

Executive Director Report

KAREN SCOTT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



A Message from the ED




 Happy Holidays!


I wish all of you a joyous season and hope for a wonderful and prosperous New Year!

 On November 21,


2011, a Superior Court judge ruled in favor of First 5 Children and Families Commissions in their challenge to State legislation that requires First 5's to transfer \$1 billion to the State Treasury. First 5 San Bernardino's proportionate share of the transfer was just under \$50 million.


 Ruling the entire bill invalid, Judge Debra Kazanjan stated that AB 99 did not further the intent of Proposition 10 and was inconsistent with the initiative's purpose as articulated in the 1998 ballot measure, including the provision to provide local

control of funds that support programs for children. Judge Kazanjan went on to say that "to claim that transferring decision-making from local communities to the State Legislature is 'consistent with' Prop 10 is like asking the court to find that black means white" and is in direct opposition to a key provision of Prop 10.

 A spokesman for the California Department of Finance said State lawyers are reviewing the ruling and officials have not decided whether to appeal, but do have 60 days in which to do so. Considering the careful planning and strategic leadership provided by the First 5 San Bernardino Commission to make decisions to mitigate the impact of this potential loss and to enable the continued funding of programs and services for children prenatal to age 5, the Commission will stick with the results of that planning. The third year of contracts under

the Desired Results and Gap Fill funding will not be reinstated. The Commission will operate with its adopted budget of \$25 million for direct services for FY 2012/13 and its current strategic plan.

 The Commission is committed to protecting funding for its local children and to not allowing funds to be spent for purposes other than First 5's strategic priorities. Now, more than ever, it is vitally important that our Commission be able to demonstrate how commission funding for specific programs will avert future costs to the State and even how commission funding for specific programs is taking pressure off the State budget now without supplanting.

 First 5 San Bernardino recently released the "Investing in Children" funding opportunity committing \$57,450,000 over the next three years into programs for children,

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December Edition



2011

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ages 0 to 5 and their families of San Bernardino County.

More than 240 people representing about 90 agencies attended a mandatory proposal conference for the "Investing in Children" Request for Proposals. The Commission's goal for requiring this mandatory conference is to ensure successful proposals and provision of much needed services to children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 is committed to building capacity and was very excited about that room full of "potential"!

Although we are operating with fewer monies, the new funding priorities established under the "Investing in Children" RFP are aligned with the First 5 San Bernardino Strategic Plan and meet the mandates of Proposition 10. A more narrowed and targeted approach will allow us to demonstrate immediate and measurable outcomes, ensuring maximum accountability and integrity in how these public funds are invested. Research and experience shows that raising the bar in qualifications improves outcomes and that is exactly what the Commission must demonstrate.

First 5 Commissions are required to report spending on programs, staffing, evaluation data, and what is being accomplished statewide by the Commissions.

The Commission, Advisory Committee and First 5 staff helped guide the development of what will be funded and accomplished under the "Investing in Children" RFP. The most important emphasis is on supporting families to prevent growth in child welfare and foster care caseloads; providing screening to improve child health outcomes and diagnose conditions early, when treatment is least costly and most effective; and ensuring that we are addressing the issues that contribute to the ever-widening "achievement gap" so that children are ready to enter and succeed in school.

With a direct service budget of \$25 million per year for the next 3 years, (\$12,850,000 less than this current fiscal year), cuts had to be made and the funding focus narrowed. The investments must be for services that are not currently funded or available. There can be no duplication of services.

First 5 San Bernardino's budget and long range financial plan are located on our website. A PowerPoint presentation which illustrates the Commission's Strategic Plan and breaks down other expenditures and funding outside of this RFP is also located on the website.

The "Investing in Children" RFP, commits \$6.25 million per year in the focus areas of Health, Education and Family utilizing the service delivery approaches that are outlined in Exhibit A of each focus area. Child Mental Health Services are not included in this RFP.

Except for the Healthy City/Healthy Community initiative, the contract period for this RFP is July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015. The Commission reserves the right to negotiate for 1, 2 or 3 year contracts within this period based on the specific project, need for service, coordination of existing services, changes in demographics, etc.

