

Cross-Cutting Approaches Conceptual Framework

**First 5 LA Commission Meeting
June 14, 2007**



I. BACKGROUND

In creating the *Next Five* Strategic Plan (2004-2009), the First 5 LA Commission emphasized its desire to work in an integrated manner across the three goal areas of Early Learning, Health, and Safe Families and Children by identifying three “programmatically strategies.” Capacity building, systems improvement, and sustainability were approved as strategies in this plan with the expressed intent to “strengthen and interconnect” *across and within* the three goal areas. In addition, these strategies were approved to work across the initiatives within *communities* defined as “areas of greatest need.”

The Commission furthered its commitment to these programmatic strategies by allocating \$48 million to the “Cross-Cutting Approaches” in the *Revised Programmatic and Fiscal Policies* approved in November 2005.¹ This allocation also included policy and advocacy and data as “approaches” necessary to achieve the Commission’s vision for the Cross-Cutting Approaches (CCA). These five approaches are meant to:

- “Bridge initiatives within communities and across the County,”
- “Support and link various efforts” within and outside of the Commission, and to
- “Integrate the work conducted by the Commission in specific communities.”

These approved intents were the starting point for developing a CCA framework. The framework has been further informed by:

- A literature review of research and foundation reports;
- Interviews with internal and external stakeholders,² and
- Staff involvement in a broad range of countywide discussions about similar work currently being planned and/or implemented throughout the county.³

This paper presents a conceptual framework for the Cross-Cutting Approaches that is designed to support and enhance the current work of First 5 LA by strategically bridging gaps in current Commission investments and by strengthening community resiliency. It proposes that the Commission take a lead role in integrating formal and informal supports for families with young children in LA County.

This CCA Framework is presented in five major sections:

1. *Los Angeles County Snapshot*: A snapshot of the current landscape facing families and communities in LA County and the current response by public and private funders to these challenges.
2. *Commission-Approved Priorities*: An overview of the Commission-approved priorities for this investment based on the *Next Five* and Revised Programmatic and Fiscal Policies.
3. *Goal*: The proposed goal of the CCA to promote a family-centered community based on the current landscape and approved priorities.
4. *Theoretical Basis*: An explanation of what theory states about how to achieve this goal.
5. *Outcomes and Strategies*: The proposed outcomes and strategies detailing what the CCA plan to impact and the specific role of this allocation in achieving these outcomes.

The attached logic model illustrates the flow of thinking presented within these pages (Please see Attachment 2).

II. LOS ANGELES COUNTY SNAPSHOT

As the population of Los Angeles County continues to grow and diversify, so do the needs of families, particularly those who are immigrant and low-income.^{4 5} Those needs include services and supports that are accessible, linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant to families. Proximity to formal services, transportation challenges, childcare demands, and overlapping needs (literacy, health insurance, childcare, income supports, etc.) require that service systems have the flexibility to meet those needs.^{6 7 8} Families requiring more formal supports face multiple obstacles when trying to navigate a system where eligibility and participation requirements vary from one service to the next.

In addition to more traditional services, families rely on informal neighborhood resources (church, friends, family, etc.) as their first line of support for basic assistance, including information, parenting advice, childcare, housing, and monetary aid.^{9 10 11} However, despite the importance and value of informal networks and supports, there remains a heavy reliance by funders on a formal service delivery model to address the needs of families and children.¹² Few funders have recognized the importance of and directed funding and programs toward building more natural types of supports.¹³

In many communities, organizations and community providers are confronted with a particularly difficult funding environment: ongoing budget cuts limit the amount of funding available for essential services, while categorical funding limits an organization's ability to flexibly address its community's needs.^{14 15 16} Moreover, organizations and networks face increasing expectations from funders for accountability and demonstrated results. They are further challenged with creating meaningful partnerships that include a number of participants with various levels of sophistication and cultural backgrounds. Within this environment, organizations and networks often lack the capacity and resources to engage in culturally appropriate, family-inclusive planning and provision of services.¹⁷

Families, organizations, and communities function within a larger system that likewise presents barriers to their ability to promote community conditions that foster optimal child development. Of particular concern is the existence of siloed programs evidenced by a lack of systems level coordination between agencies and an inadequate service infrastructure to achieve sustainable change. Historically the system response to the aforementioned barriers has been geared toward formal supports. This is, likewise, evident in the way First 5 LA has funded the majority of its previous and current investments.

