

Executive Director Report – January 19, 2023

This report provides an update about project work and key activities staff have engaged in since the October 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.

1. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)

Following investment approval for the next contract cycle during the last Commission meeting, First 5 California (F5CA) staff have received the proposed scope of work from CHIS staff and will be entering the contract process soon. Meanwhile, progress continues with the current contract cycle, with deliverables being received as scheduled. Recent deliverables, which are being reviewed internally prior to approval, include briefs on knowledge about and use of paid family leave by California families and the impact of COVID-19 on California families.

2. Kit for New Parents

In July 2022, F5CA contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and its partners at Social Policy Research Associates and Allen, Shea & Associates to evaluate the *Kit for New Parents*—specifically to understand the distribution of the *Kits* to families across the state and the experiences and outcomes of families that receive the *Kit*. Findings from this evaluation will be used by F5CA to improve culturally and linguistically responsive *Kit* content and access.

As an initial step in addressing the key question of whether the *Kit* is reaching families that may need it the most, AIR examined the scope of distribution across the state and provided the following interim findings to F5CA in November 2022:

- More than 80,000 *Kits* were sent out in 2021–22, and the vast majority were sent to local agencies to distribute to families.
- Most *Kits* sent to parents and agencies were in English, with some in Spanish; very few *Kits* in other languages were sent out.
- *Kit* distribution by county varied widely, with a few counties receiving enough *Kits* to serve at least half of their families with new babies, but the majority of counties received far fewer.

• There is less county-level variation in the proportion of *Kits* that are sent to parents versus agencies—most *Kits* are sent to agencies in nearly all counties.

Analyses of CHIS data revealed additional findings:

- An estimated 13% of parents with children ages 0 to 5 received a Kit in 2021.
- About four out of five parents who received the Kit reported using materials from the Kit, and most found them useful.

These interim *Kit* distribution findings provide an initial picture of statewide *Kit* distribution and use. Preliminary findings indicate varied *Kit* distribution and use of the *Kit* across the state. Further analysis of the ALOM and CHIS data, as well as data gathered through the Parent Experiences Study and the Parent Outcomes Study, will provide additional insight into the characteristics of families receiving the *Kit* and their response to the *Kit*. Ongoing analyses will inform discussions of how to improve the *Kit* and its distribution.

Next steps for the study will include examining the distribution process in more depth as well as parents' experiences with the *Kit* and outcomes associated with *Kit* receipt.

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. Through leadership and funding from 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 providers and parents was used to identify system inequities and issues of access. The following is a summary of participation.

- Focus groups/interviews:109 interest holders engaged across 36 focus groups/interviews. 72% of those who participated reported it was their first-time offering feedback on the early childhood system.
- Surveys: 819 interest holders provided feedback via web-based surveys
- QCC relationships/recruitment efforts were most effective in engaging the Latinx population and family child care providers

School Readiness Consulting will analyze data from the focus groups and surveys, and work with F5CA, the California Department of Education, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to create a final slide deck with actionable, stakeholder-oriented findings, takeaways, and recommendations. The final deliverable is expected to be complete by Spring 2023.

2. PEARLS

The Program for Equitable Access to Resources for Literacy Support (PEARLS) helps to create safe, stable, and nurturing relationships and environments through early literacy programming and supports. As approved by the F5CA Commission in May 2022, PEARLS is a multi-pronged strategy designed to get books into homes, to provide training and resources, and to promote local innovations around early literacy. Book distribution will focus on improving access to high quality books that reflect the diversity of California, including race, language, ability, and age. Training and resource development will support those working directly with families of young children to incorporate early literacy into their existing programs and curriculum. Lastly, a competitive Request for Application (RFA) is under development to allow First 5 county commissions to apply for funds to expand or initiate local literacy programs and for Regional Literacy Coaches to support cross-county collaboration around literacy. The RFA will be released in 2023.

