



PRINCIPLES ON EQUITY

Inclusive Governance and Participation

First 5 San Bernardino recognizes that children develop within the context of their families and communities, and as such, it is essential that First 5 San Bernardino programs secure and obtain meaningful participation and input of the families and other caregivers of children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities throughout all program development and implementation phases.

First 5 San Bernardino programs should:

- Use culturally- and linguistically-appropriate outreach strategies, as well as approaches effective in reaching parents of children with disabilities and other special needs and parents who themselves may have disabilities;
- Assure that all diverse groups, particularly those who have been traditionally underrepresented and underserved, are actively engaged and involved so that they can have an equal voice in defining their needs and finding solutions;
- Use community organizations, both formal and informal networks, and other communication vehicles that have been effective in reaching out to and serving diverse groups;
- Promote and support the development of emerging parent and community leaders; and assure that families representing diverse groups participate equitably in the planning, delivery and evaluation of initiatives, which includes the grant criteria process, advisory groups and other committees.

Access to Services

To assure that children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities have access to high quality and culturally competent early care and education/development opportunities as a critical means for achieving equity, First 5 San Bernardino funded programs should:

- Set measurable goals and objectives for increasing access and achieving equity;
- Use culturally and linguistically relevant methods of communication and community outreach, which include engaging respected community persons to promote messages;
- Assure that programs provide access to information, resources and support regarding their child's development, including strengths and needs for all families;
- Conduct assessments that include assets, challenges, and gaps in communities and systems, as well as analyze disaggregated community demographic data (ethnicity, disabilities, language, age, socio-economic status, literacy levels, underinsured/uninsured rates, etc.). Use these assessment and data to establish priority desired results and to design program that will remove disparities and attain desired results;
- Provide information and support through culturally and linguistically responsive service providers and service providers who are knowledgeable about children with disabilities and other special needs and their families;

- Promote collaboration across disciplines, service delivery systems and communities. This includes implementation of a coordinated service delivery approach to young children, especially children with disabilities and other special needs and their families who are often served by a variety of agencies, programs, and service providers;
- Develop print, audio-visual, and electronic materials that are culturally and linguistically relevant for all communities served, are written at appropriate literacy levels, and are available for specialized populations (e.g., Braille, closed captioning);
- Schedule services in accordance with family needs and situations (work schedules, time of the year, language, transportation, etc.);
- Support programs that are individualized to address the cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as the range of ability levels and behavioral and learning styles that are representative of California's children and families;
- Ensure availability of adapted and specialized services and supports as needed to assure full participation for all children and their families. Individualization of services and supports for all families are critical to actively support a child's learning experiences in natural environments to the maximum extent appropriate;
- Demonstrate awareness of, and referrals to, services, resources and other supports available for children with disabilities and other special needs and their families;
- Demonstrate a commitment to promote a workforce that has skills, knowledge of, and reflective of the children and families being served, and a workforce that is knowledgeable about and supportive of children with disabilities and other special needs and their families;
- Demonstrate that staff who work with or on behalf of children and their families display a positive attitude about working with children with disabilities and special needs as well as children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and
- Promote policies to assure training and technical assistance necessary to improve knowledge, attitudes and skills of all involved with the Commission and build their capacity to work within culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and serve as well as to work more effectively in serving the range of abilities, behavioral and learning styles that are representative of California's children.

Legislative and Regulatory Mandates

Agencies must adhere to all legislative, regulatory and accreditation mandates pertinent to the provision of services to children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities. First 5 San Bernardino programs should:

- Embrace the spirit of the law;
- Demonstrate leadership in assuring that all staff receive training, are knowledgeable about pertinent legislative and legal mandates and have the skills and resources necessary to implement required modifications or enhancements to services or facilities;
- Inform parents of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of their children;
- Offer its services to all children and their families regardless of immigration status (California Children and Families Commission Resolution –June 24, 1999); and

- Be held accountable for their compliance with key laws and other related mandates, for example:
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: requires linguistic access via qualified interpreters and translated materials at no cost to the individual;
 - Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 (ADA): prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and promotes equal access, building modifications, hiring practices for persons with disabilities;
 - Language Access Laws i.e., Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (CA); imposes direct obligations state/local governmental agencies to provide appropriate translation services for languages spoken by 5% or more of population served;
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) establishes special education and coordinated, family centered service delivery systems for children with disabilities from birth through age 5 through several programs e.g., California’s Early Start Program, California Department of Education’s Preschool Special Education Program; and
 - Executive Order 13166: issued on August 11, 2000 to provide meaningful access to Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals to federally assisted and federally conducted programs and activities.

Results-Based Accountability

First 5 San Bernardino programs will have well defined and meaningful outcomes that benefit children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse abilities and thus should:

- Commit to attaining their stated program outcomes realizing that their results are crucial to ongoing sustainability and advocacy;
- Allocate sufficient resources to support accountability and evaluation activities;
- Use program planners, evaluators and other experts who are knowledgeable about children’s differing abilities, and who are culturally competent in regards to the population(s) served in developing effective assessment and evaluation tools and methods;
- Conduct assessments that include assets, challenges, and gaps in communities and systems, as well as analyze community demographics (ethnicity, disabilities, language, age, socio-economic status, etc.);
- Assess regularly its inclusive governance process and provide updates on the extent of the family involvement and engagement throughout all phases of program development (planning, implementation and evaluation);
- Use culturally and linguistically appropriate questions, instruments and other research methods to collect relevant data from the populations and communities served;
- Include questions on disabilities and other related issues in surveys and other evaluation and research tools/instruments;
- Collect and report disaggregated data (e.g., ethnicity, disabilities, language, age, socioeconomic status, etc.) describing children and families served and the achievement of access, equity and desired child/family results;
- Recognize that accountability and results are crucial to ongoing advocacy and sustainability; and
- Disseminate best practices and promising practices for the benefit of all children and their service providers throughout California.