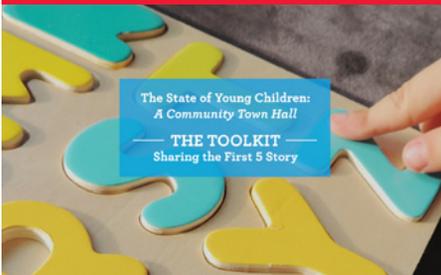




First 5 California Releases Town Hall "How-To" Toolkit



First 5 California has released the [First 5 Town Hall Toolkit](#), a new resource intended to provide any First 5 county commission or partner group with a basic guide to launch a community town hall meeting targeted at local elected officials. The Toolkit, developed in partnership with the First 5 Association and input from First 5 Sacramento, includes a menu of advice and tools, including templates for essential in-print items such as agendas, issue papers, and panelist questions. The "How-to" webinar is available at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/2827884908000881420>.

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Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



It took a couple of years, but I have finished my 58th First 5 county visit. I am deeply impressed by the enormous amount of good work First 5 counties are doing on behalf of young children and their families and grateful to have had the opportunity to tour every county. The energy and commitment demonstrated in each county gives me hope, and reaffirms my belief in the absolute benefit of the diversity of resources and services provided on behalf of California's youngest children.

Executive directors, local commissioners, and I have discussed the programs they are implementing, concerns about declining revenues, and opportunities to work together with us in the future. Counties shared the benefits and challenges of providing services to all parts of the state. Whether it is a major city, town, or small rural community, the needs of families are great. We have much work to do.

Seeing first-hand how counties benefit from the work of First 5 has been phenomenal. Counties invest in a variety of essential services such as oral health services, early learning programs, development assessment and screenings, neonatal health care, parent education, home visiting, and play groups, just to name a few. I am impressed by investments in Family Resource Centers that facilitate service expansion and systems coordination and integration in order to seamlessly link communities to service.

I have found it remarkable how well First 5 counties tailor services to their communities. Some examples include targeted partnerships with hospitals, family justice centers, and preschool classrooms, and support to family providers. These First 5 models of effective collaboration show that when community agencies work together, families receive the services they need.

Traveling across the state also has enabled me to experience California's vast landscape of mountains, ocean, desert, rural towns, and big cities. It has made

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In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 17 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

First 5 California Releases Town Hall “How-To” Toolkit (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

As tobacco tax revenues continue to decline, and the promise of First 5-funded best practices continues to thrive, policy education for elected officials in each county is a linchpin in furthering the goals of Proposition 10. Town hall forums provide an effective stage for educating and influencing elected officials and other policymakers. Town halls can be the perfect combination of issue expertise and constituent relevance—a huge resource for any policymaker.

First 5 California sponsored the Toolkit, and town hall technical assistance, so that counties may launch the town hall approach that is right for their community, whether a commission is comfortable with a tough sell on specific policy issues, or prefers to stick to general issue promotion. The most important outcome of any event is to make First 5 a trusted resource for local elected officials who will influence the future of children’s policy and funding.

For more information on the Toolkit, available technical assistance, or related advice, please contact Whitney Staniford at wstaniford@ccfc.ca.gov. ✨

Camille’s Corner (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

me appreciate even more how far many of our First 5 county staff must travel to attend meetings.

I would like to thank First 5 county staff throughout the state who went through an incredible amount of planning and preparation to make these visits an informative opportunity to learn about the history of communities and the families who choose to call them home.

I’m indebted to Perla Ramos for coordinating these visits for First 5 California. She was diligent about getting these visits on the calendar, looking up and providing endless Google maps, and securing accommodations.

And last, but not least, I would like to thank all the First 5 California staff who joined me on county visits. It was a pleasure to have companions who were great navigators and good sports. ✨



White House Summit on Dual Language Learners

On June 2, 2016, First 5 California Executive Director, Camille Maben, Commissioner Lupe Jaime, and Deputy Director of Program Management, Sarah Neville-Morgan, participated in a White House Regional Summit on Dual Language Learners (DLLs) in Early Education Settings. The summit highlighted the importance of supporting our country's DLLs in early learning programs.

