



Executive Director Report

This report provides an update about primary work and key activities staff have engaged in since the January 2021 Commission Meeting framed by the Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs). It includes relevant highlights, rather than a summary of all staff work.

SPA I: CHILD HEALTH

GOAL: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5

Over the past three months, First 5 California (F5CA) has contributed to a vision of a future in which all young children have access to the full spectrum of health care services, receive timely developmental screenings, and are referred to appropriate developmental services when services are necessary through the following investments and activities:

1. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)

UCLA researchers finalized the research memorandum, *CHIS 2017/2018: Tables of Selected Child Variables*, summarizing data funded by or of interest to F5CA. Tables included data related to investments such as the Talk. Read. Sing.[®] media campaign and knowledge and use of the *Kit for New Parents*. Additional topics of interest include developmental screening, childcare, and dental and health services. Tables disaggregate data by poverty level, education, race/ethnicity, citizenship status, and dual language learner (DLL) status. These data address some questions commissioners have posed this past year about the reach of F5CA investments. The memorandum was emailed to commissioners on April 6, 2021.

UCLA and Public Health Institute researchers are finalizing a CHIS policy brief about developmental screening in California to be published in June.

SPA II: Child Development

GOAL: All Children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

Over the past three months, F5CA staff has continued working with state agency partners, counties, and policy leaders to support the development and sustainment of a well-trained and sufficiently prepared workforce, striving to ensure young children have access to high-quality early learning settings that prepare them to enter school well-prepared and able to succeed through the following investments and activities:

1. IMPACT 2020

IMPACT 2020 continues to expand, providing support to early learning and care providers who are most isolated and under-resourced and those who serve children with high needs. Quality Counts California consortia report that COVID-19 presents unprecedented challenges. Local implementation continues to focus on COVID response and recovery, as described by consortia in the most recent Annual Performance Report (APR). Highlights from those reports include:

- Nearly half of the 7,737 sites participating are family child care; family, friend, and neighbor; and other alternative settings.
- Most consortia reported redirecting IMPACT 2020 staff to assist with COVID response, including distribution of personal protective equipment, delivering materials and supplies for both in-person care and to support families and providers in distance learning, and providing both mental and physical health resources.
- Existing partnerships and relationships proved to be a significant benefit to supporting and communicating with programs and providers. With restrictions on what services could be delivered during the pandemic, counties were able to flex quality improvement funds from planned expenses to meet other developing local needs. These included parent engagement, equity and anti-bias training, child social-emotional needs, and trauma-informed practice. Funds were also reprioritized to focus on addressing emerging health and safety needs for COVID prevention practices and resources.

In April 2020, F5CA released the Regional Training and Technical Assistance, and Coordination Hub Lead Agency (Hub) Request for Applications (RFA). This is a continuation of the work begun under First 5 IMPACT that is continuing with IMPACT 2020 funding. Under this new RFA, Hubs will support local consortia by providing specialized support to create economies of scale, better coordinate services, and reduce duplication of effort. Specifically, Hubs support coordination of training and technical assistance, data and evaluation, communication and partnerships, and quality assessments. This two-year funding cycle emphasizes promoting and supporting anti-racism, anti-bias, and equity, and ensuring access to high-quality training and professional development that is culturally and linguistically appropriate and supports each region's high priority populations.

2. Dual Language Learner Pilot

As we enter the final phase of the DLL pilot, 16 counties are expanding effective DLL practices and helping DLL children, families, and DLL-serving providers recover from the pandemic. To date, 11 of the 16 counties have reported their anticipated impact.

These counties expect to:

- Train more than 3,000 center-based; family child care; family, friend, and neighbor care; and other community-based providers to improve their knowledge and skills to serve young DLLs
- Provide direct support to more than 12,000 families
- Distribute approximately 45,000 books
- Reach more than one million families through public awareness campaigns about the importance of home language on children's development.

In addition, F5CA received a \$150,000 grant from the Emerging Bilingual Collaborative (funded through New Ventures Fund) to facilitate communities of practice (CoP) for county implementers. The CoPs are intended to help counties implementing DLL expansion phase activities learn from one another and provide important feedback to support implementation of the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care. CoPs will launch on April 29, 2021, and be held monthly over the next 14 months. The expansion phase of the DLL Pilot concludes June 30, 2022.

3. Foster Bridge Study

The Child Care Resource Center continues its work on the California Emergency Child Care Bridge Study (aka Foster Bridge Study). The study evaluates the success and challenges families and county staff faced during implementation of the Foster Bridge program throughout the state. The evaluation report for the first year is drafted and soon to be finalized.

SPA III: Family Functioning

GOAL: All families have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support their children's optimal development.

Over the past three months, F5CA has progressed in its efforts to ensure all families have equitable access to information, resources, services, and programs designed to optimize their children's learning, health, and overall well-being through the following programs and activities:

1. Home Visiting

The 50 counties receiving home visiting coordination funding recently identified technical assistance needs to help them strengthen coordination across home visiting programs and create integrated early childhood and family support systems

where home visiting is embedded as an essential component. Counties will receive technical assistance from experts from the Home Visiting Applied Research Collaborative (HARC) in four areas identified as a need by most of the participating counties: (1) strengthening partnerships among home visiting programs and developing shared vision and *measurable* goals for coordination; (2) overcoming barriers to meaningful partnerships and aligning home visiting services with county resources and needs; (3) coordinating data collection/use and leveraging funding across sectors; and (4) building collective accountability and sustainable partnerships between home visiting and other family serving organizations. Counties will receive technical assistance from HARC through June 2022.