



STRENGTHENING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

First 5 LA's Strategic Plan
2009-2015



FIRST 5
LA 

Champions For Our Children



Since its inception in 1998, First 5 LA has invested over \$871 million in programs to improve the health, safety and early learning of children under 5 years old who reside in L.A. County.

In June 2009, the First 5 LA Commission adopted an ambitious new strategic plan which directs a significant portion of its future resources toward helping the children and families most in need and strengthening the communities in which they live.

First 5 LA's goals for its new strategic plan are:

- **Healthy Births**
More pregnancies go to full term, and fewer infants are born with low birth weight.
- **Healthy Early Childhood Weight**
Children are less likely to be overweight and develop related diseases.
- **Safety from Child Abuse and Neglect**
Children are protected from child abuse and neglect.
- **Readiness for Kindergarten**
Children have the social, emotional and cognitive readiness to start school.

First 5 LA will pursue these goals through both a **place-based approach** and a **countywide approach**. The place-based approach will concentrate new funding in 10 to 20 communities with high need. The countywide approach will focus on integrating children and family service delivery systems, policy change, public education and other strategies that improve the health, safety and early learning of all children in L.A. County.



DID YOU KNOW?

- L.A. County has more than 900,000 children age 5 and under, and each year 150,000 new babies are born here.
- One in seven of these children lives in poverty.
- Two-thirds of L.A. County children will receive some form of public assistance for food before the age of 5.
- Every year, more than 10,000 babies are born here with dangerously low birth weights, putting them at risk for developmental disabilities and other health problems.
- By the time they reach preschool, one in four of our children will be obese.
- Over one-third will likely never graduate from high school, let alone college.

And in communities with a high concentration of poverty, these alarming facts are far worse.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
www.first5la.org

OR CALL FIRST 5 LA'S
Public Affairs Department at
213-482-7551

PLACE-BASED APPROACH

Lessons learned from the first 10 years of First 5 LA's grantmaking and research have underscored not only the importance of supportive and informed parents and caregivers to young children's quality of life, but also of safe parks to play in; access to healthy foods; quality child care facilities and schools; well coordinated social services; and strong social institutions including faith-based organizations, libraries and community health centers that are supportive of families.

In recognition of these unmet needs, a significant portion of First 5 LA's 2009–2015 funding will focus on community-based programs and services that strengthen families and build community capacity to support the needs of children.

First 5 LA will invest in a continuum of support for children in targeted high-need communities, from birth through their entry into kindergarten. Funding will range from intensive family services, such as home visitation and case management, to preschool and quality health services for children.

First 5 LA will also work to strengthen communities by funding training and technical assistance for service providers, building community coalitions, helping parents and residents advocate for positive changes in their communities, and improving service delivery coordination.

By focusing significant funding in 10 to 20 target communities, First 5 LA will:

- Concentrate funding in communities where children and families have the greatest need.
- Provide more holistic support to families, communities and organizations that goes beyond simply funding additional services.
- Significantly improve the lives of high-risk children in L.A. County for a longer period of time.

COMMUNITY SELECTION

First 5 LA is currently engaged in a data-driven and research-intensive process to identify 10 to 20 communities which can benefit the most from First 5 LA's placed-based investments. Communities will be selected in Spring 2009.

The primary consideration in target community selection is community need as measured by incidences of low birth weight, low-performing schools, poverty, reports of child abuse and neglect, and other commonly recognized factors that put children at risk.

COUNTYWIDE APPROACH

First 5 LA will continue to invest in strategies that help children and families throughout the county. This countywide approach will focus on improving the ways in which services and other important resources are delivered to children and families.

Countywide strategies will include public policy development and change in areas that affect the lives of young children. Special emphasis will be placed on policies that further First 5 LA's goals of supporting healthy births, reducing childhood overweight, increasing children's safety from abuse and neglect, and assuring children are ready for school.

First 5 LA's ongoing countywide public education efforts will provide parents and caregivers with information on positive parenting, child development, early learning opportunities, children's health and nutrition, and other areas critical to the first five years of life.

First 5 LA is dedicated to providing supportive resources to all parents, such as the parent helpline (1-888-FIRST5-LA), and to ensuring young children throughout the county have access to health insurance.



Additional selection considerations include:

- Community readiness, including community leadership and organizational infrastructure.
- Leveraging resources, including the potential for partnerships with other funders.
- Respect for natural community and neighborhood boundaries.
- Representation of diverse populations and regions among the target communities.

DEFINING SUCCESS

First 5 LA is committed to public accountability and will continue to closely monitor, measure, evaluate, share lessons learned and report to the public the progress made toward achieving its 2009-2015 goals of healthy births, healthy early childhood weight, safety from child abuse and neglect, and readiness for kindergarten.

Sustainability

First 5 LA is committed to investing in high quality programs with the potential for lasting, sustainable impact on the lives of young children and their families.

Responsiveness

First 5 LA recognizes that social investments require flexibility and adaptability to respond to changing conditions and lessons learned in the field. First 5 LA strives to work in collaboration with grantees and other partners to make mid-course corrections as needed to improve the potential for positive results.

Replicability

First 5 LA desires to evaluate the success our investments are having in order to partner with other public and private funders to spread that success to more children across L.A. County.



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