



Executive Director Report – May 9, 2022

This report provides an update about project work and key activities staff have engaged in since the January 2022 Commission Meeting framed by the Strategic Priority Areas. It includes relevant highlights, rather than a summary of all staff work.

Priority Area I: Child Health

GOAL: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.
Since the prior Commission meeting, First 5 California (F5CA) has contributed to a vision of a future in which all young children achieve optimal health through the following investments and activities:

1. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)

The UCLA Center for Health Policy Research continues work under its current contract with F5CA for CHIS (August 2021—June 2023). F5CA funding enables data collection with the CHIS Child Questionnaire and making data available to the public through two online platforms (AskCHIS and AskCHIS Neighborhood Edition). UCLA and the Public Health Institute are developing a policy brief on effects of the COVID-19 pandemic for families with young children. Additionally, a research memorandum will summarize preliminary data from new questions on paid family leave. Staff participated in an exploratory work group on the utility and feasibility of collecting information via CHIS for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).

2. Emergency Supplies Program

F5CA and Supplybank.Org completed its second program iteration in December 2021 by distributing emergency supplies statewide to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Per direction from the F5CA Commission, this investment prioritized the distribution of resources to the most vulnerable communities based on data from the Healthy Places Index (HPI).

Through this contract, SupplyBank.Org designed a program to address local needs through a survey for county commissions and in consultation with F5CA and the First 5 Association. This process had four steps: (1) assess the need for emergency supplies as a state, (2) quantify the need into a budget, (3) build an implementation and coordination plan, and (4) distribute resources and assess program success.

Additionally, through SupplyBank.Org's ability to leverage partnerships, county commissions were provided more than 44 million units of items to help keep communities safe. As informed by the needs assessment, and a continued focus to reduce community spread of the COVID-19 virus, supply deliveries included the following items:

- 64,896 Bottles of Hard Surface Disinfectant (32 oz.)
- 5,563,200 Children's 3-Ply Masks
- 15,671,200 Disinfectant Wipes
- 6,639,000 Hand Gloves
- 4,614,794 Diapers
- 11,526,200 Baby Wipes
- 65,496 Bottles of Hand Sanitizer (32 oz.)
- 500,160 Adult 3-ply masks
- 395,640 N95 Masks
- 61,680 Isolation Gowns
- 21,000 Cloth Masks
- 1,000 KN95 Masks

Following the final distribution of resources, SupplyBank.Org collected survey responses from 47 county commissions. Respondents categorized the distribution of resources by the number of families or childcare providers served in each ZIP code. To highlight the prioritization of communities living in ZIP codes with a lower HPI score, the data was broken into four quartiles based on their HPI score.

This includes the following highlights:

- 14,000+ families served in ZIP codes with an HPI score below 50 (65% total families served)
- 10,500+ childcare providers served in ZIP codes with an HPI score below 50 (69% total childcare providers served)

These survey results demonstrate the effort county commissions made to ensure essential supplies were provided to the children, families, and childcare providers who needed them the most during the pandemic. The most disadvantaged families and childcare providers received the bulk of supplies: 65% of families and 69% of providers were in HPI quartiles 1 and 2.

For additional information, please reference the Emergency Supplies Program Final Report in Attachment A-1.

Priority Area II: Child Development

GOAL: All Children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

1. IMPACT 2020

Racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion work continued to be a greater focus during the past fiscal year. With racial and social justice on our collective minds and hearts in the weeks and months following the death of George Floyd, addressing inequities was elevated as a priority in California.

At the state level, multiple efforts to address inequities within our quality system are underway. In response to a call for an equity audit in the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (MPELC) and feedback from the field, F5CA has engaged in contracted work with School Readiness Consulting. This work will identify system inequities and inform quality system reforms through focus groups with participating and non-participating early learning and care (ELC) providers and parents, and partner surveys. F5CA anticipates recommendations for Quality Counts California (QCC) system changes to be complete near the end of the 2022 calendar year. Related to equity, to better understand and improve effective interactions in diverse populations of children and teachers, F5CA has partnered with Teachstone® to refine and develop Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) 2.0 and Environmental Scales. The goals of this new approach to the CLASS measure are to improve ways teachers support diversity in their classrooms in a variety of program models. F5CA staff provided feedback during development of revised tools, and support for observers and participating programs. Selected observers will begin pilot observations in May 2022.

