

2024-2025 Annual Report





Our 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 22,000 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,

At Tandem, we know that small books teach big lessons: a child smiling delightedly at a story, a caregiver connecting with their child through a book in their home language, and an educator watching a child light up with confidence. This past year, I witnessed one of those moments in a San Francisco preschool classroom. My colleague Susan Chen read aloud from a counting book that showed a father and his daughter walking through Chinatown as the child learned her numbers from one to ten. The joy that Susan brought into this experience—and the children's obvious enthusiasm as they participated—captured the essence of our mission: relationship-centered, high-quality early learning experiences that ripple into families and communities.

Those ripples reached far this year. Together, we:

- Reached 24,772 children and families across Alameda, Contra Costa, and San Francisco counties.
- Brought more than 45,000 books into homes, classrooms, and community spaces.
- Partnered with 2,631 educators through professional development
- Hosted 197 family workshops and playgroups that brought play, early literacy, and math learning into living rooms and community centers.

Behind every number is a story: a father in Oakland discovering joy in reading aloud with his son; a teacher in Pittsburg introducing playful math games that sparked confidence; a grandmother in San Francisco who told us that Tandem helped her find the resources and the community to help her grandchild thrive.

As proud as I am of this year's impact, what excites me most is where Tandem is headed. Our vision is simple: **deepen** the learning, **grow** our reach, and **build** the foundation so this work lasts. That means more StoryCycles in more classrooms, more math and literacy woven into play at home, and stronger partnerships with educators and families who know their communities best.

This future is bold, and it's exactly what children and families should expect from an equitable early learning system. And with the dedication of our staff, the wisdom of our partners, and the generosity of our supporters, it's a vision within reach.

As I prepare to step down as Executive Director later this year, I feel both pride and gratitude. Tandem's programs are thriving, our team is stronger than ever, and our path forward is clear. Thank you for walking with us on this journey—and for believing, as we do, that every child should grow up surrounded by laughter and learning.

With gratitude,

Savitha Moorthy

Executive Director

Tandem, Partners in Early Learning

By the Numbers

24,772
Children and families served

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

4,271

Parents and caregivers

2,631

Educators and staff at family-serving community organizations

Partnerships

821

StoryCycles classrooms

70+

Nonprofits, school districts, and education agencies

Books and Resources

45,000

Books distributed

55,000+

Books rotating through StoryCycles classrooms

32

Languages represented in the Tandem book collection

136

Activity guides available as a free resource for caregivers and educators



We get to read a lot of books that we wouldn't have found otherwise. They're fun, and we really appreciate the variety—especially how they reflect people from different cultures.

– StoryCycles parent



Theory of Change

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

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



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

What We Do

At home, in school, and in the community

Tandem works with partner organizations across four program areas: **StoryCycles®**, **Read & Play Club**, **Early Learning Everywhere**, and **Network Capacity Building**. Programs serve children in school and throughout the community, while also strengthening the overall ecosystem through professional development and resource sharing.

StoryCycles

StoryCycles is a school-to-home book lending program, currently in 821 classrooms, that provides children with diverse books in order to create more opportunities for book-sharing experiences at school and at home. Tandem's carefully curated book collection relies on high-quality books that make room for everyone and intentionally reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Bay Area.

96%

of StoryCycles educators agree that StoryCycles supports literacy, language, social emotional learning, and other early learning skills.



Read & Play Club

The Read & Play Club program adapts Tandem's programming to best support home-based programs, such as family child care and home visiting programs. Through this program, Tandem provides over 1,300 children and families with multilingual books and accompanying activity guides, quarterly play-and-learn sessions, and learning opportunities for both parents and educators.

"[Read & Play Club] has been a great help to my program and families to support reading readiness, emotional development, culture development and help children's literacy. Thank you for supporting us!"

– Family child care educator

Tandem works alongside school districts, early care and education providers, and community-based organizations. Using multilingual, multicultural picture books as the starting point, Tandem supports learning across literacy, language, math, social-emotional learning, and more.



Early Learning Everywhere

Early Learning Everywhere engages children not enrolled in formal care through family-centered programming in community spaces—offering multilingual workshops, play-and-learn groups, and events at libraries, parks, health clinics, and more.

"The Give Me 5 workshops are always super popular and the work that you and Tandem do is incredible."

