AGENDA

COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, January 10, 2008
1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Multi-Purpose Room

First 5 LA
750 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

COMMISSIONERS
Los Angeles County Supervisor
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Chair

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Vice Chair

Nancy Au

Jane Boeckmann

Neal Kaufman, M.D., M.P.H.

Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W.

Evangelina R. Stockwell, Ed.D.

Corina Villaraigosa

Carolyn R. Wilder

Item 1  Call to Order / Roll Call  ACTION

Item 2  Election of Commission Chair - 2008
  •  Jonathan Fielding  ACTION

Item 3  Election of Commission Vice Chair - 2008
  •  Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  ACTION

Item 4  Announcements by the Commission Chair
  •  Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  INFORMATION

CONSENT CALENDAR:  (Items 5-6)

Item 5  Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes  ACTION
  •  Thursday, November 8, 2007
  •  Thursday, November 28, 2007
    •  Yvonne Brathwaite Burke

Item 6  Approval of Monthly Financials  ACTION
  •  October, 2007
  •  November, 2007
    •  Anthony Bellanca

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS
Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W.

Connie Russell

Deanne Tilton

Harriette F. Williams, Ed.D.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Evelyn V. Martinez

750 N. Alameda Street
Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012
PH: 213.482.5902
FAX: 213.482.5903
www.first5la.org
contact@first5la.org

Item 7  Executive Director’s Report  INFORMATION
  •  Evelyn V. Martinez

Item 8  Approval of the Full Cycle 2 School Readiness Initiative Funding (Option 1A) For an Amount Not-to-Exceed $42 Million  ACTION
  •  Yolanda Bosch

Item 9  Public Comment  INFORMATION

A public entity.
Item 1

Call to Order / Roll Call
Item 2

Election of Commission Chair - 2008
Item 3

Election of
Commission Vice Chair - 2008
Item 4

Announcements by
the Commission Chair
Item 5

Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes

November 8, 2007
November 28, 2007
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

FIRST 5 LA

SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
Commission Meeting
November 8, 2007

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:
Commissioners:
William Arroyo (Alternate)
Nancy Au
Jane Boeckmann
Jonathan Fielding (Vice Chair)
Neal Kaufman
Evangelina Stockwell
Corina Villaraigosa
Carolyn Wilder
Zev Yaroslavsky (Chair) (Arrived @ 2:51 pm)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Deanne Tilton
Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:
Commissioners:
Marv Southard (Excused)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Jacquelyn McCroskey (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT:
Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Carol Baker, Director of Public Affairs
Anthony Bellanca, Finance Director
Yolanda Bosch, Director of Grants Management & Legal Compliance
Armando Jimenez, Director of Research & Evaluation
Teresa Nuno, Director of Planning & Development
Maria Romero, Executive Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL:
Craig Steele, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:
1. Vice Chair Fielding called the meeting to order at 1:42 pm.

CONSENT CALENDAR: (Items 2 – 3)
2. Approval of Commission Meeting Minutes – October 11, 2007
   M/S (Evangelina Stockwell / Neal Kaufman) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
3. Approval of Monthly Financials – September 30, 2007
   M/S (Jane Boeckmann / Carolyn Wilder) APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED

COMMISSION: (Items 4 - 9)
4. Announcements by the Commission Chair
   RECEIVED
5. Executive Director's Report

RECEIVED AND FILED

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

- **Oral Health Community Development Project:** On November 5, 2007, First 5 LA released a Letter of Interest (LOI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) providing eligible water agencies an opportunity to request funding to construct the infrastructure equipment necessary to optimally fluoridate water. Through this LOI, First 5 LA seeks letters from prospective water agencies who intend to submit a proposal for OHCD Project funds.

- **Strategic Planning:** Staff is preparing to update the *Next Five* Strategic Plan as part of the Commission’s ongoing commitment as a learning organization to reflect lessons learned from the development, implementation, and evaluation of our initiatives and projects. The strategic plan update will allow the Commission an opportunity to continue engaging community stakeholders on today’s pressing issues as well as to gain important insight on how our investments are impacting young children, families and their communities.

Commission Tilton announced that the ICAN Nexus Conference was scheduled for Wednesday, November 14th at the Universal Sheraton Hotel.

6. Approval of a One Year, No-Cost Extension of the Healthy Kids Initiative through June 30, 2009, Utilizing Unspent Funds from the Original Allocation and Continuing the Strategic Partnerships with L.A. Care Health Plan and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH)

Director Bosch reported that based on a fiscal analysis conducted in October 2007 by First 5 LA’s Finance Department, there will be an estimated amount of $40,788,347 unspent from the original Healthy Kids Initiative allocation by June 30, 2008. Funding for the L.A. Care portion will come from unspent funds from the premium allocation. Funding for the DPH contract will be broken down as follows: 1) $1,209,945 will come from unspent carryover funds from the original DPH allocation; 2) $2,203,598 will be *reallocated* from unspent funds of the premium allocation and 3) $1,247,233 will be matched by DPH utilizing reimbursement funds from the Medicaid Administrative Activities (MAA) program. The Initiative was designed to maximize funding opportunities by leveraging MAA funds to sustain the Outreach Partnership.

Numerous studies have shown that access to health care is essential to ensure that children stay healthy, receive the preventive care they need, and are ready for school. Having health insurance is key to getting access to quality health care. Although the Healthy Kids Initiative has demonstrated success on many measures, according to the 2005 California Health Interview Survey, there are still 41,000 children ages 0-5 in households below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) that remain uninsured in Los Angeles County. An additional 138,000 children ages 6-18 in households below 300% of the FPL, many of whom are siblings of the younger children, remain uninsured. In addition, thousands more children and families already enrolled will need assistance in maintaining their coverage and navigating the complex health coverage system. Lastly, data has demonstrated that employer-based coverage from 2001 to 2005 has seen dramatic decreases in low or moderate income families (UCLA Health Policy Research Brief, July 2007), which highlights the intensity of the need.
The one year no cost extension would be in alignment with the First 5 LA Next Five FY 2004-2009 Strategic Plan timeframe, the November 2005 Fiscal and Programmatic Policies commitment to “access to health care”, and the recently approved First 5 LA Public Policy Agenda.

M/S  (Neal Kaufman / Evangelina Stockwell)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED


Agenda item was continued to a special Commission Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2007.

8. Request from Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) to Approve Their 2007-2008 Scope of Work, Budget and Sustainability Plan

Agenda item was continued to a special Commission Meeting scheduled for Wednesday, November 28, 2007.

(Chair Yaroslavsly arrives at the meeting).

9. Healthy Births Initiative Expansion

A. Approval of the Healthy Births Initiative Expansion Framework and Authorization for Staff to Negotiate the Contracts for Related Development and Implementation

Director Nuno reported that in response to the Board’s approval to expand the Healthy Births Initiative and create an implementation plan, staff considered the initial Blueprint recommendations that included funding the BBCs for five years of programmatic implementation, adding additional BBCs to provide services in more geographic regions, and extending the LABBN contract to continue providing the infrastructure support to the Initiative. Moreover, the expansion framework is based on staff’s analysis of information gathered from multiple sources, including stakeholder interviews and focus groups, the Initiative database, the Initiative evaluation, and grantees’ reports. Staff also reviewed current zip code data to ensure that the Maternal and Child Health indicators used in the initial planning were still relevant to the areas identified as highest need. In addition, as the Initiative evolves and expands to new service delivery areas, it is important to use prior experiences to build upon the Initiative evaluation in defining program relevant baselines to begin tracking over time as the Commission relates this Initiative with other strategies to enhance overall birth outcomes. Specifically, staff reviewed First 5 LA’s current investments, such as Prenatal to Three Focus Area, Cross-Cutting Approaches, Partnerships for Families, and Oral Health and Nutrition Enhancement and Expansion Project to identify areas of potential integration with the Healthy Births Initiative to provide opportunity to leverage and sustain First 5 LA’s investments.

Staff recommends that the expansion uphold the same structure and overarching principles and practices of the Healthy Births Initiative to provide greater opportunity for continuity of grantee operations across an extensive network of collaborating providers currently working to improve birth outcomes for all, especially women at high risk. The expansion also allows First 5 LA to strengthen its ability to further measure the long-term effect the Initiative has had on birth outcomes.
Staff recommends that the $13 million allocation be divided among Initiative partners based on the original funding allocation distribution. Based on the lessons learned and implementation experiences, new and existing partners will streamline areas of operation while maintaining the integrity of the Initiative. This approved allocation does not permit First 5 LA to maintain the same level of funding across all partners, thus, each of the existing partners will receive a percentage decrease in funds. Staff recommends that the scopes of work for both the BBCs and the LABBN be adjusted to accommodate a reduction in funding as part of the contract negotiation process. This scaled reduction in funding will also facilitate and promote the further development of sustainability plans for each partner. Staff recommends that the anticipated additional BBCs be funded at the same level as the original smaller BBCs with funding remaining consistent across the three years of funding. Lastly, staff recommends that a small percentage of the allocation be set aside to support additional technical assistance based on an inventory of the BBCs' individual capacity building needs and interests for daily operations.

B. Approval of the Healthy Births Initiative Expansion Evaluation Framework with an Allocation Not-to-Exceed $1,810,000 and Authorization for Staff to Negotiate Contracts and Grants Necessary for Evaluation Development and Implementation

Director Jimenez reported that based on lessons learned during the first two years of implementation, and the future needs of the Initiative, the recommendations for evaluation, data, and research were as follows:

- Conduct an evaluation planning process with all new BBCs to include the creation of logic models and translation of the concepts of the Initiative into common work plans, outcomes and performance measures across BBCs, Healthy Births Learning Collaboratives and the LABBN.
- Continue to fund a Research Analyst at the LABBN to provide evaluation technical assistance to the BBCs based on monthly feedback data to the BBCs.
- Fund a data support (accountability) position at each of the BBCs.
- Develop and improve the interactive web application for the collection and reporting of quality improvement and evaluation data.
- Fund a research partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health – Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health including analyses of existing Los Angeles Mommy and Baby (LAMB) Survey data as well as future surveys to identify trends over time.