In the QCC Annual Performance Report for FY 2020–21, many counties reported work at the regional and county levels to understand and address racism, implicit bias, equity in access to services and access to quality improvement support by the workforce, Dual Language Learner/Multilingual Language Learner engagement, inclusion, and other topics in local communities. Most counties have embedded aspects of racial equity, diversity and inclusion work into local strategic plans, governance, and quality improvement delivery and are thoughtfully reflecting on operations and practices and how to better elevate marginalized voices. Several counties referenced developing advisory committees and teams to review data, identify opportunities for change, and develop collaborative action plans. In addition to equity-focused work, F5CA has executed seven Shared Services Alliance (SSA) pilots in alignment with the MPELC. SSA provides business and pedagogical supports for ELC providers, prioritizing family child care providers and other private sites not receiving state or federal funds. A major part of the SSA pilot is an extensive evaluation project that will take place to inform the effectiveness of the pilot in supporting ELC workforce and providers.

2. Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot

Representatives from the 16 DLL Pilot counties have participated in monthly DLL communities of practice (CoP) since April 2021. The CoPs are a forum for counties to hear from DLL experts, learn from one another about implementation successes, offer feedback to help overcome challenges for implementing DLL professional development, and discuss how to integrate a focus on DLLs into their QCC efforts. The QCC Regional Hub leads began participating in the CoPs in January 2022 to begin considering how counties and regions can more intentionally integrate DLL best practices and county successes into future QCC efforts.

Over the past several months, DLL Pilot counties engaged with state and national DLL experts and California ELC leaders, and heard presentations about local activities related to:

- Embedding DLL strategies in local QCC infrastructure (January 2022)
- How to reach family child care and family, friend, and neighbor care providers (February 2022)
- Strengthening articulation and alignment between early childhood and K-12 systems (March and April 2022).

Following the CoPs, a summary of the discussion and recommended resources were shared with the public through Early Edge's monthly blog posts, available at <https://earlyedgecalifornia.org/first-5-california-dll-pilot>.

Priority Area III: Family Functioning

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

F5CA has progressed in its efforts to ensure all families have equitable access to information, resources, services, and programs designed to optimize their children's learning, health, and overall well-being through the following programs and activities:

1. Refugee Family Support

In October 2021, the Commission approved a \$3 million investment over one year to help support refugee families with children birth through age five resettling in counties across California. Staff released a competitive Request for Application (RFA) on March 23, 2022, followed by an informational webinar on April 4, 2022. Only First 5 county commissions are eligible to apply, and applicants are required to partner with local refugee-serving organizations and other agencies to leverage

existing resources and fulfill the goals of the grant. Multiple counties are encouraged to submit a single application to support services across county lines.

Priorities for this funding include:

- Supporting socio-cultural adjustment and system navigation: Access to translation, healthcare, mental health, basic needs, transportation, and other services that benefit children ages 0 to 5 and their families.
- Providing short-term emergency childcare: Refugee families with children birth through age five may receive a time-limited voucher to assist with emergency child care costs for up to six months or until the child is successfully transitioned into long-term childcare (whichever is sooner). Eligibility may be extended for an additional six months at the grantee's discretion.
- Offering emergency housing: Grantees may use up to 25% of the overall budget for emergency housing and the F5CA grant must be the funding of last resort.

Applications are due May 20, 2022. Between 5 and 10 grants will be awarded through a competitive process. Grantees will be notified by June 10, 2022, and activities will take place between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.