– Oakland Public Library staff member



Network Capacity Building

Through Network Capacity Building, we partner with community leaders, schools, early education providers, and other community-based organizations to better serve children and families. We offer custom professional development workshops, community leadership cohorts, and access to high-quality early learning resources. Together, we are building a stronger early learning ecosystem.

Tandem's professional development workshops span topics from neuroscience and brain development to trauma-responsive practices and dual-language learning.

Highlights from 2024-2025

StoryCycles in San Francisco

As San Francisco’s early childhood education landscape evolves with the expansion of Transitional Kindergarten, Tandem has embraced the change and grown alongside our community. This year, we launched StoryCycles in TK classrooms at Sutro Elementary School, Visitacion Valley Elementary School, Jean Parker Elementary School, Longfellow Elementary, Spring Valley, Chinese Immersion School at De Avila, McKinley Elementary, Miraloma Elementary, Argonne Elementary School, John Muir Early Education School, Bryant Elementary School, and Jose Ortega Elementary School.

These classrooms are more than just new program sites—they reflect our continued commitment to children, families, and educators, as well as our longstanding partnership with the San Francisco Unified School District.

Grounded in relationships and shared goals, StoryCycles programming gives children engaging opportunities to build early literacy and learning skills through diverse books, interactive storytimes, and play-based activities.

And when children bring home a green bag filled with four colorful titles each week, they create joyful bridges between the classroom and home.

At both the direct service and systemic levels, Tandem continues to adapt with the city we serve—partnering with schools, supporting educators as they navigate change, and keeping our youngest learners at the center of every decision.



We have generally followed how the program should be implemented. We send home the book bags on Mondays and families return it on Fridays. In general, this has worked well for the past two years now. Families enjoy the books and we remind them that they can look at the pictures with their child if it is written in a language they cannot read.

– Educator, Francis Scott Key Elementary School



So far, we have not encountered any challenges. Our parents have shown great interest in the Story Cycle program and would take home a book bag every week to share stories with their children.

– Junipero Serra Annex EES



Highlights from 2024-2025

Read & Play Club Expansion to Alameda and Contra Costa

This year, the Read & Play Club grew in an exciting new direction: reaching families in Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Through a partnership with the Unity Council's home visiting program, Tandem brought the joy of early learning directly to 175 families, ensuring that even more children, caregivers, and educators could benefit from diverse books, play-based activities, and interactive learning communities.

For the 15 home visitors participating in the Read & Play Club, Tandem resources helped them deepen their practice, grow their capacity for promoting early learning, and build community with families and other educators. For children and families, it created joyful learning experiences in the context of their everyday lives, with stories, songs, and playful learning seamlessly woven into daily routines.

The Read & Play Club expansion reflects one of Tandem's core values: meeting families and providers where they are, celebrating the important role of caregivers, and building strong, connected communities across the early learning ecosystem.

Early Learning Everywhere Oakland Zoo / BANANAS field trip

One of the highlights of Tandem's Early Learning Everywhere program this year was a family field trip to the Oakland Zoo. BANANAS staff member Mayra Morales and Tandem staff member Carolina Briseño worked closely to coordinate all the details—transportation, zoo admission, snacks and lunch—so families could simply show up and immerse themselves in the experience.

The day was filled with delight and discovery. Children marvelled as giraffes stretched their necks high into the trees and river otters splashed around in their pool enclosure. For some, it was a first-time experience; for all, it was a moment to share wonder with family and friends. Beyond the excitement, the time spent at the zoo also helped to reinforce important kindergarten readiness skills that children and their caregivers had been practicing in the playgroup sessions.

In addition to being a fun excursion, the zoo trip embodied the spirit of Early Learning Everywhere: children and their caring adults learning together, while also experiencing the joy of belonging to a strong, supportive community. All the children received books and zoo-themed backpacks with materials to continue the learning at home.



“
Tandem's Read and Play Club empowers every family to feel heard, valued, and confident as their child's first teacher, bringing books, connection, and joy to our community.

