COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Commissioners:
Jonathan Fielding
Neal Kaufman
Alma Martinez
Gloria Molina (Chair)
Marv Southard (Vice Chair)
Evangelina Stockwell
Carolyn Wilder

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Duane Dennis
Deanne Tilton
Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioners:
Nancy Au
Jane Boeckmann

STAFF PRESENT:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Chief Executive Officer
Carol Baker, Director of Policy
Yolanda Bosch, Chief Administrative Officer
Antonio Gallardo, Chief Program Officer
Tracey Hause, Director of Finance
Armando Jimenez, Director of Research & Evaluation
Teresa Nuno, Director of Community Investments
Maria Romero, Executive Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL:

Craig Steele, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

1. Chair Molina called the meeting to order at 1:41 pm. Quorum was present.

CONSENT CALENDAR: (Items 2 – 3)

2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – Thursday, September 9, 2010
   M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Marv Southard) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

3. Approval of Monthly Financials – August, 2010
   M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Marv Southard) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
COMMISSION: (Items 4 – 9)

4. Announcements by the Commission Chair

Commissioners were reminded that due to the observance of Veteran’s Day on Thursday, November 11th, the regularly scheduled Commission Meeting will be taking place the following week on Thursday, November 18th.

5. Chief Executive Officer’s Report

RECEIVED AND FILED

In addition to the written report, the following items were highlighted:

- Chief Program Officer – CEO Martinez introduced Dr. Antonio Gallardo as the new Chief Program Officer. Dr. Gallardo comes to our organization with over 22 years of experience in the private and non-profit sectors with expertise in program development and implementation, research and evaluation, financial management, policy, public affairs and management.

- State Budget – Governor Schwarzenegger has signed the budget. Among the governor’s unilateral cuts this year were several which affect young children, including $256 million from CalWORKs Stage 3 child care for parents going back to work. This reduction will effectively end Stage 3 child care as of November 1st leaving thousands of struggling families without access to child care.

- Coro CrossTalk – First 5 LA will be co-hosting a panel discussion on childhood obesity on November 8, 2010 with the Coro Foundation. Panelists include Councilwoman Jan Perry, Rosa Soto from the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, and Alex Sosa from the WIC Program Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles. The panel discussion will be moderated by Dr. Michael Goran from the USC Keck School of Medicine.

6. Approval of the 2009-2010 Annual Report to First 5 California (State Commission)

Director Jimenez reported that each year staff prepares two versions of the Annual Report: 1) a report to the State Commission that provides fiscal and programmatic information in response to a Commission-designated template, and 2) a “user-friendly” report that is distributed to all First 5 LA stakeholders and includes the Commission’s annual financial report, as well as significant activities and accomplishments for the year.

M/S  (Jonathan Fielding / Neal Kaufman)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

7. Approval of the Final Draft of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for FY 2009-2010

Director Hause reported that Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co., LLP, Certified Public Accountants, have issued an unqualified (“clean”) opinion on First 5 LA’s financial
statements for the year ended June 30, 2010. Commissioners were provided with four documents provided as part of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

- **SAS 114 Letter** – This correspondence outlines the Auditor’s Responsibility under U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and OMB Circular A-133. Significant audit findings, if any are discussed in this letter. The Commission did not have any significant findings for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010.

- **Comprehensive Annual Financial Report** – Vavrinek, Trine, Day & Co., LLP, Certified Public Accountants, have issued an unqualified (“clean”) opinion on First 5 LA’s financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2010. The independent auditor’s report is located at the front of the financial section of this report on Page 1. Further reports on Internal Control and State Compliance begin on Page 34. Management also provides a Letter of Transmittal and an overview and analysis of the basic financial statements in the form of Management’s Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). The MD&A can be found immediately following the independent auditor’s report beginning on Page 3.

- **Management Letter** – During the course of an audit, certain matters involving internal control and other operational matters are observed by the independent auditors and recommendations are made in the Management Letter. These issues are considered housekeeping in nature. Staff has reviewed all recommendations and will follow-up during the next fiscal year and will address the observations as indicated in the responses.

- **Single Audit Report** – A single audit is required for all entities who receive more than $500,000 in funding for Federal programs. The Commission receives Federal funding for Medi-Cal Administrative Activities. The Auditors’ Reports on Internal Control and Compliance with Federal requirements begin on Page 1 of this Report. Findings, again housekeeping in nature, are found on Pages 9-12.

Director Hause also reported financial highlights including a decrease in tobacco tax revenues by $12.4 million or 10.8% primarily due to the decrease in sales of tobacco products, a decrease in the birth rate in Los Angeles County as projected by the State, and increased administrative fees assessed by the State Board of Equalization for the collection of tobacco taxes.