With the accountability First 5 must maintain for sustainability of Prop 10 it is vitally important that investments funnel into strong, experienced organizations with excellent capacity. Improved, significant and sustainable outcomes for children are crucial. Contracts will be awarded to those service providers that best meet the needs of children ages 0 to 5 and their families, are aligned with the First 5 San Bernardino Strategic Plan and able to obtain measurable outcomes. The number of awards will be determined by the quality of the proposals and the aforementioned criteria.

A fiscal capacity review will be conducted by an external expert panel according to the criteria indicated in the RFP.

A guideline to Administrative Costs was shared with each potential proposer at the conference.

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Updates

As more and more parents "plug in" for information on how to raise their children, ZERO TO THREE, a national nonprofit organization that informs, trains and supports professionals, policymakers and parents in their efforts to improve the lives of infants and toddlers, is meeting the need with its new parenting podcast series Little Kids, Big Questions, generously funded by MetLife Foundation.

Little Kids, Big Questions is a series of 12 podcasts that translates the research of early childhood development into parenting practices that mothers, fathers and other caregivers can tailor to the needs of their own child and family.

Visit www.zerotothree.org to listen to or download the podcasts.

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A Message from the ED, continued

The First 5 San Bernardino Commission is committed to strong infrastructure and capacity among the child serving organizations in San Bernardino County. Administrative guidelines support greater disclosure and accountability with our funded agencies. It is the Commission's intent to optimize, not minimize administrative costs.

Significant changes related to this First 5 funding opportunity include the following that affect the RFP expectations overall:

15% advance (by justified request only and down from 25%) – the Commission seeks agencies that possess strong fiscal capacity, strong governing boards and experience, so the agency is not solely dependent on advance payments of public funds.

Controlled Incentives – should not be inducements for parents to participate in the valuable programs that contractors provide; can be used upon completion of programs in a manner that supports the programs objectives.

No Gift Cards - Proposal should include an accountable and effective plan for addressing issues such as transportation.

No Hard Goods - This includes bedding, appliances, household goods, etc. Although the need may be great, the outcomes cannot be measured. Contractors must collaborate and coordinate effectively through referral and linkage.

Limitation of Service Delivery Models - The highest priorities adopted by the Commission included reducing the rates of child abuse and neglect, domestic violence and unintentional injuries and death of children ages 0 to 5; increasing the percent of children exhibiting age appropriate development; increasing the number of parents that practice developmentally appropriate parenting with services to families most at risk of abuse and neglect and supporting families to be stable and have the capacity to meet the needs of their children especially in the most impoverished geographic regions.

The Commission sought an approach that would ensure the accomplishment of the expected outcomes and thus adopted the Strengthening Families TM Protective Factors Framework. This framework, aligned with the First 5 San Bernardino Strategic Plan, aids in working with children and families through the approach that allows for consistency across child- and family-serving systems and acknowledges the interdependent factors affecting families every day. Models of Service and curriculums were based on impacting these factors and therefore contractors must use identified Models of Service and Curriculums. Limiting the number of service delivery models and curriculums allows the Commission to enforce the fidelity of the evidenced-based model, measure “apples to apples” and effectively achieve, evaluate and report outcomes.

Evaluation is vitally important to Prop 10's sustainability. In FY 2009-10, First 5 contractors served less children and parents than the year before. This was due to a myriad of reasons, from introducing new evaluation tools, changing and increasing the number of evaluation tools, changing data collection requirements, and incorporating a mixed variety of program models and strategies, all affecting the final report of our true accomplishments. With the implementation of the Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework, and funding of limited service delivery approaches, success in evaluation outcomes will be realized by prescribing that contractors must use identified Evaluation Tools and must serve the identified Targeted Populations.

