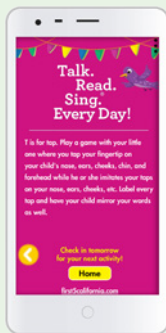




INTRODUCING THE NEW FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA APP



The new *Talk. Read. Sing.*® App from First 5 California, in partnership with Scholastic, provides parents and caregivers a different language-boosting activity every day. Users can use the app to help support their little ones' brain development through daily talking, reading, and singing activities. It encourages parents to sing classic kids' tunes, share their favorite books, and turn free moments together into learning adventures. The app is free and available on the App Store and Google Play. *



Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



"Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot. Nothing is going to get better. It's not." —Dr. Seuss

Doing the work we do, supporting the health, early education, and care of California's young children and their families, is difficult—no doubt about it. But the secret sauce that makes us work harder—never give up, and continuously improve—is a simple recipe. We are people who care a whole awful lot. And we keep our eyes on the prize—3 million California children ages 0 to 5.

Thank you for continuing to partner with First 5 California on this important work, and thank you for bringing the secret sauce.

In this edition of FOCUS, we highlight the outstanding work going on in Monterey County with "Family, Friend, and Neighbor" child care providers; provide a summary of our April Commission meeting; and report on the new award of our training and technical assistance contract.

With May comes the Governor's State Budget May Revision and debate. We are relieved he made good on the multi-year promise to increase crucial per-child funding rates in early learning. But in a year where there is more than a \$2 billion surplus, California has room for increased investments in child care. Unfortunately, 70,000 fewer children are served today than in 2007, and an estimated 1.2 million eligible children lack access to care that could change their lives and keep their parents in stable employment. We at First 5 California believe this year's State Budget must include a modernization of child care eligibility and modest investments in child care—California can't afford not to make this investment. We will continue to educate the Legislature and Administration as the last few weeks of budget negotiations begin.

Finally, once in a while you come across something that hits the mark and makes a point abundantly clear. I am including a link to a video that brings to life the essence of *Talk. Read. Sing.*® Enjoy!

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Wj_zlQ2ql20 *

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 17 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

April 2017 Commission Meeting Highlights

The First 5 California (F5CA) State Commission convened its most recent quarterly meeting in Sacramento on April 27, 2017. In addition to regular standing items (i.e., state and federal budget and legislative update, financial update), the Commission took the following actions:

- **Annual Report Guidelines.** The Commission approved an updated version of the Annual Report Guidelines for fiscal year 2017–18. The Guidelines include new data collection categories and definitions that provide detail to support improved messaging about statewide contributions of First 5 Commissions.
- **Educare Los Angeles at Long Beach.** Commissioners approved a no-cost, time-only extension of the \$2.7 million in remaining committed funds for Educare Los Angeles at Long Beach to expend over a two-year contract period. The funds will support enhanced program quality and independent evaluation, in line with the Commission’s previous Educare funding approvals in both 2010 and 2014.
- **Child Health, Education, and Care Summit—Venue Contract.** The Commission gave F5CA staff its approval to move ahead with a contract to secure the venue for the 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit.
- **F5CA Strategic Plan.** After an in-depth mid-course review of the 2014 Strategic Plan, which included a Commission retreat in February to discuss amendments to the Plan, Commissioners approved the moderately amended version of the Plan as recommended by F5CA staff. Among the amendments reflected in the updated Plan are the following:
 - F5CA will support a comprehensive plan to reduce or eliminate childhood poverty.
 - The work of F5CA will continue to emphasize that the most optimal interventions are those that take place in the earliest months and years of a child’s life.
 - The work also will recognize the need to be inclusive of all caregivers, including both fathers and mothers, regarding engagement in a child’s early development.
 - F5CA will develop a child policy advocacy/communications strategy, building upon existing efforts in partnership with key early childhood advocates, to provide consensus information on

the gap between current child outcomes and opportunities, and First 5 Policy Agenda goals.

- Within the context of declining revenue, the work of F5CA must be approached strategically and creatively.
- **California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) Report.** The meeting concluded with a presentation by researchers from the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, which summarized key points of a UCLA report entitled *Families with Young Children in California: Findings from the California Health Interview Survey, 2011-2014, by Geography and Home Language*. The study describes families based on 6,600 survey responses by adults with young children (infants through 5 years of age). The report summarizes socio-economic characteristics of these families within three frames of analysis: 1) a statewide overview; 2) regional differences by urban, suburban, and rural residence; and 3) families speaking a language other than English in the home.

For more detailed information on the April 2017 Commission meeting agenda and items, including reports, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations, go to http://www.cfc.ca.gov/about/Meetings/meeting_handouts_2017-04.html.*



First 5 California Advocating for Time to Engage with Babies

New Bill Will Increase Parental Leave for More Californians

First 5 California (F5CA) is proud to co-sponsor the New Parent Leave Act—SB 63 (Jackson)—with the California Employment Lawyers Association and Legal Aid at Work.