Held at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Education in Miami, Florida, the Obama Administration was joined by public and private sector organizations that announced new commitments to support DLLs.

The event was kicked off with remarks from Roberto J. Rodriguez, Deputy Assistant to the President for Education, who highlighted the assets this population of children and their families bring to our communities and the nation. National experts shared new research that highlights the cognitive and economic benefits of bilingualism, and shared policy recommendations, tools, and new efforts that promote the learning and development of young DLLs. First 5 California received special recognition for its development and investment in a DLL Pilot, and also was mentioned in the White House's announcement of the new Federal policy statement and Fact Sheet, [*Supporting Dual Language Learners in Early Education Settings*](#).

First 5 California announced the investment of \$16 million to develop a DLL Pilot to identify effective culturally and linguistically responsive strategies to better support young children who are DLLs. The pilot will focus on three priority areas while ensuring they are scalable and implementable across California's multi-lingual early learning settings. The strategies include professional development for early educators and program directors on successful teaching strategies and curricula approaches to promote dual language acquisition, proven practices to partner with families of DLLs, and appropriate child and program assessment tools.



The event concluded with children from the Educare Miami, co-located at the event site, reciting a poem in English and then singing songs in Spanish.

Following the policy launch, Camille, Lupe, and Sarah were part of a small group who had the honor of participating in a discussion with Sylvia Acevedo, a White House Education Commissioner, on the economic benefits of bilingualism. They also participated in a tour of the Miami Educare and saw first-hand the multiple documentation boards capturing the latest learning and projects in which the children were engaged—from ants in the preschool room, bubbles in the toddler room, and movement and music in the infant room. During the tour, they heard more about the bilingual model implemented at the site and had the pleasure to observe infant, toddler, and preschool classrooms in action through the “peekaboo” windows which allow adults to observe without disrupting the children. Their day concluded with a special meeting with a group of local program administrators, higher education faculty, and researchers to discuss DLL work and research in the Miami area, and to explore opportunities for shared learning and collaboration to help build knowledge of effective efforts to support emergent bilingualism flourish. ✨

The Impact of Transitional Kindergarten

A recent study, “Impact of California’s Transitional Kindergarten Program 2013-14,” was conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). This study found Transitional Kindergarten (TK) had positive effects on children entering kindergarten. The greatest effect found was on student literacy and pre-literacy skills. Children who attended TK were significantly better at identifying letters and words in kindergarten than children who had not attended TK, using the Woodcock-Johnson Letter-Word Identification subtest. This gain was equal to approximately five months of learning. In addition, TK students also had a greater understanding the sounds of letters and syllables, using the Clinical Evaluation of Language Fundamentals phonological awareness measure. This gain was equal to three months of learning.

TK students also were significantly better on mathematics knowledge and skills than children who had not attended TK. Students in TK showed a greater knowledge of basic mathematical concepts and symbols, and stronger mathematical problem-solving skills such as counting, basic mathematical operations, and word problems, as measured by the Woodcock-Johnson Quantitative Concepts and Applied Problems subtests.

TK showed a small but significant influence on students’ executive functioning skills, including the ability to regulate their behavior, remember rules, and think flexibly—skills that support a solid foundation for school achievement as measured by the Social Skills Improvement System. No significant effects were found on social-emotional or behavior skills.

The study’s authors concluded that TK students were more prepared for kindergarten than students who did not attend TK. The influence of a year of TK provided in a school setting by a qualified teacher using an appropriate curriculum appears to better prepare children for kindergarten than students without a comparable early education experience.

Future analyses will examine the relationship between instructional content and student outcomes more directly to explore which practices may be driving these positive outcomes.