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

The Refugee Family Support (RFS) grants are a \$3 million investment approved by the F5CA Commission in October 2021. Implementation of the RFS grants covers the period of September 1, 2022, through August 31, 2023. Six First 5 county commissions received the RFS grant funding to implement three priority areas of supporting socio-cultural adjustment and system navigation, short-term emergency childcare, and emergency housing. Grantees are partnering with 52 local partners, including 9 other local counties in providing services through this grant.

Grantees and their partners participate in quarterly network meetings, which started November 2022, to learn about program implementation, successes, best practices, challenges, and lessons learned. Staff from the CDSS, Refugee Programs Bureau also attend these meetings to share their expertise and resources. These network meetings are a space to learn from each other, exchange knowledge, identify problems, and find solutions. The network meetings are hosted by F5CA staff and facilitated by the Glen Price Group.

2. Home Visiting

F5CA staff are in the process of closing out phase one of the Home Visiting Coordination grants approved by the Commission in October 2019. Between 2020 and 2022, 50 counties received approximately \$9 million of funding to develop or strengthen a cross-agency, cross-system understanding of the role home visiting plays in supporting family well-being, increase access to culturally and linguistically responsive home visiting, and integrate home visiting into other child- and familyserving systems.

Phase two, which continues and expands on this work with a focus on regional coordination, will begin in July 2023. The RFA for phase two was released on January 3, 2023, with final applications due on March 31, 2023. A Request for Offer for a technical assistance contractor, who will assist counties in development of their phase two application and activities, was released in December and will be awarded in January 2023.

3. Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA)

At the onset of FY 2022–23, Small Population Counties (SPCs) began preparation for completion of two key reports – Systems Change and Impact Evaluation Data Mapping Tool (DMT), and the Annual Performance Report (APR). Each report provides F5CA with information about the critical work accomplished by small population First 5 county commissions.

The intent of the DMT is for SPC's to collect and report information about the relationship between the local systems change activities and their impacts on children, families, programs, and communities. During FY 2020–21, SPCs completed the initial version of a systems change tool – Telling the Story of Systems Change. In FY 2021–22, revision of the tool involved building on the First 5 Association's Race, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) focus. The revised Data Map Tool (DMT) intended to have a more explicit focus on equity and the data SPCs use to demonstrate the reach and impacts of their systems change activities. Prior to the October 2022 submission of the DMT, SPC's participated in a webinar that reviewed content of the tool, examples of its completion, and answered questions in preparation for their completion of the tool. The submission highlights SPC's specific systems change activities that foster cross-sector collaboration to improve outcomes for children and families.

The APR summarizes SPCFA specific program accomplishments, challenges and lessons learned. It also provides insight into how SPCFA-funded projects accomplish the following:

• Integrate and support other local, state, and F5CA-funded efforts

- Insure cultural and linguistic responsiveness and alignment of programs
- Support families during the COVID-19 pandemic

F5CA will use the results to inform technical assistance needs, identify successful strategies implemented by SPC's, and understand challenges that undermine the implementation of systems change activities.

Personnel Update

New Hires

Jennaya Ramirez, the new Child Health and Welfare Specialist in the Program Innovation and Evaluation Division, joined F5CA on December 7. Prior to this, Ms. Ramirez managed the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program at California Emergency Medical Services Authority. Jennaya will be managing the F5CA Home Visiting Program.

Suzanne (Suzy) Costa Darrow, the new Legislative Coordinator in the External and Governmental Affairs Office, joined F5CA on December 5. Suzy comes to F5CA from the Board of Psychology within the Department of Consumer Affairs, where she served as the legislative expert for the Board and worked on numerous regulatory packages.

Promotions

Richard Flores was promoted to an Information Technology (IT) Specialist II in the IT Services Office as of December 2022. Richard has been with F5CA for 15 years and has been responsible for numerous web-based applications for both internal and external customers. Richard's current projects include rebuilding F5CA's internal financial system and expanding F5CA's Datahub offerings to include additional budget and invoicing applications to support program operations. Additionally, Richard will be building two new budget and invoicing applications to support the next iterations of IMPACT and Home Visiting. These budget and invoicing applications transformed the way F5CA manages contract/grant awards with counties so that it's done completely online and with much more transparency and efficiency.

