



## THE CALIFORNIA QRIS CONSORTIUM IS NOW QUALITY COUNTS CALIFORNIA

With a new year comes a fresh brand for California's quality improvement system. Quality Counts California is the new name for California's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), including the system pieces funded through First 5 IMPACT and the California Department of Education's QRIS Block Grants. The rebranding of California's QRIS efforts is intended to unite local and state QRIS building blocks under one umbrella and communicate better with parents, providers, and policy-makers alike about the purpose of the quality improvement system.

With the new brand also comes a refreshed governance structure for California's QRIS efforts statewide under Quality Counts California. This governance structure provides guidance on the implementation of QRIS efforts locally and advises state

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



Although it's a bit late, I want to wish you all a Happy New Year! 2018 has started with a bang and all signs point to an incredible year ahead for young children in California.

Along with our own personal New Year's resolutions, First 5 California also has a few: to work harder (is that possible?); to disseminate critical information on time (again, is that possible?); and most importantly, to keep laser-focused on improving the young lives of our state's children and their families (that we can do!).

In this edition of *FOCUS*, you will read about the amazing impact of home visiting in San Diego County—a good news story if there ever was one. In the policy world, the Governor's Proposed FY 2018–19 budget proposal and federal budget carry some positive news and recognize the importance of providing services and opportunities for children, families, and early learning issues—a recognition that has been hard-fought in recent years. Supporting the workforce continues to be a priority for First 5 California, so look for the final Cares Plus evaluation findings in this issue to see what we have learned.

We hope to see all of you at our 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit from April 10–12 in Glendale. First 5 California is in the final stage of planning for this outstanding event. Thank you to our returning and new sponsors, including First 5 Los Angeles, our first platinum sponsor! We have lined up inspirational keynote speakers, innovative workshops, and networking galore. You won't want to miss it. For Summit and registration information, just click [here](#).

Unfortunately, we also started the new year with sad news. Former First 5 California Commission Chair and our agency's first Chief Deputy Director, Joe Munso, passed away at his home in Sacramento. Joe was one of the founding fathers of First 5 California. He helped steer Proposition 10 funds on the right path to serve young children and their families and we will always appreciate his vision, dedication, and commitment to this important work.

On behalf of children's champions, new and old, and in honor of champions lost, let's all seize the opportunities ahead, together, in 2018. ✨

---

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 18 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.

---

## The California QRIS is Now Quality Counts California

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

agencies on quality improvement rating elements and policy. Its membership includes local agencies participating in First 5 IMPACT and the California Department of Education's QRIS Block Grants that make up the Quality Counts California Consortium. Since its inception in 2016, the Consortium meets quarterly.

The Consortium has adopted the new name and tagline for its statewide, locally-implemented QRIS system:

Quality Counts California—Raising the Quality of Early Learning and Care. A logo is forthcoming that will complete the branding process and a new state QRIS website will follow later this year to continue sharing the importance of quality early learning. ✨



## 2018 CHILD HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND CARE SUMMIT: *California—Leading the Way for Children*

The 2018 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit will feature these inspirational speakers:



**Dr. Ajay Chaudry**  
Co-author of "Cradle to Kindergarten: A new plan to combat inequality"



**Mario Lopez**  
Recipient of *Talk. Read. Sing.*® Award; Host of EXTRA, a nationally syndicated daily entertainment show



**Dowell Myers, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Policy, Planning, and Demography, Sol Price School of Public Policy, University of Southern California



**Dr. Vincent Felitti**  
Physician and Health Researcher; One of the world's foremost experts on childhood trauma



**Andrew N. Meltzoff**  
Professor of Psychology, Job and Getrud Tamaki Endowed Chair; Co-Director, Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences



**Dr. Dana Suskind**  
Founder of the Thirty Million Words Initiative

### REGISTER NOW

There are 51 sessions and workshops to choose from during the 3-day Summit. Register [here](#) before the early-bird registration rates end on March 5, 2018.