The Commission reported expenditures of approximately $168.2 million in FY 2009-10, a decrease of $3.0 million or 1.8 percent over the prior year. Reduced expenditures were primarily due to reduced grants to Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and a slower start up of the Oral Health Community Development initiative than originally anticipated.

The Commission’s financial position remains strong with net assets totaling $872,640,945. This is a decrease of approximately $22.3 million from the previous year, representing a 2.4% decrease. This decrease is primarily due to a decline in tobacco tax revenues and reduced interest earnings.

M/S (Jonathan Fielding / Neal Kaufman) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
8. Request for Authorization of Destroy Specified Records Pursuant to the Commission’s Records Detention Schedule

Legal Counsel Steele reported that state law requires public agencies to retain all records for a minimum of two years, and then permits the destruction of obsolete records pursuant to a written records retention schedule.

The Commission has previously adopted a records retention schedule in compliance with applicable. There are 54 boxes of records that need to be destroyed. All documents proposed for destruction are outside the applicable retention period and none are documents designated for permanent retention. These documents are no longer needed for current Commission business or for historical records.

M/S (Marv Southard / Angie Stockwell) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

9. Resource Mobilization Strategy

A staff presentation was made on the strategies and activities which the Community Investment (CI) Department will employ to ensure that resources are maximized to support the four priority outcomes of the Commission. The staff presentation also provided information on the three main approaches to leveraging resources, internal process and procedures, and the criteria for the prioritizing strategic partnerships and grantmaking activities.

Commissioner Fielding asked about sustainability being part of the criteria. Director Nuno responded that sustainability was an element that is expected to be addressed within the criteria. While it is included in the criteria, this will be more clearly defined.

Commissioner Fielding asked for clarification on the evaluation of leveraging opportunities. Staff clarified that when leveraging opportunities are assessed, especially programmatic opportunities, such opportunities will need to have clear outcomes that can be evaluated and measured.

Furthermore, Commissioner Fielding asked if a threshold amount could be defined for seeking approval of strategic partnership opportunities by the full Commission rather than just delegating this responsibility to the CEO and the Operations Committee. Based on Commissioner Fielding’s inquiry, unanimous consensus was reached on the following baseline thresholds.

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<th>LEVERAGING OPPORTUNITY</th>
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<td>Up to $500,000</td>
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<td>Between $500,000 and $1 million</td>
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Commissioner Fielding asked that staff provide Commissioners with a progress report at the end of a 12-month period on the lessons learned and status of the implementation of the resource mobilization strategy.
Chair Molina reported that at the September Commission Meeting, there was an effort to say that more money needed to be invested in the community for Countywide programming. Based on the discussion that was generated, it was agreed to create a series of motions of what other kinds of issues, policies and programs should be funded by the Commission. Staff had previously presented a series of various items but Commissioners felt strongly about investing additional resources in the community.

Chair Molina commented that all of the staff efforts under the new re-organization have been moving toward the placed-based approach based on the strategic plan previously approved by the Commission. In the proposed motions, there are a lot of issues that require unique or special expertise in order for the proposals to be carried out. Some of the proposals require an RFP process, contracting responsibilities, and the provision of direct services. Decisions need to be made as to how these are going to be carried out keeping in mind these issues. Chair Molina also suggested having a workshop on these proposals to further discuss the proposals and refine the outcomes, the target population, and the impact on the community.

It was the consensus of the Commissioners that each proposal would be presented and requests for clarification, if any, would be made. In agreement with Chair Molina’s suggestion of having a workshop to further discuss the feasibility of these proposals, staff was directed to initiate an RFQ process to identify a consultant pool, with the necessary subject matter expertise, to assess each proposal and determine its feasibility based on the Commission’s priority goal areas. Staff would also be conducting proposal assessments, as appropriate, based on subject matter expertise.

10. Approval of Motion for East Los Angeles College Child Care Providers

Commissioner Martinez commented that East Los Angeles College has a long and successful history in offering a quality academic and workforce program as well as in creating and administering special projects. Family child care providers from all over the County come to the East Los Angeles Community College to take English as Second Language courses and introductory child development courses and are strongly motivated to complete their Commission on Teacher Credentialing Child Development Teacher Permit, Initial child development permit, and/or their Associate Degree in child development. There is an increased (from 35 to almost 200 providers) interest and demand, for prerequisite courses in English, Math, and advanced child development, especially by Spanish and Chinese Speaking providers. This group of students is a special population that needs additional support services, bilingual assistance in meeting and understanding prerequisites, course sequence and graduation requirements, counseling, alternative scheduling of Friday evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays.