Amplified emphasis related to this First 5 funding opportunity for specific focus areas include the following:

Health - The rate of health care coverage in San Bernardino for children ages 0 -5 is nearly 93%. San Bernardino County reports approximately 80,000 children ages newborn to 5 are covered under Medi-Cal. However, just holding a health coverage card does not mean you have health care!! Under this RFP, contractors must provide successful care coordination and utilization. The Commission seeks not only to address targeted health issues such as asthma and obesity, but to strengthen access and care coordination to existing services. This is for immunizations, screenings, well-baby check-ups, and referrals for specialized medical care, etc., as well as collaboration with Public health and its clinics, our County's FQHC's, school based health clinics and community clinics.

The Healthy City/Healthy Community initiative is an innovative and exciting strategy that has the potential to strengthen all of our communities by investing in established infrastructure where our missions are similar.

Education - Early childhood education is one of the best investments our country can make. First 5 funding for education services must support an emphasis on the target population of 4 – 5 year olds and their social emotional development utilizing measurement with evidenced based tools and skilled professional workforce/providers.

Senate bill 1629 established the Early Learning Quality Improvement System. The Early Childhood Educator Competencies project came out of this and is a joint initiative of the California Department of Education and First 5 California. The initiative aims to strengthen the links between early educator qualifications, professional development and effective teaching to improve child outcomes.

First 5 San Bernardino supports this Quality Improvement System in several ways including the expectation that any funded Pre-K and Preschool providers

A Message from the ED, continued

Family Services - In regards to Parent Education, only one service delivery model/curriculum will be used. Limiting the number of service delivery models and curriculums allows the Commission to enforce the fidelity of the evidenced-based model, measure “apples to apples” and effectively achieve, evaluate and report outcomes.

Nurturing Parenting curriculums are the ONLY ones that will be funded for parent education programs through this RFP. Facilitators of the Nurturing Parenting programs must be certified by Nurturing Parenting, possess a Bachelor’s degree and have experience in group facilitation.

The Nurturing Parenting Programs have been field tested with families at risk for abuse and neglect, families identified by local social services, families in recovery for alcohol and other drug abuse, families at risk for delinquency, and parents incarcerated for crimes. As such, a primary use of the Nurturing Parenting Programs is to treat and prevent the recurrence of child maltreatment and build nurturing parenting skills in at-risk populations. The program compliments the Strengthening Families TM ProtectiveFactors Framework. Certifications must be complete prior to proposed contract going before the Commission for approval.

The strategy for case management funded by First 5 has evolved. Case management must be delivered with specifically skilled personnel, must be time-limited and must skillfully utilize linkage and referral to existing services and resources within our communities. Case management will allow for some limited basic needs to be met, but does not allow for distribution of hard goods and/or gift cards unless that portion of the contractor’s program is funded from another source other than First 5. The Commission encourages and supports C4 Yourself coordination, increasing food access via the Cal Fresh program and greater utilization of WIC services. In the Case Management service delivery approach, providers must use the prescribed tools and collect data that clearly supports “gain” for our children and families.

In closing, First 5 San Bernardino Commission is excited about continuing to meet the needs of our communities, and ensuring the best possible outcomes for children; that they are safe, healthy and ready to enter and succeed in school and in life.

All Aboard the Reading Railroad on the Right Track

In spite of heavy rains, thousands turned out for our literacy event, on Sunday, November 6, at the San Bernardino County Museum. Children from across the Central and East Valleys made their way to “All Aboard the Reading Railroad” to participate with their families in literacy games and activities, face painting and fun. First 5 San Bernardino was able to reach out to over 800 preschoolers and their families.

Many First 5 agencies specializing in health and family

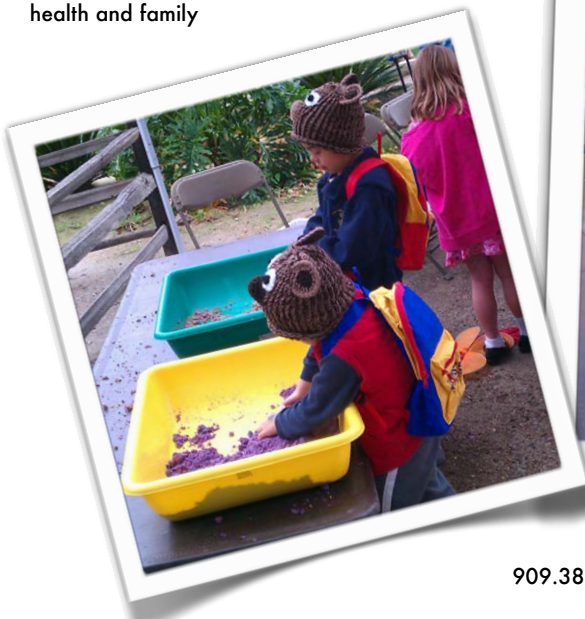
resources were also on site to share information with the parents of the preschoolers.