This bill would provide up to 12 weeks of job-protected maternity and paternity leave for additional California employees. Under current law, only those parents who work for an employer of 50 or more employees within a 75-mile radius are eligible for job-protected parental leave to bond with a newborn or newly adopted child.

Consistent with F5CA's *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign, SB 63 is based on the social equity imperative that every parent needs and deserves the facts about early brain science and must have support in nurturing their young children from birth. If parents do not have the ability to take leave after the birth of their child, and spend those first key months nurturing and interacting with their child, the knowledge means nothing. Working parents must have the ability to spend the first months of each child's life establishing a foundation for that child's life success. Parental leave is not just a luxury for a parent; it is a major biological and developmental benefit for the child.

SB 63 successfully passed out of both the Senate Labor and Industrial Relations and Judiciary Committees, and is now on the Senate Appropriations Committee suspense file.



In order to promote this crucial state policy, F5CA Executive Director Camille Maben testified on May 3, 2017, before the Senate Select Committee on Women, Work, and Families. The Select Committee, chaired by Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, is tackling the policy drivers behind economic parity between men and women in the workplace and has identified family leave policies as a key issue. ✱

Child Signature Program Evaluation Released

Earlier this year, First 5 California (F5CA) released its Evaluation of the Child Signature Program: Summary Report, 2012–15. The Child Signature Program (CSP) supported quality in early learning programs for all children ages 0 to 5 for healthy development and school readiness. F5CA collaborated with First 5 county commissions to build upon prior investments, expanding quality to new preschool and child care classrooms statewide.

CSP benefitted more than 72,000 at-risk children and their families. The evaluation report describes a successful program with high-quality classrooms, including physical environment assessments, teacher-child interactions, and improvement in child development. The full report is available [here](#). ✱

COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

First 5 Monterey Program Inspires

Child Care Provider and Quality Systems Design Served by Local Model

Monterey County has deep agricultural roots and is recognized for its picturesque coastline and the world-famous Salinas Valley. These assets drive two of Monterey County's biggest industries: agriculture and tourism. Workers within these industries generally have untraditional labor hours that cause parents to rely on friends and extended family members for child care, rather than formal child care centers traditionally open Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. This type of informal child care—aunts, uncles, cousins, and neighbors—is commonly referred to as Family, Friend, and Neighbor (FFN) child care or license-exempt child care.



Recognizing FFN is a significant part of Monterey's child care system and has a substantial impact on a child's life, First 5 Monterey County (F5MC) developed a "relationship-based playgroup" format that allows FFN providers to exchange information, support each other, and cultivate peer and professional relationships that promote high-quality child development principles.

F5MC funds GoKids, Inc. (GoKids) to administer the Apoyando a Los Niños en su Casa* project offering eight FFN playgroups. Each group consists of providers and



the children they care for along with GoKids staff. The playgroups meet twice per month at a community-based location. This program serves 77 Salinas-area FFN providers in the area that is 93 percent Latino/Hispanic, 67 percent English language learners, and mostly low-income.

These FFN playgroups provide a rich play-based environment and allow for provider-child interactions and provider-peer support with the facilitation and input of trained staff. FFN providers can then incorporate these lessons in the home care setting to strengthen the child care experience. Providers receive materials and information related to high-quality child development where they also learn to use every day household materials, incorporating them into rich learning experiences. Each playgroup allows time for provider

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

The feedback from FFN providers has been strong as it has been overwhelmingly positive, thoughtful, and honest. Some specific views shared through year-end reflections about the FFN program include the following:

"Here, I have learned that the environment where we take care of children is really important for their development in order to find solutions for each situation that we may face with children. I have learned that every child is different and I should treat them according to their needs."

"Thank you for the time that the teachers take to explain and bring us information. If all people who take care of children would find a program like this, they would understand how important children are in our lives."

*"The best part for me this year was to talk about the feelings of the children, the parents, my family, and us, the providers, who take care of the children while their parents go to work. It was a different way to analyze and feel like a child would feel and worry like a parent worries when they don't know if their childcare provider is caring for their children in a good way. For me, this year was good and important." **

Data Sharing Agreement Helps Facilitate CA-QRIS Data

In April, First 5 California (F5CA) and the California Department of Education (CDE) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for sharing common reporting data in support of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS). Both agencies administer CA-QRIS; F5CA through a \$190 million commitment over five years via First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive), and CDE through its California State Preschool Program QRIS and Infant/Toddler QRIS Block Grants.

Previously, each agency had different data reporting requirements for their quality improvement funding sources. During 2016, both agencies committed to a better-shared governance approach, including a plan to gather and share the same information in a singular system that will capture CA-QRIS data.

