



December 14, 2023

 INFORMATION ACTION
SUBJECT: 2023 HIGHLIGHTS, 2024 PREVIEW**SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE**

This item provides discrete highlights regarding the operational work of First 5 California for 2023. Organized by department, this non-comprehensive list lifts up the work staff have identified as successful to lay the groundwork for the purpose of beginning a comprehensive analysis of the strategic plan ending in 2024. This item will also provide a preview of the high-level events and initiatives scheduled for 2024.

Organizational Development

Beginning in September 2022, First 5 California established an internal analysis of the challenges facing the Agency aligned with previous change management efforts. Our end goal is the transformation of our organizational culture and the establishment of a learning organization, guided by the North Star, with a focus on equity and systems impact work. Common to most state agencies and similar organizations, three issues (Asymmetrical Information, Immunity to Change, Lack of Processes) required our immediate attention and action. Brief highlights of the challenges and the solution (our actions) are listed below:

Challenge	Solution
Asymmetrical Information	Data Visualization (ex. Candyland Map, F5 Revenue Map). Strengths Finder Training for all staff.
Psychological Safety/ Immunity to Change	Consistent Communication and action about change (ex. New hires, Group Leadership Trainings: Strength Finders, Actions Addressing Declining Revenue)

Lack of Clear Processes

New Habitual Processes (ex. Establishment of P.O.P (Purpose, Outcome, Process) for all mtgs. Creation of a Governance Office.

2023 Highlights

Program Innovation and Evaluation Division

- Major grant dissemination and enhanced education, training and technical assistance, communication and system of change collaboration with local first 5's on Home Visiting, SPCFA and Impact Legacy. This work includes the execution of regional grants for the initial two years of IMPACT Legacy funding to all 58 counties for implementation of quality improvement supports for ELC providers, including family and community engagement.
- The QCC Equity Project research study was designed to identify inequities in QCC and to further efforts to reimagine and create a more equitable, robust system that supports quality early learning and care for California's children. The community report summarizes the study's findings and recommendations. The QCC Equity Project was generously funded and managed by First 5 California on behalf of the QCC Leadership agencies - the California Department of Education, the California Department of Social Services, and First 5 California. The report can be viewed at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14kb81Y1ZoQHmMchG6-9amhrp-HxGeG3R/view?usp=sharing>
- Reorganization of our contract with Childrens Data Network (CDN) focused on CDN developing a First 5 CA early childhood data dashboard and possible online public facing portal/dashboard. This new direction includes the development of a SOW for partnership with Childrens Data Network (CDN) to help First 5 CA identify a handful of indicators that speak to the health, safety, and well-being of young children and their families.
- Foundational research for the Fatherhood Initiative including a communications plan assessment, academic peer review and environmental scan to identify the key issues regarding the changing definition of Fatherhood and exemplary Fatherhood Initiatives within the local First 5 network. This represents a new way of working focused on data driven investments and a collective impact methodology for implementation and grant funding. Updates and a full report on the Fatherhood Initiative are scheduled for the 2024 Commission meetings.
- Dr. Martha Dominguez-Brinkley hired as new Deputy Director of Program Innovation and Evaluation Department.

Governance/Administrative Services Office

- Establishment of a Governance Office for the purpose of volumizing our impact related to Commission preparation and proceedings. For the 25 years of our Agency, there has never been a Governance Office, and the work has been embedded in a portfolio with competing interests. Jaime Hastings is leading this office. In addition to organizing and executing a successful Commission meeting in Fresno, California, Ms. Hastings is leading the production of a Commission Proceedings Manual.
- In collaboration with other F5CA offices, executed a contract with the Marriott for and leading the organization and execution of the 2024 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit: Stronger Starts: 25 Years of First 5.
- Facilitation of ten successful public Commission and Advisory Committee Meetings.

Governmental Affairs Office

- In June 2023, Sara Bachez, Deputy Director for Governmental Affairs, testified at an informational hearing put on by the Assembly Select Committee on California's Mental Health Crisis.
- Governmental Affairs staff developed a strong relationship with the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications, under the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. Through this connection, F5CA has engaged with the First 5 Association and local First 5 commissions to create awareness of vaccinations for children 6 months through 5 years of age and the impact extreme heat has on vulnerable populations, specifically on pregnant people and children ages 0-5.
- Developed new and strong relationships in the Capitol, with new state agencies, and external partners.
- In early 2023, Governmental Affairs staff met with newly elected legislators and their staff to introduce them to First 5 California's recent endeavors and be available as a subject matter expert.
- In April 2023, Governmental Affairs staff advocated for children and families in Washington D.C. as part of the California Chamber of Commerce's Cap-to-Cap annual advocacy trip. Staff met with members of congress representing the Sacramento region and Senator Padilla's staff to discuss the importance of working families and childcare. We also participated in meetings put on by the Congressional Dad's Caucus to highlight issues related to childcare, tax credits, and paid leave.

