



EXPANDED MEDI-CAL PROGRAMS IMPACT LIVES

First 5 San Joaquin and Covered San Joaquin Collaborate On Access

Lani Schiff-Ross, Executive Director,
First 5 San Joaquin County Commission



In 2014, the First 5 San Joaquin County Commission organized a collaboration of 12 community-based organizations and county departments to promote and assist San Joaquin County's uninsured community with access to Expanded Medi-Cal coverage. First 5 San Joaquin was the lead for the Covered San Joaquin (CSJ) campaign, a product of San Joaquin County's Human Services Agency (HSA). Funding for the CSJ was received from HSA, Health Plan of San Joaquin, and California Department of Health Care Services to provide Medi-Cal outreach, in-person enrollments, and renewal assistance within the community. First 5 San Joaquin

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Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



I am pleased to present to you *First 5 California FOCUS*. Our refreshed newsletter is a resource through which we will bring you regular updates about the state Commission's activities, highlights of the work of the county commissions, and summaries of the successes achieved through our many partnerships that help California's children receive the best possible start in life. This edition will cover topics ranging from the State Budget to good things happening with First 5 San Joaquin.

Working Together

At our summit earlier this year, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson, Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency Diana Dooley, and First 5 California State Commission Chair George Halvorson agreed to partner and collaborate on behalf of young children and their families. One common goal is to share information on early brain development and science with constituents across all three agencies. Central to this shared information is our Talk. Read. Sing.® campaign.

The three agencies also are developing several common data indicators to better align and streamline the work at both the local and state level.

California State Budget

In another recent win for California's children and their families, First 5 California staff and commissioners worked with dedicated partners, legislators, and the Governor to secure nearly \$265 million more in funding for the early learning and care system than was initially proposed. Read the Legislative Update inside for more details, including our State Policy Agenda.

County Visits

Finally, as I complete my tour of First 5 Counties this year, I can tell you the journey has been an eye-opening experience. I have been impressed by the breadth, variety, and individualism of each county's programs, the people, and the great work they do. Our sincere kudos go out to all of you doing the heavy lifting on behalf of California's youngest children. I look forward to working with all of you and sharing the news through *First 5 California FOCUS*. ✨

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.

Expanded Medi-Cal Programs Impact Lives

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became involved in this effort to invest in raising its young residents in a healthier environment.

In its first year, CSJ reached 386,355 individuals through outreach events, social media, and mailings. A total of 8,681 individuals received Medi-Cal application assistance, and 1,053 individuals were provided with annual Medi-Cal renewal assistance.

In addition, CSJ participated in cultural events, homeless programs, school enrollments, flea markets, employment resource centers, and much more.

First 5 San Joaquin is excited to be part of a campaign that is positively influencing the health and well-being of families in the county. They hope to build a legacy of health that will establish a lasting impact in the community for years to come. ✨

AN EXAMPLE OF SUCCESS

Covered San Joaquin helped a working, single mother of three obtain Expanded Medi-Cal. This hard-working mother was without health insurance and had been paying for her family's medical expenses and prescriptions out-of-pocket until the collaborative helped her determine she was eligible for this program.

FIRST 5 IMPACT

Systematic approach builds on existing county programs to improve quality in early learning settings

As many of you know, the First 5 California Commission approved an investment of \$190 million dollars for First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive). This investment will support early learning and development, family engagement, and care settings expansion and improvement.

First 5 IMPACT will positively affect children ages 0 to 5 and their families by working with the best and most recent science, best practices, pooling resources, and engaging with stakeholders from local communities.

First 5 IMPACT has received an overwhelming response, including Letters of Intent from 57 counties, with all 58 counties participating. This is an outstanding level of partnering, and First 5 California expects positive statewide outcomes over the course of the next five years and beyond as this innovative approach shifts funding from individual programs to systems work. This new approach promotes higher-quality early development and learning and looks to build on past and current program investments to help young children and their families thrive by providing the right type of assistance and services.

Our partners, the First 5 county commissions and stakeholders, will help parents, policy makers, and the public identify key characteristics of high-quality programs while creating a comprehensive, integrated, and coordinated early childhood system that supports school readiness and healthy development.

To read more about First 5 IMPACT, please visit http://www.first5california.com/programs/programs_impact.html. This link will provide access to all things related to First 5 IMPACT, including the Request for Application and supporting information. ✨



Evaluation Results—CSP 1 and 3 (2013–14 School Year)

It's no secret—high-quality preschool leads to a range of positive educational and social-emotional outcomes for disadvantaged young children. Beyond these immediate effects, high-quality preschool results in positive benefits later in life, such as improved health, reduced incidents with the criminal justice system, and higher rates of academic achievement.