Our special guests, Word Girl, from the PBS Children’s television series, and Hip Hop

Reggie were in attendance and were a huge draw.

Guests of the event enjoyed healthy snacks of apples, carrot sticks and bottled water, and were able to take advantage of the dozens of learning activities at the event.

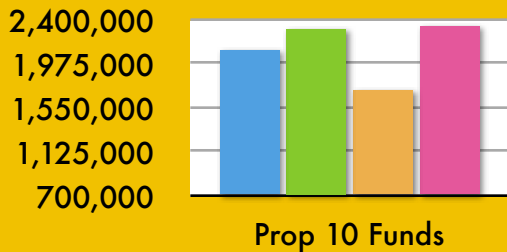
First 5 San Bernardino was able to hand out 800 backpacks with school supplies and 1,600 books to preschoolers. The books were all donated by First Book National Book Bank. This special event was open to all County preschoolers and their families.



Updates

Fiscal Update

F5SB received the monthly revenue from Prop 10 funds in the amount of \$2,354,446 for September 2011. This revenue funds First 5 San Bernardino programs and services.



■ June ■ July
■ August ■ September

Children's Health

IEHP Coverage for October 2011=445 premiums paid by First 5 San Bernardino for a total of \$43,774.

Upcoming CAN Meetings

The Children's Advocate Linkage is a mutually ongoing partnership between the various components of the Children's Network and children's services providers, advisory boards, local educational agencies, child advocates, community collaborative and community-based organizations, the religious community, and the community at-large.

High Desert Partnership for Kids

Monday, January 9 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Location: At Desert Mountain SELPA, 17800 Highway 18, Apple Valley

East Valley Collaborative

Tuesday, January 10 3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Location: First 5 San Bernardino, 330 North D Street, Suite 500, San Bernardino

Bear Valley Collaborative

Monday, January 16 2:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Location: Big Bear Parks and Recreation Community Room, 41220 Park Avenue, Big Bear Lake

Focus West Advisory Council

Thursday, January 26 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Location: Ontario Montclair YMCA, 215 West C Street, Ontario

First 5 San Bernardino Staff Corner Vanessa Lee, Office Assistant II

Vanessa Lee just started serving First 5 San Bernardino this past Thanksgiving as an Office Assistant II. Although Vanessa is still learning the ropes, she loves learning about our organization and is ecstatic to be a part of the First 5 San Bernardino team.

Vanessa was born and raised locally in San Bernardino. She graduated from Arroyo Valley High School and is nearly done with her Associates degree at San Bernardino Valley College.

Vanessa loves scrapbooking, playing volleyball and volunteering at church. She also loves spending time with her two daughters Jaydin (age 5) and Isabel (age 4) and can't wait to meet Olivia, her new little bundle of joy due to be arriving in January.

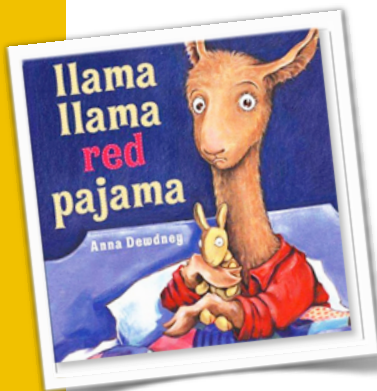
Vanessa and her husband, Jonathan, enjoy taking their motorcycles out on the weekends. The both have Yamaha sports bikes- hers is pink and white, his is blue. Vanessa hasn't been able to ride during her pregnancy, so her bike has been collecting spiderwebs and she can't wait to get back on her bike and take a nice long ride.



