

# 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT





# Tandem, Partners in Early Learning

## Mission

Tandem, Partners in Early Learning® is a nonprofit working at the intersection of social justice and early childhood education. Our mission is to co-create equitable, high-quality early learning experiences in partnership with families, educators, and community partners.



## Our Work

The first five years of life are crucial for building lifelong learning foundations. We know that investing in early learning leads to lifetime impacts of social, racial and economic justice. Tandem works alongside preschools, child care providers, and community-based organizations to engage over 19,000 children and caregivers annually. Tandem leads workshops and play-and-learn groups, distributes diverse picture books, and provides timely professional development for educators and nonprofit staff.

Our goal is to saturate communities with accessible, equitable opportunities, making high-quality early learning the default.

# A Letter from Tandem's Executive Director

## Dear Tandem Community,

This past year at Tandem has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I'm excited to share our achievements and vision for the future.

Recently, Tandem hosted a series of play-and-learn groups with a First 5 Center in Contra Costa. Afterwards, a mother contacted Tandem to share her enthusiasm for her daughter's progress. Not only had her child grasped new math concepts, but she also gained confidence, interacting with peers and actively participating. Our team had invited her daughter to sit in front during the read aloud and encouraged her to ask and answer questions. Inspired by her daughter's sense of belonging and courage, this parent reached out to see how she could help spread the word about Tandem's programs so more families could participate.

This story is just one of thousands demonstrating how our high-quality early learning programs transform lives. Thanks to our dedicated staff, board, and community partners, we've achieved new milestones across Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties:

- 20,000+ children and families engaged in our early learning programs and literacy events
- 2,600+ parents and caregivers participated in workshops and play-and-learn groups
- 857 classrooms embraced our StoryCycles or Read & Play Club program
- 28,133 books with accompanying activity guides distributed to families

These numbers reflect our commitment to educational equity and social justice. They represent children exploring new worlds through books, families bonding over shared learning experiences, and educators enhancing their skills to better serve our community.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to share a bit about our vision for putting the transformative \$2 million gift that we received from the Yield Giving Fund to work.



We will leverage this gift as a catalyst for program growth and increased impact, focusing on responsible growth that can be sustained through partnerships and annual fundraising. I invite you to read on for more details about our vision and strategy.

As we begin this new program year, I encourage you to stay engaged, share your insights, and continue championing equity in early learning. Together, we can create a community where every child has access to the tools and support they need for a strong educational foundation.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Tandem community. Here's to another year of growth, connection, and positive change!

In community,

**Savitha Moorthy**

*Executive Director*

Tandem, Partners in Early Learning

# By the Numbers

Children and families served

**20,013**

Adults engaged in workshops, professional development, and early learning experiences

**2,624**

Parents and caregivers

**2,741**

Educators and staff at family-serving community organizations

Partnerships

**857**

StoryCycles and Read & Play Club classrooms

**70+**

Nonprofits, school districts, and education agencies

Books and Resources

**28,133**

Books distributed

**40,000+**

Books rotating through StoryCycles classrooms

**93%**

of StoryCycles educators agree that StoryCycles supports children's literacy, language development, social-emotional learning, and other early learning skills.



**26**

Languages represented in the Tandem book collection

**60**

New activity guides created (with a focus on science!)



# Theory of Change

**We partner with families, educators, and communities to co-create interactive learning experiences for children 0-5.**



## Families

- Access multicultural books and learning materials in their home languages
- Connect with supportive networks of peers and trusted experts
- Are confident in their strengths and knowledgeable about child development
- Strengthen and sustain joyful learning practices



## Educators

- Access high-quality instructional materials that reflect the languages and cultures of children in their care
- Connect with professional communities that promote continuous learning
- Implement research-based practices that support child development through joy and play
- Engage with families as partners in their children's learning



## Communities

- Support children and families with early learning resources and co-create experiences at libraries, parks, health clinics, family resource centers, and more
- Commit to advancing children's early learning and development
- Advocate for equitable policies that center the well-being of children & families

Read more about our detailed logic model [here](#).

educators

families

children



# What We Do



89%

of StoryCycles educators agree that StoryCycles helps them talk with families about the importance of literacy and language development.