For each of the major components being requested, Commission staff is dedicated to identifying areas where these dollars can be leveraged against efforts being implemented by non-First 5 LA entities as well as leveraging our own work in future and previous initiatives. The total proposed costs for evaluation, data, and research related activities are based on learning over the past two years of implementation. The Initiative has achieved several milestones with data collection and evaluation for program improvement in the first years of implementation. Some notable accomplishments include the creation of an online reporting system and successful evaluation planning and logic modeling for the BBCs.

M/S (Neal Kaufman / Evangelina Stockwell)  APPROVED AS RECOMMENDED
10. Public Comment

Celia C. Ayala, LAUP
Ezequiel De La Torre, Cudahy Ready For School
Anne Farrell-Shiffer, MotherNet LA
Samuel Gilstrap, Los Angeles Unified District
Julia Heinzerling, South LA Best Babies Collaborative
Felicia Johnson, Locke Ready For School
Nomsa Khalfani, St. John's Well Child & Family Center
Aretha Lightner, DAYSTAR Mini-Treats
Jim Mangia, St. John's Well Child & Family Center
Vanessa Mendez, Children's Bureau
Jose Ramos, Children's Bureau
Yolanda Salmon-Lopez, Long Beach-Wilmington Best Babies Collaborative
Rocio Sevilla, MotherNet LA
Michael Sahnnon, LA Unified School District

Chair Yaroslavsky apologized to the Commission for his late arrival to the meeting and wanted to have it noted for the record that the continuance of the two agenda items relating to LAUP would allow for consideration of different ideas prior to the special meeting of Wednesday, November 28, 2007.

Chair Yaroslavsky thanked the Commissioners and staff for their hard work and support throughout his tenure as Commission Chair. Specifically, Chair Yaroslavsky thanked Commission staff for their extraordinary efforts in the Oral Health Community Development Project while working under a very short timeline. Chair Yaroslavsky was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his leadership.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 pm.

The next regularly scheduled Commission meeting will be on:

January 10, 2008 at 1:30 p.m.
Multi-Purpose Room
750 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Meeting minutes recorded by Maria Romero.
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES

FIRST 5 LA
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
Special Commission Meeting
November 28, 2007

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Commissioners:
William Arroyo (Alternate)
Nancy Au
Jane Boeckmann
Jonathan Fielding (Vice Chair)
Neal Kaufman
Evangelina Stockwell
Corina Villaraigosa
Carolyn Wilder
Zev Yaroslavsky (Chair) (Arrived @ 2:51 pm)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Deanne Tilton
Harriette Williams

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:

Commissioners:
Mery Southard (Excused)

Ex-Officio Commissioners:
Jacquelyn McCroskey (Excused)

STAFF PRESENT:
Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Carol Baker, Director of Public Affairs
Anthony Bellanca, Finance Director
Yolanda Bosch, Director of Grants Management & Legal Compliance
Armando Jimenez, Director of Research & Evaluation
Teresa Nuno, Director of Planning & Development
Maria Romero, Executive Assistant

LEGAL COUNSEL:
Craig Steele, Attorney-at-Law

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL:

1. Chair Yaroslavsky called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

COMMISSION: (Items 2 – 5)

Chair Yaroslavsky announced that for the record, all agenda items are being considered at the time.

Item 2 Approval of the Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) FY 2006-2007 Annual Report

Item 3 Request from Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) to Approve Their 2007-2008 Scope of Work, Budget and Sustainability Plan

Item 4 Discussion and Possible Action on Alternate Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) Sustainability Plan Announcements by the Commission Chair

Chair Yaroslavsky commented that a meeting had been held at his office between First 5 LA Commissioners, LAUP Board Members, Evelyn V. Martinez and Gary Mangiofico to attempt to work through some of the issues pertaining to LAUP's budget for FY2008-09 and future sustainability.

Chair Yaroslavsky stated that the Commission had a responsibility of maintaining fiscal integrity while providing sufficient resources for LAUP to continue their mission, perhaps not in the same
manner as initially conceptualized, but the circumstances in which LAUP finds itself are not the same. It would be fiscally irresponsible for the Commission to ignore this situation. As a result, a prudent approach has been developed in which the Commission can position itself to continue to be able to funds its other programs as well as universal preschool.

Commissioner Kaufman commented that First 5 LA Commissioners, LAUP Board members and staff had been meeting since the summer to collaborate on the development of a sustainability plan for LAUP. At several meetings, it seemed that a coherent and logical framework could not be developed. After the meeting at Chair Yaroslavsky’s Office, the couple of weeks prior to this Commission meeting were used to conceptualize ideas and develop the proposed motion.

Commissioner Kaufman presented the following motion to the Commissioners for consideration:

WHEREAS:

1. The First 5 LA Commission is committed to maximizing early learning experiences for all young children with one key approach being universal, high-quality preschool for all 4-year-olds in Los Angeles County.

2. With the failure of Prop. 82 and other challenges to raising funds, it is evident that neither enough public money nor public will currently exists to sustain the existing universal preschool strategy, nor will there be enough money available in the foreseeable future.

3. A modified strategic approach to supporting universal preschool in Los Angeles County – one that is more in line with existing political and financial realities – must be pursued to provide informed direction to the First 5 LA Commission, to LAUP, to other potential entities that could take an active role in meeting the preschool goals for all 4-year-olds, and to the variety of stakeholders. This modified approach must be decided upon and implemented quickly with minimal disruption to children and families and to preschool providers.

4. This Commission is committed to creating a fiscally sound approach for LAUP, such that it will be able to optimally align their mission and work around meeting the revised goals of the Commission, and to improve and strengthen the common partnership between the two entities in their mutual efforts to enhance preschool opportunities for 4-year-olds in Los Angeles County. The suggested fiscal approach is outlined below.

THEREFORE THE FOLLOWING MOTION IS PROPOSED:

1. First 5 LA will continue to support enhancing early learning experiences for 4-year-olds at the previously agreed upon total dollar amount of $580 million with the approved additional $20 million for evaluation bringing the commitment to $600 million. In addition, interest generated from a portion of that earmark will be available to contribute to this effort.

2. First 5 LA will complete a planning process for increasing the availability and quality of preschool for 4-year-olds in Los Angeles County. This plan will detail the overall First 5 LA approach to enhancing preschool availability and quality and will include (1) an analysis of the range of approaches to meet our goals; (2) the establishment of the minimum number of preschool spaces LAUP needs to accomplish the objectives set forth in the new strategies developed by the planning process, taking into account the long-term funding approach spelled out in this motion; (3) determine what entities, in addition to LAUP, might be able to provide support to the implementation of our modified approach and define their roles, responsibilities and funding options; and, (4) define the roles of key stakeholders. First 5 LA
will provide financial and logistical support for any necessary consultants, LAUP and other stakeholders so that the planning process can be efficient and productive.

3. Approve a FY07-08 LAUP budget not to exceed $60 million, of which $40 million has previously been allocated by the Commission’s action on June 14, 2007. An additional amount will be available, if needed, to cover capital expenses beyond this amount via the Preschool Capital Contingency Fund (see below). Any unspent dollars from FY07-08 will be placed into the Preschool Capital Contingency Fund unless LAUP requests and the Commission approves that the unspent dollars be allocated to the FY 08-09 budget. LAUP’s FY07-08 scope of work is approved to scale back to conform to this FY budget approval.

4. First 5 LA will allocate $200 million in funding for LAUP for the next 10 years, beginning in July 2008 (from the dollars remaining from the original $580 million early education earmark) starting with $40 million beginning FY 2008/09. Each subsequent annual total LAUP budget (from all sources) must be at least equal to the $40 million starting amount with funding coming from First 5 LA and other sources. The first 5 LA funding will decrease by about 17% each year, with the remainder of LAUP’s annual budget to be derived from revenue LAUP generates. LAUP’s continued allocation from the total earmarked First 5 LA funds will be contingent on LAUP successfully completing a scope of work that is modified to meet the approved budgets and includes LAUP securing agreed upon matching funds.

5. First 5 LA will create a $200 million Early Learning Endowment (from the dollars remaining from the original $580 million early education earmark) within the First 5 LA account to generate surplus dollars earmarked for learning experiences for 4-year-olds. This approach will provide a stable source of funds with the goal of building a contingency fund equal to one time the annual LAUP budget of $40 million.

**THE ENDOWMENT WILL DO THE FOLLOWING:**

- Generate an estimated $8 million per year (at an interest rate yield of 3.5%) and provide $5 million per year starting in year four (FY2011-12), and for the duration of this agreement, and provide up to $8 million per year beyond the duration of this agreement, if approved by the Commission. These funds are to be made available for LAUP as part of the First 5 LA’s earmarked funds.

- Generate dollars to be plowed into the contingency funds to be available to mitigate the risk if LAUP is unable to meet its fiscal responsibilities in any given year. These surplus funds will be used only if LAUP is unable to raise sufficient funds to meet its obligations and with the approval of First 5 LA Board of Commissioners. No more than 25% of the existing surplus will be allocated to LAUP in a given year.

6. If LAUP fails to meet its fundraising obligations for any two consecutive years, the Commission will begin to decrease the following year’s allocation to LAUP in an amount equal to the past year’s shortfall. Funding in an amount equal to the amount not allocated to LAUP will be used to support other approaches to providing preschool and other early learning services for 4-year-olds.

7. First 5 LA will create an additional $20 million Preschool Capital Contingency Fund to be available for LAUP to meet its current binding obligations as of November 26, 2007 toward capital construction and renovation. These allocations will be approved as part of the usual LAUP budget process. Unspent dollars from LAUP’s FY 07/08 budget would be placed into this account unless the Commission approves their use in the LAUP FY08/09 budget.
8. First 5 LA staff and legal counsel are directed to initiate and negotiate the necessary contract amendments and other implementing actions with LAUP. Staff shall report back to the Commission at its March 2008 meeting regarding the status and progress of these items.