2. Home Visiting

There are three significant updates in home visiting:

- a. *Home Visiting Workforce Policy Recommendations*. Child Trends released findings and policy recommendations from their Home Visiting Workforce Study on January 19, 2022. The policy recommendations and supporting evidence can be found on the F5CA Website at [First 5 California Home Visiting Workforce Study - Child Trends](#). Recommendations include, but are not limited to:
 - Increasing awareness of home visiting as a profession
 - Increasing home visitors' access to trainings on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as supporting the mental health and well-being of the workforce
 - Adopting a core set of cross-model home visiting competencies for home visitors and supervisors
 - Promoting cross-service coordination for systems integration through shared training, integrating the home visiting workforce into the career lattice and workforce registry, and other opportunities

Staff are discussing F5CA's role in moving these recommendations forward with the First 5 Association, and leaders from the Departments of Social Services and Public Health.

- b. *County Home Visiting Coordination*: One of the effects of COVID-19 was an inability for some counties to convene local leaders and/or carry out planned home visiting coordination activities, disrupting most counties' ability to fully expend their contracts by June 2022. Most counties (40 of 50 counties) participating in the home visiting coordination funding opportunity chose to extend their contracts with F5CA for an additional year (through June 2023) to continue collaborating with home visiting and family support partners to coordinate intake and referral, data collection, and other activities, and embed home visiting into other child-and family-serving systems.
- c. *Home Visiting Coordination Policy Recommendations*: In May 2022, contractors from James Bell Associates and Johns Hopkins University, who provided technical assistance to counties engaged in home visiting coordination efforts over the past 18 months, will release policy recommendations from their work in May 2022. Culminating recommendations are a result of data collected from several surveys of county commissions and other local home visiting program implementers, notes from technical assistance sessions, interviews with policy leaders, and other data gathering opportunities. They focus on specific ways California can improve interagency coordination at the state level to support local county implementation, reduce duplication of effort, and remove barriers to families across programs and systems.

3. Kick It California (a.k.a. California Smokers' Helpline)

F5CA funds the University of California San Diego (UCSD) to provide tobacco cessation services and a helpline focused on the First 5 population. During the first half of fiscal year 2021–22, UCSD completed rebranding activities for Kick It California (KIC), including the launch of the new website, kickitca.org; reviewing and updating 41 First 5 educational materials; and the F5CA and parent websites. To increase awareness and promote referrals for services, the helpline created promotional campaigns through Instagram and Facebook for the First 5 audience. Outreach and promotion of helpline services was also directed to professionals who can refer tobacco users from the focus population. Promotional materials for inclusion with the *Kit for New Parents* was also developed. The helpline provided the following cessation services:

- 1,416 intakes were completed
- 1,465 Quit Kits were mailed
- 820 clients received counseling
- 937 clients received a two-week supply of Nicotine Replacement Therapy

KIC continues to explore alternative communication modalities to reach tobacco users and inform the public about the dangers of secondhand smoke and vaping to young children.

3. Media and Public Relations

In October 2021, Rescue Agency was awarded the contract to develop and manage new public education and outreach, and public relations campaigns to support F5CA's vision of ensuring all children in California receive the best start in life and thrive. Existing ad creative from the previous *Talk.Read.Sing.*® campaign went live in February 2022 to serve as a bridge campaign while new formative research is conducted to help guide and inform a new campaign direction highlighting safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments (SSNREs) and toxic stress, which will go live in fall 2022. Additionally, new content is being published on the F5CA parent website and social media platforms, introducing families and caregivers to the SSNRE concepts ahead of the new campaign reveal.

4. Kit for New Parents

Following a competitive bid process, F5CA awarded an agreement for Request for Proposal No. CFF 7610, *Kit for New Parents* Evaluation, to American Institutes for Research in the amount of \$1,940,373. Evaluation of the *Kit* and its impact is critical to ensuring current and future investments are informed by research and evaluation findings that are valid, credible, and relevant. As one of the longest-running investments by the F5CA Commission, the *Kit* promotes parental education on topics of child health and family functioning. Since 2001, F5CA has distributed 5.4 million *Kits* to parents of young children.

Kit evaluation findings will provide information on whether and how the *Kit*:

- Reaches its intended populations
- Acts as a lever to mitigate family stressors to improve family health and well-being
- Impacts parent/caregiver knowledge and behaviors

In addition, findings from this evaluation will be used to improve culturally and linguistically responsive *Kit* content and will complement focus group feedback received from parents and county partners in 2020. Currently, the *Kit* is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. The basic *Kit* contains a *Parent Guide, What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick* soft-cover book, *Numbers* bilingual baby board book, *Talk.Read.Sing.*® book, *Poison Control* brochure and magnet, adult cloth face covering, and a baby gum massager.

