

# Executive Director Report

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## A Message from the ED



Happy Holidays!

First 5 San Bernardino wishes you and your family the best this holiday season. The season also reminds us how much children delight in the sights, smells and sounds of the holidays. It reminds us of family and gratefulness, but not all children have the same fortunes as others when it comes to their health, education and well being. First 5 continues to take on the role of assisting families with children 0-5 so all children have a great start at life. Understanding First 5 and its role in our community is not always easy, so here are a few answers to the burning questions that have risen since proposition 10 passed back in 1998.

The bulk of First 5 funding supports programs well understood by the Legislature and the

public – health and dental care, quality preschool, early intervention for children with special needs, and child safety programs, among others. However, over the past several years, critics have pointed to a handful of programs and charged First 5 with “frivolous” or “wasteful” funding decisions. Because these claims generally reflect a lack of information about current child development research and why such programs are funded, we hope the following facts will help inform members of the Legislature and others who may have questions.

Proposition 10 guidelines require First 5 commissions to support programs that improve children’s health, enhance opportunities for early learning, provide support to families, and change systems so that services better meet family needs. Unlike many large, bureaucratic programs, county First 5 commissions have the flexibility not only to invest in large-scale programs that reach thousands of children, but

also to support small, carefully designed programs that reach some of the highest need families – many of whom have historically “fallen through the cracks.”

These programs don’t always look like traditional health and human service programs. But that is because they are reaching families in ways traditional programs have failed to do.

Following are examples of critics’ questions about First 5-funded programs and the research that underlies commission decisions to fund them.

### Parental Support and Community Building Programs

[Why do First 5 commissions support neighborhood grant programs focused on bringing families together?](#)

Answer: Social isolation, lack of family support systems, and lack of parental knowledge about child development are proven risk factors for child abuse. Parents who have support from peers or social institutions, realistic expectations  
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December Edition

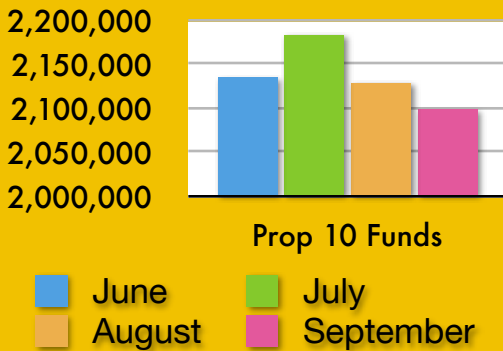


# 2010

## Updates

### Fiscal Update

F5SB received the monthly revenue from Prop 10 funds in the amount of \$2,100,527 for September, 2010. This revenue funds First 5 San Bernardino programs and services.



### Children's Health

IEHP Coverage for November, 2010= 705 premiums paid by First 5 San Bernardino for a total of \$52,128.

## The Gift of Family Time

*Strengthening family ties during the holidays and beyond*

We all have such busy schedules that it can be a challenge to find time to spend together as a family. But quality time is important because when parents learn and play with their children every day, it boosts a child's self-esteem and helps kids develop positive relationships. Even 10 to 30 minutes of one-on-one time per day is a good start, as long as it's part of a regular routine. Young children will benefit from the love and attention they receive during these precious moments.



This holiday season, First 5 San Bernardino encourages parents as well as grandparents and caregivers to give the gift of quality time. By planning educational and nurturing activities everyone can enjoy together, families can set up healthy routines that last through the holidays and well into the New Year.

- Start a tradition. Plan a family meal at least once a week – even more often if you can. Eating together provides a wonderful opportunity to talk with your children about their day and show them that they are your top priority. Get kids involved by giving them age-appropriate tasks like setting the table, tossing the salad and cleaning up.
- Open a book daily. Help your child's imagination soar by reading favorite stories together. Point out fun things you see in picture books and let your toddler turn the pages.
- Host a weekly family fun night. On cold or rainy days, turn off the TV and computer, and get creative. Set up a row of chairs and role-play as a bus driver or train conductor; enjoy a game of musical chairs; or use everyday items like cardboard boxes, glue and cotton balls to create pieces of art.
- Take a field trip. Visit the zoo, local museums and libraries to learn about animals, interesting historical facts and other educational topics. Make sure to call ahead and find out if there's a kids' day, and ask if free or discounted tickets are available.
- Go outside for physical activity. Go for a walk, play catch, ride bikes around the neighborhood or visit the park. It's a chance to spend time together as well as squeeze in a healthy dose of active play!
- Make every moment count. Above all, use every moment together to learn from and listen to your child, even when taking care of every day errands. Young children love to help – take your kids grocery shopping and let them pick out fruits and vegetables while you ask about favorite foods. When driving, point to colors and shapes, and ask your child to count trees or read simple signs.

Remember, spending quality time with your children this holiday season is a priceless gift – your time and attention cost nothing and mean everything.

## State of First 5 Address


January 5, 2011  
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[www.first5sanbernardino.org](http://www.first5sanbernardino.org)



of their children, and an understanding of appropriate discipline are significantly less likely to abuse their children. Community-building programs and neighborhood parent groups have succeeded in building support networks for parents and providing forums in which facilitators can model appropriate behavior and increase parent understanding of child development. Moreover, parent- and community-developed projects often address community needs and attract community participants far more effectively than programs emanating from large state bureaucracies.

 **Fact:** Programs that strengthen connections among members of a community build “social capital” – norms of reciprocity that decrease isolation and increase social support. According to researchers, increased social capital is most crucial for families with fewest economic resources and for children at greatest risk for poor developmental outcomes. In the preschool years, the parents' social capital appears to confer benefits on their offspring, just as children benefit from their parents' financial and human capital.