For more information, please see <http://tkstudy.airprojects.org/>. *



Yuba County: Making it work, despite the odds

Cynthia Sodari, Executive Director—First 5 Yuba

Yuba County is nestled on a beautiful stretch of northern California real estate in an area rich with lush agricultural crops and expansive recreational opportunities. Even with such great features, Yuba County is also a community with a poor showing on health and economics rankings, creating great challenges to raising healthy children. The Children and Families Commission has risen to the challenge of bringing healthier opportunities to area families, but sometimes it feels like each accomplishment is merely a drop in the bucket of what needs to be done.

One of the most successful investments the Commission has made is the creation of a mobile dental clinic for elementary students of Marysville Joint Unified School District. Through its partnership with a local health clinic, the district is able to provide pediatric preventive, diagnostic, and basic dental services to many of its elementary school campuses. Last year, the mobile clinic served over 1,000 children whose parents said their child would not have received dental treatment if the mobile dental clinic was not available. It is staffed by one of only two pediatric providers in the county, including an outreach coordinator who partners with the public health department to provide all preschool and kindergarten students a special interactive oral health presentation.



The Commission also partners with the Salvation Army's Depot Family Crisis Center to help hundreds of young children who may otherwise be taken from their home due to neglect or abuse. Services include quality child care and a treatment program geared specifically

toward children who have parents in the program who are seeking treatment. The 100-year-old drug free facility serves 25 children at a time and includes 11 family rooms, a shared kitchen, dining area, and living room. The facility is instrumental in serving entire families facing their greatest time of need. Many of its volunteers and employees are program graduates, and the recidivism rate within the past five years has been less than five percent. This program's success has truly been a community effort due to the level of collaboration among the local agencies to support its mission.



More recently, the Commission conducted a survey to gain a better understanding of community needs and to assess the current systems in place for children. They determined a lack of knowledge about available services and limited accessibility of care were underlying issues preventing most parents in Yuba County from getting their children vital early intervention services. As a result, the Commission strategically partnered with existing and core community programs to strengthen the county's capacity in serving children in a coordinated effort focused on increasing early development screenings. Through an innovative partnership with public health, the Commission has been instrumental in planning a seamless entry and support system for all families with young children. The Commission is looking forward to the county's Help Me Grow affiliation to strengthen community partnerships and build local continuous quality improvement standards in order to maintain the system's accessibility.

Certainly, state rankings can paint grim pictures for those counties ranking at the bottom of the list. Nevertheless, it is forums and commissions like those described here that give interested readers a better perspective of the local contributions and tireless efforts to one day transform those drops in the bucket to a steady flow of support. ✨

Statewide Support for Effective Adult-Child Interactions

Because effective adult-child interactions make a difference in children's learning and development, First 5 California (F5CA) is committed to building knowledge, skills, and improvements by offering statewide training, resources, and coach supports. Between February and May 2016, F5CA sponsored a week-long series of Classroom Assessment Scoring System® (CLASS®) trainings at regional locations, each location offering five different training options. Participants who satisfied the pre-requisite requirements could attend trainer certification for the Infant, Toddler, and PreK CLASS tools, instructor certification for the Making the Most of Classroom Instruction™, and one-day training on coaching strategies on how to provide feedback to help teachers improve instruction and interactions. More than 220 individuals participated in one or more of the trainings, with participants attending from every First 5 IMPACT Hub region. Thank you to our hosts: Brandman University (Riverside, Walnut Creek, and Irvine), Fresno

Pacific University (Merced), and the Glenn County Office of Education (Willows) for hosting these training weeks.