State Legislative Update

Sponsored Legislation

F5CA is proud to be co-sponsoring two pieces of legislation in the 2022 legislative session:

SB 976 (Leyva), co-sponsored by F5CA, the Child Care Resource Center, EveryChild California, and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, would establish universal preschool in California, ensuring that parents have the option to send their children to a public elementary school provider or a community-based provider to benefit from universal transitional kindergarten. This bill not only provides parents with the logistical flexibility they require, but it also allows them to choose a provider that fits in with their unique cultural and linguistic needs. Furthermore, SB 976 promotes educational continuity for children and much-needed stability for licensed community-based providers and their employees, most of whom are women of color. Senator Leyva and the sponsors are also pursuing a budget request to fund the first year of a phased-in implementation of Universal Preschool through the 2022–23 budget.

SB 951 (Durazo), co-sponsored by F5CA, the California Work & Family Coalition, Legal Aid at Work, and UNITE-LA, would increase the wage replacement rate for Paid Family Leave and the first 16 weeks of State Disability Insurance to 90 percent of lower-wage workers' regular wages, ensuring that workers with low wages can afford to take time off to bond with a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or recover from a serious illness. This is an issue F5CA has championed for many years and is in line with the recommendations of the Governor's Paid Family Leave Task Force and the MPELC. Senator Durazo and the sponsors are also pursuing a joint budget strategy to fund this increase through the 2022–23 budget.

A full list of priority legislation is in attachment A-2.

Budget Priorities

Early Care and Education (ECE)

In alignment with the ECE Coalition's priorities, F5CA requests the following budget actions:

- Increasing Child Care Provider Wages:

\$316 million Proposition 98 funds and \$1.03 billion General Fund & American Rescue Plan Act funds. This money will fund a 20 percent rate increase on top of the 2018 RMR Survey for state subsidized programs and \$50 million for federally funded Head Start programs to account for four years of minimum wage increases and 7

percent inflation in 2021.

- **Waiving Family Fees and Increasing Access:**

\$823.7 million for 36,000 child care spaces. F5CA supports the Governor's addition of 36,000 spaces toward the goal of an additional 200,000 by 2025–26 with the adoption of rate increases and a waiving of family fees to support these additional spaces.

- **Infrastructure Grants:**

\$300 million of funding support for the Child Care and Development Infrastructure Grant Program. This investment will ensure a targeted approach directed to communities and families with the greatest need with multi-year investment priorities.

\$10 million for the Department of Housing and Community Development to implement a study and provide start-up funding for a grant program that supports gap financing for child care centers and family child care housing units that are co-located with affordable housing projects.

- **Workforce Development Grants:**

\$250 million for restoration and expansion of the Early Learning and Care Workforce Development Grants Program.

- **COVID Fallout Protections:**

F5CA is also requesting the continuance of several COVID-19 pandemic policies into 2022–23. To ensure child care providers can keep their doors open during a future COVID-19 surge, they need to be “held harmless” for attendance drops, and additional paid COVID-19 sick days.

Additionally, several items in the 2021–22 budget were not distributed until later than anticipated in the current budget year. F5CA is recommending these dollars are carried over to next year to allow community contractors and providers to exhaust the funds.

Paid Family Leave

As referenced in the above Sponsored Legislation section, F5CA, in partnership with the California Work and Family Coalition, is requesting an increase in the wage replacement rate for Paid Family Leave and the first 16 weeks of State Disability Insurance, to 90 percent of a low-wage worker’s income, be established through the 2022–23 budget.

Early Literacy

F5CA is supportive of the \$10 million in general funds proposed in the 2022–23 budget for early literacy and book distribution for early childhood. As staff will discuss at the Commission’s May meeting, F5CA is proposing to match this investment as part of a partnership with the California Department of Public Health to provide multilingual books and early literacy programming for families with young children in collaboration with other state programs such as home visiting, child care, and foster care.