 **Fact:** Compared to demographically matched mothers, maltreating mothers list fewer friends in their social support networks, report less contact with friends, and give lower ratings of quality of support received from friends. Quality of current relationships and social support from friends were among factors independently associated with maltreatment status in logistic regression analysis.


 **Fact:** Studies have found that mothers who physically abuse their children have both more negative and higher than normal expectations of their children, as well as less understanding of appropriate developmental norms. Small group activities, often based in families' own communities, provide facilitators an effective forum in which to model appropriate behavior and enhance parental understanding of child development.


### Family Literacy Activities


Why do First 5 Commissions support activities like book give-aways, neighborhood reading circles, developmental play groups, and other small parent-child programs –


even for families with children under age three?


Answer: Because research shows that encouraging parents to read, tell stories, and sing to their children – even if they did not experience those things in their own childhoods – can significantly enhance their children's language, cognitive, and social development and increase their chance of later success in school.


 **Fact:** Early language and literacy (reading and writing) development begins in the first three years of life and is closely linked to a child's earliest experiences with books and stories. The interactions that young children have with such literacy materials as books, paper, and crayons and with the adults in their lives are the building blocks for language, reading, and writing development.

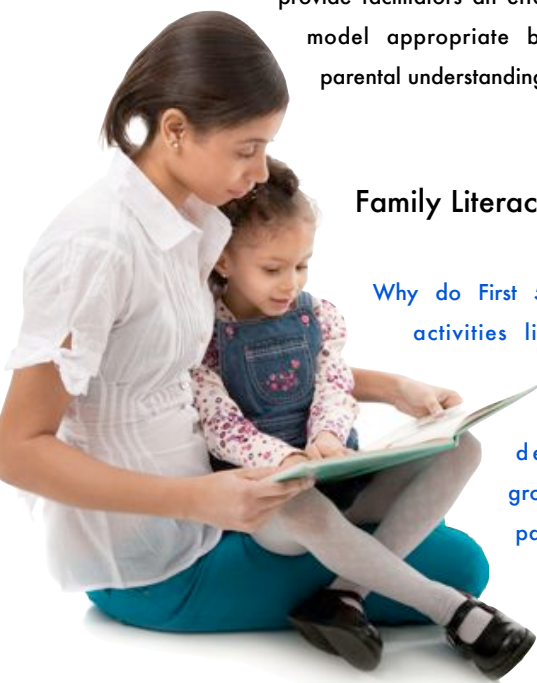
 **Fact:** Reading to children in their early years correlates to higher reading scores. The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study found that children who were read to at least three times a week by a family member were almost twice as likely to score in the top 25% in reading compared to children who were read to less than three times a week.

 **Fact:** The number of books in a home correlates significantly with reading scores. An analysis of a national data set of nearly 100,000 United States school children found that access to printed materials – and not poverty – is the “critical variable affecting reading acquisition.”

 **Fact:** One study found that 60 percent of the kindergartners in neighborhoods where children did poorly in school did not own a single book.

 **Fact:** Songs, movement, and musical games are neurological exercises that introduce children to speech patterns, sensory motor skills, and vital movement strategies. “Inner speech” and “impulse control” are cultivated through musical play, helping the child to develop self-management skills critical to school success.

 **Fact:** The frequency and quality of words children hear during their first three years of life have a significant effect on their I.Q., literacy, and success when they enter school. While children in professional families hear approximately 11 million words per year, children in working class families hear approximately 6 million words, and children in welfare families hear approximately 3 million words annually.



## Health and Exercise Classes for Pregnant Women

Why would First 5 commissions fund health and exercise classes, including programs that incorporate yoga or belly dancing, for pregnant women?

Answer: Pregnancy is one of the most effective times to engage mothers in making behavioral changes to benefit their children and themselves. Prenatal programs that promote healthy eating, exercise, and reduction in tobacco use have shown to improve outcomes, even among high risk populations. Health and exercise classes for pregnant women are components of comprehensive prenatal care that can keep pregnant women engaged, increase the likelihood that their children will be born healthy, and improve their understanding of health and nutrition in the lives of their children.

**Fact:** Because many women are concerned about the health of their babies during pregnancy, researchers have found pregnancy an especially powerful "teachable moment" for the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity behaviors among women.

**Fact:** Research shows that pregnancy is an effective time to change the behavior of women at high risk of poor outcomes through concerted behavioral intervention. Researchers evaluated the efficacy of a primary care intervention targeting pregnant African American women and focusing on psychosocial and behavioral risk factors for poor reproductive outcomes (cigarette smoking, secondhand smoke exposure, depression,

and intimate partner violence). Behavioral intervention significantly reduced psychosocial and behavioral pregnancy risk factors.

**Fact:** Pregnancy provides an opportunity for interventions that can succeed in curtailing smoking. Counseling of pregnant women has been shown to be effective; the U.S. Public Health Service guideline recommends more intensive counseling, particularly person-to-person psychosocial interventions that exceed the minimal advice to quit.

The programs First 5 critics most often disparage are small and non-traditional. They are easy to belittle when they are taken out of context and the research underlying them is ignored. County First 5 commissions invite a closer look at these – or any – programs they support.

It will not be difficult to see that California families are benefiting from new approaches to enhancing their children's health, development, and school readiness. For other questions concerning funding for First 5 San Bernardino, please consult our website at [www.first5sanbernardino.org](http://www.first5sanbernardino.org) or call our offices at (909) 386-7706.



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**Big Results**  
small hands