Similar to many foundations, First 5 LA's initial investments were primarily initiative-based funding for sector-specific direct services. Initiative frameworks have traditionally been intended to impact a child's immediate environments and have focused less on community and neighborhood level factors influencing a child's well-being. As a result, organizations have been given funding to provide direct services with less emphasis on building informal network support. In addition, services have been delivered within the specific frameworks of an initiative, while links between initiatives, within the Commission and within communities, have been less developed. Through the CCA, the Commission has recognized the value-added of focusing future investments on strategies that ensure initiative linkages, as well as collaborating with non-traditional partners.

Along with First 5 LA, public and private funders are beginning to recognize the importance of balancing improvements in the integration of the service delivery system, with increasing informal support networks for families. For example, the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Program focuses on funding three "opportunity strands" that it prioritizes to achieve family well-being: 1) connections to economic opportunities; 2) strong social networks; and 3) quality services and support.¹⁸ Similarly, LA County's Healthier Communities, Stronger Families, and Thriving Children (HST) coordinated by the CAO-SIB and DCFS, proposes two "cross-cutting" strategies: Community Building, which includes social networking and community organizing; and Service Integration, which includes revenue maximization, collaborative planning and implementation, and greater data sharing. These examples, and others that focus on supporting family-centered communities, offer the opportunity for First 5 LA to partner and leverage the CCA allocation with private and public sector funds to accomplish the intent of this framework.¹⁹

III. COMMISSION-APPROVED PRIORITIES

Movement towards strengthening families in a more holistic manner has been a key goal of the Commission under the *Next Five*, as indicated by the approved priorities for the Cross-Cutting Approaches. As stated above, the overall intent of the CCA is to "strengthen, interconnect, and sustain the work of First 5 LA within and across initiatives within communities of greatest need." The Commission has also approved priorities for each of its five approaches. These priorities identify how the Commission can address the above identified challenges through this investment, highlighting the uniqueness of the CCA.

- *Capacity Building*: To strengthen and establish **resource networks** within and across communities. Resource networks can be both formal and informal support networks and represent an attempt to build community resiliency through informal supports that are readily accessible and through provision of a seamless array of services.
- *Systems Improvement*: To nurture the growth of **family-centered systems**. Family-centered systems are those that are strengths-based, culturally competent, collaborative, outcomes-oriented, community-based, and built on natural support.²⁰
- *Sustainability*: To mobilize **social and financial capital**. Social capital refers to the collective value of all "social networks" in a community and the desires that arise from these networks to do things for each other.²¹ Financial capital refers to the broadly-defined financial resources available in support of a community.
- *Policy and Advocacy*: To build **public support for policies** and programs. Policy and advocacy are tools to create the institutional changes necessary to promote the development of family-centered communities where services are strong and integrated.
- *Data*: To enhance and **integrate information systems**. Information systems that are integrated facilitate community and parent-level access to information for use in program planning, community advocacy, and policy change activities and play a role in the improved integration of formal supports.

Role of the Commission

The CCA approaches will be implemented in an integrated manner in order to realize the Commission's vision for the overall CCA. Therefore, the outcomes and strategies presented herein are not specific to an individual approach, but are presented in a bundled manner where various approaches are used to achieve each overall outcome.

In addition, the Commission has identified criteria that represent how funds should be distributed through the Cross-Cutting Approaches. These criteria represent overarching values that will be incorporated into all funding decisions. They include:

- Sustain results by mobilizing social and financial resources.
- Leverage federal, state, local, and private funds.
- Create linkages between countywide systems and First 5 LA funded projects.
- Build upon community assets and infrastructures.

Given the Commission's diminishing resources and the relatively small percentage of overall funds that First 5 LA contributes to children and families in LA County, this framework proposes that the CCA allocation should be used to leverage, sustain, and link investments both internal and external to the Commission, not to create a new initiative or to fund stand-alone Commission projects.²²

IV. CROSS-CUTTING APPROACHES GOAL

The identified challenges facing families and the Commission's vision for community change, point to the need for the CCA to focus on strengthening communities in LA County to better support families. Therefore, the overarching goal of the CCA is to:

Support the conditions that promote family-centered communities that:

- *Are safe, secure and nurturing places for families to live, learn, work, and play within;*
- *Maximize and strengthen a family's ability to be resilient and able to fully support their child's optimal emotional, cognitive, and physical development.*

