

# Summary of Commission Actions



Champions For Our Children  
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## Meeting of September 11, 2014

### Welcome Baby Evaluation Project Approved

The Commission unanimously allocated \$6 million for the five year Welcome Baby Evaluation project.

[Welcome Baby](#) began in 2009 as a pilot program in the [Best Start Metro LA](#) Community. Since that time, it has enrolled thousands of moms at 13 participating hospitals, connecting new mothers with a trained parent coach who provides free and voluntary home visits to help address early challenges like breastfeeding, infant care, and maternal health and well-being of Los Angeles County's youngest children.

The Welcome Baby Evaluation project will build on the Child and Family Survey, which began in FY 09-10, and is an evaluation of Welcome Baby in the Metro LA pilot community that is currently underway through FY 2015.

[A recent 24 month update on the Child and Family Survey](#) revealed promising results such as stronger communication skills for child participants, more responsive mothers, a better home environment and mothers who engaged in more home learning activities with their children. Yet inconclusive findings also existed, warranting further investigation.

The primary goal of this new, five-year Welcome Baby Evaluation project is to evaluate Welcome Baby as a mature program in order to determine its effectiveness at promoting positive parenting behaviors, a safe and nurturing home environment and optimal child development. To achieve this broader goal, the evaluation will be comprised of a set of inter-related studies that examine implementation, the reliability and validity of the universal assessment tool, maternal and child outcomes, program impacts and cost-benefits.

The Welcome Baby Evaluation is projected to start March 1, 2015 and end June 30, 2020.

### New Agreements and Renewals Approved to Maintain Important Services

The Commission unanimously approved three new agreements and three renewals totaling \$4,327,188 which include:

#### Highlights

- Welcome Baby Evaluation Project Approved
- Little By Little Program Renewed at 10 WIC Programs
- Executive Director Points to Success of Welcome Baby Program

#### COMMISSIONERS

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- Two new agreements from the Countywide Strategies area totaling \$437,195 with [Amigos de los Rios](#) and the [Los Angeles Conservation Corps](#) that will implement and complete safety improvements at [Tot parks](#)
- One new agreement from the Countywide Strategies area totaling \$99,500 with Diversified Printers, Inc. for printing of the four Family Guides
- \$3.6 million from the Countywide Initiatives area to [Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc.](#) for renewal of the [Little By Little](#) program at 10 selected WIC programs to provide early literacy counseling, safety messaging to an estimated 61,013 participants
- A \$190,493 renewal to [Children's Institute Inc.](#) from the Countywide Initiatives area as part of a 2.5 year program to train support group facilitators, recruit at least 300 parents to participate in peer support groups, increase social connectedness of parents, raise awareness of available resources to parents and increase parenting skills

The requested extension is aligned with the adopted First 5 LA Strategic Plan because 211 LA County's information and referral services impact all four First 5 LA Strategic Plan goal areas: 1) Children are safe from abuse and neglect, 2) Children are born healthy, 3) Children maintain a healthy weight and 4) Children are ready for school.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Executive Director Kim Belshé spoke of the [first anniversary celebration of Welcome Baby](#) held at St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood and attended by about 120 stakeholders, dignitaries and participants.

Belshé said it was an important recognition because Welcome Baby impacts the lives of thousands of parents and children in Los Angeles County at the earliest moments – before or at birth. Welcome Baby also illustrates the power of partnerships with the diversity of stakeholder who share our aspirations for young children. Finally, Welcome Baby represents an investment in direct services that is complemented by research and evaluation to understand impact and policy and advocacy to secure non-First 5 LA funding to sustain services.

Belshé then introduced Welcome Baby Project Director Celeste Goff from St. Francis Medical Center. Goff said that during the past fiscal year, 500 families were served by the Welcome Baby project at her hospital. Of those, 90 percent repeated the visits and 93 percent initiated breastfeeding – an impressive number since the regular breastfeeding rate at St. Francis is below 50 percent. Next year, St. Francis anticipates serving 2,500 families.

Belshé concluded by noting that First 5 LA's Welcome Baby hospitals are on a path to reach 25 percent of all births in L.A. County and would like to do even more, which is why it is important to work for policy change and to have the support of champions for children like [U.S. Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard](#), 40th District, and [Assembly Member Anthony Rendon](#), 63rd District, to help push for policy change.



The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners is comprised of 17 members (nine voting, four ex-officio, four alternates). The board includes voting members appointed by each of the Los Angeles County supervisors and the L.A. County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health and **Mental Health**. The Chairman of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors also serves as Chairman of the First 5 LA Commission. The Board also includes representatives from other educational, children and families organizations throughout the county. The Board of Commissioners meets on the second Thursday of each month at 1:30 p.m. unless otherwise indicated at the First 5 LA offices. All meetings are open to the public and agendas are posted [here](#) at least 72 hours in advance.