



Early Care & Education Cluster (ECE)

Child Care Workforce Development and Child Care Subsidies Strategies

ECE Overview

Through this RFP, First 5 San Bernardino seeks to support high quality and developmentally appropriate early care experiences for children in San Bernardino County. In addition to expanding capacity (number of slots), First 5 San Bernardino is committed to building local infrastructure and working with providers to continuously improve the quality of early care and educational settings. Research shows that high quality child care can improve a child's cognitive, social and emotional development so they are better prepared for success in school and in life.

Strategic Outcomes & Desired Results

The First 5 San Bernardino Strategic Plan supports Early Care and Education (ECE) activities through three strategic and inter-related initiatives, two of which are included in this RFP: (1) Child Care Workforce Development, (2) Child Care Subsidies and (3) School Readiness (not included in this current RFP). The initiatives are designed to ensure that "children enter school ready to learn and succeed." Through this RFP, First 5 San Bernardino seeks to increase the number of quality childcare spaces and improve the quality of early care settings. This RFP is designed to support a combination of the following outcomes described in the First 5 San Bernardino Strategic Plan:

Components of Desired Results:

- Children are personally and socially competent.
- Children are effective learners.
- Children show physical and motor competence.
- Children are safe and healthy.
- Families support their children's learning and development.
- Families achieve their goals.

Access and Availability (Capacity)

- Improved access to quality childcare programs (slots) for children 0-5 with a priority on infants, toddlers and children with special needs. This also includes the development of child care in underserved areas.

Quality Improvement

- Increased number of qualified childcare providers recognizing the developmental needs and milestones of children
- Increased length of time early child care providers stay in the early care and education field
- Increased number of parents informed of and number of children enrolled in high quality subsidized care

As previously noted, priority consideration will be given to providers who serve infants, toddlers, and/or children with special needs age 0-5. This funding opportunity will also support quality improvement activities such as professional development and quality improvement training for providers, teacher certification, and program accreditation efforts of which must remain in San Bernardino County serving San Bernardino County children. Note that providers who apply for subsidized slots must participate in the First 5 San Bernardino quality improvement activities (staff development and environmental improvements) described in this Exhibit of the RFP.

The Importance of Quality Childcare in San Bernardino County

Quality child care is of critical importance to families as well as an important and viable sector of the state’s economy. Yet families throughout San Bernardino County face many challenges when seeking care for their children, including limited access and the high cost of quality care. Families are often forced to patch together different child care arrangements. Children need the security and stability of a consistent and nurturing child care environment. As of December 15, 2009, the number of children ages 0-5 on the Centralized Eligibility List (CEL) system is about 9,843.

Funding Requirements and Expectations

Both center-based and family-based childcare providers who meet the minimum requirements outlined in this RFP are invited to apply. In addition to requirements outlined in the RFP, requirements also include:

Funding Requirements and Expectations	
Center-Based	Family-Based
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Must serve 0-5 population ■ Must be licensed and in business for 3-4 years ■ No violations and must pass DOJ clearance ■ Must serve a minimum of 10 children in 0-5 age group ■ Must demonstrate financial stability ■ Must demonstrate participation in staff study process ■ Must be in good standing with community care licensing ■ Director should have appropriate permits, education or certifications ■ Must participate in and demonstrate commitment to First 5 San Bernardino continuous quality improvement efforts including trainings and development of quality improvement plan(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Must serve 0-5 population ■ Must be licensed and in business for 3-4 years ■ No violations and must pass DOJ clearance ■ Must be open for childcare services at least 20 hours per week ■ Must care for at least 3 children in 0-5 age group that do not currently live in caregivers home ■ Providers must be at least 21 years or older ■ Must have a high school diploma or GED ■ Must have at least 6 units of ECE courses ■ Must have current first aid and CPR certification ■ Must demonstrate financial stability (home ownership strongly preferred or at least one year lease term) ■ Must participate in and demonstrate commitment to First 5 San Bernardino continuous quality improvement efforts including trainings and development of quality improvement plan

Definitions and Key Terms

Quality childcare programs focus on children’s social, emotional, cognitive and physical development, providing the foundation that children need to enter school ready to learn. First 5 San Bernardino defines **quality** childcare as:

Child care and early learning programs (including family-based and center-based care) are safe, healthy, nurturing, stimulating, supportive, interactive, culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of all children. They promote early education and the development of trusting relationships to support individual children’s physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development.

Key elements of quality include:

- **Health & Safety:** This includes the health and safety of the physical (indoor and outdoor) environment as well as policies and practices to ensure health and safety of the children.