When communities offer support, resources, and opportunities, families are strengthened and have the means to raise children into healthy, productive adults. For the purpose of the CCA, communities that focus on building the capacity of families are considered "family-centered" communities and possess the following values:^{23 24}

- *Family-Focused:* Communities that place the needs of families at the center of all policies and services and involve families in decision-making and community change activities.
- *Place-Based:* Communities that put in place systems and services so that families can thrive within the context of their neighborhood.
- *Collaborative:* Communities that create formal and informal partnerships between diverse groups of families and their support systems.
- *Culturally-sensitive:* Communities that value diversity and provide supports to families of all backgrounds in a manner that respects their cultural uniqueness.
- *Accountability to Families:* Communities that collect, analyze, and report data on child and family outcomes and use this data to inform and improve systems.
- *Preventative and Promotional:* Communities develop protective factors that prevent problems from occurring on the front end before interventions are needed.

The values of a family-centered community are rooted in a theoretical base that explains how they can be enacted within LA County communities. Two widely accepted theories argue for the link between community conditions and child development and emphasize the importance of family-centered communities; Ecological Systems theory and Social Capital

theory. Research stemming from these theories highlighting the most effective ways to support the development of resilient communities is reflected in the potential strategies.

V. THEORETICAL BASIS

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory is a socio-cultural view of child development, which focuses on the changing relations between individuals and the environments in which they live. Ecological Systems theory has been the basis for many of First 5 LA's prior investments.²⁵ The theory consists of multiple environmental levels, each nested within the next (see Attachment 1). A child's immediate environment is referred to as the microsystem and contains the structures with which the child has direct contact (e.g. family, school, neighborhood, childcare). The next layer is the mesosystem, which involves the interrelationships or linkages among settings (i.e. the home, a day-care center, and schools) with stronger and more diverse system linkages creating more influential systems that can impact the child's development. The exosystem includes the quality of interrelationships among settings which are influenced by forces in which the child does not participate, but which have a direct bearing on parents and other adults who interact with the child. These may include the parental workplace, school boards, social service agencies, and planning commissions. Finally, the macrosystem is the outermost level comprised of cultural values, customs and laws.^{26 27}

Families in Los Angeles County face many circumstances and challenges that can lead to gaps in the structures of a child's mesosystem (e.g. single parent families with little or no social support, low income parents who work multiple jobs to make ends meet). When there is a disruption at the mesosystemic level, the structures in the exosystem are called upon to fill the gaps. Communities can fill gaps because they provide parents with access to people with similar concerns who can function as resources and emotional support. Communities also provide access to childcare, parental employment, and programs designed to encourage interaction among families.²⁸

Ecological Systems theory highlights the need for the CCA to invest in integration of the social service system within the larger system level and across levels where it interacts with communities and families, because family challenges are often played out at multiple levels within its ecological context. Coordination among service providers, parents, schools, and others can provide a safety net for families that works to strengthen all of their relationships.

Social Capital Theory

Social Capital theory emphasizes the value of social networks, which bond similar people and bridge between diverse people, to work collaboratively in an atmosphere of trust toward mutual goals. Social capital is built through the development of social networks, which are sets of people, organizations, and social entities connected by social relationships.²⁹ Work by the Annie E. Casey Foundation suggests that developing the proper dynamics within social networks can result in the type of positive environment where changes can happen and be sustained.³⁰ It is important to note that social networks are not an alternative to the services families need, rather a necessary partner in addressing issues that formal services cannot (e.g. social isolation, powerlessness).

Literature supports the assertion that social networks and a strong service delivery system both are necessary to strengthen and sustain family-centered communities.

These two theories begin to highlight the manner in which this work can most effectively be accomplished. The CCA, therefore, will strengthen and support both informal and formal support systems to foster family-centered communities where conditions allow families to become resilient, safe, secure, and able to thrive.

The Theory in Practice

Ecological Systems and Social Capital theories highlight the impact of communities on the overall development of a child. Derived from Ecological Systems theory is research highlighting the importance of community resiliency as identified by the presence of community protective factors. Protective factors are conditions in communities that, when present, support the ability of families to promote the health and well-being of children and families.³¹ Research has identified community protective factors as:³²

- Informal neighbor networks and the trust they generate
- Active local associations through which residents mobilize for action
- Stable local organizational networks, and
- An adequate service infrastructure

When families are challenged by socio-economic, health, or interpersonal barriers, community protective factors can help to mitigate these challenges and create conditions that promote resiliency of the family and child, thus creating patterns of positive adaptation in the context of significant risk or adversity.^{33 34} More specifically, these community attributes serve as buffers, helping parents to find resources and informal and formal supports, or develop coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.³⁵ Conversely, communities with few protective factors lack the resources to empower families to protect children from additional risk for poorer well-being.

