



October 18, 2018

Since our inception nearly 20 years ago, First 5 Ventura County (F5VC) Neighborhoods for Learning (NfLs) have been a cornerstone in the community, providing early childhood education, health and family support services. Each of you has played a vital role in ensuring that families have the support they need to give their young children prenatal to age 5 a strong foundation for success in school and life.

With the decline in Prop 10 tobacco tax revenues and the depletion of our sustainability fund which helped to mitigate the decline in tax revenues, our F5VC Commission has carefully contemplated how to best utilize its limited funds. The Commission recently approved a 7-year plan that redesigns the place-based services, relies on sustainable investments and innovative partnerships with communities, and focuses on systems building approaches. We recognize that we must work differently moving forward to achieve maximum impact with limited dollars.

Today, I am pleased to announce our new partnership with Interface Children & Family Services (ICFS) to implement the redesigned place-based Neighborhoods for Learning initiative. Beginning with FY 2019-20, ICFS will serve the entire county, leveraging the important work of NfLs, and building on it with systems approaches and continuous quality improvement strategies.

ICFS and F5VC staff deeply honor the long-standing history of our NfLs and we are committed to continue delivering Parent and Child Together and family support services throughout the county and in neighborhoods where our most vulnerable families and young children reside. Together with ICFS, we will be engaging all of you to help us make thoughtful, strategic decisions about how to best transition resources, knowledge and partnerships that promote the optimal health and well-being of Ventura County's children and families.

We value the current talent and capacity of all of our funded partners' staff. Retaining talent will be a top priority in our transition to the new implementation model. Developing a detailed transition plan with timelines for recruitment of staff will be of utmost importance over the next few months. As these transitions take place, we know that you will continue to keep the well-being of children and

families front and center in your work over these next weeks and months. And please remember that these **changes to Neighborhoods for Learning contracts will not go into effect until July 1, 2019.**

I know that this has been a difficult process for everyone as we worked to find the most sustainable path forward. I understand there are many questions about these changes and I remain committed to ongoing transparent communication! We will continue to keep staff, partners, parents, and community members informed. F5VC is planning parent information sessions as well as producing bilingual materials that funded partners can provide to parents.

In the meantime, we ask that you direct all questions and concerns (from staff or families) to the contact information below so that messaging remains consistent. Speaking with a unified voice will greatly help reduce confusion with the families we serve during this transition! We also invite funded partner staff to join us for upcoming “Coffee and Conversations” to share suggestions and ask questions.

I am humbled by and grateful for your dedication and the amazing work you do every day to improve the lives of young children and their families! On behalf of the Commission, children and families – my sincerest thank you!

Warmly,



Petra Puls
Executive Director





We are looking forward to working with you as we transition to the newly redesigned Neighborhood for Learning model. We have received some questions – keep them coming – and want to offer some answers. We are also developing bilingual handouts to provide to parents, and will incorporate answers to any questions you are receiving. For additional information or questions, email us at assistant@first5ventura.org or call 805-648-9990.

Will families still be able to receive Neighborhood for Learning services in their neighborhood?

Yes! First 5 Ventura is maintaining a **countywide** approach with Parent and Child Together (PACT) and family support services for **everyone**.

Will all income levels be able to receive services?

Yes! First 5 Ventura remains committed to serving families of all income levels who can benefit from early childhood experts and resources. We will develop a sliding fee scale to enable us to serve more families. We'll seek parent and staff input as we develop the pricing and no family will be excluded based on inability to pay. The sliding fee scale will be implemented in the summer of 2019.

Can families continue attending classes in 2019?

Yes! Classes will continue with current providers until July 1, 2019. Our current partners are working together closely as we expand our partnership with Interface Children & Family Services to ensure a smooth transition. Interface will take the lead role in providing PACT and family support services countywide in July 2019.

Does Interface Children & Family Services have experience with early childhood?

Yes! Interface has successfully delivered the Triple P Positive Parenting program and is experienced in delivering prevention and early intervention services that focus on social-emotional development/attachment/bonding. They served more than 4,000 families in Santa Paula and Oxnard through Family Resource Centers last year, and will work with all of our Neighborhoods for Learning to expand their reach in a culturally relevant way throughout Ventura County.

Will preschool still be available?

Yes! The First 5 Ventura County Commission will continue to fund \$1 million in preschool investments annually through June 30, 2021. We will continue to update you as we work out preschool details.

Staff is still researching potential preschool funding models to determine how best to measure outcomes and improve sustainability. Current partners will be engaged in the process in the Winter and we anticipate making decisions in the Spring. The \$1 million investment will represent a reduction in funded spaces. F5VC has worked with our funded partners to convert more than a thousand spaces to sustainable state preschool, and will continue that effort. F5VC has also transitioned QRIS to the Ventura County Office of Education to make the quality program more sustainable.

Why are these changes happening?

As fewer people in California smoke, there is less revenue available from the tobacco tax for young children. However, our expanded partnership with Interface Children & Family Services will allow us to leverage their existing countywide reach and increase efficiency to ensure our county's youngest children have the best start in life possible.

The expanded partnership with Interface Children & Family Services will help F5VC serve families in their own community, with an emphasis on prenatal to 3. The service model will evolve and changes in access points are being evaluated to determine the most effective way to provide families and children the best access possible for PACT classes and other family support resources. We are all working together to provide young children and their families the beneficial programs and shared resources of F5VC and Interface. With a continued reduction in available tobacco tax funding, there will be a decrease in services provided and locations. However, we are committed to having a countywide reach and leveraging recent research in effective PACT classes to promote school readiness.

Thank you again for playing such a vital role in ensuring that families have the support they need to give their young children prenatal to age 5 a strong foundation for success in school and life. We appreciate the amazing work you do each day.



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