In addition to the training, F5CA is funding ten counties to pilot implementation of myTeachstone™ in nearly 400 family child care homes and early childhood centers. This effort is supporting more than 900 early childhood educators to improve quality. MyTeachstone is an online subscription service designed for teachers, coaches, observers, and administrators that combines CLASS observation data and professional development resources, includes a robust multi-media professional development library, and enables coaches and administrators to recommend data-driven professional development resources. The ten counties (Contra Costa, Madera, Marin, Napa, Placer, Riverside, Santa Clara, Sonoma, Tulare, and Ventura) applied to participate and will have access to these F5CA-funded subscriptions through June 2017.*



First 5 IMPACT and California QRIS Consortium Meeting

Statewide efforts to strengthen the early learning system and improve the quality of sites and are moving ahead through First 5 IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive). All 58 counties are progressing with their plans, with the eventual goal of serving over 5,200 sites across the state. Forty-two of the 49 High Quality Action Plans have been approved, with the remainder to be approved within the next few weeks. Consortia are implementing a wide variety of strategies to engage and support early learning providers, along with the families they serve, and ultimately improve outcomes for children.

First 5 California applied on behalf of California and was accepted as a participating state in the Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement in Family Child Care peer learning group. This group is supported by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance and the BUILD Initiative. As part of First 5 IMPACT technical assistance, a California team, consisting of both county representatives and state agency staff, will participate in a series of webinars and an in-person meeting to learn about and share the most current and effective strategies in working with family child care providers.

Building on First 5 IMPACT and the broader QRIS movement in California, First 5 California and the California Department of Education—Early Education and Support Division jointly hosted the first meeting of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (CA-QRIS) Consortium on March 17. The CA-QRIS Consortium includes every county in the state and was attended by individual counties, as well as regional representatives. Participants represented a variety of agencies, including local First 5 commissions and county offices of education, receiving funding from First 5 IMPACT, the California State Preschool Program QRIS Block Grant, and/or the Infant/Toddler QRIS Block Grant.

The orientation meeting included 84 attendees from 39 counties across the state and was geared toward counties relatively new to QRIS implementation. Agenda topics included an overview and history of QRIS in California, as well as detailed information pertaining to the components of the CA-QRIS—the Rating Matrix, Implementation Guide, Assessor Management System, and Continuous Quality Improvement Pathways. In



addition, the day included a panel discussion with county leaders from Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge consortia who addressed lessons learned and held a question-and-answer session.

At the full CA-QRIS Consortium meeting, participants consisted of 143 attendees from 45 counties and included a range of discussion topics and activities. The day began on a positive note with a video message from Libby Doggett, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Early Learning, U.S. Department of Education and Linda K. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Early Childhood Development, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Secretaries highlighted California's hard work and big successes throughout the period of the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant, including exceeding the targeted number of participating sites, increasing the number of children receiving developmental screenings, creating an online hub for professional development (California Early Childhood Online), and expanding the CA-QRIS by achieving full-state participation in QRIS. California was recognized as being a model for implementing QRIS in a large and diverse state.

The next meeting of the CA-QRIS Consortium will take place at the Yolo County Office of Education on June 29, 2016. *

Talk. Read. Sing.® Campaign

On March 19, building on the success of the “How I Really Got Here” series, new First 5 California television ads aired featuring Los Angeles Police Department Sergeant Emada Tingirides, fondly known in her community as Sgt. T. The ads were filmed on location in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles County. The following excerpt from *Los Angeles Magazine’s* September 16, 2015, issue does a good job of describing who she is professionally and what she values. The article was printed after Sgt. T was named one of the “10 most inspirational women of 2015” in Los Angeles:

As a child, Emada Tingirides used to play on Belhaven Avenue in Watts. Now she patrols the housing project on that street and two others nearby. The LAPD sergeant oversees the department’s Community Safety Partnership (CSP), an elite 57 officer unit praised for making life not just safer but better for the nearly 10,000 residents it serves. “There wasn’t a blueprint,” says Tingirides, who is developing the CSP squad’s big-picture policing model, with backing from LAPD Chief Charlie Beck. “The average patrol officer’s not going to worry about socioeconomic development. That’s not his mission. But I go about everything with that in mind.”