9. LAUP's current annual report is received and filed and has been considered by the Commission in making this decision.

**ROLL CALL VOTE OF MOTION REGARDING LAUP SUSTAINABILITY PRESENTED BY COMMISSIONER KAUFMAN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nancy Au</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane Bocemann</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Fielding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neal Kaufman</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Arroyo</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelina Stockwell</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corina Villaraigosa</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carolyn Wilder</td>
<td>Abstain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zev Yaroslavsky</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MOTION APPROVED AS PRESENTED AND RECOMMENDED**

5. Public Comment

Lucy Fitzpatrick, Office of Public Counsel
Gary Mangiofico, LAUP

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Maria Romero.
Item 6

Approval of Monthly Financials

October, 2007
November, 2007
Los Angeles County Children and Families First -
Proposition 10 Commission
Statement of Net Assets
October 31, 2007

Assets

Current Assets:
- Cash 19,103,559
- Cash- Morlin Mgmt Corp 26,950
- Investment:
  - Operating and Allocated funds * 836,711,779

Interest Receivable 1,221,101

Total current assets 857,063,390

Fixed Assets:
- Building - Net 13,036,352
- Furniture & Equipment - Net 515,215

Total fixed assets 13,551,567

Total Assets $870,614,957

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current liabilities:
- Deferred Revenue 1,782,280
- Other liabilities 137,446

Total current liabilities 1,919,726

Net Assets:
- Investment in capital assets 13,551,567
- Restricted 853,009,076
- Unreserved 2,134,588

Total net assets 868,695,231

Total Liabilities and Net Assets $870,614,957

* Operating and Allocated funds - Included within this investment account is approximately $11.3 million intended for operating expenses for the next 12 months.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTS</th>
<th>MONTHLY ACTUAL</th>
<th>YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE TO DATE ACTUAL</th>
<th>TOTAL ALLOCATION</th>
<th>BALANCE REMAINING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Year Grants:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle V-Small</td>
<td>134,709</td>
<td>331,414</td>
<td>1,500,109</td>
<td>1,516,648</td>
<td>16,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Year Grants:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Planning Council</td>
<td>130,802</td>
<td>543,546</td>
<td>27,055,691</td>
<td>30,592,446</td>
<td>3,536,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Planning Council Renewal</td>
<td>389,430</td>
<td>697,400</td>
<td>28,628,867</td>
<td>34,388,897</td>
<td>5,760,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle II</td>
<td>134,521</td>
<td>431,820</td>
<td>17,017,562</td>
<td>24,916,405</td>
<td>7,898,843</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle III</td>
<td>149,471</td>
<td>15,842</td>
<td>7,985,911</td>
<td>20,800,000</td>
<td>12,894,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Expansion Grants</td>
<td>479,775</td>
<td>479,775</td>
<td>10,322,360</td>
<td>28,000,000</td>
<td>17,677,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Best Babies Network (Healthy Births)</td>
<td>524,651</td>
<td>89,455</td>
<td>42,318,089</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>57,661,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Readiness</td>
<td>7,932,363</td>
<td>13,101,260</td>
<td>108,801,293</td>
<td>580,000,000</td>
<td>471,198,707</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAUP</td>
<td>2,100,358</td>
<td>163,351</td>
<td>102,155,837</td>
<td>137,260,000</td>
<td>35,104,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, Friends and Neighbors (Workforce Development)</td>
<td>21,879</td>
<td>58,937</td>
<td>96,556</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
<td>3,503,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Allocations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building, Systems Improvement, Sustainability</td>
<td>22,325</td>
<td>22,456</td>
<td>80,134</td>
<td>27,350,000</td>
<td>27,269,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>53,746</td>
<td>115,880</td>
<td>904,444</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>6,065,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Petite Academy</td>
<td>(2,190)</td>
<td>(1,735)</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>92,500</td>
<td>92,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Opportunity Fund (Open Grantmaking)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20,141</td>
<td>10,852</td>
<td>13,200,000</td>
<td>13,089,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Venture Fund (Open Grantmaking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,800,000</td>
<td>4,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunsetting allocation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21,740,000</td>
<td>21,740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Health/Nutrition Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership for Families</td>
<td>825,466</td>
<td>795,111</td>
<td>11,533,120</td>
<td>50,000,000</td>
<td>38,466,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal Through Three</td>
<td>25,974</td>
<td>96,141</td>
<td>1,622,364</td>
<td>125,000,000</td>
<td>123,307,636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs Plan</td>
<td>2,133</td>
<td>596,798</td>
<td>6,606,233</td>
<td>9,723,768</td>
<td>3,027,535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Evaluation (Early Learning)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>365,066</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Evaluation</td>
<td>48,985</td>
<td>332,641</td>
<td>3,670,917</td>
<td>35,000,000</td>
<td>31,329,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>30,343</td>
<td>49,862</td>
<td>257,706</td>
<td>11,400,000</td>
<td>11,142,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1 Line</td>
<td>286,307</td>
<td>553,175</td>
<td>3,852,168</td>
<td>9,800,000</td>
<td>5,947,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1 Line (Marketing)</td>
<td>9,840</td>
<td>30,400</td>
<td>58,958</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,101,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Health Community Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting MAA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32,524</td>
<td>32,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grants and Other Allocations</strong></td>
<td>13,230,888</td>
<td>18,556,193</td>
<td>381,023,164</td>
<td>1,344,775,039</td>
<td>963,751,875</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The Cumulative to Date Amount includes a Working Capital cash advance amount of $18.4 million which has been used by LAUP to pay September, 07 expenditures of $4.7 million (First 5 LA reimbursed LAUP for these expenditures in December, 07), October, 07 expenditures of $4.0 million (First 5 LA will reimburse these expenditures in January, 08), November, 07 expenditures of $3.8 million, estimated December, 07 expenditures of $5.6 million and part of January, 08 expenditures leaving a balance of approximately $0 by the end of the second week in January, 08. The Working Capital cash advance will decrease to an amount that will be reflective of the reduced amount of the LAUP budget.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation &amp; Administration Expense</th>
<th>Monthly Actual</th>
<th>YTD Actual</th>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
<th>YTD Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Related Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; Wages</td>
<td>240,598</td>
<td>1,635,856</td>
<td>6,879,267</td>
<td>5,243,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>116,692</td>
<td>379,626</td>
<td>1,722,067</td>
<td>1,342,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personnel Related Expenses</strong></td>
<td>357,290</td>
<td>2,015,482</td>
<td>8,601,334</td>
<td>6,585,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Operating Expenses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADP Payroll Charges</td>
<td>1,098</td>
<td>2,783</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>9,017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Compensation Insurance</td>
<td>8,464</td>
<td>16,928</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>43,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Insurance</td>
<td>2,314</td>
<td>26,850</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>53,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage Expense</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>3,485</td>
<td>36,388</td>
<td>32,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephones &amp; Modems</td>
<td>5,691</td>
<td>16,930</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>36,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>1,894</td>
<td>80,525</td>
<td>78,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage &amp; Delivery</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>7,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>3,240</td>
<td>13,131</td>
<td>66,270</td>
<td>53,139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Purchases</td>
<td>6,699</td>
<td>8,976</td>
<td>118,500</td>
<td>109,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Rental</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>14,133</td>
<td>63,358</td>
<td>51,225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair &amp; Maintenance-Building</td>
<td>2,431</td>
<td>7,970</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>7,030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair &amp; Maintenance-Equipment</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>5,557</td>
<td>91,000</td>
<td>85,443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents &amp; Lease - Offsite Storage</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,820</td>
<td>17,100</td>
<td>12,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County Overhead</td>
<td>18,912</td>
<td>42,171</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>187,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>3,607</td>
<td>4,705</td>
<td>311,000</td>
<td>306,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities &amp; Other Supplies</td>
<td>1,771</td>
<td>4,781</td>
<td>42,600</td>
<td>37,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>11,184</td>
<td>33,706</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>116,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Supplies</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>(502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phones &amp; BlackBerry</td>
<td>2,043</td>
<td>5,419</td>
<td>24,120</td>
<td>18,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Improvement Projects</td>
<td></td>
<td>185,552</td>
<td>402,775</td>
<td>217,223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>70,263</td>
<td>402,343</td>
<td>1,865,286</td>
<td>1,462,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit and Accounting Fees</td>
<td>7,400</td>
<td>42,387</td>
<td>188,000</td>
<td>145,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Fees</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>10,700</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>79,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>4,720</td>
<td>54,664</td>
<td>49,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
<td>2,909</td>
<td>13,492</td>
<td>10,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Recruitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>5,706</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>44,294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commission Stipends</td>
<td>3,750</td>
<td>5,400</td>
<td>28,800</td>
<td>23,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>15,792</td>
<td>71,813</td>
<td>424,956</td>
<td>353,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Fees</td>
<td>164,432</td>
<td>207,544</td>
<td>692,300</td>
<td>484,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Fees</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>1,015</td>
<td>123,800</td>
<td>122,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>164,997</td>
<td>208,559</td>
<td>816,100</td>
<td>607,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; Meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conferences - Travel &amp; Lodging</td>
<td>1,072</td>
<td>2,381</td>
<td>54,955</td>
<td>52,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference - Registration Fees</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>7,203</td>
<td>62,950</td>
<td>55,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Meeting Expenses</td>
<td>2,180</td>
<td>5,536</td>
<td>42,990</td>
<td>37,454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>1,902</td>
<td>4,048</td>
<td>46,630</td>
<td>42,552</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per Diem</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>2,151</td>
<td>26,624</td>
<td>24,473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>8,341</td>
<td>21,320</td>
<td>234,119</td>
<td>212,799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>614,684</td>
<td>2,719,516</td>
<td>11,941,795</td>
<td>9,222,279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The administrative expenses are within the maximum authorized under the Board policy.
Los Angeles County Children and Families First -
Proposition 10 Commission
Statement of Net Assets
November 30, 2007

**Assets**

**Current Assets:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>8,060,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash- Morlin Mgmt Corp</td>
<td>26,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating and Allocated funds *</td>
<td>859,405,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Receivable</td>
<td>1,221,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>868,714,392</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fixed Assets:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building - Net</td>
<td>13,036,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture &amp; Equipment - Net</td>
<td>515,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total fixed assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>13,551,567</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Assets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$882,265,960</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Liabilities and Net Assets**

