COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Commissioners:
Jonathan Fielding (Alternate)
John Hatakeyama (Alternate)
Neal Kaufman
Don Knabe (Chair)
Maria Veloz (Vice Chair)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Chuck Hurewitz
Matt Rezvani
Deanne Tilton

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioners:
Jane Boeckmann
Renatta Cooper
Carolyn Wilder

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Jacquelyn McCroskey

STAFF PRESENT:

Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Victor Abalos, Director of Communications
Casey Beyer, Director of Government Affairs
Lisa Brabo, Director of Grants Management
Armando Jimenez, Director of Research & Evaluation
Marilyn M. Morton, Director of Management Services
Teresa Nuno, Director of Planning & Development
Angelica Herrera, Senior Staff Accountant
Maria Romero, Executive Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL:
Craig Steele, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

1. Chair Don Knabe called the meeting to order at 1:37 p.m.

CONSENT CALENDAR:  (Items 2 – 3)

2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – August 12, 2004

   M/S  (Maria Veloz / John Hatakeyama)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

3. Approval of Monthly Financials

   M/S  (Maria Veloz / Jonathan Fielding)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
4. Announcements by the Chair

RECEIVED

5. Executive Director’s Report

RECEIVED AND FILED

In addition to the written report, Executive Director Martinez commented on the following Commission-related issues.

- **Special Needs Project** – First 5 LA is planning to participate in the First 5 California Special Needs Project RFA which was recently released by the State. The timeline is very ambitious as the deadline for getting the applications to the State is October 4, 2004. The State is looking to fund 10 demonstration sites throughout the state for a funding opportunity of $250,000 per year or up to $1 million per site over four years. Each site will be required to demonstrate the capacity to provide a 1:1 fund match. Only County Commissions are eligible to receive funding under this Request For Application (RFA) and only current existing First 5 California-funded School Readiness Initiative Programs will be considered as possible demonstration sites. Los Angeles County will be allowed to submit two applications to the state; however, it is a competitive process and there is no guarantee of funding.

- **Legislative Roundtable V** – The next legislative roundtable discussion has been scheduled for Friday, October 1, 2004. The focus of the discussion will be the Healthy Births Initiative. Dr. Carolina Reyes, Project Director, will be making a presentation on the activities and accomplishments of the initiative.

6. Approval of Executive Director Employment Contract:

Legal Counsel Steele presented the proposed employment contract for the Executive Director.

M/S (Maria Veloz / Jonathan Fielding) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED


The accounting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP conducted the annual independent audit during the month of August, 2004. During this audit, all assets, liabilities, expenses and fund balances were verified and tested for accuracy.

The audit found the financial statements to be fairly presented with no material weaknesses in internal control or instances of noncompliance under the Children and Families Act.

M/S (Jonathan Fielding / John Hatakeyama) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

8. Approval of the Staff Recommendation Regarding the Position Categories, as Required for Compliance with the Political Reform Act Status of the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LA-UP) Third Parent Board Nominee and Ex-Officio Member

Director Nuno commented that at the Commission meeting of August 12, 2004, Karen Hill-Scott, UPK lead consultant, asked the Commission to consider adding an additional space on the LA-UP Board for a third parent representative. At this same meeting, a vote was taken on the proposed LA-UP Board membership. Chair Knabe then referred the issue of the potential third parent nominee
issue as well as the potential vacancy of one of the two, one year ex-officio seats back to staff for a recommendation to be presented at the Commission meeting scheduled in September.

In response to Chair Knabe’s request, staff recommended that the LA-UP Board maintain the two parent representatives as originally proposed by the UPK Transition Team and approved by the Commission. Staff recommended that the LA-UP Board maintain the two parent representatives as originally proposed by the UPK Transition Team and approved by the Commission.

M/S (Maria Veloz) THERE WAS NO SECOND TO THE MOTION – MOTION FAILED

Commissioner Kaufman commented that the focus right now should be on the governance structure. He suggested that the ex-officio seat on the LA-UP Board that was vacated by Robert Ross, as a result of him declining the appointment, be filled with the third parent nominee, Eleanor Plummer.

Commissioner Veloz concurred with Commissioner Kaufman and further added that the ex-officio positions on the LA-UP Board be evaluated at the conclusion of their one-year term to determine their future functionality. In addition, Commissioner Veloz commented that she was supportive of the third parent nominee being appointed to the LA-UP Board as the second ex-officio member because she valued the importance of parent involvement in universal preschool.

M/S (Neal Kaufman / Maria Veloz) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

9. Approve an Approach to Balancing Universal and Targeted Commission Activities Under the Next Five Strategic Plan that Includes: 1) A Universal Component with Strategies Intended to Have Widespread Impact; and, 2) A Targeted Component with Focused Efforts in A Priority Group of Geographic Communities, and Authorize Staff, in Conjunction with Outside Experts, to Develop and Return to the Commission with Specific Plans for Implementing this Approach

Director Jimenez commented that during the last three months, staff and Commissioners have engaged in several conversations regarding these two issues with the most recent discussion held at a joint meeting of the Research Partnership and Planning Committees held on July 22, 2004 titled “Data Driven Approaches to Initiative Planning and Implementation”. Following the joint meeting, staff juxtaposed feedback from the meeting participants with information from both the strategic planning retreats and recently approved Next Five Strategic Plan and concluded that the most plausible solution is the adoption of a funding approach that will guide and balance the Commission’s investments and efforts for the next five fiscal years.