The proposal is requesting that an East Los Angeles College Family Child Care and Caregivers Higher Education Academy be funded at a cost of $528,976 per year for a period of two years, to ensure that child care providers are equipped to adequately prepare the children in their care for kindergarten.
Chair Molina commented that this proposal could be further strengthened by making it a pilot program that could be replicated to other community colleges and institutionalized.

Commissioner Kaufman asked if the program had the capacity to generate revenue for tuition. Commissioner Martinez commented that students had to follow the fee schedule at the community college.

Commissioner Williams commented that she would like to possibly see another community college in another part of the geographical area. Commissioner Martinez commented that East Los Angeles College could possibly be a mentor to another community college.

11. Approval of Motion for Tot Parks and Trails

Commissioner Martinez reported the benefits of green space, parks and trails in urban areas are great improving family and children’s physical and psychological health, and making our neighborhoods better places to live. Common places where children meet to play and enjoy time in the outdoors are at a premium in disadvantage areas of the County and existing parks need to be re-imagined to be toddler-friendly, safe, shaded and accessible to strollers and developmentally disabled children; and

Current research has determined that when children and their parents have access to more parks and trails they exercise more, maintain healthier weight, suffer less depression and that the cooling effects from green spaces generates public health benefits by lowering heat-related incidents and reducing emergency room visits for asthma. Findings from the USC Green Visions Plan, Access to Parks and Park Facilities in the Region, August 2008 demonstrate that only 14.6% of the region’s population has pedestrian access to green spaces (where pedestrian access is defined as living ¼ mile—or ½ mile round trip—to the nearest park), leaving 85.4% of the population without easy access to such resources.

Parks and trails create an opportunity for parents to “get in on the action” by exercising with toddlers or by walking through well-designed stroller trails and paths. The reasons for lack of green spaces is varied; the fact remains that the First 5 LA commission has an opportunity and a responsibility to define create a better future for its children and generations yet to come. Community-based organizations, are stepping forward to fill this critical gap by leveraging resources and working to communicate the benefits provided by parks and green spaces.

The proposal is requesting a one-time allocation of $50 million for a countywide park and trail enhancement campaign from the First 5 LA Commission that will have a lasting impact on the built environment affecting 0 – 5 year olds. Part of the funding would be for land acquisition. Maintenance costs of the parks would be absorbed the local municipalities.

Commissioner Southard commented that the proposal seemed to be more of an intensive place-based approach.
Chair Molina requested further clarification of child safety, how to ensure that parks are utilized by the 0-5 population, and how would these parks be sustained after they are built.

Commissioner Fielding commented that this was a good idea. Tot parks could be created in smaller areas than traditional parks, still keeping with the Commission’s priorities.

12. Approval of Motion for Infant Safe Sleeping

Commissioner Tilton reported that the goal of this project would be to significantly reduce the number of preventable infant fatalities resulting from unsafe sleeping. This positive impact would be sustained with community level involvement, institutional support, and infusion into existing prenatal and infant programs.

Research has shown that these tragic deaths could be prevented by the use of safe sleeping practices such as back to sleep, uncluttered sleep surfaces, and room sharing instead of co-sleeping. Information and guidance regarding safe sleeping practices needs to be shared with all infant caregivers including parents, grandparents, babysitters, foster parents, and employees of child care facilities.

A major safe sleeping effort should be undertaken in Los Angeles County to save infant lives by raising communication, guidance and support at the local and countywide level. This effort would begin with 10 small community focus groups on safe sleeping in areas known to have higher rates of unsafe infant sleeping deaths.

The small groups would be followed by an initial community-wide forum to share information from the small focus groups and help create an informed and culturally relevant campaign that can effectively impact infant safe sleeping. The community-wide forum would draw directly from the lessons learned in the focus groups and would incorporate through vignettes, role playing and dialogue, the cultural beliefs and practices as well as real life challenges related to economic struggles, sleep deprivation and lack of social support.

Following the initial community-wide forum in the higher risk area, a county-wide effort including forums in at least 10 communities based on this approach would be launched to provide the foundation for a major campaign to promote awareness and education about safe sleeping. Each level and aspect of this campaign would utilize existing materials, documents, and resources such as SIDS prevention materials, American Academy of Pediatrics research, and other campaigns, expanding the focus to address all aspects of unsafe infant sleeping.

The proposal is requesting an allocation of $800,000 to fund the Infant Safe Sleeping Campaign over the next 2 years.

Commissioner Williams was supportive of the proposal, especially with its focus on child safety.