**Current liabilities:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deferred Revenue</td>
<td>1,782,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other liabilities</td>
<td>137,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total current liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,919,695</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Net Assets:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investment in capital assets</td>
<td>13,551,567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted</td>
<td>864,660,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unreserved</td>
<td>2,134,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total net assets</strong></td>
<td><strong>880,346,265</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>$882,265,960</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Operating and Allocated funds - Included within this investment account is approximately $11.3 million intended for operating expenses for the next 12 months.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRANTS</th>
<th>MONTHLY ACTUAL</th>
<th>YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL</th>
<th>CUMULATIVE TO DATE ACTUAL</th>
<th>TOTAL ALLOCATION</th>
<th>BALANCE REMAINING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One Year Grants:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle V-Small</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,500,109</td>
<td>1,516,648</td>
<td>16,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multiple Year Grants:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Planning Council</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>331,414</td>
<td>5,875,948</td>
<td>6,054,375</td>
<td>178,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children's Planning Council Renewal</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td>4,250,000</td>
<td>4,250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle I</td>
<td>183,844</td>
<td>727,391</td>
<td>27,239,535</td>
<td>30,592,446</td>
<td>3,352,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle II</td>
<td>324,985</td>
<td>1,022,385</td>
<td>28,953,852</td>
<td>34,388,897</td>
<td>5,435,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Developed Initiative - Cycle III</td>
<td>322,208</td>
<td>754,028</td>
<td>17,339,770</td>
<td>24,916,405</td>
<td>7,576,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Literacy Expansion Grants</td>
<td>340,845</td>
<td>356,687</td>
<td>8,246,756</td>
<td>20,800,000</td>
<td>12,553,244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA Best Babies Network (Healthy Births)</td>
<td>412,078</td>
<td>891,853</td>
<td>10,734,438</td>
<td>28,000,000</td>
<td>17,265,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Kids</td>
<td>2,134,410</td>
<td>2,223,864</td>
<td>44,472,499</td>
<td>100,000,000</td>
<td>55,527,501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAUP</td>
<td>14,060</td>
<td>13,115,320</td>
<td>108,815,352</td>
<td>580,000,000</td>
<td>471,184,648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Readiness</td>
<td>1,137,740</td>
<td>1,301,092</td>
<td>103,293,578</td>
<td>137,260,000</td>
<td>33,966,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family, Friends and Neighbors (Workforce Development)</td>
<td>44,158</td>
<td>103,095</td>
<td>140,714</td>
<td>3,600,000</td>
<td>3,459,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Allocations:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capacity Building, Systems Improvement, Sustainability</td>
<td>17,370</td>
<td>39,825</td>
<td>97,504</td>
<td>27,350,000</td>
<td>27,252,496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>11,943</td>
<td>127,823</td>
<td>946,387</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>6,053,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Petite Academy</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>(838)</td>
<td>1,352</td>
<td>92,500</td>
<td>91,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Opportunity Fund (Open Grantmaking)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20,141</td>
<td>110,852</td>
<td>13,200,000</td>
<td>13,089,148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Venture Fund (Open Grantmaking)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4,800,000</td>
<td>4,800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunsetting allocation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21,740,000</td>
<td>21,740,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Health/Nutrition Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
<td>10,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership for Families</td>
<td>596,969</td>
<td>1,392,080</td>
<td>12,130,089</td>
<td>50,000,000</td>
<td>37,869,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prenatal Through Three</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>96,269</td>
<td>1,692,492</td>
<td>125,000,000</td>
<td>123,307,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs Plan</td>
<td>62,867</td>
<td>659,665</td>
<td>6,759,100</td>
<td>9,723,768</td>
<td>2,964,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Evaluation (Early Learning)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>365,066</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
<td>19,634,934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and Evaluation</td>
<td>111,308</td>
<td>443,948</td>
<td>3,782,225</td>
<td>35,000,000</td>
<td>31,217,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development</td>
<td>5,340</td>
<td>55,202</td>
<td>263,046</td>
<td>11,400,000</td>
<td>11,136,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1 Line</td>
<td>13,406</td>
<td>566,581</td>
<td>3,865,575</td>
<td>9,800,000</td>
<td>5,934,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-1-1 Line (Marketing)</td>
<td>13,280</td>
<td>43,680</td>
<td>112,238</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,087,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Health Community Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
<td>20,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting MAA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>32,524</td>
<td>32,524</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>57,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Grants and Other Allocations</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,747,835</strong></td>
<td><strong>24,304,029</strong></td>
<td><strong>386,770,999</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,344,775,039</strong></td>
<td><strong>958,004,040</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) The Cumulative to Date Amount includes a Working Capital cash advance amount of $18.4 million which has been used by LAUP to pay September, 07 expenditures of $4.7 million (First 5 LA reimbursed LAUP for these expenditures in December, 07), October, 07 expenditures of $4.0 million (First 5 LA will reimburse these expenditures in January, 08), November, 07 expenditures of $5.8 million, estimated December, 07 expenditures of $5.6 million and part of January, 08 expenditures leaving a balance of approximately $0 by the end of the second week in January, 08. The Working Capital cash advance will decrease to an amount that will be reflective of the reduced amount of the LAUP budget.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operation &amp; Administration Expense</th>
<th>Monthly Actual</th>
<th>YTD Actual</th>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
<th>YTD Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personnel Related Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries &amp; Wages</td>
<td>446,444</td>
<td>2,082,300</td>
<td>6,879,267</td>
<td>4,796,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fringe Benefits</td>
<td>93,637</td>
<td>473,262</td>
<td>1,722,067</td>
<td>1,248,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Personnel Related Expenses</strong></td>
<td>540,081</td>
<td>2,555,563</td>
<td>8,601,334</td>
<td>6,045,771</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Operating Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADP Payroll Charges</td>
<td>1,884</td>
<td>4,667</td>
<td>11,800</td>
<td>7,133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Compensation Insurance</td>
<td>6,580</td>
<td>23,508</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>36,492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Insurance</td>
<td>25,893</td>
<td>52,743</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>27,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mileage Expense</td>
<td>1,176</td>
<td>4,662</td>
<td>36,388</td>
<td>31,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephones &amp; Modems</td>
<td>7,144</td>
<td>24,074</td>
<td>53,000</td>
<td>28,926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>559</td>
<td>2,453</td>
<td>80,525</td>
<td>78,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage &amp; Delivery</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>7,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Supplies</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td>15,903</td>
<td>66,270</td>
<td>50,367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Purchases</td>
<td>1,429</td>
<td>10,405</td>
<td>118,500</td>
<td>108,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Rental</td>
<td>4,599</td>
<td>18,732</td>
<td>65,338</td>
<td>46,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair &amp; Maintenance-Building</td>
<td>7,155</td>
<td>15,125</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>(125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repair &amp; Maintenance-Equipment</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>5,747</td>
<td>91,000</td>
<td>85,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rents &amp; Lease - Offsite Storage</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4,820</td>
<td>17,100</td>
<td>12,281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles County Overhead</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>42,520</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>187,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency</td>
<td>1,163</td>
<td>5,868</td>
<td>311,000</td>
<td>305,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities &amp; Other Supplies</td>
<td>1,544</td>
<td>6,325</td>
<td>42,600</td>
<td>36,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>12,375</td>
<td>46,082</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>103,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Supplies</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>(502)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phones &amp; BlackBerry</td>
<td>2,652</td>
<td>8,071</td>
<td>24,120</td>
<td>16,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Improvement Projects</td>
<td>139,502</td>
<td>325,054</td>
<td>402,775</td>
<td>77,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Services</strong></td>
<td>216,966</td>
<td>619,309</td>
<td>1,865,286</td>
<td>1,245,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consultant Services</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant Fees</td>
<td>14,856</td>
<td>222,400</td>
<td>692,330</td>
<td>469,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Professional Fees</td>
<td>738</td>
<td>1,753</td>
<td>123,830</td>
<td>122,047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel &amp; Meetings</strong></td>
<td>15,594</td>
<td>224,153</td>
<td>816,130</td>
<td>591,947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td>806,902</td>
<td>3,526,418</td>
<td>11,941,798</td>
<td>8,415,377</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The administrative expenses are within the maximum authorized under the Board policy.
Item 7

Executive Director’s Report
MEMO

To: Board of Commissioners
From: Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director
Date: January 10, 2008
Subject: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

I. PRENATAL THROUGH THREE FOCUS AREA

The name Best Start, with the tag line “For Babies and Their Families” has been chosen for the Prenatal Through Three (P-3) Focus Area including the demonstration communities (formally called the Baby Zones). Confirming the “Best Start” name allows First 5 LA to continue to move forward on the approved communications strategy. The Public Affairs Department is currently working on a Best Start logo.

Staff has finalized the contract between California Hospital Medical Center Foundation, fiscal agent for the Los Angeles Best Babies Network, and First 5 LA for work related to a pilot of the Welcome, Baby! (formerly known as the Family Engagement Strategy). The effective date of this contract is December 1, 2007. Subsequently the Los Angeles Best Babies Network will begin negotiating a contract with Andy J. Wong, Inc. (AJWI) to begin work on the data system that will be developed to collect and track family related data.

Staff has also completed a review process to select ZERO TO THREE, as the strategic partner to carry out the Best Start Workforce Development building block. The Workforce Development building block seeks to: 1) build consensus on core P-3 competencies in the sectors of health, mental health/social services and ECE as well as build linkages to other P-3 related professions; 2) develop and implement trainings for Los Angeles County based on core competencies; and 3) sustain P-3 Workforce Development efforts through systems level change and securing necessary resources. The contract with ZERO TO THREE will start in February.

With regard to the sustainability RFQ and the proposed amendment to expand Welcome, Baby! beyond the demonstration communities, the Liaisons held several meetings in December with staff. These discussions will continue into the new year and as such, the release of the sustainability RFQ is pending.
Item 8

Approval of
the Full Cycle 2
School Readiness Initiative
Funding (Option 1A)
For an Amount Not-to-Exceed
$42 Million
FIRST 5 LA

SUBJECT:
School Readiness Initiative

RECOMMENDATION:
Approval of Full Cycle 2 School Readiness Initiative Funding (Option 1) for an amount-not-exceed $42 million.

