



Report from Executive Director  
June 19, 2014

## I. Update on Administrative Operations

- Contract Renewal for FY 2014-15
  - New process for multi-year contracting was implemented in FY 2013-14, to bring greater efficiencies to workflows for both Funded Partners and Commission staff.
    - A full boilerplate contract with the first year's service provisions and budget was issued last year.
      - Amendment was issued this year to add new fiscal year's service provisions, budget, reporting timelines, and allocation.
    - All 23 funded partner contracts were issued by June 6, 2014.
      - To date, 8 contracts have been fully executed; 15 are awaiting signature.
  - Summary of contract changes
    - Annual Evaluation Report findings and follow-up items have been incorporated into FY 2014-15 contracts wherever applicable.
    - Personnel costs have increased as a result of union negotiated salary increases.
    - Target projections for participants were increased for several services to more accurately reflect past performance.
    - NfLs are increasing Triple P Level 2 and Level 3 services for FY 2014-15, building on their successes in FY 2013-14.
    - Availability of school district facilities for NfL services is more limited in some areas of the county due to increasing enrollments and Transitional Kindergarten.

## II. Update on Commission Initiatives

- Neighborhoods for Learning
  - Santa Clara Valley NfL
    - Through a new partnership with *Santa Paula Hospital's New Beginnings Program*, infant massage classes are offered for parents with infants under 4 months old.
    - Ongoing partnerships with *Developmental Milestones* and *Amigo Babies* provide support to children with special needs and their families through weekly classes.
    - New partnerships with Valle Naranjal Apartments and Community Action Partnership preschool brought Motherread/Fatherread early literacy program to Piru and Fillmore.
    - NfL preschool program at Briggs Elementary will be discontinued in FY 2014-15 due to significant challenges with space, transportation, and licensing.
      - NfL will add an additional session at Sespe Elementary in Fillmore.

- Ojai Valley NfL
  - NfL recently met with Nan Tolbert Nurturing Center (NTNC) board members to discuss ways in which they could partner to serve children and families in Ojai.
    - One outcome of this meeting is that the NfL will provide developmental screenings for children who participate in NTNC classes.
- Countywide Strategies
  - Preschool Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)
    - Data System
      - In partnership with VCOE, staff has been researching existing database systems to support QRIS data collection and reporting requirements.
        - Negotiations are under way for First 5 Ventura County to utilize the Pinwheel data system for the remainder of the RTT ELC grant period, at a greatly reduced rate of \$12,000 annually.
          - First 5 San Diego has invested significant resources into the development of the Pinwheel system that has been customized to the 5-tier RTT ELC QRIS matrix and also meets First 5 CA reporting requirements.
    - Implementation Update
      - In FY 2013-14, a total of 75 early education sites located in 7 school districts participated in QRIS, including 26 family child care homes.
        - Data collection and analysis is ongoing to determine areas of strength and opportunity for improvement; programs have access to technical assistance and quality improvement stipends.
      - In FY 2014-15, QRIS will be expanded to 116 sites in 11 school districts, and will include 46 family child care homes.
  - Regional Health Educators (Ventura County Public Health)
    - Public health educator in Moorpark/Simi Valley region has been working with the Apollo High School Minor Parent Program to offer teen parents information on child development and developmental screenings for their children.
      - Apollo High School Minor Parent Program gives teen parents the opportunity to attend high school and earn their high school diploma.
        - Program cares for the young children, while the teen parents participate in classes; program also offers support, introduction to community resources and a series of parenting classes.
      - Health educator is also working to reach teens who have graduated from the program to offer developmental screenings for their children.
  - Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP)
    - MICOP has been working with Salud Para La Gente (SPLG), a health clinic serving low-income families in Watsonville, many of whom are Mixtec.
      - Many of the Mixtec agricultural workers live and work in both Watsonville and Oxnard.
    - MICOP is training SPLG clinic staff on Ventura's Bebe Sano health and safety curriculum for new Mixtec parents.