Commissioner Fielding commented that the impact of cultural traditions should also be taken into consideration as part of the focus groups, and that an education campaign be developed.
Commissioner Wilder proposed an amendment to this proposal requesting an additional allocation of $2 million to fund a crib voucher program and education campaign. The crib voucher program would fund 10,000 vouchers in the amount of $150 each for the purchase of cribs that promote child safety. Additionally, $500,000 would augment the budget proposed in Agenda Item 12, Infant Safe Sleeping, to provide new parents with information on alternatives to co-sleeping and crib safety.

13. Approval of Motion for Connecting Risks and Perinatal Service Systems

Commissioner Tilton reported that perinatal programs may miss issues of violence and perversion. There are also multiple programs serving the same clients. Given this, data connections between these programs can help connect services.

The goal of this project is the creation of a linked multi-agency data system connecting risk programs and perinatal service systems. Prevention and early intervention could occur more often if these separate service systems were connected, and common data links would provide a foundation for such connections.

The proposal is requesting an allocation of $200,000 for data analyst, clerk, consultants, office, and purchase of data and equipment. The end product will be a data system with liaison for future case services. Minimal costs to agencies may be more than matched by more efficient and effective service. Current models include Child Death Review, DCFS / hospital neonatal project, Family and Children’s Index, and ICAN Multiagency Data Report.

Chair Molina commented that the proposal lacked a defined pathway. Specifically, she wanted to know the purpose for the collection of data. She felt that more definition was needed to the project.

Commissioner Kaufman that it was important to collect this type of data but felt that more information was needed as to what was going to be done with this data.

14. Approval of Motion for Funders’ Partnership

Commissioner Kaufman reported that this motion was aimed at enabling First 5 LA to take advantage of a timely opportunity to support the efforts of public and private funders of early childhood in Los Angeles County to pool their resources in order to support innovative and community-driven organizations that are working to make the systems that serve children and their families more efficient, better coordinated, and higher quality. There are many precedents for multi-sector funders collaboratives and partnerships of this kind in other states and cities. From New York to Texas, and Florida to Washington State, early childhood partnerships have formed to galvanize parents, municipal and state governments, businesses, and institutions to work together to create communities that support and strengthen families with young children. Examples of such partnerships include Thrive By Five (Seattle) and the Early Childhood Funders Collaborative (National). In Los Angeles, First 5 LA has previously participated in funders collaboratives for its Healthy Kids Initiative (Children Health Initiative) funding of conferences, and shared learning activities.
First 5 LA’s support of, and participation in, a funders collaborative dedicated to investments for children 0-5, will enable the Commission to coordinate and leverage funding in our Best Start Communities and Countywide in a way that we have not yet been able to achieve. This is especially important as the Commission seeks to work deeply in communities, and to “scale up” investments Countywide. In order to create an environment in which investments can be replicated, we will need funding partners who understand and engage in our work.

In Los Angeles County, there is an urgent need to strengthen the collaboration among funders of early childhood. In addition to the Best Start communities, other large-scale place-based efforts will begin to take shape throughout the County. For instance, two Promise Neighborhood Planning Grants were recently awarded to LA-area collaboratives. These grants are supporting the development of multifaceted programs and services to create a robust “Cradle-to-Career” continuum of support for children and families in underserved and impoverished communities. The planning grants will result in requests for Implementation funding that will need to be matched with commitments from local governments, private philanthropy and businesses. In order to successfully “bring home” long-term allocations of federal resources to LA County, the Promise Neighborhood grantees will need to demonstrate that they can garner local support from aligned funding sources. This will require leadership and coordination of the public and private funders of early childhood, including First 5 LA, to ensure that Los Angeles County is successful in these efforts.

A strong and active funders’ collaborative will help the Commission to create this type of broader investment in our target communities and Countywide. As grantees are carefully planning their applications for implementation, the Commission needs to be supporting the efforts of funders partnerships as well to ensure that we do not lose the opportunity to leverage federal investment in our communities. This may include providing resources for leadership, organizing, and convening activities among the public and private funders. It may also include capitalizing a flexible grant fund, in the form of a pooled investment, which encourages others to also invest. This fund can be used, for example, to support Promise Neighborhood applicants who did not receive the federal planning grants, but who nonetheless have innovative and well-positioned collaborations in place as a result of their application process.