BACKGROUND:
In 2001, as part of its Cycle 1 School Readiness Initiative (SRI) partnership with First 5 California, First 5 LA allocated $67 million to fund School Readiness Programs throughout Los Angeles County. SRI engages families, community members, and educators in a holistic approach towards preparing children ages 0-5 for kindergarten. In developing the initiative, First 5 California adopted the National Education Goals Panel definition of school readiness: (1) children ready for school; (2) schools ready for children; (3) family and community supports; and (4) services that contribute to children’s academic success. SRI focuses on communities with the lowest performing schools (e.g., deciles 1, 2 and 3 – out of 10) as measured by the Academic Performance Index (API). As reflected in Table 1, the initiative’s focus areas have been modified by First 5 California to align with the statewide evaluation framework for Cycle 2.

Table 1    School Readiness Initiative Focus Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5 Essential and Coordinated Elements (Cycle 1)</th>
<th>4 Result Areas (Cycle 2)</th>
<th>Service Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Care and Education</td>
<td>Improved Child Development</td>
<td>• School-based or school-linked preschool, early care and education centers, and in-home providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parenting and Family Support Services</td>
<td>Improved Family Functioning</td>
<td>• Adult education including parenting classes conducted in partnership with adult schools and community colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Social Services</td>
<td>Improved Health</td>
<td>• Enrollment in free and low-cost health insurance programs through partner agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Capacity</td>
<td>Improved Systems of Care</td>
<td>• Care/case management to ensure that children receive preventative health services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Infrastructure, Administration, and Evaluation</td>
<td>Improved Systems of Care</td>
<td>• Facilitation of children’s transition from home and preschool to kindergarten</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Articulation of kindergarten standards between kindergarten teachers and early education providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Collaborative decision-making with representation from all stakeholders including parents of children ages 0-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Program development for systems change at community, school, and/or district-levels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Cycle 1 was implemented from FY 2002-2003 to FY 2006-2007.
First 5 LA's initial allocation of Cycle 1 funds provided financial resources to support 42 SR Programs serving 53 high need communities. Cycle 1 funds were originally disbursed through an open Request For Proposals (RFP) process which resulted in 17 of the 42 SR Programs being funded. In 2003, First 5 LA approved an alternative funding approach in which communities were selected to participate in the initiative and received extensive technical assistance provided by First 5 LA staff and consultants in order to develop their SRI proposals. This targeted approach resulted in the remaining 25 SR Programs being funded. Communities were selected to participate in the targeted approach based on the following indicators:

- Number of children ages 0-5;
- Number of children ages 0-5 below 200% of poverty;
- Number of births with late or no prenatal care;
- Number of low birth weight births;
- Number of kindergarten students in low performing schools; and
- Number of births to mothers with less than a high school education.

Appendix 1 lists lead agencies as well as SR Programs by Supervisorial District and Service Planning Area (SPA).

**Cycle 2 Funding Timeline**

In 2005, First 5 California announced its commitment of Cycle 2 funding totaling $200 million to continue supporting 206 SR Programs throughout the state for an additional four years. First 5 LA's Cycle 2 funding allocation from First 5 California is $67 million which equals the amount of funding that was provided during Cycle 1. In order to ensure that Los Angeles County SR Programs did not experience a gap in funding between Cycles 1 and 2, First 5 LA submitted Cycle 2 funding applications to First 5 California in January 2007. All 42 SR Program applications were subsequently approved by the State Commission.

Because First 5 LA has already approved funding for the first year of Cycle 2, only three years of funding are being requested. Figure 1 reflects the amount of program implementation funding that would be needed for the remaining three years of Cycle 2 should continuation of the initiative be approved for full funding.

**Figure 1**  
Timeline of Program Implementation Funding

---

2 First 5 LA's 42 SR Programs represent 20% of all programs funded throughout the state.
In addition to providing funding for program implementation, First 5 California provides First 5 LA with an annual allocation of coordination funds in the amount of $340,000 for a total of $1.36 million over four years. First 5 LA uses these coordination funds for staff expenses related to the following: completing program accountability activities (e.g., adherence to First 5 California and SR Program RFF policies, timely and accurate reporting, etc.), reviewing progress and evaluation reports, performing site visits and observing program implementation, reviewing budgets and expenditures, preparing First 5 California annual and fiscal reports, identifying areas for program/initiative improvement, highlighting best and promising practices, and sharing critical challenges and successes with First 5 California. The total cost of participating in the remaining three years of Cycle 2, including additional costs for First 5 LA staff and a proposed technical assistance fund, is outlined in Table 2.

### Table 2: Total SRI funding required for remaining 3 years of Cycle 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Implementation</th>
<th>First 5 California</th>
<th>First 5 LA</th>
<th>Grantee Match(^3)</th>
<th>TOTAL Funding (FY 2008-2011)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$50,011,569</td>
<td>$40,131,685</td>
<td>$15,503,570</td>
<td>$105,646,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination Funds</td>
<td>$1,020,000</td>
<td>$1,643,315</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$2,663,315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Assistance(^*)</td>
<td>$225,000</td>
<td>$225,000</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>$450,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$51,256,569</td>
<td>$42,000,000</td>
<td>$15,503,570</td>
<td>$108,760,239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^*\)Additional information regarding technical assistance follows after Funding Option 1.

### Cycle 2 Requirements

In order to receive Cycle 2 funding, all SR Programs met the following criteria: (1) maintenance of Cycle 1 levels of service; (2) implementation Evidence-based and/or Promising Practices; (3) local cash match requirements; (4) collaboration with other County and State First 5 programs and projects; and (5) participation in statewide evaluation activities. First 5 LA’s failure to adhere to all five funding requirements would mean a loss of millions in state funds for Los Angeles County.

1. **Maintenance of Efforts for Cycle 2**

To ensure long-term benefits, First 5 California requires that all SR Programs put systems in place to ensure that Cycle 1 levels of services are maintained in the existing SR communities. While SR Programs were allowed during the Cycle 2 application process to revise any ineffective program aspect or strategy, the number of children and families served during Cycle 1, as well as the spectrum of services provided, must continue.

2. **Evidence-based and Promising Practices**

Because of the importance of long-term and outcome-based evaluations, consistent implementation of Evidence-based and/or Promising Practices remains a major focus for Cycle 2. First 5 LA’s SR Programs are currently implementing a combination of strategies that are research-based, many of which have been modified to meet the unique cultural and linguistic needs of Los Angeles County communities.

\(^3\) Includes Cash and In-kind contributions.
Evidence-based Practices are clearly conceptualized, well defined, and are supported by empirical research that documents their effectiveness. Promising Practices have some evidence - anecdotal, case studies, etc., which consistently report effectiveness, but not enough evidence to sufficiently prove effectiveness. Programs implementing Promising Practices must have clear plans in place for implementing, monitoring and evaluating such practices.

(3) Local Cash Match (County Level)

One local dollar must be spent on Los Angeles County SR Programs for every First 5 California dollar spent within each fiscal year. Although grantee-based cash match was not a requirement during Cycle 1, 17 Los Angeles County SR Programs contributed over $10.6 million in cash match that was used to draw down First 5 California matching funds. This enabled First 5 LA to leverage $1.54 for every $1 spent on SRI. For Cycle 2, First 5 LA requires that all SR Programs contribute both in-kind and cash match. First 5 California's acceptable sources of local cash match include: County Commission funds; dedicated expenditures by school districts; and local public agencies specifically targeted to the SR Program; and funds from private sources such as foundations and businesses. The local cash match must be auditable and traceable as revenue received or by written agreement such as a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which lists services and financial commitment.

Table 3 reflects the cash match requirement for Cycle 2. Although SR Programs are also required to contribute a minimum of 5% in “In-kind” resources each year, these funds are not matched by First 5 California.

Table 3  Cycle 2 In-Kind and Cash Match Requirements for SR Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cycle 2 Program Year</th>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Cash Match</th>
<th>In-kind</th>
<th>Projected Cycle 2 Cash Match and In-Kind&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>≥ 5%</td>
<td>$2,976,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>≥ 5%</td>
<td>$3,622,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>≥ 5%</td>
<td>$5,170,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>≥ 5%</td>
<td>$6,710,464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$18,480,354</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By requiring that SR Programs contribute cash match and in-kind resources during Cycle 2, First 5 LA will leverage approximately $1.39 for every $1 invested in SRI.

(4) Collaboration with other County and State First 5 Programs and Projects

School Readiness is the overarching goal for First 5 California, and the four Result Areas of Improved Child Development, Improved Family Functioning, Improved Health and Improved Systems of Care provide the framework for all other First 5 California efforts. Therefore, close work among First 5 Programs and Projects at both the County and State Commission levels is critical to the overall effectiveness of SR Programs. Table 4 reflects some of the programs offered at the State and County Commission levels with which SR Programs are collaborating.

<sup>4</sup>Only cash match is eligible to draw down First 5 California matching funds.
Table 4  First 5 California and First 5 LA Partner Programs and Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 5 LA Goal Area</th>
<th>First 5 California Programs</th>
<th>First 5 LA Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Learning</td>
<td>• CARES</td>
<td>• LAUP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Power of Preschool</td>
<td>• Family Literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special Needs Project</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Migrant Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>• Health Access for All</td>
<td>• Healthy Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Oral Health</td>
<td>• Healthy Births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Tobacco Cessation</td>
<td>• Best Start (Prenatal Through Three)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>• Kit for New Parents</td>
<td>• Partnerships for Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>• KCET-A Place of Our Own/Los Niños en Su Casa</td>
<td>• First 5 LA Parent Helpline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SRI and LAUP Partnership

In 2006, First 5 LA and LAUP formalized an interagency task team with the purpose of maximizing both agencies’ investments in preschool. This joint effort resulted in a Concept Brief (an LAUP Scope of Work deliverable) which proposes two models designed to leverage LAUP dollars for currently funded SRI preschools, increase child care capacity in Areas of Greatest Need (AGN), and provide consistency across SR Programs that provide center-based child development activities. Approval of Cycle 2 funding would offer the opportunity for implementation of both Models 1 and 2. An overview of the two models is reflected in Table 5.

