



Executive Director Report – July 28, 2022

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

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

Efforts to address inequities within Quality Counts California (QCC) are continuing through the equity audit, as called for in the Master Plan for Early Learning and Care (MPELC). Through leadership and funding from First 5 California (F5CA), a contract with School Readiness Consulting is supporting the facilitation of focus groups and partner surveys. Extensive outreach to participating and non-participating early learning and care (ELC) providers and parents will identify system inequities and issues of access. The 42 planned focus groups will represent all regions of the state, including tribal lands, and will include ELC teachers; administrators; Family, Friend, and Neighbor and Family Child Care providers; and parents and families.

In partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the process for identifying focus group facilitators is in development. Facilitators will be selected based on a set of co-developed qualifications with the goal of representing local communities and the diversity of focus group participants. Focus groups will be conducted in up to six languages, with translation into additional languages, as needed.

Surveys will be conducted in up to eight languages in both electronic and paper formats to gather data about current stakeholder experiences, as well as opportunities for enhancing equity for those already within the QCC system and those who might potentially benefit from QCC quality supports and resources. Surveys will be tailored for six different audiences, including families; ELC teachers; administrators; Family, Friend, and Neighbor providers; Family Child Care providers; and other ELC stakeholders and partners.

School Readiness Consulting will analyze data from the focus groups and surveys and work with F5CA, CDE, and CDSS to create a final report with recommendations

with actionable, stakeholder-oriented findings, takeaways, and recommendations. Final recommendations are expected to be complete by early 2023.

2. Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot

On June 17, the DLL Pilot hosted a Policy Summit to celebrate the work accomplished throughout the Pilot and the corresponding Community of Practice sessions. The DLL Pilot ended June 30, 2022.

The DLL Pilot was a historic \$20 million investment by F5CA to understand effective, scalable, and sustainable DLL practices in diverse early learning and care settings. The summit uplifted bright spots and exemplary strategies to support DLLs and their families and provided a forum to recognize continued needs related to the implementation of DLL-focused recommendations for the MPELC and to build knowledge of and support for DLL-focused policies. Reports from the study, including the final Summary of Study Findings, are available at <https://californiadllstudy.org/reports>.

Priority Area III: Family Functioning

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

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 on March 23, 2022, and awarded grants to the following six counties: Fresno, Los Angeles, Placer, Sacramento, San Diego, and Santa Clara.

Each applicant described how they intended to partner with local refugee-serving organizations and other agencies to leverage existing resources and fulfill the goals of the grant. 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.

Grants will begin on September 1, 2022, and be implemented over a 12-month period.

2. Home Visiting

In June 2022, contractors from James Bell Associates (JBA) and Johns Hopkins University (JHU) released policy recommendations for moving toward a coordinated home visiting infrastructure in California. 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. The recommendations 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.

Priority Area IV: First 5 California Workplace Development and Culture

GOAL: Foster the creation and maintenance of a positive and productive work environment to support successful implementation of the plan.

1. Change Management

F5CA is working with the Arabella Group to achieve its strategic vision for the long-term sustainability of the organization, with an emphasis on increasing innovation, broadening the approach, centering equity, and engaging authentically with state and local partners. This work will include a roadmap for implementing F5CA's Strategic Plan and operationalizing the North Star/Audacious Goal's impact framework. The roadmap will include recommendations for developing optimal staffing structures to meet the organization's needs now and over time; integrating principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) into the organization; and managing any changes to the organization's culture that arise from the strategy. Recommendations will include an understanding of the current context in which F5CA is operating, including the new national and statewide funding environments resulting from the American Rescue Plan, as well as best practices among other early childhood agencies.

2. Leadership Development

F5CA has identified a need to build capacity for management through a continuous learning process. The transition of new leadership in executive positions make this an opportune time to establish new and strengthen existing leadership practices and structures while also building relationships. A staff survey administered in late 2021

identified key themes that could inform topics for leadership discussion and attention. Given these themes, F5CA staff would benefit from leadership capacity building to strengthen the culture, improve the workplace environment, and increase overall efficiency and effectiveness of the agency.