Personnel Requests in Progress

Staff is working to readvertise for the Deputy Director position in the Program Innovation and Evaluation Division, as interviews were conducted, and no selection was made from the previous recruitment.

Staff is working on the recruitment for the vacant Education Administrator I position over the Prevention, Equity, and Opportunity Office, as the previous incumbent Debra Silverman retired in November 2022.

State Legislative Update

In 2022, we saw huge shifts in the California State Legislature. Between redistricting, the election, and a bloc of legislators deciding not to seek re-election, the Assembly has 31 new members, and the Senate has 9 new senators. F5CA staff is currently scheduling meet and greets to inform the new legislators of our work.

Additionally, December 5, 2022, commenced the start of the 2023–24 Legislative Session. Legislators will introduce bills through February 16, 2023. Staff is combing through these bills.

State Budget Update

The Legislative Analyst's Office anticipates a \$24 billion deficit this budget year and estimates smaller deficits over the next three fiscal years. Considering the major deficit, the Assembly has prioritized protecting the progress made over the last 10 years, leveraging special funds when possible, re-evaluating one-time expenditures, and using reserves.

On January 10, 2023, Governor Newsom unveiled his 2023–2024 state budget proposal – the first budget proposal of his second term. The Governor's budget includes total expenditures of \$296.9 billion. This budget forecasts General Fund revenues will be \$29.5 billion lower than at the 2022 Budget Act projections, and California now faces an estimated budget gap of \$22.5 billion in the 2023–24 fiscal year. The Governor pointed to record high inflation, the decision by the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates, and volatility in the stock market as the primary reason why state revenues have dropped well below projections from last summer when the Administration anticipated a \$100 billion surplus in the current budget year.

The Governor emphasized that his Administration will not pull funds from reserves for this budget and will instead utilize funding delays and reductions/pullbacks, among other strategies, to focus on previous priorities. Most agency programs received approximately a 10-15% cut from 2022 budget allocations. There were \$7.4 billion in funding delays, \$5.7 billion in reductions/pullbacks, \$4.3 billion in budget fund shifts, \$3.9 billion in trigger reductions (to be restored in 2024 if sufficient funds are determined to be available in January 2024), and \$1.2 billion of borrowing from special funds.

Despite this news, he emphasized the need to prioritize children and families. In his press conference, he stated, "you can't have an economic development strategy without a workforce strategy, and you can't have a workforce strategy without a childcare strategy."

Below is an overview of proposed budget items of interest to F5CA and aligned to its Strategic Plan. Additionally, a joint budget statement was issued by F5CA, the First 5 Association, and First 5 Los Angeles.

Build Resilient Families and Communities

CalWORKs Increase

The 2022–23 budget included a 'trigger' to ensure CalWORKs families receive the maximum aid payment which would incase cash grants by 11 precent to prevent children from growing up in deep poverty. This rate incase only goes into effect if sufficient resources are available in 2024. The budget projects a 2.9 percent increase to CalWORKs Maximum Aid Payment (MAP) levels, effective October 1, 2023. This projected increase would bring the non-exempt MAP level from \$1,130 to \$1,163 per month for an assistance unit of three residing in a high-cost county.

CalKIDS Program Marketing

An increase of \$1 million one-time General Fund to support marketing efforts to increase participation in the CalKIDS child savings accounts program, which seeks to help more California students afford higher education.

Migration and Border Communities

Given F5CA has supported refugee families in the past, especially if the family unit includes young children, we wanted to highlight the Administrations comments.

Since 2019, California has supported humanitarian services for migrants released from short-term federal custody in the border region. These services were expanded in 2021, given changing federal policies and public health needs related to COVID-19. California's national model of care and community partnership provides screening, support services, temporary shelter, and onward travel coordination for migrants so they may safely continue with their immigration proceedings at their destination in the U.S. The California model prioritizes the state's border communities and the well-being of migrants.