– Lucy Arrizon, Unity Council Associate Director of Integrated Services

Highlights from 2024-2025

Lil' Library at Immigration Courthouse

In December 2024, a spark of an idea turned into something truly special. Marivel Mendoza, founder and Director of Hijas del Campo, shared news with Tandem's Cecilia Valdez about a new partnership between Stand Together Contra Costa and the Contra Costa Library: they hoped to create a children's library inside the nearby immigration courthouse. Cecilia immediately offered Tandem's support through bilingual book donations, and soon leaders from the Contra Costa Immigrant Rights Alliance also joined in to shape the vision together.

By January, plans were in motion. Tandem committed to donating more than 100 books, carefully considering the language needs of the children who would pass through the courthouse doors. With guidance from community partners, the collection included Spanish titles, as well as Punjabi, Hindi, and even wordless books that could speak across languages. Cecilia coordinated procurement, arranged delivery, and—after learning of courthouse restrictions—found creative solutions like mobile storage bins so the books could still reach children easily.

In April, the books arrived. Bright covers, familiar characters, and welcoming stories brought a sense of comfort and joy into an environment that can feel intimidating and overwhelming for families. Today, volunteers continue to carry the books around the courthouse, offering them to children whenever possible.

This partnership illustrates the heart of Tandem's Lil' Libraries initiative: bringing the magic of books and learning into everyday places where families spend time—waiting rooms, laundromats, and community centers, to name a few. Encouraging parents and children to share stories together helps turn ordinary moments into opportunities for connection and early learning that last a lifetime.



I love that some of the books really show our culture and language—it means a lot to see ourselves in the stories.

—Parent



The Road Forward

At Tandem, we believe every child deserves a strong start. Our new programmatic roadmap builds on more than a decade of impact—rooted in equity, joyful learning, and deep community partnerships. With a solid and holistic early learning foundation, children are increasingly ready for kindergarten and beyond. Families are empowered, and educators are equipped with multilingual resources and strengths-based practices to support all learners. This roadmap positions Tandem to widen access and deepen support, so that every child’s story begins with opportunity and possibility.

DEEPEN

Deepen our efforts with existing partners by adding more community-based playgroups, workshops, and expanding StoryCycles classrooms.

GROW

Add new partnerships or programming in new communities, with an emphasis on strategic growth in historically underserved communities.