Through support from its contract with the Glen Price Group (GPG), the F5CA management team will engage in a series of improvement cycles that will focus on one leadership competency and will be designed using an implementation science approach (plan, do, study, act) over a period of approximately 3-5 months. The team will meet in leadership sessions every other week. GPG will document agreed upon practices to help codify emerging leadership practices.

3. Workplace Development and Culture (WDC) Workgroup

The WDC Workgroup was developed to begin planning out how to support the goals and values expressed in Section IV of the 2019 F5CA Strategic Plan. The WDC is a staff driven group that aims to not only provide suggestions to F5CA leadership for consideration, but also working to implement tangible activities to enhance workplace experience. Focus areas include continued equity work, enhancing communication methods, and expanding professional development and growth opportunities. The WDC continues to meet every other week to discuss and refine focus areas and develop strategies for meeting goals and outcomes.

State Legislative Update

Before July 1, 2022, the legislative policy committees meet and acted on policy bills before beginning their legislative summer recess. F5CA took positions and submitted formal letters of support on the following bills. An extensive report will be provided at the October Commission meeting to highlight the actions over the two-year legislative cycle.

Resilient Families and Communities

- **AB 1728 (Rivas, R): CalWORKS: Welfare-to-Work: exemptions** – This bill expands the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKS) welfare-to-work (WTW) exemptions to recipients who are pregnant, and for parents and other relatives who have primary responsibility for providing care to children from up to six months to up two years of age and under, as specified. This bill also requires a county to provide a notice of action (NOA) regarding an individual's exemption and how they may voluntarily participate in WTW activities, as specified, and further requires CDSS to issue implementation instructions to counties by April 1, 2023, as specified.
Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee

- **AB 2300 (Kalra): CalWORKs and CalFresh: work requirements** – This bill adds paid family leave (PFL) benefits to those benefits included as disability-based unearned income for the CalWORKs program and exempts a recipient receiving PFL from CalWORKs aid time limits. This bill also prohibits sanctions from being applied for failure or refusal to comply with CalWORKs work requirements if the anticipated work hours are unpredictable or certain labor law protections were violated, requires that good cause exists for a CalFresh recipient who has voluntarily quit a job or reduced work hours based on the same circumstances that prohibit a CalWORKs recipient from being sanctioned, and permits a person to requalify for CalWORKs benefits by attending school on a full-time basis.
Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee
- **AB 2466 (Cervantes): Foster children** – This bill prohibits a placing agency, when placing a foster child, from declining to place a child with a resource family because of a resource family’s parent’s actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and removes the term “hard to place children” from certain statutes.
Current location: Senate Floor
- **SB 860 (Rubio): Personal Income Tax Law: Young Child Tax Credit** – This bill allows qualified taxpayers who earned no income for the taxable year to receive the Young Child Tax Credit.
Current location: Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee
- **SB 951 (Durazo): Unemployment insurance: contribution rates: disability insurance: paid family leave: weekly benefit amount** – This bill Revises the formula for the computation of State Disability Insurance (SDI) and PFL benefits. Specifically, this bill extends the existing wage replacement rates for SDI and PFL (set to sunset on January 1, 2023) to January 1, 2025. The bill also revises the formula for computing SDI benefits (available for 52 weeks) for periods of disability commencing on or after January 1, 2025, and revises the formula for the computation of PFL benefits (available for eight weeks) for periods of disability commencing on or after January 1, 2025.
Current location: Assembly Appropriations Committee
- **SB 1058 (Durazo): Disability insurance: paid family leave: demographic data** – This bill requires the Employment Development Department to collect demographic data, including race and ethnicity data, for individuals who claim disability benefits under the SDI and PFL programs.
Current location: Assembly Appropriations Committee
- **SB 1083 (Skinner): CalWORKs: pregnancy and homeless assistance** – This bill makes various changes to the CalWORKs homeless assistance (HA) program, including expanding the number of days that a family can receive temporary shelter assistance, extending CalWORKs HA to families at risk of homelessness and facing eviction, removing HA program benefit limits for families that include a pregnant

person, and allowing a family who is receiving CalWORKs HA benefits to remain eligible for HA following termination of CalWORKs participation due to receiving income above the eligibility threshold.