No state has invested more than California in these humanitarian efforts. However, California cannot continue to fund these efforts at scale without significant support from Congress. The federal government is responsible for immigration policies and processing, and Congress must invest in policies and sustainable infrastructure that ensures the right to asylum for those fleeing violence and persecution while supporting their safe passage through border regions and onto their destinations within the U.S. Local jurisdictions, including immigrant affairs offices and non-governmental organizations, are important partners in supporting the delivery of services.

In the coming months, the Administration will continue to work with the federal government, including Congress, to leverage additional federal resources and

assess operational needs to inform a 2023–24 investment in these humanitarian efforts, which will be included as part of the May Revision.

Optimize Child Health

Health and Human Services Innovation Accelerator Initiative

This initiative will seed a new entity and provide an initial investment so that researchers and developers can create solutions for the most significant health challenges facing Californians: targeting diabetes-related morbidity and mortality, addressing disparities in maternal and infant mortality faced by women and their babies, and preventing and mitigating infectious diseases.

Medi-Cal Provider Rate Increase

The Budget includes \$22.7 million in 2023–24 and \$57.1 million ongoing for primary care and obstetric care provider rate increases representing a 10 percent rate increase. These rate increases will begin to close the gap between Medi-Cal and Medicare for these services.

Developmental Services Provider Rate Reform

The Budget maintains an estimated annual \$1.2 billion General Fund by 2024–25 to fully implement service provider rate reform with a focus on improving outcomes and quality of services, and to address disparities within the system.

Behavioral Health

The Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) will seek federal Medicaid Section 1115 waiver for the California's Behavioral Health Community-Based Continuum (CalBH-CBC) Demonstration. The CalBH-CBC Demonstration will complement the state's existing initiatives to build out the behavioral health continuum of care within communities. This Budget includes \$6.1 billion (\$314 million General Fund, \$175 million Mental Health Services Fund, \$2.1 billion Medi-Cal County Behavioral Health Fund, and \$3.5 billion federal funds) over five years to implement the CalBH-CBC Demonstration.

The CalBH-CBC will expand behavioral health services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries with serious mental illness and emotional disturbance – focusing on key populations: children and youth, persons experiencing homelessness, and justice-involved individuals. As it relates to F5CA's goals, the CalBH-CBC will clarify coverage for evidence-based therapies and home-based services for children and families, as well as improve integrated medical, behavioral health and social services for foster children and youth.

Health Workforce Development Programs

The 2022–23 budget included \$65.6 million for various public health workforce development programs over four years. The proposed Budget is recommending the investment be reduced to \$15.8 million to help address the projected revenue shortfall.

Opioid and Fentanyl Response

The Budget includes an additional \$93 million in Opioid Settlement Fund over the next four years beginning in FY 2023–2024 to support youth-and fentanyl-focused investments. The investment will support Naloxone Distribution Project distribution to first responders, law enforcement, community-based organizations, and county agencies; fentanyl program grants to increase local efforts in education, testing, recovery, and support services, to support innovative approaches to make fentanyl test strips and naloxone more widely available.

The Budget also includes \$3.5 million ongoing Proposition 98 General Fund to provide middle and high school sites at least two doses of naloxone hydrochloride (Narcan) to reverse an opioid overdose on campus.

Reproductive Health Services 115 Waiver

The Budget includes \$200 million in 2024–25 for a grant program through a Medicaid Section 1115 waiver demonstration focused on supporting access to family planning and related services, system transformation, capacity, and sustainability of California's safety net.

Early Learning

Child Care Spaces Expansion

The 2020-21 Budget committed to funding 200,000 child care spaces by 2025–26. Over the last two Budgets, the Administration has provided 146,500 new child care slots; however, not all of those spaces have been utilized to date. The Administration is delaying the expansion of 20,000 spaces to 2024–25 but remains committed to the 200,000 slots goal.

Rate Reform

A Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) consisting of the state and the Child Care Providers United Union – California presented a single rate reimbursement structure to the Department of Finance on November 14, 2022. The JLMC's presentation was informed by members of a stakeholder workgroup convened by the Department of Social Services, in consultation with the California Department of Education, in the summer and fall of 2022. The presented approach toward a future single-rate structure consists of the following:

- An alternative methodology that considers a cost estimation model
- Base rates
- Incentives/enhancement rate-setting metrics
- An evaluation of the rate structure. The state will rely on the presented approach as it develops a single rate structure.