Read for the Record

On October 6, 2011, more than two million people around the world will open Anna Dewdney's book, Llama Llama Red Pajama and read aloud to children in their communities.

Through the efforts of First 5 San Bernardino and community partnerships with City of Readers, Office of the Mayor, San Bernardino City Unified School District, local Head Start Preschools, and several local libraries, including Rialto Branch and Highland Branch, a total of 15,770 books were distributed to children throughout San Bernardino County.



"The gimmes" are all around us during the holiday season. It can be hard for kids — and parents — to look beyond all of the product-driven hoopla and remember what the holidays are really about.

It's not the gifts but what's behind them that's important — the spirit of giving. Help your kids learn the fun of giving, and how rewarding it can be to look for, make, and wrap something special — or do something special — for people they care about and others who are in need. Here are five ways to curb materialism in your kids and reinforce the real reason for the season:

1. Teach Kids to Question Marketing Messages

From the TV commercials during cartoons to the promos on the backs of cereal boxes, marketing messages target kids of all ages. And to them, everything looks ideal — like something they simply have to have. It all sounds so appealing — often, so much better than it really is.

The ads kids see around the holidays can help foster unrealistic expectations and lead to disappointment. After imagining their "wish list" items all around them, it's hard for reality to measure up when they actually open their gifts.

Of course, it's nearly impossible to eliminate all exposure to marketing messages. You can certainly turn off the TV or at least limit your kids' watching time, but they'll still see and hear ads for the latest gizmos and must-haves. Explain, when your kids ask for products they see advertised, that commercials and other ads are designed to make people want things they don't necessarily need. And these ads are often meant to make us think that these products will make us happier somehow. Talking to kids about what things are like in reality can help put things into perspective.

2. Focus on Family Traditions

Traditions that focus on family or friends can be a great way to put meaning back into the holidays.

3. Teach Kids to Give of Themselves

Volunteerism, especially around the holidays, offers an ideal opportunity for families to have fun and feel closer to each other at the same time. Community service helps to drive home the message that giving is much more than laying down cash for the hot gift of the season or scrambling around to buy mounds of presents. Volunteerism can show kids that giving your time, effort, and kindness is more rewarding than just expecting to receive lots of presents.

4. Give Gifts With Meaning

Of course, gift giving will always be a large part of the holiday season. And with good reason — it can teach kids to really consider what might make others happy and what's important to people they care about. Watching loved ones' faces as they open presents that your children put a lot of heart and thought into can make the holidays more worthwhile for your kids.

But presents don't always have to be purchased in a store. Teach your kids how to put some real meaning and feelings into their gifts this year and beyond. Making their own presents can help

show just how much kids care and can make the experience of giving more rewarding for both kids and their gift recipients.

5. Be a Good Holiday Role Model

Show your kids that the holidays can be joyous and fulfilling, not just a stress-ridden time that revolves around marathon shopping trips. Emphasize early on that it's not about tons of presents but giving and receiving a few heartfelt gifts.

By starting early with traditions that emphasize the true meaning of the holidays and the caring thoughts behind gift giving, you can help to mold your kids' perspectives on the holiday season and what it means to both give and receive all year long.



Safe Holidays are Happy Holidays!

Remember to take toy safety precautions



Is the toy right for your child's age? Look for the "recommended label" sticker on toys to be sure a toy is appropriate for your child.

Is the toy too small? Toys should be bigger than a child's mouth to avoid choking. Try the "toilet paper roll" test - if a toy fits inside the roll, it's too small and unsafe.

Is the toy in good condition? Older toys may be worn or falling apart. Check for buttons, batteries, ribbons and plastic that can be chewed or snapped off.

Is the toy's string long? Strings longer than 12 inches can wrap around a child's neck. Remove strings and straps such as toy guitar straps, necklaces or ribbons before giving them to young children.

Does the toy have magnets? Magnets may fall out of toys and can be swallowed. Keep toys with magnets away from kids 5 and under.

For more information about First 5 San Bernardino, call (909) 386-7706 or visit www.first5sanbernardino.org and www.first5california.com/parents.