As stated earlier, current First 5 LA initiatives and strategies have focused largely on reducing child and family risk factors. While this is an essential aspect of promoting positive child outcomes, this framework contends that an equally important element is to build upon and enhance community-level resilience.³⁶ By building upon the child and family-focused approaches of the Commission's current investments, the CCA's unique contribution will be promotion of the values of a family-centered community within its focus on building community protective factors, thereby addressing more systemic challenges to family, and therefore child resiliency.

Potential Partners:

Ecological Systems and Social Capital literature identify the need to work across system levels to build neighborhood protective factors. Likewise, the intent of the CCA allocation points to supporting community and systems level change. Therefore, a strong need exists for integrated planning and implementation across three levels:

- *Communities, Neighborhoods, and Associations:*³⁷ A variety of informal entities exist within communities that the Commission can link and leverage in order to accomplish the goal and outcomes of the CCA. These organic groups are significant partners because of their intimate knowledge of their community and of effective, family-inclusive strategies, but often they exist outside of formal power structures and lack the

means of influencing change. This level includes a range of informal and formal groups, such as volunteer, religious, political action, neighborhood watch, community clubs, civic groups, and others.

- *Organizations*: Organizations and networks of organizations provide the infrastructure necessary for larger community-wide change. Strong, sustainable organizations are required to meaningfully participate in collaboratives and to maintain an adequate service delivery network within a community. This level includes formal, nonprofit organizations that are locally-based and provide social services in specific communities, such as grassroots organizations and community-based organizations.
- *Countywide Systems*: Countywide systems refer to the decision-making structures and cultures in which health and human services are provided in Los Angeles County. These systems directly influence the communities, organizations, families, and children that exist within them by way of policies, funding, and service provision. Because countywide systems influence all of the system levels existing within them, it is critical that this level be integrated, as well as responsive to the needs of the inner circles (see Attachment 1). This level includes formal institutions operating on a countywide level. They could include, but are not limited to, health services, social services, education, transportation, public safety, employment, recreation, and financial institutions.

Targeting strategies within and across these levels will allow elements of the various approaches (capacity building, systems improvement, etc.) to be implemented in an integrated manner to maximize their impact. Ecological Systems theory illustrates that these levels are not mutually exclusive and therefore, what happens across them will have an impact on family and child functioning. These levels also represent potential leveraging points for the CCA in creating linkages between different informal and formal systems to sustain the impact of the Commission's efforts.

VI. OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

Based on the needs in LA County, the benefits of a family-centered community, and the Commission's intent for the CCA investment, staff propose the outcomes and strategies presented below.³⁸ The short-term outcomes highlight the specific role of the CCA allocation and point to the strategies necessary to reach them. Please refer to Attachment 2 for additional intermediate outcomes.

Because the Cross-Cutting Approaches are focused on community-level change, and given the proven benefits to families when community resilience is built, these outcomes are focused on the change the CCA plans to achieve within communities. Child and family level outcomes will continue to be measured by First 5 LA through its various initiatives and its place-based evaluation. However, for the purpose of the CCA, the outcomes focus on the change that must happen within communities and the larger system.

Presented below are the overall and short-term (1-3 year) outcomes for the CCA framework along with the corresponding rationale, strategies needed to achieve short-term outcomes, and examples of the role of First 5 LA. This section highlights the specific niche the CCA investment intends to fill in achieving the overall outcomes. For additional information on strategies and activities, please refer to Attachment 3.

Overall Outcome #1: Improved social connections within and across families, community members and organizations.

Rationale: Researchers have documented how improving social connections through social networks contributes to family-centered communities by promoting factors that protect children and families. Social networks have been linked to improved health and school readiness of children as neighbors and community groups are more involved in supporting the overall well-being of the child.³⁹ Informal networks can disseminate information about best practices in parenting and child development and also provide support to families in implementing these practices.⁴⁰ In addition, increased diverse social networks can lead to higher incomes and expanded assets as families rely on friends, neighbors, and others for job referrals, job seeking advice, and connections to tangible support.^{41 42 43} Neighbor networks and local associations that are mobilized are more effective in creating and maintaining public safety within their community.⁴⁴ For example, this community advocacy can contribute to changing unsafe structural factors, including unsafe streets and neighborhoods, poor lighting, and lack of police controls.