California State Preschool Program

The 2022 Budget Act increased California State Preschool Program (CSPP) adjustment factors for students with disabilities, dual language learners, childhood mental health and added an adjustment factor for three-year-olds. These increases were coupled with requirements for CSPP providers to (1) incrementally ramp up to serve at least 10 percent of students with disabilities by July 1, 2024, and (2) provide additional supportive services for dual language learners.

The Budget includes \$64.5 million Proposition 98 and \$51.8 million General Fund to continue the ramp up the inclusivity adjustments for CSPP. The 2023–24 year will be the second year of the three-year ramp-up process, and requires students with disabilities make up at least 7.5 percent of CSPP providers' enrollment.

The Budget delays the Preschool Inclusion Grant for two years - FY 2022–2023 and 2024–2025 – the implementation of an annual \$10 million General Fund grant program to support preschool inclusion efforts (i.e., facility modifications, staff training, etc.).

Transitional Kindergarten

The Budget continues the implementation of Transitional Kindergarten (TK) with \$690 million Proposition 98 ongoing to increase access to children turning five years old between September 2 and April 2.

The 2022 Budget Act included \$100 million one-time General Fund and reflected an additional \$550 million in 2023–24 to support the Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) Program. The FDK program supports the construction of new school facilities or retrofitting existing school facilities to provide transitional kindergarten, full-day kindergarten, or preschool classrooms. The Budget delays 2023–24 planned \$550 million FDK Program investment to 2024–25.

Cost of Living Adjustment

The Budget includes an annual Cost of Living Adjustment of 8.13 percent for applicable Child Care and Development Programs; the estimated cost of the adjustment is \$301.7 million General Fund and the California State Preschool Program estimated to cost \$63.3 million General Fund and \$112 million Proposition 98.

State Partnerships

Staff have been continuing partnerships with various organizations and state agencies to strengthen the voice of 0 to 5 issues and leverage opportunities for catalytic systems transformation. Below is a list of some of the strategic partnerships with other state entities.

In addition to this, Jackie Wong was asked to represent F5CA priorities at the following events: 2022 Century Summit hosted by the Stanford Center on Longevity; 2022 CA

School Board Association Annual Education Conference Mixed Delivery Panel; Catalyst CA 2022 Birth to 12th Grade Water Cooler Conference: Building a System of Belonging and Community Power Transformation Rooted in Racial Equity; CA Association of African American Superintendents and Administrators panel: Universal Pre-K a Roadmap to Equity; A Child Care Resource Center of CA 2023 Policy Forum; and CA Department of Education's Community Schools Webinar for Early Childhood Learning and Care Community.

State Agency Partnerships	Outcomes
WIC Association; California Department of Public Health – Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Division; U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Determine ways to promote the <i>Kit for New Parents</i> and collaborate in sharing parent resources that our agencies create. Since July 2022, <i>Kit</i> distribution has increased by 140%. (Administrative)
CA State Association of Counties (CSAC)	Discuss broadband advocacy and collaborating on ECE and workforce/economic support programs for families. (Legislative/Congressional)
Commission on the Status of Women	Discuss cross-collaboration opportunities on maternal/child issues. At their June 2022 meeting, Jackie Wong presented on F5CA North Start and Audacious Goals to best serve families with young children. (Administrative effort)
California Department of Social Services	Children and Youth System of Care pursuant to AB 2083. (Jackie Wong and Amanda Lawrence are engaged in work related to the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths findings, that indicate a need for strategic intervention for children ages 0 to 5)
CA Strategic Growth Council	Health in All Policies Taskforce that convenes state agencies to advance health, equity, and environmental sustainability (Jackie Wong, Amanda Lawrence, Gretchen Williams, Jaime Hastings, and Erl Cardenas-Jackson sit on various committees)