The proposal is requesting an allocation of $1.5 million to support development of a new or established prenatal to five public-private funders partnership in Los Angeles County designed to leverage First 5 LA’s investments, and to increase the support for innovative family strengthening activities Countywide. Of this allocation, $1.5 million would be used to provide leverage for innovative programs and promising practices arising out of the public-private partnership. First 5 LA funding in this category would be subject to a 1:1 matching requirement. The criteria and process for disbursement of the leveraging fund will be governed by an advisory body to the partnership representing all of its investors who are interested in participating. First 5 LA will be represented on the advisory board by a staff person to be determined. The remaining $500,000 would be used for the management, organizational needs, and governance of the funding initiative.

Chair Molina commented that more clarity was needed as to what would be accomplished with the formation of the partnership.
Commissioner Stockwell was supportive of the proposal, especially since the proposed partnership would potentially lead to leveraging opportunities and facilitate the resource mobilization strategy.

15. Approval of Motion for Data Partnership

Commissioner Kaufman reported that the Commission has invested in improving infrastructure and capacity for data-driven policy, planning and services in LA County and other funders have made similar investments. Data capacity is essential in order to optimally plan for and measure meaningful results in First 5 LA's four goal areas: 1) Children are born healthy; 2) Children maintain a healthy weight; 3) Children are safe from abuse and neglect; and 4) Children are ready for kindergarten;

There is a need to create a place where tools and information can be exchanged and applied toward accelerating and focusing investments for kids. Data infrastructure would be enhanced through integration among partners who have demonstrated alignment, collaboration, and ability to respond to the information needs of communities and decision-makers. Diffusion of a variety of data is critical in the path toward building broader and deeper awareness and enthusiasm for the potential of such investments, based on evidence (from data and research) and real stories from communities.

The purpose of the Data Partnership would be to establish a collaborative network of people and organizations experienced in addressing gaps related to data, technology and communication on child and family well-being. The Data Partnership would have three functions: (1) formation and convening of Data Response Team, (2) engagement with data consumers, and (3) development of research clearinghouse/portal and new community-based research applications.

The proposal requests an allocation of $5 million in countywide funds over five years to help create a countywide Data Partnership focused on increasing access to timely accurate data and improving outcomes for families with young children.

Commissioner Stockwell recommended that some of the other proposals that complement this proposal be consolidated into a more comprehensive proposal. She suggested that Commissioner Tilton’s proposal on Connecting Risks and Perinatal Service Systems be incorporated.

Director Jimenez commented that the proposed data collection of certain proposal will help the accountability framework of the Commission in determining which investments have resulted in an impact. The data partnership could possibly feed information onto the various dashboards. Staff was directed to coordinate multiple data projects to see how they fit into the accountability framework.

16. Approval of Motion for County-Wide Universal Assessment of Newborns

Commissioner Kaufman reported that a brief assessment provided to each newborn and his or her family would screen for immediate needs, provide information about available programs and services, and allow the opportunity to receive at least one voluntary home visit and on-going information on child development. Providing a system that could
touch all families countywide presents an opportunity to positively influence the life of each and every child born in Los Angeles County. Offering universal assessment immediately after birth before discharge from the hospital would ensure that almost all families with new babies are reached, and all families would have the opportunity to participate in the supportive services offered.

In Los Angeles County, there is currently no community-wide system in place that universally provides parents with an opportunity to learn about parenting and early childhood development, or obtain assistance on issues such as basic health care, insurance coverage, nutrition, breastfeeding, family violence, maternal depression, improving home safety, etc. This would be a voluntary system where all families are assessed at birth and offered either one home visit or referrals and resources for additional services as needed.

Other counties in California, cities throughout the United States and other countries have already invested in universal assessment programs. These examples demonstrate that this approach is affordable, feasible and positively impacts the health and well-being of children and families.

The initial assessment would occur in the hospital following birth. This assessment would indicate the services and programs that the family may be eligible for, indicate concerns and issues that the family would like assistance with, and provide assistance in enrolling the newborn in health insurance. Following the assessment the family would be offered a tailored menu of services that they are eligible for. The services are all voluntary, but the key to success in these programs is the element of universality. A universal program takes away the stigma that a program only targeted at high risk families would have.

Families with greater need would be offered voluntary home visitation follow-up services. This would consist of one to three visits in the home or to another mutually acceptable location. The home visits would focus on meeting the identified needs of the family and could consist of limited education about child health, development, and safety; newborn care; safe sleeping; linkage to additional community resources; and assistance with breastfeeding, using health insurance benefits, or other critical resources. Implementation of the universal assessment tool would have the added benefit of providing community planners with more accurate and time sensitive information relative to the needs and challenges facing new parents in LA County.

The proposal requests an allocation of $54.1 million for the remaining duration of the current strategic plan to implement a universal assessment of all new parents at the birth of their child to systematically identify families in greatest need of support in LA County.