Sgt. T, who attributes her success in life to the three strong women in her family who raised her, will soon



be featured in an hour-long segment of the national television program “Dateline.”

The Sgt. T radio and TV ads premiered on April 18.

On the radio side of the campaign, First 5 California continues to partner with iHeart Radio stations via in-depth radio interviews to discuss the *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign and the importance of early brain development through verbal engagement with young children during their earliest months and years of life.

On March 25, Chief Deputy Director Diane Levin returned to Universal Hollywood, where she recorded the second in a series of radio PSAs with celebrity Mario Lopez, host of the EXTRA television show and the radio program “ON with Mario Lopez.” The interview has aired repeatedly on iHeartRadio stations across California as part of the *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign.



Another high-profile and exciting promotion of the campaign recently took place. On May 25, First 5 California’s *Talk. Read. Sing.*® campaign and a national book donation program was featured on the **Dr. Oz Show** and included State Commission Chair George Halvorson. First 5 California, UPS, and the National WIC Association partnered with the Dr. Oz Show to encourage people across the country to donate new and gently used books to their local participating UPS store. UPS will deliver the books to the participating WIC centers who will in turn hand out these wonderful donations to families with children ages 0 to 5. ✨

April Commission Meeting Highlights

The most recent meeting of the First 5 California Commission took place in Sacramento on April 28, 2016. The Commission and staff welcomed its two newest Commissioners: Lupe Jaime and Shana Hazan. Commissioner Jaime is the Director of Early Care and Education at the Fresno County Office of Education. Commissioner Hazan is the Senior Director of Resource Development at Jewish Family Service of San Diego. Both members bring a wealth of relevant knowledge and experience to the Commission.

During the meeting, the Commission took action on several items, including Commission Advisory Committee assignments, and the approval of guidelines for data entry and preparation of the Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016-17.

Informational items included a presentation on the state's new K-12 assessment system. Glen Price, Chief Deputy Superintendent from the California Department of Education, gave a presentation on results from the 2015 third-grade assessment, featuring data highlighting the achievement gap for children of color, English-language learners, and children living in poverty. The Commission discussed the relevance of these findings to the work of First 5 California and the county commissions, as well as that of other stakeholder groups and organizations focusing on early childhood education. Commissioners asked for a follow-up discussion at the July Commission meeting to brainstorm ways the early learning community can collectively and proactively work to address these alarming results.

Additionally, staff provided an overview and update on the development of First 5 California's Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot. To inform the focus of the Pilot, First 5 California developed a survey to capture a scan of current DLL program practices and determine areas that respondents agreed were important to

consider in developing the Pilot. Key themes emerged from the survey analysis, including professional development, family engagement strategies, evaluation of best practices and teaching strategies, evaluation of curriculum, and appropriate child and program assessment options. Staff will return to the Commission in July to formally request funding to conduct the Pilot, and will provide a more specific and comprehensive overview of Pilot content and timelines. A Request for Proposals for the Pilot will be released shortly thereafter.

Finally, the Commission was briefed on the final evaluation of the Child Signature Program (CSP). In summary, CSP 1 and 3 programs were a success, as evidenced by the more than 72,000 children served throughout the duration of the program, assessments of high quality for physical environment and teacher-child interactions, and improvements in child development. The evaluation revealed classrooms benefited at-risk children and families. As suggested by teachers' ratings with the Desired Results Developmental Profile assessment, children benefited particularly from participation in Quality Enhancement classrooms supported by Quality Essential Staff (early education experts, family support specialists, and mental health specialists). Collaboration among First 5 California, local evaluators, and program coordinators enabled data collection and reporting. Findings of the CSP evaluation support the utility of building and maintaining flexible, collaborative working relationships within an integrated early care and education system to effectively serve the state's children and families, especially those with high needs. First 5 IMPACT builds on the strengths of CSP. ✨