MOST 3-year olds

are not enrolled in preschool. Supporting families through community-based programs is critical.



**In schools and throughout the community, we meet children and families where they are.**

Using multilingual, multicultural picture books as a starting point, Tandem’s programming helps children develop skills across language, literacy, math, social-emotional learning, and more.

## StoryCycles

**Working with children, families, and educators in over 750 classrooms, the StoryCycles program builds book-sharing practices at school and at home.**

- Access to diverse, multilingual books (up to 100/year)
- Family engagement
- Educator professional development

The **Read & Play Club** adapts this program to support the unique needs of 98 in-home family child care providers.

## Early Learning Everywhere

**Engaging families with children who are not enrolled in formal education settings, Early Learning Everywhere provides multilingual family focused programs in community locations.**

- Family workshops
- Give Me 5 play-and-learn groups
- Community events and book giveaways

## Network Capacity Building

**Partnering with educators and family support professionals, Tandem strengthens the early learning ecosystem through professional development and access to high-quality early learning resources.**

- Educator and staff professional development
- Community leaders cohorts
- Innovation and curriculum development

By partnering with early education providers and family-serving organizations throughout Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties, Tandem strengthens the overall ecosystem, ensuring children are supported everywhere they go.



# Highlights from 2023-2024

## Building Community Connections through Early Learning Everywhere

In collaboration with BANANAS, Tandem facilitated ten Give Me 5 playgroup sessions in East Oakland, focusing on kindergarten readiness and early math skills. This partnership built opportunities for children outside of early education classrooms, allowing parents and children to spend time learning together. Tandem provided each family with books and resources to continue the learning at home. Participants returned for multiple sessions, allowing for greater connection with peers and Tandem facilitators.

“When we discussed needs with our community partners, a common thread emerged – to improve numeracy for our young learners. BANANAS was excited to partner with Tandem and their Give Me 5 program because it also empowered our young learners’ parents and teachers with the tools to support them. Many people have been socialized to fear numeracy and math. The Give Me 5 program intends to debunk that fear early and prepare them for ongoing academic success.”

- Kym Johnson  
CEO BANANAS

“What I liked about the playgroup is it makes kids more social, they communicate with others and improve their skills.”

- Play-and-learn group participant



# Highlights from 2023-2024

## StoryCycles Expansion: Partnership with Hayward Unified School District

This year, Tandem launched StoryCycles in four schools in the Hayward Promise Neighborhood footprint – expanding this program into South Alameda County. This expansion involved: selecting books that reflect the language and culture of the families; delivering the books, bags, and other materials to implement the program; and helping teachers send book bags home with children. Tandem staff also visited each classroom to provide interactive read alouds focusing on key early literacy skills.

**Hayward Unified School District is beyond grateful to have begun our formal partnership with Tandem this year. Thanks to our Hayward Promise Neighborhood Grant we were able to begin services in 10 classrooms. Children proudly brought their books back and forth from home to school, eagerly awaiting the next set. Families reported appreciating the intentionally curated selection of books that represented their home cultures and languages. One father shared with me that he was amazed that his 8-year-old son was as excited as his preschool son each time new books came home because he got a turn to read them to his preschool-aged brother. Because of the successes we have experienced, we are on the search for funding to support incorporating Tandem into all of our preschool classrooms and Family Child Care Homes.**

– Kristina Adams  
HUSD Director of Early Learning Programs

Ms. Rubio receives StoryCycles materials at Hayward Unified School District.



**StoryCycles strengthens the culture of book-sharing with students and their entire families, and we hope to expand to more classrooms in Hayward in the future.**



# Highlights from 2023-2024

## Community Leaders and Abriendo Puertas

This year saw two cohorts of families graduating from a literacy-focused version of the Abriendo Puertas program. In total, 29 families participated in the sessions that were co-led by Tandem's Community Leaders. Through this 9-session program, families gain in-depth knowledge and skills to support and advocate for their children's education and development.

The Community Leaders who co-facilitate Abriendo Puertas are integral partners in Tandem's community-based early learning initiatives. The impact of their exceptional work shows when participating families share how much they've learned and how they are already seeing positive growth in their children across physical, cognitive, language and socio-emotional development.