### SPONSORS

#### PLATINUM SPONSOR

First 5 Los Angeles

#### GOLD SPONSOR

Zero to Three

#### SILVER SPONSOR

Silicon Valley Foundation

#### BRONZE SPONSORS

Child Care Resource Center  
Institute for Healthcare Advancement

#### ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

American Institutes for Research  
Branagh Information Group  
California Child Care Resource and Referral Network  
California Paid Family Leave  
California School Boards Association  
California Teachers Association  
Child 360  
Discount School Supply  
Kaplan  
LA Chamber of Commerce  
Learning Genie  
Santa Clara County Office of Education  
Teachstone Training, LLC  
The Discovery Source

## COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

# San Diego's First 5 First Steps: A Bridge for Refugee Families

By Alethea Arguilez, M.A.

Executive Director, First 5 San Diego

Moving to a new city is difficult under the best of circumstances, but for refugees, the experience is far more complex. Recent arrivals must navigate new systems in an unfamiliar language and culture, often without strong support networks and resources.

San Diego's First 5 First Steps program helps with this transition through voluntary home visiting to refugee families. The countywide family support program has been serving pregnant and parenting teens, and military, refugee/immigrant, and low-income families using the Healthy Families America (HFA) model since 2013. Home visitors, or Family Support Specialists, connect new and expectant parents with medical providers and other community resources. They also model and teach positive parenting, child development, health and safety strategies, stress management, and skills to establish healthy bonds.



In San Diego's East County, there is a large Middle Eastern refugee population, most recently composed of families fleeing terrorism in their home country."

Home visitors need to establish trust from the start," notes Kim Thomas, project director at the American Academy of Pediatrics—California Chapter 3, the countywide coordinator for First 5 First Steps. "These refugees have undergone a lot of persecution, so there are a lot of trust issues. Having a visitor from their own community allows the family to accept the information and to hear what we have to share."

Case management is a key element of home visiting with refugee populations so families can learn to navigate the housing, employment, insurance, and education systems, as well as daily tasks, such as shopping, that differ from their home countries. "If a family is worried about how to meet basic needs—like food and shelter—they can't focus on parenting," Thomas said.

Parents also need help understanding a new culture.

"Many of the American ways are different: Having kids in school before kindergarten, playing with your kids, and reading to them—it is all different. Discipline is different. So we introduce new concepts and see what parents think," Thomas said. "It's never about what we think they should be doing. It's about having discussions and relationships, and helping people think about what they want for their children."

Chaldeans, who are Iraqi Christians and comprise much of the refugee population in the East County, are from the Northern Region in Iraq near Mosul, bordering Syria and Turkey. Chaldeans tend to have a more "wait and see" approach to child development, notes Nifin Poules, a Family Support Specialist for First 5 First Steps—East, who personally immigrated from a small town outside of Mosul and is from the Chaldean culture.

"In my culture, if your child isn't walking or talking by a certain age, the parents are more laid back. So we teach parents about exposing children to different things to help them out—how to help their kids roll over, crawl, walk, or talk," Poules said. "We teach how to increase

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

# Summary of January 2018 State Commission Meeting

On January 25, 2018, the First 5 California Commission met in Sacramento. Highlights included the following:

## First 5 Network Strategy

First 5 Association Executive Director, Moira Kenney, updated the State Commission on of a new major project, Building a Network Strategy for First 5, which is geared to positively help the Association, First 5 county commissions, and First 5 California engage as a network and ultimately provide greater “unity, influence, and impact, leading to more funding, and greater outcomes for kids.” The Network Strategy is timely with the upcoming 20th anniversary of the passage of Proposition 10.