Short-Term Outcomes: In the short-term, the following outcomes can be expected:

- 1.1. Increased parent and family member involvement in leadership training.
- 1.2. Increased number of informal and formal neighborhood-based groups.
- 1.3. Increased parent and family member involvement in community decision-making activities.
- 1.4. Increased training opportunities specific to community network development and support.
- 1.5. Increased number of convenings between informal and formal neighborhood based groups.

Potential Strategies: Potential strategies to increase social connections include:

- *Community Collaboration:* This strategy assists in the development of new neighborhood and community associations and creates bridges between formal and informal groups facilitating their interaction.
- *Community Mobilization:* Mobilizing communities to address specific issues within their midst can include working through informal associations with no prior involvement in community action, as well as developing the leadership skills of formal and informal network leaders to carry out the work.
- *Organizational Capacity Building:* As a key part of the infrastructure of any community, organizations must understand the importance of and their role in facilitating the development of informal community groups through their programs.

What could it look like? There is no uniform example of what social networks look like or limit to what they can accomplish. In some cases, it is the neighborhood “grandma” who provides advice to young mothers; or the parent group that mobilizes to address safety issues around their preschool; or the housing association that raises funds for a new playground; or the new dads group that connects dads to the support of other fathers; or the church group works with the local clinic to increase its parishioners participation in their prenatal care program. In every case the power of social connectedness is unleashed in a unique way to the benefit of young children.

First 5 LA's role in this work will specifically focus on developing and expanding upon informal community supports that have begun to be developed by its place-based initiatives (PFF, SRI, Healthy Births, CDI). The relationships and informal networks already supported through these initiatives will be the starting point for this more focused work. In addition, the CCA will look to build upon and expand the development of support networks initiated by the Prenatal through Three focus area's community building activities within the Baby Zones.

Overall Outcome #2: Improved integrated child and family services that are accessible and culturally appropriate.

Rationale: As stated throughout this framework, community services that are integrated, culturally-appropriate, and accessible to families are a key component of a family-centered community. Research has shown that a community's ability to provide concrete support to families when needed is essential to family resiliency.^{45 46} An adequate service infrastructure that is culturally appropriate and inclusive of families, also plays a role in building and strengthening social networks. Establishing a strong service system requires cross-agency coordination, not just within communities, but also within the larger countywide network of service systems. This service system is responsible for providing everything from health care to childcare to families and therefore it is critical that it be responsive to family needs with clear points of entry and smooth streams of navigation.

Short-Term Outcomes: In the short-term, the following outcomes can be expected:

- 2.1. Increased participation in training to establish and manage collaborative partnerships.
- 2.2. Improved program linkages across First 5 LA initiative networks.
- 2.3. Increased participation of community-based organizations in cultural competency training.
- 2.4. Increased organizational participation in sustainability planning.
- 2.5. Increased organizational participation in leadership development.
- 2.6. Increased number of co-located services.

Potential Strategies: Potential strategies to increase service system integration include:

- *Service Delivery Network Integration:* An integrated service delivery network allows families to receive services in one location, or to easily navigate between different service systems. Integration of services will begin with First 5 LA's own initiative networks and expand to external networks when appropriate and timely.
- *Organizational Capacity Building:* Meaningful participation on the service delivery system requires that organizations and networks of organizations have capacity to sustain their own services, to share data, to evaluate their effectiveness, and to adapt to changing community needs. Organizational capacity building will begin with First 5 LA's own grantees and expand to strategic communities.
- *Countywide Joint Projects and Collaborative Planning:* First 5 LA involvement in joint planning with other public and private funders in LA County will allow for projects to be designed and implemented with common outcomes, eligibility, and reporting requirements
- *Communitywide Convenings:* Convenings provide the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge about best practices and culturally appropriate practices allowing for the highest quality of services to be provided to children and families.

- *Revenue Maximization:* This strategy proposes the development and implementation of a plan to maximize available state and federal resources in order to sustain current First 5 LA projects and leverage for future projects.

