



October 22, 2020

ACTION ITEM

SUBJECT: KIT FOR NEW PARENTS

Priority Area 1: Child Health

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

Priority Area 3: Family Functioning

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

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

In January 2020, the Commission authorized funding for up to \$5 million (July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021), to continue the *Kit for New Parents (Kit)* production and distribution. The approval allowed First 5 California (F5CA) time to fully utilize the current *Kit* inventory, conduct focus groups, and research new *Kit* packaging and distribution options for a future updated *Kit*. The focus group results provided F5CA with a framework to produce the updated *Kit* for release in late 2021.

F5CA staff will request funding for up to \$18 million over approximately 3 years to implement the *Kit* program. The funding will allow staff to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP) that includes, but is not limited to:

- *Kit* fulfillment:
 - Procurement of *Kit* contents
 - Inventory control and tracking
 - *Kit* ordering site setup and maintenance
 - *Kit* assembly
 - *Kit* shipping
 - Technical support for F5CA and all 58 county commissions
- Translation services for *Kit* materials into additional languages for online access and download
- Focus groups and surveys

- *Parent Guide* booklet and website content updates
- Development of *Kit* training materials
- Mobile app development
- Office of State Publishing (OSP)-designated printing

Current funding (authorized in 2020) will allow for *Kit* production to continue through the end of the contract which sunsets June 30, 2021.

The plan includes a three-month overlap (April through June 30, 2020) to smoothly transition *Kit* production and distribution from OSP to the new contractor. The new contractor will distribute pre-built basic and custom *Kits*, use OSP-transferred inventory to build current versions of the *Kit*, while at the same time preparing the updated *Kit* for release in late 2021 to distribute through June 30, 2024. The updated *Kit* will include a mobile touchpoint that enables parents to access the information and important resources in multiple ways.

F5CA staff will work with the Program Advisory Committee on the development of the *Kit* and report progress to the Commission on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATION

F5CA staff recommends the Commission approve up to \$18 million to fund the development and fulfillment of the updated *Kit for New Parents* from FY 2020–21 through FY 2023–2024.

BACKGROUND OF KEY ISSUES

Rob Reiner, the first chair of the California Children and Families Commission, envisioned a toolkit that would educate new parents in California about the care, health, and education of children ages 0 to 5 because “babies don’t come with instructions.” As a result, F5CA launched the *Kit for New Parents* in 2001. The *Kit* became a reliable resource to guide parents through their child’s first five years. Since its release, 5.4 million *Kits* have been distributed. The *Kit* has touched more hands than any other F5CA resource. Currently, the *Kit* is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

The *Kit* is considered by many to be the finest publication that F5CA has ever produced. First 5 county commissions and their partners view the *Kit* as a critical tool to use for family engagement. Parents view the *Kit* as an essential resource.

In FY 2019–20, F5CA distributed 152,015 *Kits* throughout California. Individual *Kit* orders processed via F5CA’s online service totaled 4,930. *Kits* also were distributed through F5CA’s partnerships with First 5 county commissions, and through local

organizations ranging from hospitals and clinics, to family resource centers, churches, WIC offices, foster care services, preschools, correctional facilities, community colleges, and the military.

In early 2020, F5CA facilitated *Kit for New Parents* focus groups with both parents and First 5 county commissions. Based on the focus group findings, F5CA will update the *Kit* with the following changes:

- Add health and safety best practices information to the *Parent Guide* and *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick*, including what to do during a global pandemic.
- Develop a mobile app to provide parents easy access to critical information about the education, health, and care of their young children.
- Include a mental health booklet and/or brochure on pandemic.
- Include information geared toward single fathers of children ages 0 to 5.
- Include an additional children's book.
- Conduct an evaluation on *Kit* effectiveness to enable F5CA to refresh the *Kit* on an ongoing basis with information relevant to the needs of parents of children ages 0 to 5.
- Create and distribute training materials for *Kit* distributors.
- Include robust promotion of the *Kit* as part of the public relations campaign to increase public awareness of content and availability.
- Ensure the *Kit* is linguistically and culturally appropriate and reaches all of California's families.

Both parent and First 5 county commission focus group participants felt that access to information distributed in the *Kit* is especially critical during a crisis such as a global pandemic.

F5CA will continue to conduct focus groups with parents and county partners to provide feedback on the updated *Kit* to ensure that it meets the needs of hard-to-reach and low-income parents when they bring home their newborn. This feedback also will help strengthen the *Kit* as a trusted resource for parents and providers. F5CA will continue to reach out to other advocacy groups to get their feedback on the *Kit*, *as well*.

F5CA's goal is to provide parents with comprehensive and updated information, and access to important resources via their smart phones and other connected devices.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Since 2013, the Commission has authorized approximately \$5 million annually for *Kit* production and distribution.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The request of \$18 million from the Education account will fund continued production and distribution of the current *Kit for New Parents* through June 30, 2024. The table below illustrates the impact this request will have on that account.

	Fiscal Year 20/21	Fiscal Year 21/22	Fiscal Year 22/23	Fiscal Year 23/24
Beginning Balance	\$44,303,390	\$28,742,034	\$23,345,059	\$17,679,500
Budgeted Expenditures	\$34,120,176	\$18,897,844	\$18,681,229	\$4,240,616
Kit for New Parents	\$1,500,000	\$6,000,000	\$6,000,000	\$4,500,000
Projected Revenue	\$20,058,819	\$19,500,870	\$19,015,670	\$18,562,970
15% Reserve	\$2,796,951	\$2,713,259	\$2,640,479	\$2,572,574
Net Year End Balance	\$25,945,082	\$20,631,801	\$15,039,021	\$24,929,280

ATTACHMENTS

A. *Kit for New Parents* Focus Group Results and Redesign PowerPoint