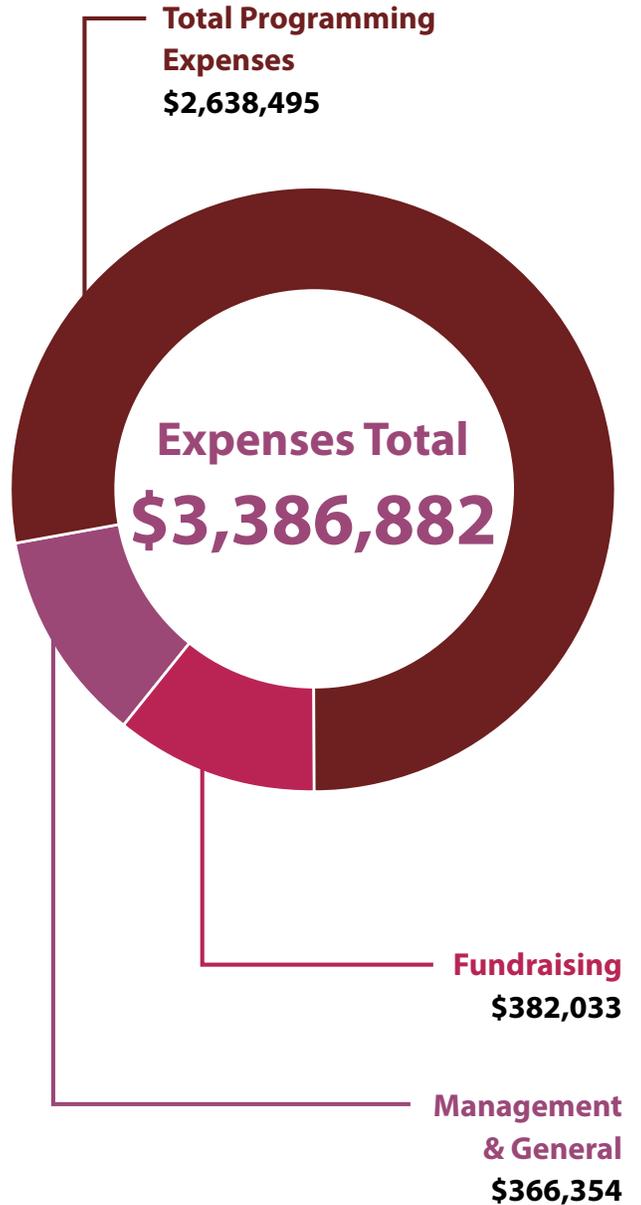
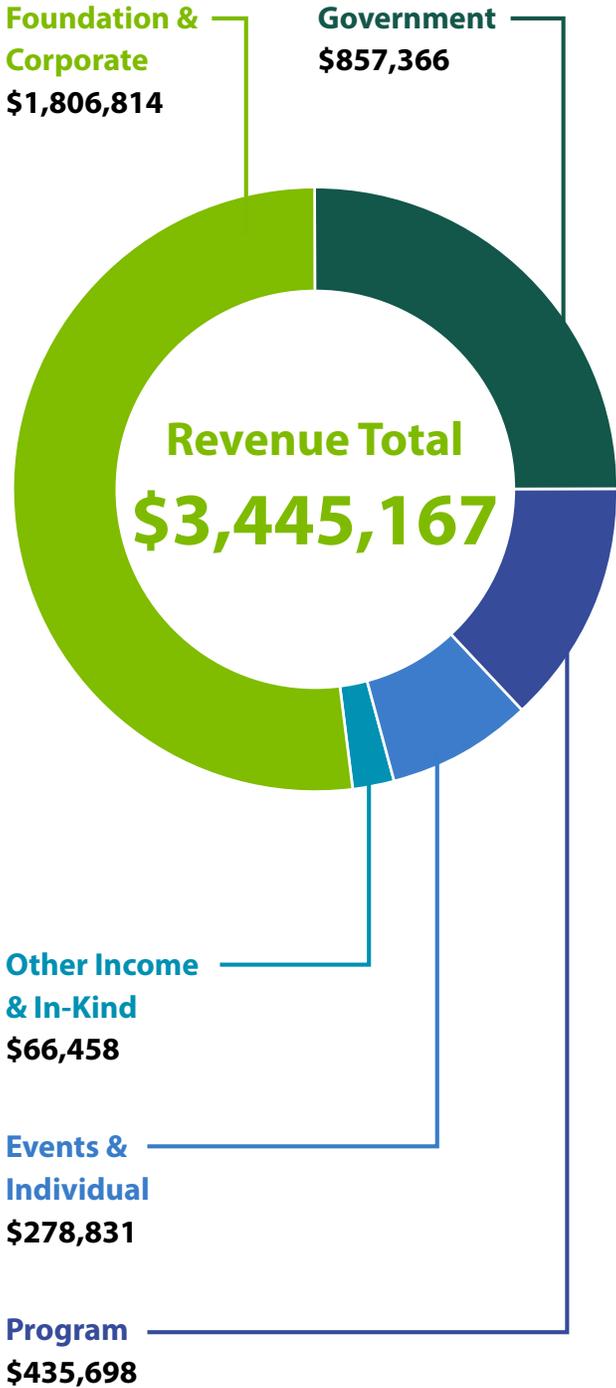
BUILD

Pilot new programs or outreach efforts to increase reach and impact by adapting programs for new partners, new settings, and laying the foundation for future program growth.



Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025*

Financials



*This represents unaudited financials and is a reflection of revenue and expenses in the 2024-2025 fiscal year. Audited financial statements can be found at www.tandembayarea.org.

Powered by Community

Tandem’s work is rooted in the knowledge that meaningful change happens through deep partnership. Every book we share, every workshop we lead, and every story that sparks learning is made possible by a community that believes in equitable early education.



Community Partners

Our community partners are at the heart of our work. By collaborating with our team, they bring Tandem’s mission to life—reaching families in schools, libraries, clinics, and neighborhoods across San Francisco, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties.

Individual Donors

Individual donors are the quiet champions behind every story we share and every child we reach. Their generosity fuels our work and ensures we can respond to community needs with flexibility and care.

Corporate & Community Volunteers

Corporate and community volunteers are a vital part of Tandem’s impact. From assembling StoryBlocks to hosting book drives and packing backpacks, their hands-on support helps us expand our reach and bring early learning experiences to more families.

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

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