## First 5 California Public Relations Capacity Building

The Commission heard from Erin Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs, on a proposed plan for a three-pronged public relations strategy to support First 5 public policy goals:

**Public Relations Contract:** An external contractor will create a statewide public relations strategy that builds upon the current and future First 5 California media campaign, and existing state, First 5 Association, and First 5 county commission’s strengths and infrastructure. Additionally, the contractor will introduce new and innovative capacities that will increase public and policy maker awareness of early brain science, build the First 5 California brand, influence policy makers and the public through media coverage of children’s issues, and support and assist First 5 California staff and partners. First 5 California staff requested authority for up to \$2 million over a two-year period to secure a public relations contract.

**Advocacy Data Communication Tools:** In addition to large-scale public relations capacity, consensus data sets and data communications documents will be commissioned as advocacy tools for individual First 5 California Children’s Policy Agenda goals. These data sets and advocacy documents would track the current state of children’s outcomes and opportunities on a particular goal (i.e., access to early childhood education), as well as the difference between these outcomes and the First 5 California Children’s Policy Agenda goal, and

communicate these differences to policy makers. First 5 California staff requested authority for up to \$600,000 over a two-year period for a data communications contract(s) on up to five priority First 5 California Children’s Policy Agenda goals.

## First 5 County Commission Town Hall Events and Toolkit:

In 2016, the Commission was provided an overview of First 5 California’s pilot to support up to 10 local First 5 county commissions by providing town hall event funding, training, and technical support through the development of a Town Hall Toolkit. The First 5 California Town Hall pilot was a success with 10 participating First 5 county commissions, including eight funded by this pilot program. First 5 California staff requested authority to continue the program.

## Media Contract Extension

First 5 California heard a presentation from Chief Deputy Frank Furtek and Information Officer Jamiann Collins-Lopez on a request to extend the media contract with Fraser Communications on the award-winning *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign. The proposal extends the contract for three years and \$60.3 million to continue First 5 California’s campaign about early brain science and the importance of parents and caregivers talking, reading, and singing to their children.

Visit [http://www.cfc.ca.gov/about/Meetings/meeting\\_handouts\\_2018-01.html](http://www.cfc.ca.gov/about/Meetings/meeting_handouts_2018-01.html) for information on all January 2018 Commission meeting agenda items, handouts, and PowerPoint presentations. ✨

## Camille Maben Appointed to State Advisory Council

On February 12, 2018, First 5 California Executive Director Camille Maben was appointed by Governor Brown to the California State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care. Camille is honored to formally join the council, which is charged with making policy recommendations on early learning and services for young children. ✨

# Governor's Proposed Budget and Federal Budget Highlights

With the New Year came many new opportunities to champion increased investments in young children. On January 10, 2018, Governor Brown introduced his Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018–19, setting the stage for this year's early childhood budget debate. The Governor's January Budget proposal reflects a new recognition from the Administration regarding the need for core investments in early childhood, with investments in a variety of supports during these crucial early years. The proposal:

- Maintains the early childhood education multi-year deal on increased per-child funding rates and new preschool spaces
- Provides new progress on quality early learning, as well as support for new parents:
  - Proposes new home-visiting funding support for CalWORKS families
  - Creates one-time grants to expand early education classrooms to prepare for inclusive, quality child care and preschool services
  - Increases child care per-child funding rates—the backbone of our system—beyond the multi-year deal
  - Recognizes the importance of workforce training and education for child care teachers with the Community College Online proposal
  - Implements last year's budget deal for increased Denti-Cal service rates

While First 5 California is encouraged by the Governor's proposal, there still is a long way to go in this budget year. With the help of our many legislative supporters, we hope to address shortcomings such as the 1.2 million eligible children who lack access to high-quality child care, according to the California Budget and Policy Center. Without addressing this access crisis, the Administration and Legislature leave a huge gap that would address the needs of working parents.

There are 218,000 child care spaces currently funded by the State Budget, and this serves only 14 percent of eligible infants and toddlers, 38 percent of 3-year-old children, and 68 percent of 4-year-old children. California's investment in high-quality early learning and care can reap dividends—up to a 13-to-1 return on investment. We must find increased early learning access funding in this year's surplus budget.