What could it look like? Integration of service happens everyday across LA County and within First 5 LA funded programs. For example, Healthy Births, Partnerships for Families, and the School Readiness Initiative were all designed to fund collaboratives of agencies working together for common goals within their communities. In these communities, a family who attends a school readiness community fair may be enrolled in a home visitation program. Via the home visitation program, the child receives a developmental assessment, which may indicate the need for a complete screening provided by a collaborative partner. If identified as special needs, the child and family would be referred to the appropriate service partner, either the regional center or school district. The family could also participate in a support group for parents of special needs; receive support via case managers with housing, employment, transportation and other family needs; and be connected to adult education/literacy programs and employment training.

First 5 LA's role in this effort will be to continue and expand upon the work it is currently conducting in support of grantee capacity building, including the Sustainability Project and the Leadership in Action Program. Integration of services will begin with a focus on better integrating Commission initiatives in terms of their reporting, data collection, and requirements within the Commission, as well as better integrating the way services are received within communities. In addition, it will include expanding the Commission's involvement in countywide planning efforts such as, the Public/Private Funders Partnership, the Healthy Communities, Stronger Families, and Thriving Children (HST) effort initiated by the CAO-SIB and DCFS, and other efforts as they arise. First 5 LA has been identified as having a specific niche as a convener able to bring together diverse groups of practitioners and policy makers to formulate common action plans. The Joint Planning Committee and other community forums will be the venue for these ongoing convenings. Finally, this work will include the continued development of opportunities for the Commission to leverage funds, such as the MAA-TCM project.

Overall Outcome #3: Improved integrated data systems for community knowledge management and utilization.

Rationale: Integrated data systems contribute to a family-centered community by facilitating the use of data within a community to improve planning, communication, advocacy activities, and service delivery. Developing technological resources ensures that families have access to pertinent information about child development, activities and resources in their community and information specific to their child's own health and development. In turn, this information allows community providers to achieve better engagement and outreach results with families.⁴⁷ In addition, collecting and maintaining high quality data on the utilization of resources and supports within and across communities can strengthen the ability of providers and policy makers to better meet the changing needs of families.

Short-Term Outcomes: In the short-term, the following outcomes can be expected:

- 3.1. Increased availability and accessibility of child development information for public consumption.

- 3.2. Increase in formal agreements to collect child and family outcome data.
- 3.3. Increase in data sharing agreements.
- 3.4. Increase in availability of data on children, family and communities for planning purposes.

Potential Strategies: Potential strategies to improve integrated data systems are:

- *Case management/Family tracking system:* This strategy assists families in sharing information about their child's health and well-being, at their discretion. It will allow the Commission and others to have more available and timely data on children for better service planning and outreach.
- *Public website interface and Baby Registry:* As currently proposed in the P-3 model, the development of a public site will improve the availability and accessibility of information on child development and pertinent community resources for families allowing for more informed parents who can act as advocates for better services and policies.
- *Health information exchange projects:* This strategy will support the ability of providers across sectors to share information as directed by families allowing for data sharing agreements and improved capacity for data collection, utilization and analysis.⁴⁸

What could it look like? First 5 LA began partnering with Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) in 2002 to mine information stored in their client database for health indicators consistent with the goals of First 5 LA. Through a partnership with Healthy City, WIC's mined data on children 0–5 years old was geo-mapped. As a result, planners and community members can use this data to develop a profile of low-income young children in LA County or at sub-County geographic areas. In particular, this data highlights needs of children and families that can be addressed through programs and policy change. Policymakers who rely on data to inform the many phases of their work can also access this information to inform their policy change recommendations.

The CCA allocation will support and expand upon the work of the P-3 data infrastructure building due to the comprehensive nature of the P-3 plan and its strong ties to the CCA framework. This work will include continuing to focus on leveraging partnerships to develop integrated data systems and to disseminate data effectively throughout the county. This effort will include building upon the current partnership between the Public/Private Funders Partnership and Healthy City for philanthropic mapping and exploring potential new partnerships, such as with the Long Beach Network for Health. These efforts also include expanding upon the Data Sharing Group initiated by First 5 LA for the purpose of facilitating the sharing of data across various groups.

Overall Outcome #4: Improved policies that promote and sustain positive community conditions for pregnant women, children and their families.