“Our goals include system alignment and streamlining program reporting. This agreement reduces our reporting burden and creates efficiencies with our limited resources,” said Elizabeth Blakemore, Director of Early Learning and Family Support, El Dorado County Department of Education. She adds, “For small departments like ours that must input various reporting data due to different requirements from multiple funding sources, this agreement on data reporting has a huge benefit.”

“The great thing about this agreement is it eliminates by half the amount of paperwork and bureaucracy caused by necessary data collection. That in itself is a significant good government innovation by both agencies,” said Erin

Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs, F5CA.

Likewise, F5CA’s David Dodds, Deputy Director of the Evaluation Office, adds that both agencies demonstrated willingness to increase efficiencies from their prior quality-related programs—the federal Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge and F5CA’s Child Signature Program.

“Having both agencies agree on a single data reporting file creates efficiency,” added Dr. Dodds. “The collection of the same data, regardless of the local consortia data systems, supports statewide information about CA-QRIS.”

With the collection of uniform data, both agencies will be able to provide statewide analyses on implementation, accountability, assessments, and ultimately, success of the QRIS in California. The information can be shared with First 5 commissioners, service providers, policy makers, the legislature, and other stakeholders in the pursuit of improved quality and outcomes. ✱

Need Child Data?

First 5 California recently updated its webpage for data resources regarding young children in California. See Data Sources and Information or [click here](#).

First 5 Monterey Program Inspires

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

dialogue to support connections and learning among the providers.

The staff also interact closely with the F5MC-funded Special Needs Initiative (SNI) that is managed by GoKids. The staff link FFN providers with other county services, such as child development screenings, mental health services, home visits, and parent education.

“Families who work in non-traditional industries rely on the flexibility of FFN providers. The choices they need to make are difficult and we want to make sure they are not

having to forego quality,” said Francine Rodd, Executive Director of First 5 Monterey County. She adds, “Our partnership with GoKids is a great example of how our community supports innovative practice that aligns with the needs of our child care providers and families.”

During the last full-year reporting period (July 1–June 30, 2016), the F5MC and GoKids collaborations (both FFN/SNI) have provided multiple services (duplicated) to 1,224 children and 222 parents along with 107 unique educators/service providers. ✱

First 5 California Awards Contract for California Quality Rating and Improvement System

First 5 California (F5CA) is investing in building a strong California child care and early education workforce by creating an effective training and technical assistance system to support early care and education providers. To this goal, F5CA has awarded the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies (WestEd) a three-year contract to develop high-quality, research-based statewide standards, training, and resources necessary to support local teachers and child care providers through the work of California's Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS).

As many of our partners already know, F5CA, through its five-year First 5 IMPACT program, has committed \$190 million to seeding critical state, regional, and local infrastructure to grow and support CA-QRIS systems. This CA-QRIS Training and Technical Assistance infrastructure, as designed by F5CA and the California Department of Education (CDE), will be implemented by WestEd and its contract partners, and is intended to provide high-quality, research-based statewide standards, training, and resources necessary to support CA-QRIS work at the state, regional, and local levels.

The work of this contract will build upon and adapt existing national, state, and local resources for high-quality early learning system support, draw upon the experience of state and national quality child care experts, and provide California with affordable, sustainable, user-friendly tools to contribute to the implementation of the CA-QRIS.

WestEd is a preeminent educational research, development, and service organization with a long track record of successfully developing early childhood systems, training and technical assistance, and initiatives. WestEd's Center for Children and Families Studies has worked with the CDE to develop many of the resources and high-quality training courses, which support the effective implementation of the California Early Learning and Development Framework.

The contract includes significant and strategic partnerships with four of the nation's leaders in core early care and education areas: the Childcare Quality and Early Learning Center for Research and Professional Development at the University of Washington, the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, ZERO TO THREE, and the Brazelton Touchpoints Center.

Over the next several years, these partners, together with California-based professional development leaders (i3 Institute [Inquiry, Intention & Innovation] and the Sacramento County Office of Education), will work with F5CA, the CDE, and the CA-QRIS Consortium. These leaders with work with additional relevant state and local agencies to carry out the following six key tasks: Coach Development and Support, Early Childhood Education Leader Supports, Statewide Training and Trainer Approval, Family Engagement Training and Resources, Regional Assessor Management System, and CA-QRIS Implementation.

CA-QRIS continues the work launched in California's 2012 federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, which charged regional leadership consortia with incorporating a locally driven quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to improve the quality of early learning programs throughout the state. A QRIS provides a consistent way to rate and improve learning settings, which includes quality standards and a monitoring process, a process for supporting continuous quality improvement, provision of incentives, and dissemination of information to parents and the public about program quality.

Research confirms high-quality early learning programs, such as those reflected in CA-QRIS, improve children's development (including health, social-emotional, and cognitive outcomes), enhance their school readiness, and help close the achievement gap. *



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AND CARE SUMMIT:**
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