Chair Molina asked for clarification as to how the program would be implemented? She further asked if staff would be responsible for implementation or if hiring a consultant would be a better approach for program implementation.

Commissioner Wilder proposed an amendment to Commissioner Kaufman proposal by adding a Parent-Child Interaction Training component that is to be offered to new parents assessed as higher risk. Specific groups of new parents of 0-5 year old children would be targeted for services: teen parents; parents with any criminal history;
transitional age youth; first-time kinship caretakers. The training would adopt a “train-the-trainer” model to develop a sustainable intervention. The training should strive to develop real-time skills for handling behavior problems in young children and positive discipline strategies. It would also include a special training component directed to new fathers.

The proposed amendment requested an additional allocation of $20 million.

Commissioner Martinez commented that perhaps a vote should be taken at what proposals should be moved forward for further assessment. Chair Molina reiterated that all proposals were being presented for discussion and that no formal action would be taken until an assessment could be done of each to determine feasibility.

17. Approval of Motions to Augment the Countywide Investment

Commissioners Stockwell and Dennis presented their two-prong proposal focusing on (1) improving the nutrition and physical activity environment in child care settings; and (2) an early care and education workforce consortium.

Regarding the improvement of nutrition and physical activity environment, the proposal requests, building upon the pilot recently done by the Commission and current projects being implemented by LAUP and the Department of Public Health, funding a countywide workforce improvement program that will impact early childhood providers in order to reverse the growing epidemic of early childhood obesity in Los Angeles County be establishing appropriate eating and physical activity patterns among children in care. The program would best be administered by contracting with a single community agency for implementation and including relevant County and community agencies in a public-private partnership to share expertise and build on past experience. Included in this component is the development of a strategic partnership with the Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles to support a data collection plan for countywide advocacy and planning.

The proposed early care and education workforce consortium goals are to increase the quality of early learning programs for young children and their families by supporting the education and preparation of an effective, well-compensated, and diverse early care and education workforce. Furthermore, key stakeholders cross LA County would be involved and engaged in providing and improving available training and professional development to a wide spectrum of the early childhood education current workforce and potential workforce.

The proposal requests an allocation of $51,304,547 as an additional augmentation to the Countywide investment.

Commissioner Dennis suggested that the data collection component of the proposal could be integrated with other data collection proposals.

Commissioner Fielding commented that having data on the relationship of children in childcare and family factors and outcomes was important. With respect to the consortium, he commented that it was similar to the proposal submitted by Commissioner Martinez and suggested that both proposals could be consolidated. Commissioner Martinez was agreeable to this suggestion.
Commissioner Kaufman requested that measurable outcomes be included in the proposal – i.e., number of children impacted.

18. Approval of Motion for Improving Access to Substance Abuse Services

Commissioner Southard reported that research indicates that substance abuse increases the risk of child abuse and neglect, and is often associated with increased risk of substance abuse and emotional problems later in life. If the parental issues of the family are not adequately addressed, the family unit may not be able to maintain the level of stability necessary to remain intact and impact the well-being of children and families.

Currently, there are no adequate ways to connect such parents to resources and the existing substance abuse service continuum. Through this project, parents of children, aged 0-5 years old, and identified by DCFS as having a need for substance abuse services will be provided screening, brief intervention (information and education), referral, and substance abuse treatment, as needed. This initiative would be implemented Countywide and meets First 5 LA’s overarching object to strengthen families and children via system integration and improved navigation of services.

DPH and DCFS will develop a screening and referral process to quickly identify and offer services to families who have been reported to DCFS, but have no substantiated case for abuse or neglect at the time of investigation. Under the proposed project, DPH will continue to subcontract with the Community Assessment & Service Centers (CASC) and alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment agencies to enhance service delivery to this population.

According to DCFS data, there were 4,811 cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect opened during Calendar Year 2009 involving children ages birth to five years. In 2,145 (45 percent) of the 4,811 cases, the child(ren) was never removed but released back to the family. In contrast, in 2,666 (55 percent) of those cases, the child(ren) was removed from the family and detained by DCFS. In another data report DCFS further indicated that there were a total of approximately 21,809 cases opened during Fiscal Year 2009-2010. Of those opened cases, 9,143 (42 percent) cases had one or more parent with substance abuse related issues.

The proposal requests a time-limited $5 million annual investment that would allow DPH and DCFS to design service integration and system navigation strategies to improve access to substance abuse services for parents of children (from birth to age 5).

The proposed investment by the Commission would be time-limited because access to substance abuse services is anticipated to improve as 2010 Federal parity requirements become fully implemented, and with the implementation of Federal health care reform in 2014.