On February 9, 2018, President Trump signed a budget deal which significantly increases spending on a number of issues, including several early childhood priorities. In particular, the budget deal:

- Reauthorizes funding for the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program for five years
- Reauthorizes the Children's Health Insurance Program for a total of 10 years

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

## Final CARES Plus Report Now Available

The final evaluation report for Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus, 2011–2016, is now available on First 5 California's website. CARES Plus was a First 5 California-funded program designed to support early educators working with children ages 0 to 5 by providing stipends, training, and higher education. Based on available data, highlights of the report show 17,787 participants from more than 30 counties completed training or coursework offered through CARES Plus, demonstrating the program's success in improving quality of teacher-child interaction, furthering educational goals, and providing financial support for California's early care and education workforce. To view the report in its entirety, click [here](#) for an electronic copy. ✨

## First 5 Express Tour Update

---

First 5 California's traveling resource exhibit, the First 5 Express, is gaining momentum and engaging with a record number of families across the state. The next phase of the 2017/2018 tour embarked on February 12, 2018.

During the last 8 months, the Express visited a total of 109 events in 51 counties, including preschools, learning and resource centers, county fairs, and libraries. The exhibit visited a wide range of venues, often in hard-to-reach locations, to ensure all families in need of extra support and resources are given the opportunity to experience the exhibit.

The visits encompassed larger community celebrations, including Day of the Farmworker in Monterey County, Black Family Day in San Joaquin County, Apple Harvest in Humboldt County, and Storyfest in Ventura County. The Express engaged one-on-one with almost 26,000 children and their families in 2017 while distributing over 101,000 individual resources and pieces of information.

Through 2018, the Express is planning 66 visits across 39 counties, ensuring all counties will have been reached at least once by the Express during the entire 2017/2018 tour. ✱

---

### San Diego's First 5 First Steps: A Bridge for Refugee Families

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

bonding and attachment, and help parents think through what it might mean when a baby is crying, so they can solve the problem by themselves."

Family resiliency and self-reliance is a big part of the picture, since home visits last a few years at most, from prenatal to age 3. When a mother is pregnant, home visits might focus on tips for staying healthy and on what to expect during prenatal visits. When the baby is newly born, visits might emphasize breastfeeding and developmental milestones, and the focus may shift to managing child behaviors and setting goals for the future—such as finding childcare, employment, or continuing education—when the child nears his/her third birthday.

"Once trust is established, parents are incredibly grateful for the support," Poules said. "When we go for visits, the parents have cleaned the house, prepared the child, and placed the blanket on the floor so we all are ready for activities. They are excited, willing, and grateful."

In 2017, First 5 First Steps received Healthy Families America (HFA) accreditation as the first multi-site system to serve a county, rather than a state. The accreditation recognizes the program as a provider of high-quality family support services in a large and diverse county. By committing to best practices, First 5 First Steps builds a safety net of support for families and gets First 5 one step closer to achieving its vision that all children ages 0 to 5 are healthy, loved, and nurtured, and enter school as active learners. ✱

---

### Governor's Proposed Budget and Federal Budget Highlights

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

- Increases funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) by \$5.8 billion over the next two years. This increase in federal funding will potentially allow California to increase spending on child care access and quality

While First 5 California is encouraged by this bipartisan budget deal, we also know that it comes with significant criticism. Fiscal conservatives are concerned about the bill's impact on the national debt, and progressives, including many of California's elected officials, are concerned the deal did not include a resolution on the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program which President Trump rescinded last year.

And, while this budget deal is a step in the right direction, there is still a lot of work to be done to finalize appropriations and ensure policymakers in California prioritize the effective use of these funds here at home. Perhaps most importantly, we need to make sure the state expands early care and education funding with these CCDBG increases rather than supplanting existing state funds.

Both the January State Budget Proposal and February federal budget have set the stage for a robust discussion on how to best invest in California's babies. ✱