Contracts and Procurement Office

- 23rd Annual State Agency Recognition Award by the Department of General Services, *Agency of the Year* and *Most Improved Small Business and Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Participation*
- Innovative contracting opportunities with new contractors have reflected in Q1 of FY 23/24 give the vision of the North Star and Audacious Goal. Examples include environmental scan consulting work focused on fathers and families, federal advocacy representation, Paid Family Leave advocacy, and Information Technology services.
- With limited staffing, processed 267 agreements/amendments.
 - Legal Aid at Work: Paid Family Leave Advocacy Services
 - Glen Price Group: County Commission Strategic Planning, Policy Development, and Facilitation
 - Children Now: Home Visiting Technical Assistance for County Commissions
 - Multiple Co-Sponsorships including Valley PBS, Vision y Compromiso, California Breastfeeding Coalition, Californians Together, Head Start, Sacramento Observer
 - Multiple State Agency contracting partnerships: Department of Social Services, State Controller's Office, Department of General Services
- Worked across First 5 California offices to standardize grant processes.
- Working with California Volunteer to develop an on-demand Contract Manager Training.
- Formally deployed grant programs for county commissions with decreases in processing timeframes.
- Deployed paperless transacting.

Fiscal Services Office (FSO)

- With limited staff, processed 982 vouchers for payment for county agreements, supplier contracts and miscellaneous expenditures.

- FSO staff created a travel guide for F5CA employees that details California Department of Human Resources (CalHR) travel rules and the Department's travel policies (guide is currently in review process).
- FSO participated in collaborative meetings with partners both internal and external, building stronger relationships, as well as strengthening internal processes (i.e., grant manual, cal card process, travel).
- Created an annual budget model for the Administrative Account to track expenditure trends and make recommendations to Executive Management.

Communications

- September 2022 through March 2023: The Dragon Song campaign was developed and released in 2022 to provide the first step towards creating awareness of the importance that calmness places in connecting children and caregivers to their emotions. The campaign featured English and Spanish video and radio spots, outdoor ads, a new website landing page, web ads, social media posts, and a TikTok & Instagram influencer campaign, and campaign collateral and messaging toolkits for county commissions.
- Spring 2023: Stronger Starts public education and awareness campaign launched in the Spring of 2023, introducing messaging around adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and toxic stress response to families and caregivers of young children. The campaign featured three videos as well as radio ads, outdoor creative signage, web and social including a TikTok and Instagram influencer campaign. Additionally, an interactive educational microsite was developed, connected to the Parent's website. Extensive research, literature review, and focus groups were conducted to ensure accurate message development and delivery. A toolkit was created for county commissions to access all creative collateral. In November, the mid-campaign evaluation was completed and in late Spring 2024, a final campaign evaluation will be conducted.
 - Partnerships:
 - Sacramento Kings
 - Los Angeles Dodgers
 - Sacramento Zoo
 - Oakland Zoo
 - San Francisco Zoo
 - Los Angeles Zoo
 - Sequoia Zoo
 - Univision Los Angeles
 - BabyCenter
 - PBS Kids
 - Univision LA

- Doggyland
 - Domantis Sabonis
- Experiential: F5CA has relaunched its popular community events tour with the new Stronger Starts campaign focus and messaging. At events throughout the state, our tour offers a fun and educational program that teaches parents and caregivers about toxic stress and the harmful impact it can have on children. We also give parents and caregivers tips and tools to prevent toxic stress while providing kids with engaging activities that align with toxic stress educational strategies.
 - Under development is the digital educational content with courses, coaching and
 - Micro-learning component called Stronger Starts for Parents & Caregivers powered by Cell-Ed, the program will launch in winter of 2023.
 - F5CA has developed research to aid in the development of future Fatherhood-focused campaign efforts.
 - Whole Child Campaign: F5CA is developing a ground-up public relations campaign to increase awareness and mobilize community support around a key topic affecting parents and children 0–5 in California. Childcare is a current focus of F5CA as it increases accessibility to SSNREs for children and provides critical supports for families. Access to affordable, reliable childcare is a pressing issue facing California families, impacting not just children but parents and caregivers, small businesses, and the local economy where they live.

2024 Preview

Program Innovation and Evaluation Division

- A strategic plan will be developed for programmatic and research efforts to support F5CA pillars and respective indicators.
 - Begin transformative Early Learning and Care (ELC) equitable systems strategies for Quality Counts California.
- Finalization of First 5 California Indicators with supporting prototype Early Childhood Data Dashboard.
- Behavioral Health Strategy will be finalized and implemented.
- Updates and a full report on the Fatherhood Initiative are schedule for the 2024 Commission meetings.
- Release PEARLS RFA – Transformative equity early literacy systems change efforts and education, leveraging the California State Librarian’s Dolly Parton Imagination Library investment.

Governance/Administrative Services Office

- Successful 2024 Child Health, Education, and Care Summit
- Launch Commission Proceedings Manual
- Plan/facilitate meaningful in-person Commission meetings

Governmental Affairs

- The Public Policy Advisory Committee has adopted a 2024 Young Children's Policy Agenda, which will guide the work of the office as the new legislative and budget process begins.

Contracts and Procurement Office

- Update process and procedure manuals with the goal of increasing process efficiencies.
- Continue to provide contracting services to develop new, innovative, and Diversity, Inclusive, and Equitable scopes of work.
- Complete compliance training with control agencies: CalRecycle, Department of General Services

Fiscal Services Office

- Streamline the department's financial plan to display program funding allocations more easily.
- Explore and develop a digital submission of the travel reimbursement process to replace the paper submissions.

Communications

Continued Development:

- Whole Child Campaign
- Father-Focused Initiative
- Stronger Starts Wave 2 Media Campaign

Development and Production:

- PodCast Series
- Two In-language Stronger Starts Videos for the AAPI audience
- Children's Book around the Stronger Starts Campaign
- Documentary Video on the Making of Stronger Starts/Director's Cut Extended Flagship Video