March 4, 2008

Dear Prospective Applicant:

First 5 LA is issuing this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to qualified groups or individuals with experience in the delivery of high quality early childhood care and education services interested in working with staff and Commissioners for operation of a childcare facility in the First 5 LA office building. The selected applicant will be ready to sublease and operate a continuation of services to families presently enrolled, as well as recruit new enrollees for vacancies from July 1, 2008.

The qualified childcare management group must have expertise and experience in providing a high quality, developmentally appropriate early care and learning environment for children ages six weeks through five years old. Experience establishing collaborative relationships with parents representing diverse stakeholders in a high profile setting is required. Knowledge of applicable regulations and requirements regarding the operation of licensed child daycare facilities is required. Please review the included scope of work, required qualifications and the contractual considerations for further information on the qualifications and responsibilities for this project.

In response to this Request for Qualifications, applicants are requested to submit a cover letter, budget, philosophy, curriculum, operating policies, job descriptions for all key staff, and an implementation plan to First 5 LA no later than 12:00 pm on March 31, 2008.

Please submit five (5) copies of your application to:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
First 5 LA
750 N Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Karen Robinson-Stark
Re: Childcare Center RFQ
ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 12:00 PM, ON MARCH 31, 2008. NO FAXED OR E-MAIL SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED.

For additional information or further questions, please contact Karen Robinson-Stark, Program Officer at (213) 482-7562 or krobinson@firs5la.org.

Thank you for your dedication to children and families and for supporting the vision and mission of First 5 LA.

Sincerely

[Signature]

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
BACKGROUND

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10, which levied a 50-cent per pack tax on all tobacco products. The resulting tax revenues were earmarked for the creation of a comprehensive system of information and services to advance early childhood development and school readiness within each county in California. In Los Angeles County, First 5 LA (a.k.a. "the Commission") was formed as a public entity to develop and oversee various early childhood initiatives and to manage the funding from Proposition 10 (http://www.first5la.org/). First 5 LA champions health, education, and safety issues benefiting young children and families. Since 1998, First 5 LA has invested $800 million to support initiatives in all three of its goal areas.

As outlined in First 5 LA’s Next Five Strategic Plan (2004-2009), the Early Learning goal area aims to improve every child’s attainment of their developmental potential. With a $700 million allocation to fund our mission, we are committed to supporting families to be their children’s first teachers and promote programs that have increased access to quality child care resources. The operational support of a child development facility at First 5 LA’s facility is in line with this goal area. In June 2004, the First 5 LA Commission approved the selection of the contractor for the child development facility in the First 5 LA office building with a three-year contract that began once children were enrolled by the contractor.

The contract with the present contractor expires June 30, 2008, and First 5 LA is legally obligated to open the opportunity for other potential contractors to bid on the project. The Commission plans to continue providing a high quality early learning and care opportunity to all children at the childcare center, and the creation of a diverse ethnic environment from surrounding communities. The target groups for the services of the childcare services remain children of surrounding community residents, parents using the local transit system and staff of local private and governmental businesses in the downtown area. The childcare center is currently licensed by the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing for a capacity of 60 children, which includes 12 infants and 48 children, ages 2 through 5. Some facility costs are met by First 5 LA, including equipment, utilities and maintenance.

SCOPE OF WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS

Summary
First 5 LA is seeking a childcare center contractor to operate a high quality developmentally appropriate child development program for up to 60 children in the First 5 LA facility. Services provided to children and families will meet or exceed the standards set by the National Association for the Education of Young Children for staffing and group size. Services provided will address the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and creative needs of young children through a child-initiated, developmentally appropriate curriculum that is play-based, and grounded in research and best practices in the field of early childhood education. The contractor will be responsible for articulating to stakeholders the benefits of a play-based curriculum as the foundation of a life-long love of learning and the most appropriate basis for developing the readiness skills necessary for success in later academic settings. The contractor will be required to produce the following deliverables:
Deliverables

Childcare: The contractor will provide childcare services for children twelve hours daily, twelve months a year to duly enrolled families.

