



Report from Commission Staff
May 18, 2017

I. Update on Commission Initiatives

- Neighborhoods for Learning
 - Rio NfL
 - The Rio NfL held six community wide food distribution events in Q3 providing food to 766 households and 2,967 individuals.
 - NfL staff continued to assist Rio Real school in their monthly food distribution serving 145 households and 649 individuals.
 - NfL assisted 175 households through clothing distribution.
 - Santa Clara Valley NfL
 - 480 households in Fillmore and Santa Paula were served under the USDA Program
 - 144 households were served through the Drought Box Program, which will be ending in June, as there is no longer a State declared drought.
 - Pleasant Valley NfL
 - NfL recently added a new component to the PACT Program, called "*Let's Talk Thursdays*".
 - Opportunity for parents to meet one-on-one with PACT teacher to discuss their child's developmental progress and how parents can help children achieve their milestones, including ideas and activities to use at home, and together they set goals for future meetings.
- Community Initiatives
 - Early Literacy: Take 5 and Read to Kids
 - The second annual Take 5 and Read to Kids event kicked off on Friday May 5th
 - More than 55 local celebrities read to nearly 1,000 children and donated 165 books to preschool classrooms!
 - Celebrities came from across the county and included First 5 commissioners, Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson, Assemblyman Dante Acosta, CEOs, Mayors, and a voice over actress.
 - Media attention included featured story on a radio talk show and front page article in the Ventura County Star. Online, the story had over 15,800 minutes of engagement from 1,959 page views in the first three days!
 - Social media also promoted the event, featuring readers in action #take5VC.
 - Take 5 storytimes will continue throughout the month of May with readers at local libraries.
 - Additional efforts to promote early literacy are planned into the Fall, including participation in Farm Day and a partnership with the Mexican Consulate.
 - Take 5 and Read to Kids campaign is a partnership with the Ventura County Star to raise awareness about the importance of early childhood literacy.

- Results Based Accountability
 - Staff is analyzing available data to be used for future resource development and public awareness efforts. Examples of initial findings for 2004 – 2016 include:
 - A total of 79,738 children, 45,337 families, and 37,519 parent/caregivers received services
 - 13,220 children attended preschool as a result of F5VC funding
 - 9,610 children received oral health treatments since 2005.
 - An additional 91,221 fluoride varnish treatments were provided to children since 2007

II. County, Regional and National Updates

- Civic Alliance 2017 State of the Region Report released
 - Report presents data on more than 100 quality of life indicators in Ventura County arranged into 12 key topic areas (domains).
 - Useful tool for understanding our region and preparing for the future.
 - Newly included this year under Economy is the cost of child care (pg. 36)
 - Other sections particularly relevant to 0-5 population include Childhood Growth and Disparities (Misery Index, pag. 53), Preschool Opportunities (pg. 54), Child Homelessness, Domestic Violence, and Child Abuse.
 - Download the full report <http://civicalliance.org/2017-state-of-the-region-report/>
- California State Budget (see attached)
 - May Revise projects \$2.5 billion higher revenues, resulting in increased spending:
 - Additional \$1.4 billion to the Local Control Funding Formula (Prop 98) and \$600 million for In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
 - Removes the January child care "pause" and restores \$500 million promised to child care under the 2016 Budget Act
 - \$67.6 million increase to Standard Reimbursement Rate (SRR)
 - \$92.7 million increase for California State Preschool Program (CSPP) and other direct-contracted child care providers reimbursement rates
 - \$42.2 million increase to Regional Market Reimbursement Rate for voucher-based child care providers by using the 75th percentile of 2016 SMI, beginning 2018
 - **\$7.9 million increase for nearly an additional 3,000 full-day state preschool slots**
 - Citing ongoing pressures from Washington and acknowledging that economic recovery cannot last forever, Governor Brown was adamant about curtailing spending and continued to tout fiscal prudence. He warned that any future economic downturn will result in cuts.
 - Gov Brown warned that Trumpcare, as currently proposed in House-approved AHCA, will translate into massive cuts in CA.
- First 5 California
 - Annual Report guidelines have been revised to provide specificity on program models and grantee types.
 - New guidelines will simplify reporting on children, parents and providers, as well as reduce duplication across the various forms.
 - New guidelines go into effect July 1, 2017
 - F5CA Strategic Plan was updated to better align to current realities, adopting the following areas of focus:

- First 5 California as a catalyst in compiling existing relevant data and synthesizing the information to provide a definitive and consistent perspective.
 - Supporting a comprehensive plan to reduce or eliminate childhood poverty.
 - Reflecting the latest early brain development research throughout our work, and recognizing that the earliest intervention with a child is optimal for that child's well-being.
 - The need to be inclusive of all caregivers, including fathers, to be engaged with a child's early development.
 - Creatively approaching First 5 California's work in light of its diminishing resources.
- First 5 Association Policy and Advocacy efforts
 - AB 60: Subsidized child care and development services
 - Changes eligibility determination and redetermination for subsidized child care statewide.
 - Updates the State Median Income threshold to 70% of the current SMI.
 - Updates the SMI at which families exit to 85% of the current SMI.
 - Guarantees eligibility for child care for 12 months upon receiving subsidy – decreases paperwork, may increase wait lists for programs.
 - Broad base of support, including many First 5 County Commissions
 - AB 992 – CalWORKs Baby Wellness and Family Support Program
 - Creates a voluntary CalWORKs early home visiting program intended to provide services to support health outcomes for pregnant women and infants born into poverty that will improve their likelihood to exit poverty.
 - Requires the state to provide funds to counties for voluntary evidence-based home visiting for any CalWORKs assistance unit with a recipient who is pregnant or parenting a child up to 24 months of age.
 - First 5 Association drafted budget ask of \$100 million from General Fund.
 - Approximately 20 First 5 Commissions have signed on in support of this legislation.
 - Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting program (MIECHV) Reauthorization (federal)
 - Would reauthorize the bipartisan-supported MIECHV program for five years and increase funding from \$400 million annually to \$800 million annually to expand services.
 - Current funding expires in September 2017.

I. Upcoming Events

- **First 5 Committees**
 - **Administration/Finance Committee**, June 2, 2017, 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., F5VC offices
- Funders Forum, co-hosted by F5VC and Southern California Grantmakers, June 6, 2017, 12:00 p.m. – 2 p.m., Ventura County Community Foundation, Camarillo
- Ventura County Civic Alliance: State of the Region Release Event, May 31, 2017, 3:00 p.m. - 5:15 p.m., Ventura County Community Foundation, Camarillo
- Prevention Institute and EC LINC: Cradle to Community Convening, June 21 – 22, 2017, Oakland

Anecdotes

At El Centrito's Ocean View Early Education program, the teachers focus on creating stimulating sensory activities for children. The classroom environment always includes a sensory area at the science table, yet the teachers observed that many children had not been drawn to that area and were not taking advantage of the sensory activities. The teachers decided to incorporate a broader array of sensory activities into all parts of the children's day so that children would encounter sensory activities through structured activities, free choice activities, and in the outside environment. The teachers started by ensuring that one of the three activity tables each morning included finger paint, shaving cream, or play dough. These daily options ensured that children had opportunities every day to do an activity that stimulated their sensory development. Teachers gradually incorporated other elements into these activities to stimulate the children's imaginations. For example, teachers provided popsicle sticks along with the play-doh, which inspired children to create everything from pretend lollipops to houses. Teachers also enhanced the science area by rotating a variety of materials into sensory bins including beans and rice. Children scooped and dug their fingers into the bins to explore the different textures and sensations of materials in the sensory bins.

Teachers also provided structured activities that stimulated sensory development. Children created art using glue and salt, and they also explored the insides of a pumpkin. Teachers introduced children to new vocabulary to help them describe the new textures they were experiencing. Children described their salt art as rough, the play dough as smooth, and the pumpkin guts as squishy.

Teachers observed that many children gained greater comfort and interest in exploring a variety of textures. One child's growth was especially impressive. When Kai first started the program, he refused to touch finger paint or shaving cream. When teachers described to parents at a parent meeting their plan to emphasize sensory development, Kai's mother remarked that her son does not like activities like that. "He doesn't like to get his hands dirty," she explained. One day, a teacher invited Kai to touch the shaving cream with just one finger. Kai hesitated, but eventually touched it and then immediately went to wash his hands. However, a few minutes later, he returned to the table and began to explore more, and this time put his whole hand into the shaving cream and rubbed it everywhere. Now Kai enjoys finger painting too. He still stops periodically while doing finger painting projects to wash his hands, but then returns to his work and gets dirty all over again. Kai's mother has noticed his growth and exclaimed, "Wow! He's changed." Teachers have enjoyed observing the children's growth and all they have learned while exploring interesting textures.