- VCPH – Fluoride Varnish-Medical Providers
  - As the program has grown, there has been a corresponding increase in the need for follow up, educational outreach, and care coordination to ensure clients are connected to quality dental care.
    - New web based oral health Access database has been developed to address the challenges of limited staff resources.
      - With this new system, several components of data entry will be automated, including demographic information, by interfacing with the state’s CALWIN system, which will result in less staff time needed for data entry.
        - Database is currently under design, with a goal of having a mock-up of the system ready by the end of the current fiscal year.
- Community Education
  - **Oxnard for Good for Kids (GFK) Restaurant Week, June 16-22, 2014**
    - First 5 Ventura’s Facebook page is providing "live updates" of event.
      - Many restaurants have also decided to offer special promotions if customers mention "First 5 Facebook."
        - Fresh & Fabulous: 1/2 off GFK meal with an adult purchase
        - BG's Cafe: 1/2 off GFK meal with an adult purchase
        - Cuernavaca: 20% off GFK meal with an adult purchase
        - Fresco II: Complimentary gift certificate for return visit
    - Full Good for Kids menu options can be found at: <http://bit.ly/GFKOxnard>
  - Summerfest (Ventura)
    - Summerfest 2014 took place on June 1st at the Ventura Unified School District’s Education Service Center.
      - More than 50 community, sports and health booths offered hands-on activities, demonstrations and information, all with a focus on living a healthy and active lifestyle.
    - First 5 Ventura staff interacted with 500 parents and gave out 450 *Lee the Bee Turn Off that TV* books; First 5 CA Hands-on-Health Express van was also in attendance.
    - Over 100 parents signed up for the First 5 Ventura Book Bag Raffle with 4 First 5 Read Book Bags filled with age appropriate books given out to raffle winners.
      - Email message from one of the winning participants: As soon as we got to the car, my 5 years old looked at all the books and declared “this is the best day ever”.
  - Abuela Bilingual Storytime (Port Hueneme)
    - First 5 Ventura County, Ray D. Prueter Library, and Among Friends Adult Day Health Care Center collaborated to bring a series of four bilingual storytimes presented by local Ventura County grandmothers, incorporating stories, songs, and finger plays in Spanish and English.
      - A total of 57 children and 41 adults attended the Abuela Bilingual Storytime during one of the program dates.

- Results Based Accountability
  - Transition to Persimmony Data Collection Software System
    - Initial data transfer from Mosaic has been uploaded in Persimmony system and is available for funded partners to review as part of training.
      - Final data transfer will occur June 30th; year-end data entry and reports will be submitted through Persimmony.
    - Nine trainings for 64 key funded partner staff and First 5 staff scheduled in June, with additional trainings to occur in the fall.
    - Planning underway for roll-out of fiscal and referral modules.
  - Evaluation Design
    - EVALCORP, the contractor selected to assist the Commission in refining an evaluation plan, is in the process of developing a point-in-time parent survey and a series of program survey tools to be used by funded programs for continuous quality improvement.
      - Kick-off meeting with funded partners was held in June, with 15 funded partners in attendance.
        - Funded partners shared previous successes and challenges with administering outcome questionnaires and provided initial input for the program improvement surveys.

### III. County, Regional and National Updates

- State Budget – Final Budget Bill
  - Strategic investment in early childhood education of \$264 million will increase quality in existing programs and expand access, representing the largest investment for young children and their education that California has had in over a decade.
    - Components of the budget deal include:
      - \$70 million to expand full-day, full-year California State Preschool Program for 11,500 more children by the end of the budget year.
      - Repeal of the part-day California State Preschool Program family fee.
      - Improvements to existing transitional kindergarten standards with state guidance on curriculum and early childhood education credits and/or work experience, with a 5 year phase-in to allow new teachers to meet education and experience requirements.
      - \$50 million in ongoing QRIS block grants and one-time funds for professional development, quality projects and facility loans.
      - \$69 million in increases to reimbursement rates for early learning and child care programs; Standard Reimbursement Rate increased by 5% and Regional Market Rate to 85th percentile of 2009 survey.
      - \$17 million to restore 1,500 slots for other child care programs: 500 Alternative Payment slots and 1,000 General Child Care slots.
      - An additional 31,500 slots to be budgeted in out-years to reach the agreement to provide pre-kindergarten opportunities for all low-income 4 year olds.

- ECE Coalition
  - A coalition of ECE stakeholders, representing labor, business, providers, early education groups, First 5 CA and the First 5 Association worked together to submit a set of recommendations to Assemblymember Nancy Skinner, Chair of Legislative Budget Conference Committee.
    - In 24 hours, over 200 organizations signed on to this united call for a reinvestment in California's diverse early learning system, focusing on three fundamentally linked action areas: rates, slots, and quality.

#### IV. Upcoming Events

- **Ventura County Together Monthly Meeting**, July 7, 2014, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., VCCF Non-Profit Center, 4001 Mission Oaks Blvd., Camarillo
- **First 5 Standing Committees**
  - **Administration/Finance Committee**, August 1, 2014, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m., F5VC offices

## PROVIDER ANECDOTES

### Regional Health Educators, Ventura County Public Health

- I. We received a referral for a 4 year old boy from a local pediatrician. He had a speech delay and a fine motor delay. His parents are divorced and his father is the primary caregiver. Dad is a very devoted father and we would meet regularly at community locations such as Starbucks, early before he went to work. He followed through with all the homework and activities that we discussed. We met every other week for a few sessions and then continued to meet once every month or so for six months. At our last session Dad proudly brought in copies of his son's Transitional Kindergarten progress report and a Superintendent's award. Both Dad and his son beamed! We performed another Ages & Stages Questionnaire and the boy met all his milestones!
- II. Recently an infant was referred to me who has two deaf parents that are unable to speak. The child himself is able to hear and passed his newborn hearing test. He is at high risk for developmental delay. I was able to successfully collaborate with a specialist from the SELPA Infant Program, Tri-Counties GLAD program, Gold Coast Medicare program, Lifesigns Interpreter services, the Hearing Conservation, Early Start and the Rainbow Connection.