- All regulations and requirements of the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Division (DSS/CCL) for facilities serving infants and preschool children will be met fully. First 5 LA will be kept informed of all licensing visits, including findings and outcomes of any nature.

Curriculum: The contractor will provide a developmentally appropriate program for each age group that is play-based, and grounded in research and best practices. Such a curriculum will be child-initiated and teacher supported, with a minimum of teacher-directed activities unrelated to child-initiated themes.

- A child-initiated curriculum is the result of an enriched environment in which children's typical interests are anticipated by the availability of materials and artifacts that are both culturally congruent and culturally broadening. The contractor will be expected to provide children with materials and toys that reflect the children's home life pursuits, the social settings in which they are being raised and the larger community to which the families all belong. Teacher contributions will broaden children's understanding of and increase their skills with the various elements of their family, social and community environments in a developmentally appropriate manner.
- The contractor will provide an indoor-outdoor curriculum that makes full use of the natural environment. The contractor will make recommendations to First 5 LA regarding improvements to the physical environment in order to meet desired expectations for a fully integrated indoor-outdoor program.

Curriculum Definitions

- Child-initiated: curriculum developed on the basis of children's interests, questions, explanations or problems and in which children have significant roles as collaborators with the teacher.
- Developmentally appropriate: curriculum based on the developmental stages of young children that employs strategies based on how young children learn.
- Indoor-outdoor: curriculum that makes equal and optimum use of the outdoors as well as the indoors for children's learning, and which utilizes the natural outdoor environment to its fullest extent for the setting.
- NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Play-based: curriculum that employs a carefully planned environment that stimulates children's intrinsic motivation to explore and discover and learn through play.
- Teacher-supported: curriculum that results from teacher's responsiveness to children's personally motivated interest in exploring and mastering elements of their environment.
Staff: Qualifications for staff will meet the standards of the NAEYC recommendations for the level of responsibility. All staff will demonstrate annual investment in professional development, commensurate with their current educational attainment and position at the child care center.

- The director will have a minimum of a bachelor’s degree related to early childhood development. A master’s degree in the field of early childhood or a related field is preferred. The director will have the infant-toddler units required by DSS/CCL for supervision of a program serving children in those age groups.
- The director will possess the qualifications for a California Child Development Center Supervisory Permit.
- All lead teachers will have a bachelor’s degree in early childhood or related fields. (Note: “lead teacher” is defined as staff responsible for leading in the development of curriculum for a particular group of children and for supervising the implementation of that curriculum).
- Supporting teaching staff will have qualifications sufficient for a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA).
- All classroom staff, including aides, will possess the minimum 12 units required by DSS/CCL for a fully qualified teacher under Title 22 regulations, including the infant-toddler units required for work with those age groups.

Groups: Children will be placed in age-appropriate groups that meet the standards for the NAEYC for group size.

- Every child will have a primary caregiver assigned. Changes in personnel, both temporary and permanent, will be communicated to parents in a timely manner.
- Groups may be consolidated for up to a total of two hours per day in order to meet licensing ratios during daily periods of low attendance in an economically prudent manner that is consistent with minimum licensing standards.
- Daily communication patterns will be developed that provide parents a clear understanding of their child’s experiences during their day at the center, particularly addressing the needs of families whose children have more than one caregiver due to hours of enrollment.

Reporting: The contractor will be required to submit a quarterly report of program implementation (including accomplishments and challenges), program quality, and children’s progress.

Communication: The contractor will need to demonstrate ongoing skills in collaborating successfully with a diverse group of stakeholders.

- The contractor will be sensitive to the complex needs of parents, recognizing that many of the parents of participating children will also be employees of local businesses and organizations, many of which are also stakeholders in First 5 LA endeavors.
- The contractor will communicate the value of its child-initiated, play-based indoor-outdoor curriculum to parents and community stakeholders in an effective manner. This includes written materials made available to inquiries of interest and it also
includes the ability of all staff to articulate the value of the curriculum and its methodology to stakeholders.