The approval of the third strategic plan, the Next Five, marks the continued evolution of the Commission as a learning organization. The third plan takes the lessons from the preceding plans to craft a new philosophy that centers on the Commission’s intentions to make deliberate decisions based on the results that it wishes to create and also specifies the methods that will be used to achieve those results. Further evidence of this evolution will be seen with the approval of a modified approach to balancing the Commission’s universal and targeted efforts. The balanced funding approach is a relatively simple and holistic way to address multiple issues with one solution. It is a simple solution because it does not require an “either or” orientation or an abandonment of the idea to have a focused and intentional impact on communities that may very well require the resources and services of multiple Commission initiatives.

Commissioner Rezvani stated that he agreed with the Commission’s efforts of using its unique role to leverage political, human and financial capital to improve outcomes and questioned why a policy was needed for the Commission to continue its work in the community.
Commissioner Fielding commented that the Commission was being asked to reaffirm a concept that had previously been discussed and approved. He recalled how the Commission had previously approved a list of targeted zip codes for the purpose of allocating School Readiness Initiative Funding.

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

10. Approval of UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities as the Evaluator of the Partnerships For Families (PFF) Initiative for an Amount Not to Exceed $4.4 Million for Five (5) Years and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Contract

Commissioners Neal Kaufman and Jonathan Fielding recused themselves from participating in the discussion of this item due to a potential conflict of interest.

Director Jimenez stated that the Partnerships for Families Evaluation Framework provided a detailed description of the scope of evaluation needed to successfully evaluate the Partnerships For Families (PFF) Initiative. This framework also provided information about progress by First 5 LA in producing real and measurable results in improving the safety of young children. At the conclusion of this evaluation, the Commission would know if it has been successful in achieving the three primary objectives outlined in the Safe Children and Families action plan:

1. Increasing the number of prenatal, newborn and young children who are raised in physically and emotionally safe environments,
2. Increasing the availability and accessibility of comprehensive community-level resources and supports for families that may be at risk for child maltreatment, and
3. Increasing the utilization of community-level prevention resources and support services among families with young children.

Director Jimenez also commented that evaluation is critical to secure delivery impact as evaluation is a tool for better outcomes.

Concern over the amount of $4.4 million being requested for the evaluation was expressed by several Commissioners. Chair Knabe commented that he did not want the Commission to be viewed as having deep pockets and felt that $4.4 million was a significant amount for the evaluation component of a $50 million initiative as it consisted of approximately 10% of the total initiative. He further stated that he understood the importance of evaluation in an initiative but felt that such could be done with a lower allocation.

Commissioner Veloz requested to see a detailed budget. Commissioner Hurewitz stated it would be useful to know how the results of this discussion would impact other initiatives. Typically, the allocation for initiative evaluations have not been consistent in the amount of funding that has been awarded.

Executive Director Martinez suggested that the Commission approve the design concept and the proposed contractor, and have staff work to bring the budget into the $2.7 million range. This amount equated to approximately 5% of the total initiative funding and would also align itself with the Commission’s past practice of maintaining administrative costs of initiatives to 5% or less.

Chair Knabe was amiable to this suggestion and called for a vote on the design concept and the $2.7 million allocation for evaluation. He requested that a detailed budget and cost justification be provided to the Operations Committee for ratification at the meeting of October 6, 2004.

M/S (Don Knabe / Maria Veloz) APPROVED AS MODIFIED AND RECOMMENDED
11. Approve a Research Partnership with the County of Los Angeles Office of Child Care for an Amount up to $50,000 and Authorize the Executive Director to Negotiate the Contract

Director Jimenez stated that the proposed research partnership would provide the opportunity to test the reliability, validity, and feasibility of the County Child Care Quality Rating Scale and protocols. The study would include approximately 16 programs (8 centers and 8 family child care homes) that represent the racial, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and geographic diversity of the County and representation from all program auspices. The field testing will be conducted in the fall of 2004 and a report on the findings of the field test and recommendations for a County-wide quality rating system will be available in January 2005. The report will also include recommendations on the type of technical assistance needed to substantially improve the quality of child development services available to children in this County.

This project will contribute to the development of a broad, unified child care quality rating system that is aligned with LAUP’s quality rating system as well as other child care regulatory systems in the County. The promotion of higher, evidence-based standards for child care and development programs (including both child care centers and family child care homes) will have a profound impact the school readiness of thousands of young children in the County of Los Angeles.

M/S (Maria Veloz / Neal Kaufman) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

12. Research & Evaluation Project Matrix

During the August 12, 2004 Board meeting, Commissioners requested that staff compile a matrix of all evaluation, research and data development projects funded to date. The requested matrix was to include the purpose of the project, total allocation, duration of the project and its relationship or relevance to First 5 LA’s overall goals. Although the status of all Commission initiatives and projects are updated and provided to Board members on a monthly basis via the Initiative Status Report, Commissioners stated that a brief simplified matrix of all research and evaluation projects would allow them to understand the relationships between projects and track the types of evaluation and research projects that the Commission is currently implementing.

The Research and Evaluation Matrix provided to the Commissioners was formatted so that projects were categorized into three groups. The groups consisted of evaluation or accountability projects, research partnerships and data development projects. Each project was also linked to the three major goal areas (health, early learning, safety) defined within the Next Five strategic plan. This format allowed the Commission to see how projects related to the three goal areas and what types of projects were being implemented within a goal area.

13. Public Comment

Mary Emmons, Children’s Institute International
Todd Franke, UCLA
Ignacio Rojas, UPK Parent Involvement Task Team

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

The next Commission meeting is scheduled for:

October 14, 2004 at 1:30 p.m.
Multi-Purpose Room
333 S. Beaudry Avenue, Suite 2100
Los Angeles, CA  90017

Meeting minutes recorded by Maria Romero.