- **Provider Training & Education:** Trained providers are better able to understand how children grow and learn and know how to provide the materials and activities that are most appropriate to the ages and interests of the children. This includes staff training and certification.
- **Learning Environment:** The learning environment includes activities that are stimulating and appropriate for each child's age, interests and abilities. Children are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process and to experience a variety of activities. It also includes respect for different family cultures and backgrounds.

Special Needs: First 5 California defines children with special needs as having an identified physical disability, health, or mental health condition that requires early intervention, special education services, or other specialized supports. It may also include children without identified or diagnosed conditions. Examples include but are not limited to visual, speech, hearing impairments, and other specific disabilities such as autism, blindness, deafness, severe orthopedic impairments, and emotional disturbances which require intensive services for children.

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance Component

In addition to funding childcare spaces, this funding opportunity includes a capacity building, technical assistance and peer learning component designed to promote continuous quality improvement. Participating partners will advance through quality improvement steps by developing quality improvement plans, participating in a self study process, and by using environmental rating scales and national accreditation standards (NAEYC and NAFCC). Participating providers will be required to develop a quality improvement plan and participate in quality improvement trainings. These trainings will also incorporate strategies and approaches for identifying and working with children with special needs. First 5 San Bernardino will work with partner agencies to determine the locations and most convenient scheduling for these trainings. These trainings may be approximate 2 to 4 hours in length and may occur on a quarterly basis. They will also create opportunities for peer learning. The tentative activities for 2010-11 are outlined below:

Quality Improvement Activities for 2010-11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner Orientation Meeting/Quality Standards Overview: This meeting will provide general orientation information and provide a foundation for the quality improvement training series, as well as, guidelines for developing the quality improvement plans.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Observation/Assessment Process & Quality Improvement Plan : Participating providers will receive an initial assessment of program and once areas of improvements are identified, will work to develop a quality improvement plan, outlining their quality improvement goals and priorities for the 3 year period
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relationships/Interactions Training: This training session will include best practices for interactions between providers and child, providers and parents, and peer interactions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environment, Health and Safety Training: This training session will cover safe and healthful physical environment, as well as, the requirements for State Preschool
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Curriculum Standard Training: This training session will cover best practices and explore various evidence and research-based curricula that promotes learning and development in the following areas: social, emotional, physical, language, and cognitive.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Professional Development, Leadership, and Management: This training session will address implementation of appropriate policies, procedures, and staff development.

To help meet the technical assistance needs of early care providers, First 5 San Bernardino is developing a pool of pre-qualified consultants to provide tailored one-on-one technical assistance on an as needed basis. Consultants included in the pre-approved directory will be grounded in early childhood development, knowledgeable about best practices in the field, and committed to relationship-based learning. Technical assistance consultations may include strategies for working with children with special needs, peer interactions and communications, or issues related to operating a childcare program. Applicants who anticipate needing technical consultations may include a line item in their budget however they must provide detail about the type of assistance needed.

Evaluation Requirements and Expectations

First 5 San Bernardino and the community are mutually accountable for the effective use of public funds channeled to the County through Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenue. Given this mandate and the significant investments made through First 5, the Commission is committed to collecting systematic information that helps strengthen programs, improve outcomes, and document the collective impact of First 5 efforts throughout the County. The Commission's results-based evaluation defines:

- The specific conditions we want to improve for children and families
- The evidence-based approaches we believe will contribute to achieving results
- What we will measure to assess progress towards achieving program-level and Commission-level outcomes

Contractors providing direct services will be required to track aggregate numbers for children and families, services provided to individuals and groups, as well as outcomes for program participants including:

- Client and family demographics
- Knowledge, attitude, and behavioral change

Expectations and Requirements – Agencies selected for an investment will be required to:

- **Demonstrate their ability to describe and document participant outcomes:** Establish clear and measurable goals (performance targets) that are connected and relevant to the Commission Level Outcomes described in Attachment A for each contract year. Devote time to evaluation activities and devote adequate staff time to perform evaluation activities including data collection, data entry, utilization of First 5 database, submission of quarterly reports, trainings and meetings,
- **Work with partner agencies and evaluation team:** Cooperate with the Commission's evaluation consultants and First 5 staff on evaluation activities, such as survey distribution, focus groups, and case studies,
- **Use required First 5 tools and standardized assessments:** Utilize standardized tools identified by the Commission to ensure consistency and enhance the ability to measure collective impact. Agencies must be flexible to use updated tools as required in cooperation with the Commission staff and evaluation consultants,
- **Use web-based data system for reporting:** Utilize the Commission's web-based data management system for reporting program success and individual success,
- **Adhere to reporting requirements:** Adhere to the reporting requirements as established by the Commission.