Rationale: Influencing policy can provide the opportunity for the broadest impact by affecting large numbers of people.⁴⁹ Unfortunately many organizations that serve pregnant women and families with children 0-5 in Los Angeles County do not have the capacity to do policy and advocacy work. The costs associated with building a policy and advocacy infrastructure are often beyond the scale and scope of community-based organizations.⁵⁰ Furthermore, at the family level, parents often lack knowledge and the capacity to impact

policy. Social networks and local associations have the power to connect community residents in a meaningful way to opportunities for civic participation, including registering to vote, volunteering, and leadership training.⁵¹ Investing in policy and advocacy activities will contribute to supporting family-centered communities by promoting: institutional change consistent with the family-centered principles outlined above; sustainability of Commission efforts and outcomes; and improved conditions under which to create system integration improvements.

Short-term Outcomes: In the short-term, the following outcomes can be expected:

- 4.1. Increase in community educational programs on policy issues related to children and families.
- 4.2. Increased participation of community members in advocacy activities that support children and families.
- 4.3. Increase in joint planning efforts between First 5 LA and countywide planning bodies.
- 4.4. Increased number of collaborative agreements between First 5 LA and other partners.
- 4.5. Increased participation of community members in creating a policy agenda that supports pregnant women, children and their families.

Potential Strategies: Potential strategies to improve policies include:

- *Communitywide Convenings:* Communitywide convenings represent a key niche for First 5 LA in bringing together practitioners and community members within and across issue areas to promote information and data sharing and to formulate strategies and action plans for policy change.
- *Countywide Joint Projects and Collaborative Planning:* First 5 LA's involvement in projects and planning with other key entities throughout the county will allow for policy network development and the creation of joint policy agendas and action.
- *Community Mobilization:* This strategy includes mobilizing community associations and residents to action to address challenges and opportunities in their midst and giving them the skills necessary to successfully conduct such advocacy is key to larger policy change.
- *Organizational Leadership Development:* Leadership development involves building the capacity of organizational leaders to advocate on behalf of themselves and their constituents, not only allows the organization to improve its own sustainability, but also to better act on behalf of their constituency.

What could it look like? The continuum linking advocacy and policy is broad and includes a wide range of activities. For example, in Long Beach parents saw surveyors looking over a playground and learned of proposed zoning changes leading to the playground being turned into a parking lot. They organized a meeting and invited the local elected representative. Subsequently, the changes have been dropped and the playground will not be altered. At the other end of the spectrum, funding for libraries provides safe places for parents to read to their children, get books for them, and expose them to other helpful adults; cleaner fuels and required car emissions testing leads to reduced asthma risk in children; and car seat requirements lead to fewer injuries and fatalities among children in auto crashes.

First 5 LA's role in improving policy will focus on timely opportunities to influence policy that will improve systems integration and support the development of family-centered

communities. This work will include enactment of the strategies outlined in the First 5 LA Policy Agenda (once approved) that support the overall vision of this framework. In addition, it will focus on supporting community action, such as building upon the work of the SPA/AIC councils in community building and leadership development.

VII. CONCLUSION

The theoretical assumptions, proposed outcomes, and strategies within this framework acknowledge the complexity of factors that influence the Commission's desire to create community change. The Cross-Cutting Approaches present a pathway (via outcomes and strategies) of how First 5 LA can use its resources to change outcomes for children and families by developing family-centered communities. The value-added to First 5 LA of implementing this framework include the following:

- Stress on the importance of systematic and organized participation of families and community-based groups in the development, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability of First 5 LA's investments.
- Emphasis on strategies that directly tap into the diverse cultural heritage in Los Angeles County to improve family-level access to community resources;
- Promotion and harnessing of partnerships between informal community support networks with formal service networks; and
- Creation of a clear vision and common language for integrating and consolidating First 5 LA investments with one another and with countywide systems.

VIII. NEXT STEPS

Following approval of this conceptual framework, staff will begin the development of an implementation plan to go to the Board for approval during the next few months. This plan will include:

- Identifying potential partners and beginning to build mutually supportive relationships with them in order to develop leveraging and linking points throughout the plan.
- Finalizing and applying criteria to narrow the scope of the strategies and activities on which the CCA will focus. This prioritization process will also include a series of activities involving Commissioners and community stakeholders.
- Determining an organizing mechanism for strategies and activities within which more detailed implementation plans for each of the strategies will be developed. Creation of this organizing structure will also include a timeline for roll-out of activities.
- Detailing a funding plan and allocations for strategies and activities. Examples of potential funding mechanisms include, but are not limited to, funding community organizations, funding through a third party mechanism, traditional grantmaking, strategic partnerships, etc.
- Identifying the staff resource support needed to carry out the development of implementation planning.