The representative from the SELPA Infant Program specializes in working with the deaf and hearing impaired. She provided a lot of assistance and a reminder that the standard of care is for the child to have their hearing tested every six months. She even offered to come to a home visit with the family if I desired. The gentleman from the Tri-Counties GLAD program helped explain how I could get interpreter services for my home visits. We had started out with writing notes on paper to communicate and sometimes used our phones to text each other while we were sitting together. I talked with the Cultural & Linguistic Specialist at Gold Coast Health Care Plan and we went through quite a process but we were finally able to get approval for a person from the Lifesigns Interpreter services to attend home services with me. It made all the difference! Both Mom and Dad were so much more engaged and able to ask a lot more questions. I was able to check out a box of toys from the Rainbow Connection for the baby. Since mom and dad are first time parents they enjoyed seeing which toys were a good fit for their son at his specific age. This little boy is now nine months old and progressing well thanks to the collaboration of all the agencies involved!!

### El Centrito Preschool Expansion

Language is exploding in the Little Dolphins classroom! At the start of the school year, teachers observed that many students used physical instead of verbal communication, like pointing, pulling on teachers' clothes, and crying. After analyzing results of the initial DRDP assessments, teachers set goals to prioritize language development through strategic interventions. Their primary language development goals were to increase students' exposure to new vocabulary, strengthen expressive language, especially when experiencing frustration or other big emotions, and to engage parents in the process.

To increase exposure to new vocabulary, teachers utilized a wide variety of activities and techniques ranging from music and movement, to flashcards and labels on objects in the

classroom, to interactive reading with flannel boards. Teachers also introduced the goal of increasing vocabulary and expressive language at a parent meeting to elicit feedback from parents and get their buy-in. Teachers explained that exposure to language and books supports children's healthy brain development and gives them a foundation for future success in school.

Teachers then proposed the launch of an ongoing reading program in which each child and parent would receive a journal and a different bag of books each week. Teachers urged parents to read the books to their child, ask questions, and write or draw in the journal. Teachers recognized that this is a new and challenging task for some parents, so they provided tips for how to read out loud to their children. They offered examples of open-ended questions that can help stimulate language development. For parents who lacked confidence in their reading skills, teachers reassured them that simply inventing a story from the pictures is just as valuable as reading every word. Teachers encouraged parents to follow their child's lead.

Since starting this effort, teachers and parents have observed significant gains in children's expressive language, including during moments of frustration or conflict. Teachers have worked closely with children to help build their language tool box so that they can express feelings. One teacher remarked, "We often hear adults say to children, 'Use your words' but we have to give them the words and help them practice first."

### **Triple P (Ventura County Behavioral Health)**

"Carla" is a 3 yr. old little girl who lives with her parents, maternal grandmother and great grandmother. Both parents were diagnosed with bipolar disorder and are recovering drug addicts. Mother reported that she used drugs during her pregnancy and "Carla" was born addicted to Methadone. "Carla" has exhibited speech and developmental delays for which she receives therapies. Both parents indicated that "Carla" has been non-compliant, stubborn and hyperactive. She has a difficult time focusing on activities and often becomes easily frustrated. Mother stated that "Carla's" behavior escalated when her baby sister was born 5 months before.

A potential barrier during the Triple P protocol was the parents' relationship and their struggle with self-regulation. Many of the sessions began with crises in the house or with the parents. As a result of utilizing Triple P's Level 5 Coping with Stress strategies, the therapist was able to move past the crises and focus on parenting skills and strategies. Both parents became engaged in Triple P and embraced the new skills they were learning and developing. They were able to understand the relationship between the child's decrease in disruptive behaviors and the safe, more predictable and calm environment they were providing. They were able to self-reflect on the changes they had made and how they had grown through this process. They acknowledged how much happier and less stressed they both felt as they learned to self-regulate their own emotions. Of course, they could then see what a huge impact this modeling had on their daughter's ability to do the same. They were able to understand their daughter in new ways, which impacted how they responded to her. The result was that the non-compliant behavior decreased, the relationship with their daughter improved and they found a new sense of peace and contentment at home. Their commitment to their children was evident as they worked to preserve and improve their relationships and home environment, despite the many barriers and obstacles they had faced in the past. Their confidence as parents shifted and impacted both children in a profound way.