



January 23, 2020

ACTION ITEM

SUBJECT: KIT FOR NEW PARENTS CONTRACT EXTENSION

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 April 2019, the Commission authorized up to \$5 million to continue First 5 California's (F5CA) *Kit for New Parents* program from July 1, 2019, through June 30, 2020.

F5CA requests funding to extend distribution of the *Kit for New Parents* beginning July, 2020 through June 30, 2021. This additional 12-month extension will allow time to fully utilize existing *Kits*, while transitioning to a redesigned *Kit* in 2021.

The current *Kit* production agreement ends March 10, 2020. F5CA will extend the agreement with the current *Kit* production vendor through June 30, 2021. Current funding (authorized in 2019) will fund *Kit* production between March and June, 2020.

F5CA's long term goal is to redesign the *Kit for New Parents* for a new generation of parents. The new *Kit* will enable parents to receive the best *Kit* for their circumstances, and access important resources using their smart phones and other connected devices. F5CA anticipates bringing a redesign proposal before the Commission at the April meeting, based on the framework below:

- A redesigned *Kit for New Parents* for distribution to parents of children ages 0 to 5.
- An enhanced *Kit for New Parents* targeted toward low-income parents of children ages 0 to 3. In addition to parent education materials, this *Kit* may contain newborn critical items such as diapers and wipes to address baby hygiene needs.

- A *Kit for New Parents* digital app and web interface to expand parent access to information about the education, health, and well-being of their children ages 0 to 5.

The goal is to release the new *Kit* in 2021, and distribute it through 2023. The total 16-month extension provides a buffer to prevent an interruption in *Kit* availability.

RECOMMENDATION

F5CA staff recommends the Commission approve up to \$5 million to fund continued distribution of the *Kit for New Parents* through June 2021.

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, a reliable resource to guide parents through their child’s first five years. With over 5.3 million *Kits* distributed since its release, the *Kit* has touched more hands than any other F5CA resource. Currently, the *Kit* is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

In FY 18–19, F5CA distributed 176,204 *Kits*, including 90,840 shipped to hospitals and clinics, and 6,017 shipped to county WIC Offices. Individual *Kit* orders processed via F5CA’s *Kit* ordering page totaled 5,669. In addition, *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, foster care services, preschools, correctional facilities, community colleges, and the military.

The current *Kit* has a per unit cost of \$19.40, and contains the following components:

- *Parent Guide*
- *What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* book
- *Numbers* bilingual baby board book
- Poison Control brochure and magnet
- EDD Paid Family Leave brochure
- WIC mobile website flyer
- Reusable tote bag with *Talk. Read. Sing.*® messaging

Since January 2018, F5CA also has funded a diaper distribution program. Originally named the Diaper Pilot, the program has distributed 4,733 diaper kits to low-income families to address the issue of diaper need in the following participating counties: Alameda, Amador, Contra Costa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Solano.

The kits contain 100 diapers and 200 baby wipes at a cost of \$16 per unit. The diaper box, diapers, and wipes container are designed with messaging to encourage parents to use diaper time to talk, read, and sing to their baby to help stimulate brain development in their young children. F5CA plans to launch the program statewide through distribution of the enhanced *Kit*.

To facilitate a comprehensive *Kit* redesign, F5CA will conduct focus groups including parents and county partners to provide feedback on the current *Kit*, and specifically the needs of hard-to-reach and low-income parents when they bring home their newborn. The results will help provide F5CA a plan to develop and produce the redesigned *Kit*.

Focus groups will discuss three possible *Kit* designs:

1. A Universal *Kit* will target parents of children ages 0 to 5. This *Kit* would contain information on the care, health, and education of young children. This refreshed *Kit* will be distributed to parents, caregivers, and organizations serving this population in California.
2. An Enhanced *Kit* would target low-income children ages 0 to 3 as part of a baby hygiene program. *Kits* would include components of the universal *Kit*, as well as diapers and wipes.
3. A *Kit for New Parents* app would target parents of children ages 0 to 5. This app could provide a digital path for parents to access critical information about the education, health, and care of their young children. The goal is to determine which items of the existing *Kit* would be more useful and accessible to parents in digital format, as opposed to the current physical books and pamphlets. Additionally, an app would allow useful tools to be made available to new parents through their smart phones, web browsers, and other media devices. All versions of the revised *Kit* would include instructions to access and use the app.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

In April 2019, the Commission authorized up to \$5 million to continue *Kit* production and distribution.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

The request of \$5 million from the Education account will fund continued production and distribution of the current *Kit for New Parents* through June 30, 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

None.