**Summer Safety FunFest!**

First 5 LA’s Summer Safety campaign made a splash last Saturday at the Los Angeles Swim Stadium, where families participated in water safety classes, and car seat and CPR trainings as part of a Summer Safety FunFest. First 5 LA grantees – including LAUP, Crystal Stairs, and L.A. County 211 – provided educational information to parents, and gave out a variety of other goodies – from lunch boxes, to pencils and rulers. Children had fun splashing around in water safety classes and parents who participated in car seat trainings received a car seat from Community Development Department of the City of Los Angeles.

Several hundred parents and children attended Summer Safety FunFest, as did FOX 11 News, Unavision, L.A. Watts Times, La Opinion and other media. “It’s a favorite time of year for children, but summer also puts kids at greater risk for injury, even death,” said Evelyn V. Martinez, First 5 LA’s Executive Director. “We want to get the word out about how children can be protected during a high-risk time of year.”

The summer safety message was hands-on at the FunFest. Safekids LA used temperature-taking devices to show how a car can heat up to more than 150 degrees, even when the outside temperature is in the 80s. Shirley Shot Nomoto, RN, MSN, of LAC+USC Medical Center, used the devices to show parents why you should never leave a child behind in a car, especially during the hot summer months.

Orange County resident Julie Kinley, whose 1-year-old son Jake, nearly drown last month in the family pool, shared what she had learned as a parent from the experience – that a child can drown in moments when an adult is caught off guard. “This is important,” Kinley said of the event, as Jake waved to passersby from his stroller. “I wouldn’t miss this.”

For Summer Safety tips, call the confidential Parent Helpline at (888) FIRST5LA. Summer Safety FunFest photos will be available through the First 5 LA website in the next few days.

**Study Finds Breastfeeding Lowers Risk of Childhood Obesity**

Childhood obesity is on the rise, a fact that has many parents anxious. But what’s a mother to do? Well, according to a new study by the Data Mining Project, a research partnership between PHFE-WIC and First 5 LA, breastfeeding helps prevent obesity.

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September 14-16, 9am-6pm: **Certified Infant Massage Instructor Training** at The Heart Touch Project, 3400 Airport Ave. #42, Santa Monica 90405. Registration is $650. Contact Jennifer at (310) 391-2558 x5 or jennifer@hearttouch.org.

**EVIE’S DESK**

They Go Where You Go!

Tragedy can strike at any moment – and often does when we least expect it. We’re reminded of that in last week’s tragic death of three small children and a mother who jumped back into a vehicle carrying the children after she noticed it rolling down a steep hill.

On her way to a Fourth of July picnic, the Connecticut mother stepped outside her parked minivan to talk to friends about where to set up, leaving her 3 year-old son and two other children in the car. In the next terrifying instant, the woman realized the van was rolling down the hill toward a pond. Frantic, she ran after the vehicle to save the children inside, jumping in just before it hit the water. The van sank and all four died.

First 5 LA wants to send the message to all parents to never leave children alone in a vehicle. They go where you go! It may seem inconsequential to leave a child “just for a second” while taking care of any one of a number of tasks parents today are challenged with. But whether it is stopping to ask for directions, or running into the store to grab something, ALWAYS take your children with you.

-Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

The Project last month released a research brief highlighting newfound benefits of breastfeeding for mothers and infants. It was the second of 10 reports outlining needs of families with small children in L.A. County.

In addition to lowering the risk of obesity in children, the new study indicates that breastfeeding can also significantly lower the risk of diabetes and breast cancer in mothers.

“I am delighted that this brief is coming out in time for World Breastfeeding Month in August,” said Shannon E. Whaley, Ph.D., Child Development Specialist for PHFE-WIC. “Breastfeeding has emerged as a key strategy in the prevention of obesity in early childhood and beyond.”

According to the report, the strength of a woman’s intention to breastfeed during pregnancy has a direct influence on the duration of time she ends up nursing her baby after birth. Hospitals, healthcare providers, employers and the community play a crucial role in providing support services and information that will increase a mother’s likelihood to breastfeed.

To download the brief, log-on to www.first5la.org. To receive a hard copy, contact Mayra Gomez at (213) 482-7551. You may also access the results of the study at www.healthycity.org.

**GRANTEE PROFILE**

**Family Child Care Providers Grow Their Program at Connections For Children**

When Adalgisa Nico decided to leave her elementary school teaching career and open the Butterfly Garden Preschool in Culver City, she was not sure where to start. Accustomed to older children, Gisa needed to know how to nurture kids at this tender age. After a few months with only two toddlers enrolled, she called her local resource and referral – Connections For Children – for assistance and was quickly enrolled in the First 5 LA-funded Family Child Care Resource Program.

Through the program, Gisa was paired with mentor Brianne Harvey and, after Brianne’s first site visit, they developed goals to improve the preschool. Gisa began attending many of the workshops offered at Connections. After a steep, but ultimately worthwhile learning curve, she began to accomplish her goals.

Gisa also attended a monthly peer-to-peer learning exchange group for current and past participants of the program. Although Gisa graduated from the year-long program in 2005, she still attends workshops because of the excellent topics covered there and the peer-to-peer exchanges.

“We try to offer a wide range of topics for the participants” said Patti Oblath, Associate Director at Connections. “Our staff coordinates a full schedule of workshops, from Ethics and Childcare, to Music and Movement.”

A First 5 LA grantee since 2003, Connections for Children, partnering with the Center for Community and Family Services, has mentored more than 300 providers throughout the Westside and South Bay. They have recently been chosen to participate in the partially First 5 LA-funded Steps to Excellence Program, a quality rating system for childcare.
To learn more about the Family Child Care Resource Program at Connections For Children program, contact Patti Oblath at (310) 452-3325 x 212.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Irma Ramos Models Success

Irma Ramos is a community representative at the First 5 LA-funded Family Literacy Program at Meyler Adult Learning Center, which is part of Harbor Community Adult School. In addition to her data collection and intake tasks, Irma serves as a role model for many of the parents who join the program.

She started at Meyler in 2001 as one of its first students. She was 19 years old, with little more than an elementary school education and just a few years as a U.S. resident. A mother at 16, Irma took classes alongside her 3-year-old son Angel, learning English and catching up on her lost schooling.

After two years as a star student, Irma was hired by Meyler to assist with transitioning families into the program. Her professional and scholastic accomplishments gave her the boosted self-esteem needed to earn her GED. She then attended the Southern California Regional Occupation Center to study fashion design.

Irma recently received her certificate in fashion design and plans to attend El Camino College to continue her studies in the field after the birth of her second child. "I have come such a long way from being a six year old selling gum on the streets of Mexico City!"

Which book has most influenced your life?
"How to Raise Emotionally Healthy Children" by Gerald Newmark, Ph.D. This book was read in my parenting classes at Meyler and has made a difference in how I raise my son.

Which historical figure do you admire most and why?
Cesar Chavez, because he fought for the rights of immigrant workers and was an important voice, not only for Hispanics, but for all minorities.

What is the greatest challenge the children and families of LA County face today?
For families to remain close and caring with one another so that children will not have to go to others to find trust and comfort.

Which living person do you most admire and why?
Our family literacy program director, Annette Ciketic. She has helped change so many lives through family literacy, including my own.

What is your motto?
Anything is possible.