Policy Pillar: Resilient Families & Communities

Policy Pillar: Child Health

State Agency Partnerships	Outcomes
Governor's Office of Planning & Research and California Department of Public Health	Develop opportunities to continue partnering beyond Vaccine All 58. Held a June press conference for Vaccinate all 58 with F5 Network (Sara Bachez provided Spanish translation); F5CA used media strategies to share CDPH Vaccinate All 58 toolkit. Topics: child health, climate change/heat impact, and prenatal/postpartum supports. (Administrative)
CalEPA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)	Discuss opportunities on maternal/child environmental health impacts and amplify their research in a parent-friendly communication manner. (Administrative)
Child Youth Behavioral Health Initiative CHHS, WestEd	CYBHI Steering Committee & Brain Trust Working Group (Jackie Wong – ongoing sessions) Equity Working Group (Sara Bachez and Amanda Lawrence co- facilitate these ongoing sessions) (Administrative) Subject Matter Expert Workgroup on Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (Jackie Wong is a member) CA Behavioral Health Task Force (Jackie Wong is a member)
Governor's Office, Office of the Sergeant General, and Health and Human Services Agency	Collaborate on ACEs/Toxic Stress awareness through sharing resources, media messaging. F5CA has initiated its media campaign and is sharing data/resources with fellow state agencies. (Administrative)
Department of Health Care Services	Managed Care Advisory Group Quarterly Meeting -Medi-Cal's Strategy to Support Health and Opportunity for Children and Families. (Administrative)
CA Department of Public Health and CA Department of Social Services	Early Childhood Home Visiting Collaborative- (Jackie Wong and staff have been co-planning the 2023 agenda with CDPH and CDSS to align with findings from F5CA sponsored research studies on workforce)
UCLA Center for Health Policy Research	CA Health Interview Survey Advisory Board (Jackie Wong is a member and Gretchen Williams is an alternate)
CA Office of the Surgeon General	Bi-monthly collaborative meetings to ensure alignment with media campaigns and programming related to Adverse Childhood Experiences and toxic stress.

Policy Pillar: Early Learning*

* This is in addition to our ongoing work with the CA Department of Education and CA Department of Social Services in support of Quality Counts CA work through IMPACT

State Agency Partnerships	Outcomes
Inside CA Education TV Series	Discuss early learning episode concepts (F5CA is now an active advisory member on their board). (F5CA Public Awareness)
California Health and Human Services, California State University, Labor and Workforce Development Agency, State Board of Education, California Teachers' Association, California Federation of Teachers, Early Edge, Education Trust – West, California County Superintendents, Los Angeles County Office of Education	Discuss how to leverage the structure of expanding health care workforce (apprenticeship models) and review and develop similar strategies on the early learning and universal pre-kindergarten workforce. Develop a white paper on barriers and opportunities to braid resources to support a strong mixed-delivery universal pre- kindergarten system, and showcasing best practices from both the ECE and K–12 education systems. (Administrative)
CA Department of Social Services	Rate and Quality Workgroup established under AB 131 to assess the methodology for establishing reimbursement rates and the existing quality standards for child care and development and preschool programs and to make related recommendations. (Jackie was a member)

Policy Pillar: Sustainability

State Agency Partnerships	Outcomes
State Treasurer's Office	Promote how parents can sign up for the CalKIDS program and discussing how we can incorporate this information into the <i>Kit for New Parents</i> . (Administrative)
First 5 Network	Ongoing Discussion – F5 Budget Sustainability Plan Development (initial phase) (Organizational budget)
Congresswoman Sarah Jacob (53 ^{ed} CA District), Senator Patty Murray (WA, Chair of Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pension Committee), Congresswoman Barbara Lee (13 District), US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions	Discuss ECE funding, child and maternal health funding, behavioral and mental health, and reauthorization of Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV). (Federal and Budget)
Cal Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC) Coalition End Child Poverty California	F5CA is part of this coalition and was successful in achieving many tax credit measures in the 2022 Budget Act. Discussing federal advocacy opportunities. (Federal and Budget)