These decisions will be compiled into a comprehensive implementation plan to put the Cross-Cutting Approaches into action.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ In May 2006, the Commission approved the roll-over of \$1.6 million remaining from the CDI-Small Grants allocation to the capacity building, systems improvement, and sustainability allocation bringing the total CCA allocation to \$49.6 million. To date, approximately \$10 million from this allocation has been approved for other activities.
- ² Sam Chan (DMH), Harvey Kawasaki (DCFS), Carlos Pineda (IOG), Richard Martinez (Community Development Commission), Jose Montano (Contexto Cultural), Mona Gil de Gibaja (Casey Family Programs), Pat Bowie (P-3 consultant), Joan Maltese (Child Development Institute), Patrick Burns (Economic Roundtable), Gene Nathan (P-3 consultant).
- ³ Joint Planning Committee Meetings, IOG-DCFS (HST), New Directions Task Force, DMH Children's Issues Prenatal to Five Subcommittee.
- ⁴ Children's Planning Council. 2006. Los Angeles County 2006 Children's Scorecard.
- ⁵ County of Los Angeles 2006-2007 Proposed Budget, 2006.
- ⁶ Department of Health & Human Services. 2007. *Promoting Healthy Families in Your Community*. www.childwelfare.gov/preventing.
- ⁷ Jordan, Audrey. 2006. *Tapping the Power of Social Networks: Understanding the Role of Social Networks in Strengthening Families & Transforming Communities*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ⁸ United Way, 2007. *Quality of Life in Los Angeles: 2007 State of the County Report*, www.unitedwayla.org/getinformed/rr/socialreports. Accessed on 05/09/07.
- ⁹ Baum, F. 1997. "Public Health and Civil Society: Understanding and Valuing the Connection," *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* 21(7):673-675.
- ¹⁰ Briggs, X. 1998. *Doing Democracy Up Close: Culture, Power, and Community in Community Planning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government.
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- ¹⁴ First 5 LA, Joint Planning Committee Meeting: November 2006 (Topic: Community Capacity Building), February 2007 (Topic: LA County Prevention Efforts).
- ¹⁵ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2003. *Blueprint for Change: Ending Chronic Homelessness for Persons with Serious Mental Illnesses and Co-Occurring Substance Use Disorders*. DHHS Pub. No.SMA-04-3870, Rockville, MD: Center for Mental Health Services, <http://mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/publications/allpubs/SMA04-3870/default.asp>. Accessed on 04/27/07.
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- ¹⁷ Coachman-Moore & Associates, Foundation Consortium, Transformative Collaborations International, Applied Survey Research, 2002. *Capacity Strengthening Project Report*. First 5 LA.
- ¹⁸ Bailey, Terri. 2006. *Ties that Bind: The Practice of Social Networks*. Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- ¹⁹ For example, CDC's work in Florence-Firestone, the Ford Foundation, and the Public-Private Partnership.
- ²⁰ Family Centered Systems of Care in the 21st Century, Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.
- ²¹ Saguaro Seminar, <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/faqs.htm>.
- ²² The County of Los Angeles 2006-07 Proposed Budget identifies that roughly \$5 billion will be spent on programs for children and families during this fiscal year.
- ²³ Family Strengthening Policy Center. October 2004. "Introduction to Family Strengthening." *The Family Strengthening Task Force of the National Human Services Assembly*, Policy Brief No. 1.
- ²⁴ Allen, R. I., & Petr, C. G. (1996). Toward developing standards and measurements for family-centered practice in family support programs. In Singer, G. H. S., Powers, L. E., & Olson, A. L. (Eds.) *Redefining family support: Innovations in public-private partnerships* (pp. 57-85). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
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- ³⁵ Department of Health & Human Services: Administration for Children & Families, 2007. Promoting Healthy Families in Your Community: 2007 Resource Packet.
- ³⁶ Masten and Powell, 2003.
- ³⁷ Associations are defined as "a group of citizens working together." See Kretzmann, John P. and John L. McKnight. 1993. *Building Communities from the Inside Out*. Chicago, IL: ACTA Publications.
- ³⁸ The CCA outcomes were developed through a consideration of the alignment between P-3 and the CCA. These outcomes reflect the role of the CCA in contributing to the achievement of the P-3 outcomes.
- ³⁹ These networks have been shown to improve trust between health workers and families; contribute to effective parenting and early childhood development practices by parents; and result in first graders reading at a higher level. See Bailey, 2006.
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