Table 5  Models for Leveraging LAUP and SRI Resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MODEL 1</th>
<th>MODEL 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>• Leverage LAUP funding</td>
<td>• Facilitate formal linkages between SR Programs and LAUP providers within AGN communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase the number of preschool spaces for 4-year olds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target SR Programs</td>
<td>• SR Programs with preschool components that meet LAUP guidelines; or are close to meeting guidelines</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• SR Programs within zip codes selected by LAUP that do not currently have a preschool component, but may be interested in establishing one</td>
<td>• All SR Programs are eligible to participate in Model 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 See Appendix 1 for SR Programs that are included in LAUP Areas of Greatest Need.
Special Needs Demonstration Project

In March 2003, First 5 California approved a total of $20 million over five years to support the Special Needs Demonstration Project (SNP) that addresses two areas: 1) Children with Disabilities and Other Special Needs, and 2) Mental Health. SNP funds demonstration sites based in county School Readiness Initiative programs. The purpose of SNP is to strengthen SRI and other First 5 California programs, including Power of Preschool and Health Access for All, by demonstrating and disseminating effective practices for programs and systems serving young children ages 0-5 with disabilities and other special needs.

SNP works with families, caregivers, child care providers – including Head Start and State Preschool programs, educators, health, mental health, and social services providers to support young children with a broad spectrum of special needs in the context of and as an integral part of the First 5 School Readiness Program community approach.

SNP’s emphasis areas include:

- Universal access to screening for early identification/diagnosis and referrals for physical and developmental issues (including social/emotional/behavioral).
- Improved access to and utilization of services and supports through the coordination and reallocation of existing resources and building of new supplemental resources.
- Inclusion of young children with disabilities and other special needs in appropriate typical preschools, child care and development and other community settings with provision of necessary supports to help the child succeed in these environments.
- Evaluation to identify effective practices and to improve programs.

There are only ten (10) SNP Demonstration Sites funded throughout the state. In Los Angeles County, the SNP Demonstration site is administered and operated by the Westside Children’s Center as part of School Readiness on the Westside (SRW), an SRI-funded program. Referred to by the community as Project TLC (Teaching and Learning for All Children), the project partners include three preschools, seven family child care homes, child and family support services, and a kindergarten transition program. The service area for Project TLC covers neighborhoods in the 90230 and 90291 zip codes, and includes portions of Mar Vista, Culver City, and Venice (Service Planning Area 5, and Supervisorial District 2).

The total cost to operate Project TLC over the five-year program period is $2 million, with First 5 California contributing $1 million that is being matched by $1 million from the Westside Children’s Center. While First 5 LA does not contribute funding to the project, Commission staff assists with administrative and grants management support. While SNP has been extended through June 2009, the SRI refunding decision has implications for Westside Children’s Center’s continuation as a demonstration site.

Best Start (Prenatal Through Three)

The purpose of First 5 LA’s Best Start is to optimize the social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical and motor development of Los Angeles County’s youngest children within the context of multiple environments that affect their development. In order to successfully implement this comprehensive, multi-layered approach, First 5 LA’s Best Start investment will build upon and leverage existing community strengths and assets. SR Programs could potentially serve as a platform for launching Best Start efforts because they:
• Serve a high number of children ages 0-3. In FY 2006-2007 alone, 13,536 children served by SR programs were ages 0-3. This represents 46% of the total number of children served by SRI.
• Are located in high need and historically underserved communities.
• Have already completed comprehensive community needs assessments which included an analysis of community strengths and weaknesses, identification of service gaps, and the participation of parents of children ages 0-5.
• Are a part of collaborations that involve a wide-range of stakeholders including community-based agencies, county departments, schools and districts, and parents.
• Currently implement some of the proposed Start services such as case management, home visitation, and developmental assessments, with First 5 California and First 5 LA funding.

(5) Participation in the Statewide SRI Evaluation

In July 2006, First 5 California launched a new statewide evaluation framework which placed greater emphasis on accountability and learning. The school readiness portion of the Statewide Research and Evaluation Framework includes reporting and evaluation approaches to help stakeholders guide local decision-making. Outcome reporting is tailored to individual programs so that a complete statewide picture of SR results can be provided. Data is reported to First 5 California by First 5 LA in the aggregate rather than at the individual participant level. As reflected in Table 6, three levels of data are collected, reported, and evaluated at the state level for the purpose of accountability and learning.

Table 6  First 5 California Statewide Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection Levels</th>
<th>Reporting Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 1:</strong> Descriptive data provides standardized and consistent information statewide for the Annual Report.</td>
<td>Standard reporting by each SR program, answering questions regarding: what services are being funded and why, who is being served, how many are served and by whom, and how much is being spent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 2:</strong> Outcome data provides county-specific information for the Annual Report and for use in targeted state evaluation studies.</td>
<td>County Commissions report aggregated data from outcomes and indicators. To be used to provide results information across multiple funded programs. Will answer questions about results from individual programs and for Level 3 research and evaluation work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level 3:</strong> Focused in-depth research and evaluation studies provide information for purposes of accountability, improving results, evaluating statewide impact, policymaking, and future practice development.</td>
<td>Research and evaluation efforts to: (1) evaluate impact of specific initiatives and programs executed within or across counties; (2) evaluate the overall impact and return on investment of First 5 through enhanced community capacity and intensive longitudinal studies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SRI's Alignment with First 5 LA's *Next Five* Strategic Plan

As outlined in Appendix 2, school readiness services and systems change efforts span First 5 LA's Goal Areas of Early Learning, Health, and Safety, as well as the nine key objectives of the *Next Five* Strategic Plan. First 5 LA staff also completed an assessment to review the alignment of SRI with the Commission's Programmatic and Fiscal Policies. This assessment, which is outlined in Appendix 2, includes a crosswalk highlighting the relationship between SRI efforts and the Guiding Principles and Priorities adopted by the Commission, as well as a detailed analysis of how the initiative fits within the Funding Criteria. Appendix 3 reflects how SRI links with First 5 LA's recently adopted Policy Agenda.

Sustaining School Readiness Efforts

Beginning in September 2007, First 5 LA implemented a special series of the Sustainability Project tailored specifically for SRI grantees. The Sustainability Project supports agencies in developing and implementing plans to sustain outcomes for children ages 0-5 in Los Angeles County. Through a structured eight-month, team-based curriculum, agencies strategically plan how to build their internal capacity to pursue and secure resources that will address their long-term needs. Twenty-one (21) SRI grantees, representing 30 SR Programs are currently participating in the project. Each agency has brought together two- to four-member sustainability teams which may include the executive director, superintendent or assistant superintendent, school principal, finance officer, program director, development director and board members. Throughout the process teams identify not only critical financial needs, but also essential political, technical and administrative resources required to achieve long-term sustainability.

The series will culminate with a Resource Forum in April 2008 bringing together SR Programs and representatives from local private and corporate foundations, corporations, county offices and other nonprofit agencies. During the forum, SRI teams will present their sustainability plans and receive feedback from the panelists.

Other strategies that SR Programs are utilizing to sustain efforts include leveraging funding from the following:

- Private foundations;
- School districts (e.g., Title 1, Adult Education, etc.);
- Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP); and
- The Medical Administrative Activities (MAA) Program.

Initiative Evaluation

In July 2006, First 5 LA's Commission evaluation shifted to concentrate on the effects of the initiative on children, families, organizations, and schools in Los Angeles County. It also highlighted lessons learned from the initiative that will inform other First 5 LA efforts with similar funding and implementation strategies as the School Readiness Initiative.

The purpose of the evaluation was to provide outcome data on key components of the initiative and to answer the following questions:

1. How has the School Readiness Initiative been implemented in Los Angeles County?
   a. Who participated in SR Programs and which communities were served?
2. What are outcomes for children participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?
3. What are outcomes for parents and families participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?
4. How have schools been prepared for children entering school and their families?
5. What systems of care have been developed and/or cultivated to support children’s readiness for school?

   a. What are similarities and differences between school-led and community-led SR Programs?
   b. What has been learned about collaboration and coordination?

Children and parents participating in SR Programs have demonstrated some statistically significant changes in their knowledge, skills and abilities during their participation in the School Readiness Initiative. Parenting practices and behaviors have changed, generally, in a positive direction based on the Time 1 and Time 2 survey conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). Additionally, grantee program evaluations support some of the findings of the parent survey. Qualitatively, some parents expressed that they have more of a voice in the school and community which provides an opportunity for them to advocate for their children.

In examining schools’ readiness for children and their families, there are activities the CBO-led and school-led programs have employed to provide a smooth transition of children and their families from early care settings to school. Evaluation of these types of efforts could be more systematic and deliberate so that key stakeholders are more aware of what strategies tend to be most effective.

More details regarding initiative-wide school readiness outcomes can be found in the attached evaluation reports.

**Cycle 2 Funding Options**

SRI funds more programs than any other First 5 LA initiative. Over the past five years, SR Programs have solidified critical community partnerships between families, schools and community-based agencies. In many instances such partnerships did not exist in these communities prior to the implementation of SRI. Continuation of SRI funding will provide an opportunity for First 5 LA to leverage over $85 million dollars in First 5 California and local grantee funds for Los Angeles County. Conversely, discontinuing funding will result in:

- An abrupt disruption of school readiness services in 53 of the county’s communities of highest need.
- A lack of coordinated services to over 29,000 children ages 0-5 and their families annually, since SRI funding has often served as the “glue” for collaborative approaches.
- An elimination of a platform for collaborating with other First 5 LA efforts such as Best Start, Family Literacy, etc.

Given the foreseeable positive impacts of continuing funding for SRI and the proven early successes of local SR Programs and their potential for even greater positive outcomes, the Commission should pursue one of the options outlined below for continued investment in school readiness.

