



Champions For Our Children

FY 2007 - 2009 Public Policy Agenda

“Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods”

Adopted September 20, 2007

The vision of First 5 LA goes beyond investing in specific services, program approaches, or even widespread community-based transformation on behalf of children and families. It goes beyond gathering data and studying issues. To achieve large scale and lasting change in the lives of children, families and communities, First 5 LA must proactively seek long term public policy change. The *Next Five* Strategic Plan states: *We will use our unique role to build public support for policies and programs that benefit children prenatal through age five and their families.* With this agenda, we move ahead in that effort.

First 5 LA has the capacity to be a dynamic force for positive change in the policy arena. First 5 LA has a significant and unique role to play in advocating for children prenatal to five in Los Angeles County. First 5 LA brings a perspective that values the development of the whole child, rather than one domain of early childhood. The Commission uses its position to convene experts, officials, agencies, community members, and other key stakeholders on behalf of policy reform. First 5 LA brings the expertise of our Commissioners, staff and our many grantees to the conversation. The Commission acts as a leveraging partner when appropriate. First 5 LA’s outreach and public education campaigns are well-regarded and have a wide reach. First 5 LA has done extensive research and data collection, research which informs our policy work. Additionally, First 5 LA’s interest is in improving child outcomes and is larger than our own institutional interests. First 5 LA’s voice adds credibility to advocacy efforts. Government, business and communities each have roles to play, and First 5 LA has relationships in each of these spheres.

The introduction of the Commission’s first Public Policy Agenda is an opportunity to showcase the policy work the organization is engaged in and invested in, build on that work, and take it to the next level through collaboration with key partners and local experts. It highlights that First 5 LA is more than a public foundation; we are champions for children in the policy arena.



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First 5 LA Goal Area: EARLY LEARNING

Strategic Plan Goal: Improve all children’s attainment of their developmental potential.

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the number of four-year old children in early education programs, especially in underserved areas.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

1. Long term sustainability for universal preschool.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: LAUP, School Readiness Initiative (SRI), Early Childhood Education (ECE) Workforce Development

2. Expansion of Early Head Start, Head Start, and State Preschool programs in underserved areas identified by First 5 LA.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: LAUP, SRI

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the quality of early learning programs.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

3. A strong early learning workforce system which has the capacity to recruit, train, retain, and advance the careers of professional, culturally competent staff reflective of the communities they serve.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: ECE Workforce Development, LAUP, SRI, Prenatal Through Three, Family, Friends & Neighbors (FFN)

4. Wage incentives that tie higher quality standards for child care (such as STAR and STEP ratings) to tiered reimbursement rates for child care providers.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Prenatal Through Three, LAUP, STEP, ECE Workforce Development

Strategic Plan Objective: Improve the ability of parents to support their children's learning and development.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

5. Universal, voluntary family assessments at birth that are linked to home visitation programs and other resources that help parents meet the needs of their children.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Prenatal Through Three, Healthy Births

6. Expansion of Family Literacy programs that help parents become their children's first teacher and full partners in their children's education.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Family Literacy, SRI, Prenatal Through Three, LAUP, Partnerships for Families (PFF)

First 5 LA Goal Area: HEALTH

Strategic Plan Goal: Improve access to and the quality of health resources and other health enhancing approaches for pregnant women, young children, and their families.

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the percentage of eligible children enrolled in and retained in low or no-cost health insurance programs.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

7. Continuous and comprehensive health insurance coverage to all young children under 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) while providing affordable options for children in families with incomes above 300% FPL.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Kids, SRI, Parent Helpline, LAUP, Prenatal Through Three, Healthy Births

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the utilization of preventive and other needed health care services among these children from birth through age five.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

8. Expanded access to dental care services and prevention-oriented community resources which improve the oral health status of children, birth through five.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Oral Health and Nutrition, Healthy Kids, LAUP, Community Opportunities Fund

Strategic Plan Objective: Improve the access to and the quality of developmental and behavioral health resources.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

9. Early identification of young children with developmental and/or behavioral concerns using high quality validated screening tools in pediatric, home and community settings.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Early Developmental Screening Initiative (EDSI), ECE Workforce Development, Prenatal Through Three, Special Needs Project, SRI

10. Family-centered interventions for children who have disabilities or developmental, mental health, learning, or behavioral issues.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: EDSI, ECE Workforce Development, Prenatal Through Three

11. Incorporation of early mental health in the County's Mental Health Services Act- Prevention and Early Intervention (Prop. 63) plan, such as behavioral wellness screening, home visiting strategies, mental health consultation services in early childhood education settings, and other promising practices.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: EDSI, ECE Workforce Development, Prenatal Through Three, Special Needs Project, SRI, PFF, Cross-Cutting Approaches

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the percentage of babies born at term at a healthy birth weight, improved health and well-being of new mothers and infants.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

12. Medi-Cal benefits for two years postpartum to improve maternal health, ensure inter-conception care, and prevent subsequent poor birth outcomes.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Births, Prenatal Through Three, Healthy Kids, Parent Helpline, Medi-Cal Admin Activities (MAA)

13. Perinatal depression screening as a universal standard in prenatal and post-partum care, and increased treatment options.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Births, Prenatal Through Three, PFF

14. Incentives for employers to adopt universal workplace policies that support a nurturing relationship between parent(s) and child(ren).

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Births, Prenatal Through Three

15. Increased supports for breastfeeding, including expanding the number of hospitals in L.A. County that strive to earn the UNICEF “Baby-Friendly Hospital” designation for facilities that encourage breastfeeding.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Births, Prenatal Through Three, 2-1-1 System

Strategic Plan Objective: Improve the health and nutritional status of pregnant women, infants, children and their families.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

16. Increased availability and affordability of healthy food options, such as fresh fruits and vegetables, to families in low-income or minority neighborhoods.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Oral Health and Nutrition, Prenatal Through Three, Community Opportunities Fund, Cross-Cutting Approaches

17. Improvement of public park facilities, including recreational and educational programs offered to families to promote physical activity and healthy nutrition.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Oral Health and Nutrition, Prenatal Through Three, Community Opportunities Fund, Partnership For Families

18. Inclusion of higher levels of physical activity in early childhood educational settings.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Oral Health and Nutrition, Prenatal Through Three, Community Opportunities Fund

19. Reduced exposure to nicotine and second-hand smoke for pregnant women, infants, children, and their families.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Healthy Births, Prenatal Through Three

First 5 LA Goal Area: SAFE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Strategic Plan Goal: Strengthen support to families so that they can safely raise their children.

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the number of newborns and young children that are raised in physically and emotionally safe environments.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

20. Increased monitoring by the California Community Care Licensing Division to ensure that licensed child care and early childhood education programs meet basic health and safety standards.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Prenatal Through Three, Community Opportunities Fund, LAUP

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the availability and accessibility of comprehensive community-level resources and supports for families that may be at risk for child maltreatment.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

21. Improved access to high quality child care and preschool for children belonging to the following vulnerable populations: children in kinship care, in foster care, or whose parent is the foster care client, and children who have parents in the probation or parole systems.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: Prenatal Through Three, PFF, LAUP

Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the utilization of community-level prevention resources and support services among families with young children.

To achieve this objective, First 5 LA will advocate for:

22. Community level supports to reduce maternal alcohol and drug use and increased positive, nurturing environments for young children.

- Link to First 5 LA investments: PFF, Prenatal Through Three, Healthy Births