



AUGUST 17, 2023

INFORMATION  ACTION

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON *KIT FOR NEW PARENTS* PROGRAM AND FUTURE INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS DISCUSSION**

**Strategic Plan Priority Area:** Child Health

**Goal:** All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.

**Strategic Plan Priority Area:** Family Support

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

## SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

In October 2020, the Commission authorized funding for up to \$18 million for the development, fulfillment, and evaluation of the updated *Kit for New Parents (Kit)* for fiscal years (FY) 2020–21 through 2023–24. As part of the funding approval, the Commission asked First 5 California (F5CA) to execute a *Kit* study to provide data on populations served by organizations requesting *Kits*, *Kit* content effectiveness, and recommendations for expanding *Kit* distribution.

In July 2022, F5CA contracted with American Institutes for Research (AIR) and its partners at Social Policy Research Associates (SPRA) and Allen, Shea & Associates (ASA) to better understand the distribution of the *Kits* to families across the state and describe the experiences and outcomes of families that received the *Kit*. While the study is still being conducted at the time of this Commission meeting, F5CA's update will provide the Commission with an overview of interim findings from the recently conducted *Kit* Distribution Survey. Final study findings will be available by June 30, 2024.

Additionally, F5CA will update the Commission on *Kit* distribution expansion efforts. In FY 2022–23, F5CA distributed 156,000 *Kits*, an increase of 92% from the previous fiscal year. The increase is due to F5CA's outreach efforts to Head Start California and

California Local Health Care Providers, increased distribution by First 5 county commissions, and the launch of an easy-to-use ordering portal for California parents to request *Kits*. F5CA is continuing to cultivate new partnerships with advocacy organizations, health care providers, and social services agencies working directly with low-income parents of children ages 0 to 5. Additionally, F5CA is working to strengthen relationships with F5 county commissions by making *Kit* ordering, shipment tracking, and distribution data more accessible and user-friendly. As a result of the expanded distribution, F5CA has received \$369,966.75 in federal funds for quarters 1 through 3 of FY 2022–23 through an agreement with the California Department of Health Care Services for reimbursement for *Kits* distributed to Medi-Cal recipients.

F5CA will also provide recommendations to the Commission for future *Kit* investments including expanded outreach efforts, updated product packaging, and streamlining the online ordering process to enhance and increase access.

## **BACKGROUND**

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. The *Kit* became a reliable resource to guide parents through their child’s first five years. It includes a health handbook, a baby board book, a poison control brochure and magnet, and other important information on paid family leave, literacy, and early learning.

Since its release, the *Kit* has touched more hands than any other F5CA resource with 5.5 million *Kits* distributed. It is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Since 2001, F5CA distributes the *Kit* free-of-charge to local hospitals, physicians, community groups, and partnerships with First 5 county commissions to reach new parents.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

A. AIR Interim Findings #2: *Kit* Distribution Survey Results