**Option 1. Approve full Cycle 2 funding for the School Readiness Initiative.**

- Approve full Cycle 2 funding for the School Readiness Initiative in the amount of $42M to fund SR Programs through June 30, 2011, $21.74M of which would be funded from the current “Next Five” Strategic Plan (Sunsetting Allocation) which goes through Fiscal Year 2008-2009, and $20.26M to be funded with currently unallocated First 5 LA dollars or the forthcoming Strategic Plan (FY 2009-2014).
Item 8 – SRI Full Cycle 2 Funding
January 10, 2008

Discussion of Option 1:

Approval of Option 1 will result in all 42 SR Programs receiving funding throughout Cycle 2 contingent upon each program continuing to meet performance standards and compliance guidelines. Some of the advantages of approving Option 1 are as follows:

- All 42 SR Programs would receive continued funding through the end of Cycle 2, which would result in a continuation of services for over 29,000 children ages 0-5 and their families as well as a continuation of the partnerships that have been formed over the past five years between schools, community-based organizations and families.

- LA County would receive its full allocation of $67 million in First 5 California matching funds.

- First 5 LA will be able to build upon the foundation developed by SR Programs for current and future efforts such as Healthy Kids, Family Literacy, Los Angeles Universal Preschool, and Best Start.

The primary disadvantage of Option 1 is that the Commission would be required to allocate funds beyond what is currently available in the Next Five Strategic Plan (Sunsetting Allocation).

Access to Unspent First 5 California Cycle 1 Funds

An additional benefit of fully funding SRI is that First 5 California will allow First 5 LA access to remaining SRI Cycle 1 unspent and un-disbursed funds during Cycle 2. Los Angeles County stands to receive $10-$15 million in such carryover funds. Options for the use of carryover funds include using a small portion of the funds to provide coordinated group and individual technical assistance to SR Programs.

It is estimated that through the end of Cycle 2, $150,000 per year would be needed to provide technical assistance services for the remaining three years of Cycle 2. First 5 LA’s contribution to TA funds would be $225,000 which would be matched by First 5 California, bringing the total to $450,000. The remaining Cycle 1 carryover funds could be used to allow SR Programs to enhance and/or expand services to children ages 0-5 and their families.

The amount of unspent funds available to Los Angeles County will be determined by First 5 California during Spring 2008.

Option 2. **Approve partial Cycle 2 funding for the School Readiness Initiative.**

- Approve partial Cycle 2 School Readiness Initiative funding in the amount of $21.74M to be allocated from the current “Next Five” Strategic Plan (Sunsetting Allocation) which goes through Fiscal Year 2008-2009.

Discussion of Option 2:

Because an approval of Option 2 would only provide partial funding for SR Programs, the Commission could decide to use the $21.74 million to fund all SR Programs through December 2009, or fund only a portion of SR Programs through the end of Cycle 2. If only a portion of SR Programs are funded, the length of time they would be funded would depend on the number of programs that meet First 5 LA’s refunding criteria. Some of the major disadvantages of Approving Option 2 include the following:
Item 8 – SRI Full Cycle 2 Funding
January 10, 2008

- SR Programs in areas of greatest need would end June 30, 2008, resulting in an abrupt end of services to over thousands of children ages 0-5 and their families.

- Los Angeles County would lose nearly $75 million in Cycle 2 and unspent Cycle 1 matching funds from First 5 California, and grantee cash match.

- Criteria will need to be developed to determine which SR Communities would continue to receive funding.

Conclusion

Commission staff recommends that the School Readiness Initiative be fully funded for the remaining three years of Cycle 2, as outlined in Option 1. This recommendation is based on factors related to a thorough analysis of the initiative that was conducted over the past year which included the following factors:

- Evaluation results that demonstrate SRI’s achievement of positive outcomes among children and families participating in SR programs;
- The potential for SRI to serve as a platform for launching future Commission efforts such as Best Start (Prenatal Through Three);
- SRI’s alignment with the Next Five Strategic Plan, as well as the Commission’s recently adopted Policy Agenda; and
- The extensive leveraging opportunity the initiative provides First 5 LA.

For Office Use

Board Action Taken:

Approved: [ ] Yes [ ] No [ ] Further Discussion

Referred to Committee/Work Group: ________________________________
# APPENDIX 1

## SR Programs by Supervisorial District and Service Planning Area (SPA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisorial District</th>
<th>SPA</th>
<th>SR Grantee/Program</th>
<th>LAUP (AGN)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Molina - District 1 (40% of all SR Programs)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>California State University Dominguez Hills</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mountain View School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pomona Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Rowland Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>CA Hospital Medical Center - Hope St. Family Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Children's Institute, Inc.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Estrada Courts Residents Management Corporation</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>International Institute of Los Angeles</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>LAUSD-Queen Anne</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>LAUSD-Tenth Street</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Para Los Niños</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bienvenidos Children's Center, Inc.</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>El Rancho Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Human Services Association</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intercommunity Child Guidance Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>LAUSD - Cudahy</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burke - District 2 (30% of all SR Programs)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Children's Bureau</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Westside Children's Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Drew Child Development Corporation</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>LAUSD - 90002</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>LAUSD - Hyde Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>LAUSD - Locke</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>People Coordinated Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>St. John's Well Child and Family Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>St. John's Well Child and Family Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Urban Education Partnership¹</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lawndale Elementary School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Lennox School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaroslavsky - District 3 (14% of all SR Programs)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Child &amp; Family Guidance Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Child Care Resource Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>LAUSD - Broadous</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>LAUSD - Canoga Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Urban Education Partnership⁶</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vaughn Next Century Learning Center</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knabe - District 4 (14% of all SR Programs)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Paramount Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bellflower Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Norwalk - La Mirada Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>LAUSD - Wilmington Park</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Long Beach Unified School District</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>South Bay Center for Counseling</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonovich - District 5 (2% of all SR Programs)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children's Center of the Antelope Valley</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Urban Education Partnership operates two 2 SR Programs under one contract, one in South Los Angeles and the other in Sylmar.

⁶ Urban Education Partnership operates two 2 SR Programs under one contract, one in South Los Angeles and the other in Sylmar.
APPENDIX 2
Alignment with the Next Five Strategic Plan

Given the comprehensive nature of the School Readiness Initiative (SRI), it is important to understand the initiative's structure, implementation, and outcomes in the context of First 5 LA’s Programmatic and Fiscal Policies approved by the Commission in November 2005. The following crosswalk highlights the relationship between the SRI efforts and these elements.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles</th>
<th>School Readiness Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>Strategic</strong>: Maintain focus on working across all three overarching goal areas of Early Learning, Health, and Safety as adopted in the Next Five Strategic Plan.</td>
<td>All SR Programs have been designed to provide services within each of the three overarching goal areas: Early Learning, Health and Safety. This design supports the implementation of SR Programs that promote overall child development while strengthening the capacity of parents and communities to work together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Balanced</strong>: Continue to support both universal and targeted activities.</td>
<td>SR Programs contribute to widespread countywide impact, while affording flexibility to target specific community needs. The foundation of each program is based on a comprehensive community needs assessment where parents of children ages 0-5 play a critical role in identifying their children's needs for developmental services and their own needs for family strengthening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Early Intervention</strong>: Invest in early interventions and family/community supports with the greatest potential for optimizing children's development.</td>
<td>Many SR Programs have identified the critical need to serve the 0-3 population and have implemented programs to support families and communities in early intervention efforts. During FY 2006-2007, 46% of the children served by SR Programs were ages 0-3. Current investments have been made for the 0-3 population in regards to health, development, safety and education. Additionally, the service infrastructure developed through these programs positions the initiative to expand and maximize current and future First 5 LA investments, such as Healthy Kids and Best Start (Prenatal Through Three).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Family and Community Focused</strong>: Build on the strengths and assets of families, parents, caregivers and communities throughout the county.</td>
<td>From its onset, SRI invested in identifying assets of the whole community including parents, families, providers, schools and community agencies. As a result, programs were designed to build and effectively address the communities’ specific needs in a comprehensive manner. Many SR Programs have demonstrated the ability to change within their community structure and have responded to various budget cuts, as well as to shifting community collaborative partners and agencies. SR Programs have also solidified collaborative groups and partnerships that work to collectively share ownership of solutions and problems within their respective communities. Furthermore, these collaborative groups have created strong relationships among a wide range of providers (e.g., parents, teachers, health and social service agencies) encouraging improvement of larger systems of care and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. **Accountable:** Invest in initiatives/projects that are integrated, results-based and change-oriented. The design of SRI guarantees that each SR Program includes a Logic Model (i.e., Scope of Work) that works to ensure that every activity is linked to a specific need, Evidence-based or Promising Practice, desired result, and performance measure. Additionally, each SR Program includes funding for evaluation support to help to build agency capacity for demonstrating and communicating results.

6. **Flexible:** Maintain flexibility to respond to and reflect on what the Commission learns and adjust accordingly to achieve goals. Within SRI, many opportunities exist to be responsive to the changing social needs of communities and families while addressing a wide range of issues. Local evaluation efforts help to ensure that programs are able to make timely program adjustments in order to meet changing needs of children, their families and the communities in which they live.

### PRIORITY AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority Areas</th>
<th>School Readiness Initiative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Develop efforts that can most effectively impact the nine key objectives of the Next Five Strategic Plan:</strong></td>
<td>All SR Programs are required to provide services to children and families within the nine key objective areas. The foundation of each program is based on existing community assets and identified needs. While programs are not identical, the requirements of the initiative ensure an appropriate cross-section of services throughout the nine key objective areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1) Parents ability to support their child’s learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Quality early learning resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Access to early learning resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Prevention of child maltreatment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Promoting healthy development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Access to health care</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Healthy births</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Prevention of unintentional injuries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Good nutrition and physical activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Prioritize the Prenatal through Three population, the communities where they live and their systems of care and support.</strong></td>
<td>During FY 2006-2007, nearly 46% of the estimated 29,618 children served via SR Programs were reported within the Prenatal through Three population. Within those services, SR Programs have worked to create family and community support structures to effectively implement appropriate programming. Examples of services for children ages 0-3 and their families include:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mommy and Me classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Home visitation and care/case management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Linkages to health care components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Parent education workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Encourage innovation and provide flexibility for the Commission to consider timely, crosscutting projects worthy of attention and demonstrating significant potential to impact outcomes.</strong></td>
<td>There is a great deal of flexibility for innovation to ensure SR Programs are addressing identified community needs and focused on maximizing impact. Local evaluation efforts help to ensure that programs are able to make timely program adjustments in order to meet changing needs of children, their families and the communities in which they live.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus activities and evaluation efforts via “placed-based” strategies in select communities to improve the coordination and integration of activities. Investments will be prioritized, but not limited to the following communities identified as “priority” by multiple Commission initiatives: Baldwin Park, Bell, El Monte, Hawthorne, Huntington Park, Lancaster, La Puente, Lynwood, Panorama City, South Gate, Areas of South Los Angeles and Areas of Long Beach.