The need for high-quality early education in California was evident when First 5 California launched its Child Signature Program (CSP) four years ago. At the time, only about half of California's at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds attended preschool. Even fewer attended high-quality preschool.

The primary goal of CSP is to increase access to high-quality early education in California to reduce achievement gaps experienced by disadvantaged young children. Ten counties joined the effort through CSP 1 and 3 application cycles. These counties received funds to hire Quality Essential Staff (QES), including Early Education Experts, Family Support Specialists, Mental Health Specialists, Program Coordinators, and Local Evaluators.

QES worked in and across CSP classrooms and sites to implement three essential program elements: instructional strategies and teacher-child interactions, social-emotional development, and parent involvement and support.

First 5 California's recent report highlights the results of the work conducted during the 2013–14 school year. CSP served almost 25,000 children—most families met eligibility requirements of low-income for the California State Preschool Program or Head Start. Fifty-two percent of these children were of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and 57 percent were dual language learners. Classroom teaching staff were well-qualified, with 47 percent holding bachelor's degrees and 54 percent holding Early Childhood Education (ECE) or Child Development (CD) college units.

In addition, classroom teaching staff were as diverse as the children they serve. Classroom environments in CSP were high quality as measured by Environment Rating Scales (ERS), with 87 percent of preschool classrooms receiving high scores of 5 or above. On

average, classroom interaction also was high quality, with 57 percent of sampled classrooms meeting all three Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) domain score standards, 96 percent meeting Emotional Support standards, and 100 percent meeting Classroom Organization standards.

Interestingly, CLASS Instructional Support domain scores were associated with the number of ECE or CD units held by classroom teaching teams; the higher the number of



units, the higher the scores. This result addresses policy discussions about the effects of teacher qualifications on classroom quality.

Furthermore, based on teacher's observations of children's development, children experienced healthy development while in CSP. Additionally, parents participated across a range of support opportunities in the classrooms and early learning sites.

First 5 California recognizes the level of commitment and teamwork of Local Evaluators and Program Coordinators. The high degree of cooperation and expertise of QES and local staff is something we all can be proud of as we work to improve the lives of our most disadvantaged young children and their families.

To view the entire CSP evaluation report, go to http://www.first5california.com/pdf/research/program_reports/Evaluation_of_the_Child_Signature_Program_2013-14_School_Year.pdf.*

Historic State Budget and Legislative Victories Aligned with First 5 California's 2015 Children's State Policy Agenda

At the April 2015 State Commission meeting, First 5 California adopted its first Children's State Policy Agenda as a guide for our advocacy efforts to improve policy and increase investments for children and their families. First 5 California is proud to report great strides at the state level in support of our Policy Agenda as we achieved historic wins for California's youngest children and families in four major focus areas: child health, early learning, strengthening and engaging families, and First 5 revenue.

The staff at First 5 California have been working proactively with its Legislative Advisory Committee and early childhood education (ECE) advocacy partners on bills and budget items relevant to the Policy Agenda. Our work paid off as the 2015–16 Budget Act made investments of \$400 million above the 2014–15 budget to California's early learning and care system. First 5 California, in strong collaboration with our ECE partners, worked with leaders in the Legislature and the Legislative Women's Caucus to secure \$234.2 million more than originally proposed in the Governor's May Revision Budget proposal.

The First 5 Budget priorities for early learning made historic gains during this budget cycle. However, there is much more work to be done to build on this year's successes as our goal is to ensure all children prenatal through age 5 have the resources, foundation, and systems of support they need to thrive.

First 5 California also played an active role in the Capitol this session, advocating in support for 19 bills. However, as we head into the final month of the Legislative season and a special session on health care, we hope to keep our momentum rolling to improve policy for children ages 0 to 5 and stabilize revenues for First 5 California's programs.

Below are the four areas of focus from our First 5 California Policy Agenda, followed by the final 2015–16 budget action(s) and the remaining active legislative bills that move us closer to reaching each of our policy goals.

POLICY AGENDA AREA OF FOCUS: CHILD HEALTH

- Ensure coordination across the health care access system to ensure access for every pregnant mother and child age 0 to 5 with affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage.
- Improve parents and young children's knowledge about and access to healthy foods and physical activity, including support for state and/or local taxes on sweetened beverages and/or unhealthy foods.

- Support and promote universal developmental screenings, assessment, referral, and treatment.