- The contractor will communicate regularly with First 5 LA and will be responsive to First 5 LA’s requests for information or action.

**Desired Contractor Qualifications**

- Expertise in child development facility management, including knowledge and understanding of applicable government regulations of childcare facilities;
- Experience designing and implementing developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum, grounded in research and supported by best practices;
- Expertise in facilitating collaborative relationships with a diverse group of parent and community stakeholders;
- Ability to initiate and facilitate conversations with First 5 LA staff;
- Ability to be accessible and flexible in accordance with necessary timelines and activities;
- Strong written and oral communication skills;
- Experience working with non-profits, foundation/grant makers, and public sector organizations;
- Familiarity with First 5 LA.

**REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS PROCESS**

**Required Documents to Respond to RFQ**

In order to respond to this RFQ, please submit the following documents to First 5 LA no later than 12:00 PM on March 31, 2008.

1. **Cover Letter:** Introducing the child care management group and clearly showing the group’s name, address, telephone number, e-mail address, the date, and stating that the letter is in response to an RFQ for operation of childcare facility in the First 5 LA office building.

2. **Budget:** An itemized budget and budget narrative that details expenses for operation of the childcare facility for twelve infants and 48 preschool aged children. (A template is attached.)

3. **Audit:** A copy of the most recent financial statements, audit and related management letter. (Only one copy of the audit is required to accompany the five copies of the other required documents.)

4. **Statement of Qualifications:** Provide up to 15 pages, not including attachments. Attachments may not be used to replace content except as noted below*.

   - Documentation of previous successful operation of a licensed childcare facility.
   - Statement of program philosophy.
   - Description of an indoor-outdoor, child-initiated play-based developmentally appropriate curriculum for children ages 6 weeks through five years.
   - Operating policies.
• Job descriptions for key staff, which may be provided as attachments.*
• The schedule of operations, including child group assignments and staffing.
• Communications plan: The plan needs to address issues relevant to all stakeholders, including parents, community members and First 5 LA.
• Reporting plan.

5. A detailed plan for ensuring smooth transition of current childcare center operations on July 1, 2008.

**Review Process:** Applicants may be reviewed by either internal or external reviewers for initial recommendations. Applicants will be reviewed using an assessment tool using the following criteria (applicants with the highest scores will be selected for finalist interviews):

1. The degree to which the applicant meets or exceeds the NAEYC standards for staffing and group size
2. The degree to which the applicant’s proposed curriculum is:
   a. developmentally appropriate,
   b. play based,
   c. child initiated,
   d. indoor-outdoor (makes full use of the natural environment),
   e. culturally congruent and culturally broadening,
   f. grounded in research and supported by best practices.
3. The degree to which the applicant has experience managing licensed child care facilities, including knowledge of applicable government regulations.
4. The degree to which the applicant has expertise facilitating collaborative relationships with diverse groups of parents and community stakeholders.
5. The degree to which the applicant has the ability to be flexible and accessible in communication with First 5 LA.

First 5 LA staff and/or Commission reserve the right without prejudice to reject any or all submitted qualifications. All decisions of the Commission are final, and there will be no appeal process.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Length of the Contract**
The Commission expects to enter into a three (3) year contract with an annual renewal process with the selected contractor. It is expected that services shall commence July 1, 2008 and conclude by June 30, 2011.

**Key Dates**
RFQ Issued: March 4, 2008
Due Date for Qualifications: March 31, 2008 at 12:00 PM
Finalist Applicants Notified: April 14, 2008
Finalist Interviews: April 28-29, 2008
Qualified Applicant Notified: April 30, 2008
Operations Commence: July 1, 2008
Compensation
The contractor will receive fees for services that are commensurate with market conditions, less negotiated overhead expenses. First 5 LA will provide facilities costs, including space, utilities and building maintenance. Total compensation is dependent upon the number of children enrolled.

Contractual Requirements
The sample contract and contracting requirements are attached. If successful, the applicant will be required to meet all of the terms set out in these documents within the timeframe identified.