## Science and Literacy with Family Child Care Providers

In 2024, Tandem implemented a science- and literacy-focused Read & Play Club for 98 family child care providers. This continued a three-year partnership with these in-home providers, supporting over 900 families and educators with nearly 11,000 books, activity guides and materials, playgroups, and professional development opportunities.

In June, families participated in a science-themed play-and-learn session at Ocean Beach. They read *The Big Beach Cleanup*, a book which allows children to connect with nature and develop a sense of responsibility to protect the environment. At this Read & Play event, families put the theme of the book into practice through a beach cleanup. This year, one site carried out a recycling project with the children, teaching them how to sort objects into the correct bins.



Check out featured books and activity guides about nature and science on [our blog](#).



# Highlights from 2023-2024

## Strengthening Early Math Connections in Contra Costa

Tandem strives to meet families where they are and engage them in a way that works for them. The Contra Costa team truly put this into practice by providing three different versions of the Give Me 5 Math play-and-learn group — a virtual and asynchronous cohort via Zoom; multiple series of weekly in-person sessions; and a week-long cohort with sessions every day. In total, 30 sessions took place across Contra Costa County in community locations that are convenient for families.

This play-and-learn curriculum builds early math skills through hands-on activities. Research shows that early math is a particularly strong predictor of children’s overall school success, even more so than early literacy. By providing this program in different locations, times of day, and online, Tandem creates equitable opportunities for families to build math skills in a joyful setting through book-sharing and play.

**“The work you provide for the families is incredible and books are always meaningful, at least to my family.”**

**- Program participant**





# Building Toward our Future

## At Tandem, we have always envisioned a just society where children thrive.

This year, a transformative \$2,000,000 gift from MacKenzie Scott's Yield Giving Fund has brought us one step closer to making that vision a reality. Tandem was among the 4% of 6,353 applicants selected for this extraordinary honor after a rigorous review and evaluation process involving multiple levels of review, feedback, and due diligence. This generous gift is an endorsement of our hard work as well as our trust-building and collaboration with families, educators, and community organizations.

This remarkable investment comes at a critical juncture in Tandem's journey, building on our multi-year roadmap and amplifying our efforts to expand and enrich programming in Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties. As we know, the first five years of life are the most formative: children's brains develop at an astonishing rate during this time, and the quality of children's experiences during these early years has the potential to predict numerous future outcomes including grade level reading, on-time high school graduation, and college and career outcomes. In the coming years, Tandem will continue to work with community partners and invest this gift towards the goal of ensuring that all children have access to high-quality early learning experiences that will set them up for success in school and beyond.

As we embark on the 2024-2025 program year, we are honored and humbled to be in a position to invest our resources towards growing our programs to reach a larger group of children and families while strengthening our organizational infrastructure and promoting staff well-being. To ensure the impactful use of these funds, we are conducting a planning process to update our program vision and roadmap and draft a

"We made it part of our days now to read even on the weekends. His excitement for reading is only getting started I know he will love reading more when he is older."

- StoryCycles family



detailed sustainability plan that aligns the use of these funds matched with anchor funding for year-over-year longevity of programming.