19. Approval of Motion for “One Step Ahead” Initiative

Commissioner Fielding reported that the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is a food and nutrition education program for
pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants and children under age five who are low-income (up to 185% of the Federal Poverty Level) and at nutritional risk. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and support, medical and social service referrals, and supplemental foods tailored to eligible families through funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC is a short-term intervention program designed to influence lifetime nutrition and health behaviors in this targeted, high-risk population. Nationwide, approximately 25% of the individuals served are women, 25% are infants and the remaining 50% are children ages one to five. WIC services are available in every state and US territory, and currently WIC services are delivered to over 9 million participants each month.

In Los Angeles County (LAC), WIC currently serves approximately 67% of all infants and about half of all children ages one to five, translating into approximately 600,000 individuals and 400,000 families each month. WIC organizations are devoted to improving nutrition and health among pregnant women and young children. The following seven local agency WIC Programs provide these services in LAC in over 90 sites—nearly every low-income neighborhood—across the County:

The proposal requests the establishment of a five-year project called “One Step Ahead” that would provide important child development, safety supplies and resources to families with new babies in low-income communities receiving WIC services in Los Angeles County. These items could include: children’s and parenting books, developmental toys, vouchers for car seats, child safety locks, and other items that improve childhood development and safety. WIC centers would distribute the vouchers to their clients, and provide education to ensure parents know how best to utilize these items.

The goals of this project are to provide low income families with developmental and safety items that they might have difficulty affording as well as to retain families in WIC beyond the child’s first year of life. The One Step Ahead project is modeled on the First 5 funded, successful WIC literacy program, Little By Little.

Commissioner Martinez asked how other Commission programs could be incorporated into this proposal such as Family Literacy. CEO Martinez suggested that the Ready.Set.Grow! campaign also be considered for potential incorporation into this proposal.

20. Approval of Motion for Mini-Grant Program to Establish Community Peer Support Groups for Parents of Infants and Small Children

Commissioner Fielding commented that the proposal recommends creating a mini-grant program for parents of children 0-5 to establish peer support groups in order to enhance social support for and foster community cohesion among parents. The peer support group model has been widely utilized as a strategy to address issues such as postpartum depression and continuation of breastfeeding. Communities establishing peer support groups with these funds may choose to focus on these and other issues such as parenting skills or healthy eating in the home. Support groups focusing on these issues would most significantly impact the strategic plan priority goals of children being safe from abuse and neglect and children maintaining a healthy weight.
The target for this intervention would be parents of children 0-5 in communities where peer support and a sense of social cohesion and connection to the neighborhood are often weak or lacking. A significant proportion of new mothers relate feeling a lack of social support consistent with a feeling of isolation or lack of connectedness. Social support groups are particularly important for mothers of newborns experiencing feelings of isolation. Common feelings experienced by mothers who have recently delivered include a perception of not being supported, difficulties with family members living far away, cross cultural issues, being cut off or no longer having commonalities with friends, difficulties with spouse and afraid of judgments. Data from the 2005 Los Angeles Mommies and Babies (LAMB) survey show that one in four mothers stated that they did not have someone to listen to their problems; and nearly 30% stated that they did not have someone to help them care for their child if they became sick. There is data to suggest that parents value the identity and connectedness they receive from support groups. WIC found that 26% of participating mothers in their WIC Offers Wellness case management program for low-birth-weight and very-low-birth-weight infants were returning solely to attend their support groups, without receiving food vouchers and other available services. In general, mothers with high perceived level of support are more satisfied with their babies, their maternal roles, and their lives overall.

The proposal requests the establishment a grant fund to award up to 100 individual mini-grants in amounts not to exceed $20,000 per award to establish community peer support groups for parents of children 0-5. The total allocation is $2.2 million made available for the remainder of the five-year strategic plan.

21. Approval of Motion to Augment Countywide Resource Mobilization Strategic Investment

Commissioner Stockwell reported that the Commission adopted a strategic plan, out of which an approach was also adopted to include strategies for Countywide and Place Based community investments;

The strengthening of financial and social capital resources together with local First 5 LA community mobilization to build capacity and countywide public education, policy and advocacy is necessary to the successful implementation of placed-based investments.

One of the Commission’s role in the new strategic plan is to support leveraging of resources for systems (organizations and networks) to strengthen services and resources available to families and communities to achieve the long term and intermediate goals that have been set.

The Resource Mobilization strategy will facilitate connection and strengthen the Commission’s ability to leverage federal, state, county and other private dollars; develop partnerships that will give the Commission a greater reach throughout the county; and broaden the services for families and children 0-5 in Los Angeles County beyond the Commission’s investments.