2015–16 Budget actions (Child Health):

- Expands full-scope Medi-Cal coverage to Medi-Cal eligible children, regardless of immigration status (beginning May 1, 2016, at the earliest).
- Eliminates the 10 percent rate reduction for Denti-Cal care providers (beginning July 1, 2015).
- Prohibits insurance coverage from using copayments, coinsurance, deductibles, or any other form of cost sharing for the Prenatal Screening Program fee.

Pending legislation (Child Health):

- Assembly Bill (AB) 608 (Gordon)—CalFresh, WIC, and National School Lunch program eligibility
- Senate Bill (SB) 792 (Mendoza)—Mandatory immunization for day care center and family day care home employees

POLICY AGENDA AREA OF FOCUS: EARLY LEARNING

- Expand access to quality early care and education programs for children ages 0 to 3.
- Support implementation of high-quality universal preschool access for all low-income four-year-old children, and high-quality transitional kindergarten and kindergarten statewide.
- Support a high-quality early learning workforce through strengthened qualifications, compensation, stability, diversity, and robust professional development systems.
- Promote statewide access to and participation in successful Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

2015–16 Budget actions (Early Learning):

- The \$400 million early learning and care system package represents investments in the three areas First 5 California and its advocacy partners supported: access, affordability, and quality improvement.
 - ◆ Provides for 20,330 new slots for children in early learning and child care programs, including 6,800 new Alternative Payment Program vouchers with a priority for infant/

Budget and Legislative Highlights

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toddler access; 7,030 new full-day, full-year State Preschool slots; and 6,500 part-day State Preschool slots, with 2,500 prioritized for students with disabilities.

- ◆ Invests \$129 million in increased reimbursement rates: five percent increase for the Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR), one percent for part-day State Preschool, 4.5 percent for the Regional Market Rate (RMR), five percent for License-Exempt rates, and the budget also creates a separate rate for full-day State Preschool. These increases are in addition to increases for growth and cost-of-living adjustments.
- ◆ Makes a one-time investment in an Infant/Toddler QRIS, a new quality incentive program to support infant/toddler providers to attain a higher level of quality within their local QRIS.

Pending legislation (Early Learning):

- AB 47 (McCarty)—Access to State Preschool in the year before kindergarten
- AB 74 (Calderon)—Annual unannounced licensing visits to child care facilities
- AB 427 (Weber)—Increases child care eligibility for military families
- AB 713 (Weber)—Mandatory kindergarten, Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 77 (Stone)— Comprehensive health and early intervention services and supports for all infants and toddlers in need

POLICY AGENDA AREA OF FOCUS: STRONG AND ENGAGED FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

- Support evidence-based parent education and engagement, including new parent engagement on child brain development.
- Support sustainability of Family Resource Centers and other community hubs for integrated services for children and families.
- Increase supports for breastfeeding, family leave, and baby-friendly policies in all settings.
- Expand voluntary home visit programs.

2015–16 Budget action (Strong and Engaged Families and Communities):

- Establishes one-time funding for the Resource and Referral Network to create a Consumer Education Website Statewide Database.

Pending legislation (Strong and Engaged Families and Communities):

- AB 50 (Mullin)—Home visiting programs provided to Medi-Cal eligible moms
- AB 908 (Gomez)—Improvements to Paid Family Leave (PFL) insurance benefits
- ACR 38 (Brown)—Establishes the California Task Force on Family Caregiving

POLICY AGENDA AREA OF FOCUS: FIRST 5 REVENUE

- Promote inclusion of supports and services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families in existing and new revenue policy discussions.
- Promote regulation of tobacco related products, including electronic cigarettes.

2015–16 Budget action (First 5 Revenue):

- Requires the Board of Equalization (BOE) to submit a report to the Legislature by February 1, 2016, outlining options and timelines for reducing administrative costs associated with tobacco tax enforcement while maintaining program effectiveness.

Pending legislation (First 5 Revenue):

- AB 216 (Garcia)—Prohibits providing non-nicotine vapor products/electronic cigarettes to minors
- AB 1162 (Holden)—Requires Medi-Cal to cover tobacco cessation
- SB 140 (Leno)—Defines electronic cigarettes as a tobacco product, making providing electronic cigarettes to minors a misdemeanor, and requiring retailers to pay a licensing fee

For more information about the 2015–16 Budget Act and current legislation supported by First 5 California, see the additional information below. For any questions, please contact Erin Gabel, Deputy Director, at egabel@ccfc.ca.gov.

Pending legislation:

http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/about/about_legislation.html.

2015–16 Budget overview:

http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/pdf/commission/meetings/handouts/Commission-Handouts_2015-07/Item_6_-_State_Legislative_and_Budget_Update.pdf *