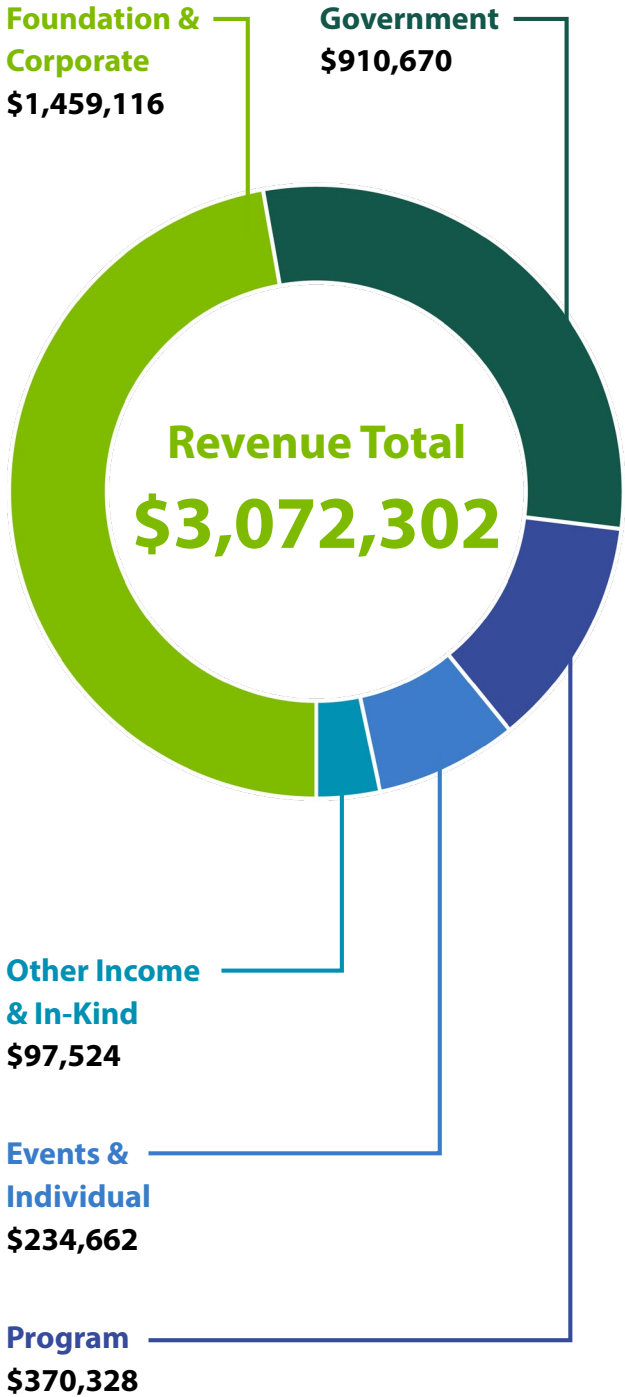
Our initial plans for program expansion in 2024-25 include launching StoryCycles in 60+ classrooms to saturate existing partner agencies, extending Lil' Libraries to serve approximately 20 additional small businesses, and extending the reach of Early Learning Everywhere through additional play-and-learn sessions and community read alouds.

This thoughtful approach allows us to maximize our impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of our work. By investing in our organizational infrastructure and staff well-being, we are not only enhancing our current capabilities but also laying the foundation for future growth. This underscores our commitment to supporting families and educators with integrity year after year.

We look forward to your continued advice, input, and support as we expand our reach and deepen impact for children during the most critical time of their lives. At Tandem, we are proud of what we have achieved together. Thank you for your commitment to Tandem's mission and for being such an important part of our community.

# Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024\*

## Financials



\*This represents unaudited financials as a reflection of revenue and expenses for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Audited financial statements can be found at [www.tandembayarea.org](http://www.tandembayarea.org).



# Gratitude to Our Community

**Tandem's theory of change is rooted in partnership. Through our network of partner organizations and generous funders, we are able to create something together that we would not be able to do on our own. We are grateful for the support of individuals and organizations who make this work possible.**



Our partner organizations help expand our impact and bring Tandem's programming to families in community locations throughout Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco Counties.

Our generous community of individual donors are champions for equitable early childhood education.

Corporate and community volunteers contribute their valuable time and talent by making StoryBlocks!



**Thank you to our community of funders. You can find a current list of our network of partners, institutional funders, and individual donors on our [website](#).**



Thank you for partnering with us to support equitable access to high-quality early learning opportunities in the Bay Area.

Keep up-to-date with Tandem and check out our book recommendation lists on our [blog](#).

Sign up for our [newsletter](#) to learn about upcoming early learning events and opportunities to get involved.



t: 415.683.5460  
e: [info@tandembayarea.org](mailto:info@tandembayarea.org)

**San Francisco Office**  
1275 Fairfax Avenue, Suite 201  
San Francisco, CA 94124

**Alameda County Office**  
111 Myrtle Street, Suite 101  
Oakland, CA 94607

**Contra Costa County Office**  
1340 Arnold Drive, Suite 118  
Martinez, CA 94553