The proposal requests that that the countywide investment of Resource Mobilization budget be augmented by an additional $40,000,000. ($11,000,000. is already allocated for fiscal year 2010-2011; $10,000,000 would be added to years 2-5 for a total of $51,000,000).
It was the consensus of the Commissioners to exclude this proposal from further assessment and consideration. The current allocation of $11 million for Year 1 was deemed to be sufficient for Year 1 of the Resource Mobilization Strategy. If additional resources are needed, staff was instructed to come back to the Commission with a request for additional funding. Staff was also directed to provide a status report on Year 1 activities of the Resource Mobilization Strategy at year-end.

NOTE: The following motions were introduced by Commissioner Wilder at the meeting. All subsequent agenda items were renumbered.

22. Approval of Motion for Ensuring Pregnant Low-Income Women have Uninterrupted Prenatal and Post-Partum Care

Commissioner Wilder reported that recent studies show that African-American infants have disproportionately higher mortality rates than the rest of the population and that eligible Hispanic women enroll in the Medi-Cal program and begin prenatal care late in pregnancy posing risks to both the mother and the newborn.

Simplifying the enrollment procedures into the Medi-Cal program for pregnant women and children is necessary to promote access to timely health services that can save lives and prevent disabilities. Providing prenatal care and health services in the first years of life can prevent more costly long-term chronic illnesses and disabilities.

Savings will result from enrolling more of the currently eligible pregnant women and newborns into health programs as early as possible and to maximize receipt of federal matching funds to support these programs. Health program enrollment for pregnant women should be as simple, convenient, timely, administratively feasible and direct as possible. This includes the key principle of immediate and ongoing coverage for persons who are very likely to be eligible until a final eligibility determination is made by the county or state.

The proposal entails engaging in two separate but related activities, especially if done in coordination with the universal home visitation program: 1) create a Perinatal Hotline; and, 2) engage in policy advocacy to any avoid disruption in medical coverage for pregnant women, especially as health reform changes are implemented.

The Commission would fund a pilot project to both create a hotline for pregnant women countywide and to work with several prenatal care clinics of various types – high volume, group practice, single provider - on the issues for women and their providers surrounding the transformation of the two-step into one-step application for Medi-Cal presumptive, immediate and ongoing coverage. The experiences would be relayed real-time to the various departments that should address any access-related barriers – primarily the State Department of Health Services and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services – and summarized in a report to support necessary policy and e-changes for the enrollment processes to affect health reform in 2014.

The proposals requests an allocation of $500,000 annually for duration of 5 year strategic plan ($2.5 million total). An additional $300,000 budget would be needed for evaluation.
23. Approval of Healthy Food Access Initiative

Commissioner Wilder reported that a third of all U.S. deaths annually can be attributed to either a lack of physical activity or poor eating habits or both. Almost a third of U.S. children and adolescents are overweight or obese with even higher rates in African-American and Latino and lower-income communities.

Overweight children and adolescents have a greater likelihood of becoming overweight and obese adults at risk for heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and other compromising health conditions. Only a quarter of the youth in Los Angeles County consume five or more serving of fruits and vegetables per day, but half consume fast food at least once a week.

Community gardens are an effective community-based strategy for improving health disparities because they offer the joint benefits of physical activity promotion and access to fruits and vegetables. Studies suggest that families are more likely to be physically active if they have neighborhood or nearby public spaces that they consider aesthetically appealing.

Health benefits from participating in community gardens include positive changes in total cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and systolic blood pressure are associated with either walking or gardening. Community gardens have also demonstrated a role in improving access to positive nutrition including findings that suggests that community gardeners have a greater consumption of fresh vegetables compared with non-gardeners as well as lower consumption of sweet foods and drinks; and

The proposal requests an allocation of a $7.5 million over the next five years for a Healthy Food Access Initiative.

COMMISSION: (Item 24)

24. Public Comment

Luz Chacon, Maternal & Child Health Access
Janice French, LA Best Babies Network
Sylvia Drew Ivie, Office of Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Kathy Malaske-Samu, Office of Child Care, Los Angeles County
Yanci Panameno, NEUHC WIC Program
Caron Post, LA Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce
Caroline Rivas, Advancement Project
Shannan Whaley, PHFC WIC Program
Kimberly Wong, LA County Perinatal Mental Health Taskforce

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 pm.

A Closed Session took place prior to the Commission Meeting. There is no reportable action.
The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be on:

November 18, 2010 at 1:30 p.m.
Multi-Purpose Room
750 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA  90012

Meeting minutes were recorded by Maria Romero.