of many partners, California is deepening its commitment to ensuring every child has access to early wealth-building opportunities. The Summit represented not just a policy conversation, but a coordinated movement to create a more equitable and prosperous future for the next generation.

Ongoing Grassroots Partnerships

Additionally, SIB staff have engaged a variety of partners ranging from school districts, professional associations, non-profit organizations, birthing centers, and more to promote the program. SIB staff support these partners with webinars, tabling events, and disseminating program information through materials available to the public on our Program website. In the last year, SIB staff worked with these organizations to deliver 128 presentations to organization staff members, 147 presentations to families, and attended 171 community events to share program information. These opportunities strengthen the Program's brand awareness by bridging CalKIDS with organizations that families already know. Since the Program's launch in 2022, SIB has engaged a total of 1,671 organizations.

Local CSA Outreach & Coordination Awards Program

In 2022, SIB received a one-time allocation of \$5 million to strengthen collaboration with local CSA programs. This investment launched the Local CSA Outreach & Coordination Awards Program (Awards Program), designed to deepen family engagement and align local savings efforts with the statewide CalKIDS initiative.

The Awards Program began in June 2023, with SIB awarding two-year funding to 11 CSA programs across diverse regions of California—including Alameda, Los Angeles, Modoc, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Yolo Counties. Each program tailored its outreach to local needs, employing strategies such as:

- Building partnerships with trusted community organizations
- Hosting in-person workshops and informational events
- Leveraging digital tools like social media and text messaging to reach families directly

This multi-pronged approach broadened awareness, built trust within communities, and encouraged families to take concrete steps toward saving for higher education.

Impact After the First Year (as of June 30, 2024):

- Local CSA programs reported a 32% increase in registrations in their own programs.
- Families participating in local CSAs showed an 11% increase in contributions to savings vehicles such as ScholarShare 529.

These trends indicate that families are not only enrolling at higher rates but also actively committing their own resources—demonstrating stronger savings behaviors.

While direct measurement of CalKIDS Account claims at the local level was more challenging, SIB tracked county-wide data and observed a corresponding increase in CalKIDS claim rates during the same period.

The two-year Awards Program concluded on June 30, 2025, with final reports due from local CSA partners by September 30, 2025. These results will provide further insights into how coordinated state–local partnerships can amplify savings behavior and maximize the long-term success of CalKIDS.

6. Conclusion

The implementation of CalKIDS stands as a landmark achievement for California and a model for the national child development account field. It represents not only a bold public commitment to students but also a transformative investment in the state's future workforce and economy. By reaching diverse populations, CalKIDS demonstrates California's dedication to help families regardless of background prepare for college and career training.

The evidence is clear:

- A substantial state-funded scholarship meaningfully supports students and families. Research and participation confirm that these investments are easing financial burdens and opening new opportunities.
- The program strengthens California's own higher education pipeline. While funds can be used nationally, the majority of CalKIDS participants are choosing to invest in California colleges, particularly the Community College system.
- CalKIDS is fostering financial literacy and aspirational motivation among young students.
- Equity is central. CalKIDS reaches a diverse population—including foster youth, unhoused students, low-income students, and newborns across every county—demonstrating the State's commitment to leveling the playing field.
- Outreach and engagement are critical. Families who know about their accounts are more likely to claim and use them. Stronger partnerships with schools, community organizations, and employers will drive participation.
- CalKIDS has largely contributed to an increase in personal savings for higher education across California. This achievement can be amplified by the adoption of a tax incentive for contributions into ScholarShare 529 Accounts. Below are current savings statistics of CalKIDS participants:
 - 95% of the reported 51,102 linked ScholarShare 529 Accounts were created after the CalKIDS Program launched in July 2022.
 - The average personal savings balance in the 51,102 linked ScholarShare 529 Accounts is \$4,538, exceeding the personal savings balance average of \$3,117 of 35,323 linked accounts listed in last year's publication of this report.
 - The ScholarShare 529 has grown substantially since CalKIDS launched. In calendar year 2023, the Plan recorded its highest annual increase, at a record 52,053 new accounts opened—nearly double the 28,864 accounts opened in 2019. For additional context, the Plan recorded 34,300 account openings in 2020, 36,696 account openings in 2021, and 33,760 account openings in 2022. The Plan recorded 50,840 new accounts in 2024—representing only a 2.3% difference from the record-setting growth in 2023.
 - Since CalKIDS launched, ScholarShare 529 is helping more younger families save for higher education. Prior to the launch of CalKIDS, ScholarShare 529 saw approximately 7,000-8,500 new accounts opened for beneficiaries ages 0-1 each year. During the 2024-2025 fiscal year, 17,067 new accounts were opened for beneficiaries in this age range, reflecting a 98% increase from the 8,591 accounts opened in this age range in the 2021-2022 fiscal year, immediately prior to the launch of CalKIDS.

The path forward requires action from all stakeholders:

- Expanding outreach so every family knows about and claims their child's account.
- Strengthening partnerships with schools, colleges, employers, and community leaders to integrate CalKIDS into existing support systems.
- Sustaining investment to ensure the Program remains a permanent promise for future generations.
- Measuring and adapting by continuing to track outcomes, learn from data, and refine strategies to maximize impact.

Now is the time to build on CalKIDS' early success. By redoubling our efforts and ensuring every eligible child benefits, California can set the national standard for how states invest in their people. When we invest in our children today, we guarantee a stronger, more resilient, and more prosperous California tomorrow.