Current location: Assembly Appropriations Committee

Child Health

- **AB 2402 (Rubio): Medi-Cal: continuous eligibility** – This bill Requires the Department of Health Care Services to seek federal authority to allow children to remain on Medi-Cal, the Medi-Cal Access Infants Program, and the County Children’s Health Initiative Programs until age five, without the need for a redetermination of eligibility, except in specified circumstances.

Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee

Early Learning

- **AB 92 (Reyes): Preschool and childcare and development services: family fees** – This bill requires the CDSS to convene a workgroup to develop a fee schedule for low-income families, exempts certain low-income families from family fees, and waives family fees for all families until October 31, 2023.

Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee

- **AB 2465 (Reyes): Pupil instruction: third-grade literacy: literacy grant program** – This bill requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction, upon appropriation of the Legislature, to administer the Family and Community Literacy: Supporting Literacy and Biliteracy in Schools, Families, and Communities Grant Program and the California Family Literacy Innovation Project to local educational agencies to support early literacy.

Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee

- **AB 2832 (Rivas, R): Whole Child Community Equity** – This bill establishes the End Racial and Economic Inequities in Childcare in California Initiative; b) requires the CDSS and CDE to develop the Whole Child Equity Framework (Framework) and Whole Child Community Equity Screening Tool (Equity Tool); c) requires CDSS and CDE to convene a workgroup to receive input for the development of the Framework, the Equity Tool, and recommended uses of the Equity Tool for early childhood investments and whole child resources to address racial and economic inequities for California’s youngest children.

Current location: Senate Appropriations Committee

- **SB 952 (Limon): Pupil instruction: dual language programs: Pathways to Success Grant Program** – This bill establishes the Expanding Culture and Language Learning in Schools Grant Program, administered by the CDE, to provide grants for the establishment of dual language immersion programs in preschools, elementary, and secondary schools.

Current location: Assembly Appropriations Committee

- **SB 976 (Leyva): Universal Preschool Act** – This bill establishes the “Universal Preschool Act”, to provide a universal high-quality, free, inclusive, mixed-delivery, and cost-effective preschool to all three- and four-year old children, regardless of family income.
Current location: Assembly Education Committee

Personnel Update

New Hires

- Amanda Lawrence, a Research Scientist II in the Research and Evaluation Office, joined F5CA on June 6. Amanda is a former California Transitional Kindergarten through grade 8 school counselor turned developmental scientist. She joins us from the policy research team of the Research and Evaluation Division of the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission.
- Susan Essman, a Staff Services Manager I in the Fiscal Services Office, joined F5CA permanently on June 6. Prior to this, Susan was a retired annuitant. Before coming to F5CA, she worked at the CDE in a variety of positions in the Fiscal and Administrative Services Division.

Personnel Requests in Progress

- Interviews have been conducted for the Chief Deputy Director position. Staff is nearing the end of the process, with a selection being made soon.
- Interviews have been conducted for the Chief Counsel position. Staff is nearing the end of the process, with a selection being made soon.
- Staff is working through the process for the Deputy Director position in the Program Innovation and Evaluation Division. Interviews are expected to be conducted in August.
- The Staff Services Manager I position in the Prevention, Equity, and Opportunity Office is expected to be posted by late July.
- A Staff Services Manager I position in the External and Governmental Affairs Office will be advertised in the upcoming months. This position will take the place of the vacant Associate Governmental Program Analyst previously mentioned.