California Child Tax Credit

F5CA, in partnership with the CalEITC Coalition, is advocating for a one-time California Child Tax Credit payment to California families. Specifically, this request is for a one-time payment of \$2,000 to families for each qualifying child. This proposal would target families who earned less than \$30,000 in 2021, reaching two million California children who may be at risk of, or are already experiencing, poverty.

Home Visiting

F5CA is supportive of the proposed \$50 million in the 2022–23 budget to increase funding for home visiting programs. F5CA, in partnership with the First 5 Association and First 5 LA, is advocating for this funding to be used to expand the California Home Visiting Program and Black Infant Health Program and ensure flexibility in the home visiting models.

Continuous Medi-Cal Eligibility 0 to 5

F5CA, in partnership with the First 5 Association, is advocating for continuous coverage for all infants in the Medi-Cal program until their fifth birthday, ensuring they have uninterrupted access to needed medical care.

Personnel Update

New Hires

- Richard Diaz, Education and Research Evaluation Consultant, Retired Annuitant for the Research and Evaluation Office joined F5CA on February 1, 2022. Richard has a PhD in education and anthropology and has worked with the California Department of Education and other major organizations to create data transparency projects with complex data sets and applied meta-analysis to meet the goals of the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- Jackie Wong was appointed as Executive Director on March 14, 2022. Previously, as F5CA’s Chief Deputy Director, Jackie helped the organization transition toward its new North Star to create safe, stable, nurturing, relationships and environments for

California children and families. She has decades of public service to California, including her time at California State Legislature, the End Child Poverty campaign, the National Center for Youth Law, CSU Sacramento in the School Nurse Credential Program, and her continued service on the Washington Unified School Board.

- Sara Bachez, Deputy Director of the External and Governmental Affairs Office (EGAO) will join F5CA on May 9, 2022. Sara has served as the Chief Governmental Relations Officer for the California Association of School Business Officials since 2015. She has represented over 24,000 school business officials on federal and state matters impacting public education. She served as a Legislative Advocate for the Association of California School Administrators. Sara was a legislative fellow for Senator Sheila Kuehl and then served for five years as a budget consultant for the Assembly Budget Committee where she administered \$15 Billion in state General Fund expenditures for California's higher education systems, the California Student Aid Commission, childcare and development programs, and the California Employment and Development Department.

Promotions

- Gretchen Williams, Research Data Specialist III in the Research and Evaluation Office. Gretchen has worked for F5CA for over nine years and is responsible for development of proposals related to data systems, data analysis, program evaluation, and contracted research or evaluation.

Resignations

- David Dodds, Deputy Director of the Program, Innovation, and Evaluation Division has accepted a promotion with the California Department of Public Health. David worked for over a decade at F5CA and his work contributed to improving the lives of young children and families through the development of F5CA's Strategic Plan, North Star Statement and Audacious Goal, creating the QCC common data file, CHIS, DLL Pilot, IMPACT, and much more.
- Camille Maben retired in March 2022. Camille has served F5CA as Executive Director for the past decade. Camille's countless contributions and leadership have made a difference in the lives of millions of California's youngest children, parents, educators, and caregivers by delivering resources, services, and programs such as *Talk.Read.Sing.*®

Personnel Requests in Progress

F5CA staff are currently processing the following:

- A final offer has been made to a candidate for the Fiscal Services Office Staff Services Manager I. F5CA's goal is to have the incumbent start June 1, 2022.

- The Associate Governmental Program Analyst position for the EGAO is being re-advertised soon, as the first applicant pool was unsuccessful.
- Interviews are being scheduled for the vacant Chief Deputy Director position.
- As of April 25, 2022, the Chief Counsel advertisement is closed with no applicants. Next steps are being determined.
- An offer to a candidate for the Research Scientist II position in the Research and Evaluation Office is expected to be made soon.
- As of April 22, 2022, the package for the Health Program Specialist II in the Prevention, Equity, and Opportunity Office has been submitted to Department of General Services for review.