SRI grantees currently serve 10 out of the 12 targeted communities. Through the SRI grantees’ relationships with their community partners and other First 5 LA grantees, the opportunity for further coordination (program and evaluation) are significant.

- Currently there are SR Programs operating within all targeted communities except for Lynwood and Baldwin Park.
- Each Service Planning Area (SPA) is represented within the initiative with a majority of SR Programs (20%) being located in SPA 6. (See Appendix 1)

HOW SRI ALIGNS WITH FIRST 5 LA’S FUNDING CRITERIA

FUNDING CRITERION #1: Use evidence-based models and interventions, whenever possible.

In 1997, the National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) developed a definition of school readiness that is widely recognized as a research framework and serves as the basis of the School Readiness Initiative model. The key components of this definition are:

- Children ready for school,
- Schools ready for children, and
- Families and communities ready to do their parts.

The NEGP drew upon research which showed that children who are ready to learn when they begin school learn more quickly, are more engaged in school and learning, are more likely to stay in school and graduate, and have a greater chance of future success in the workplace. Importantly, First 5 LA has been involved in several research efforts aimed at broadening the understanding of School Readiness in Los Angeles County. Two noteworthy projects that have helped contribute to the research in this field are as follows:

- First 5 LA, in partnership with Children’s Planning Council (CPC), led a School Readiness Indicator Workgroup to define a core set of school readiness indicators for Los Angeles County that were adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on July 15, 2003. This set of indicators recognized that school “readiness” is a multifaceted concept and incorporates the county’s five outcomes of child well-being and reflects the diverse population of the region. The core set of 15 indicators were adopted for the purposes of tracking and measuring relevant Los Angeles County indicators.

- The First 5 LA–RAND Research Partnership was established to analyze data from the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS). Conducted in 2000–2001, this survey of 65 neighborhoods was administered to ultimately disseminate research findings related to policy questions on several topics including: school readiness, childcare choices, children’s health, the contribution of neighborhood characteristics to young children’s well-being, and children’s health insurance coverage, access, and utilization.

---

7 The NEGP is a federal agency established by Congress that is in charge of setting national education goals and monitoring progress toward these goals.
FUNDING CRITERION #2: Sustain results through mobilizing social and financial resources

SRI by definition is a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative model that engages families, community members, and educators in the important work of preparing children ages 0-5 for elementary school. In order for the Initiative to succeed, appropriate groups must commit themselves to the shared vision and responsibility for preparing children to be successful in school. Because the 53 targeted communities vary by ethnic composition, income levels and available resources, Los Angeles County SR Programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of children and families in their respective community.

The foundation of SRI is its adherence to the 4 Result Areas which are Improved Family Functioning, Improved Child Development, Improved Health and Improved Systems of Care. Specific strategies selected to address the Initiative’s required elements, as well as the delivery system in which they are implemented, are locally designed with an emphasis on coordination of existing services using new SRI funds to fill in service gaps or create programs where none exists. Unlike many early care and education initiatives where systems change is not ultimately realized, SRI is unique in that it relies on the mobilization of social and financial capital which is crucial in creating sustainable change.

Social and financial resources are at the heart of ensuring measurable, sustainable changes at the community-level. During the creation of the Next Five Strategic Plan, the Commission agreed that in order to provide long lasting changes for families and communities, focus should remain on sustaining results, not just continuing to fund and refund programs. In this context, sustainability is not only the continuation of programs, nor is it simply leveraging external financial resources, it is the process by which individuals and communities are strengthened and supported, systems are improved, best practices are established and utilized, and models are created to fill systems and services gaps.

The concept of social and financial capital embedded in First 5 LA’s definition of sustainability suggests a variety of activities which the Commission will undertake to assure sustainability. Social capital means the strengthening of community networks (i.e., relationships between and among families, communities and organizations) to support and sustain results that benefit children ages 0-5 and their families. Social capital is the currency that enables a society to operate more effectively. It includes intangible factors such as values, norms, attitudes, trust, networks, etc. Social capital consists of elements found within a community that aid coordination and cooperation towards a mutual benefit. SRI embodies the concept of social capital by:

- Incorporating parents/caregivers who advocate for improved community-based service system in its governance processes;
- Supports parents’ efforts to sustain programs through their own self-help and community voluntary support activities such as reading to their children;
- Develop community-level capacity, such as data collection and analysis, to identify the most effective programs from the vantage point of the community;
- Promote community-level dissemination of best practices and model programs;
- Improve government agencies’ ability to provide continuity of resources and information for families in a community;
- Assist community-level organizations in “telling their story’ with both data and stories about program effectiveness.

Some specific examples of how SR Programs have used social capital include the following:

Parental Involvement - The inclusion of families in decision-making from program development to evaluation has been vital in order to ensuring program buy-in and adequate identification of needs.
Most SR Programs have formed advisory boards where parents are engaged in ongoing decision-making regarding such issues as hiring program staff to selecting curriculum. To help parents become effective decision-makers, School Readiness Programs provide them with leadership development opportunities. Through these opportunities parents have learned how to conduct meetings, work with school administrators, influence policy makers, and recruit other parents to become involved in program services. Parents not only bring an important voice to School Readiness Programs, but in many cases also serve as additional manpower contributing countless hours of volunteer time to the programs.

Collaboration among Community Partners - The establishment of meaningful collaborative relationships between community partners helps to change organizational cultures regarding the provision of services to young children and their families. Examples of local partnerships include those which consist of early childhood educators and district and school staff, child and family social service providers, neighborhood organizations, businesses, colleges and universities, libraries, and many others. Most of these partners have something of value to contribute to helping families prepare their children for school. Through collaboration, these partners are able to establish a common language, shared vision, and clear objectives for addressing school readiness needs.

The following chart outlines how SR Programs garner social capital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result Areas</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Family Functioning</td>
<td>Train parent volunteers assist with outreach and recruitment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Child Development</td>
<td>Help early care and education providers obtain licenses in order to increase their capacity to serve children and the quality of services provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Health</td>
<td>Develop shared messages and disseminate information about the importance of prevention and early intervention for medical, vision, hearing and dental.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Systems of Care</td>
<td>Host articulation meetings between preschool and kindergarten teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-locate programs and services to promote accessibility for families and the sharing of resources for community partners.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like social capital, the mobilization of financial capital is critical to the success of any SR Program. Because the challenges faced in preparing children for school are multifaceted, the financial resources available through the Initiative are only a portion of what is needed to help children to be successful in school.

Several local SR Programs currently partner with State Preschool programs. Focusing primarily on meeting the educational needs of children, State Preschool lacks the resources to provide critical comprehensive health and social services for children and families. SR Programs have made an ideal partner for collaborative with State Preschool because they are able to fill the gap in services by providing comprehensive wraparound services to address needs that would otherwise go unmet. Another SR Program is in partnership with a program established to provide extensive dental care to young children, including those which specials needs, who are unable to qualify for medical coverage that would otherwise pay for such care. Lastly, with the infusion of dollars for health insurance, most SR Programs have partnered with community-based enrollment entities which screen and enroll children for health care coverage such as Medi-Cal, Health Kids, Healthy
Families, and others. These partnerships have enabled SR Programs to leverage financial millions of dollars in *financial capital*.

The following chart outlines examples of how SR Programs garner financial capital.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Result Areas</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved Family Functioning</td>
<td>Work with school districts' adult education programs to provide parenting and adult education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Child Development</td>
<td>Use SRI funds to expand hours currently provided through State Preschool, Head Start or Child Development funds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Health</td>
<td>Partner with health insurance enrollment entities that receive funds [via reimbursements or contracts] for assisting families in enrolling their children into programs such as Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, Healthy Kids, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved Systems of Care</td>
<td>Blend funding sources to increase delivery of and eligibility for early care and education services. Secure funds to support efforts that SRI funding cannot pay for.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clearly, the success of any SR Program hinges on its ability to garner the *social capital* of parents and community members, as well as the *financial capital* of collaborative partners. Many SR Programs have found that when parents are significantly involved in program operations, that success in maintaining programs past initial funding awards is increased. Likewise, through participating in the Initiative, community partners such as those indicated above have the opportunity to benefit from leveraging financial resources and as well as organizational expertise. The Initiative’s success will not only be measured children’s success in school, but by its lasting effects on parents, families, community members and systems that provide direct and indirectly services to young children and their families.

**FUNDING CRITERION #3: Promise of leveraging federal, state, local and private funds**

During Cycle 1, First 5 LA had the opportunity to leverage a total of $67 million in First 5 California SRI matching funds. Additionally, First 5 LA is able to leverage an additional $9.3 million through Qualified Cash Matching Funds (QCMF) commitments of 17 SRI grantees. Because QCMF qualify for the State matching funds, First 5 LA has committed $57.7 million to fully maximize the $67 million from the State.
In addition to the nearly $77 million of leveraged funds as listed above, First 5 LA SRI grantees have both contributed significant in-kind funding and also individually leveraged additional state, federal and private funds. Below are examples of current funding structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 5 LA</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($334k)</td>
<td>($500k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCMF ($166k)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Readiness Initiative
Grantee Example A ($1M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 5 LA</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($500k)</td>
<td>($500k)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Readiness Initiative
Grantee Example B ($1M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 5 LA</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($334k)</td>
<td>($500k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCMF ($166k)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-Kind or Other Non-Qualified Match

School Readiness Initiative
Grantee Example C ($1M)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First 5 LA</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>($334k)</td>
<td>($500k)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QCMF ($166k)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-Kind or Other Non-Qualified Match

School Readiness Initiative
Grantee Example D ($1M)

In planning for and designing an appropriate funding structure for the second SRI cycle (Cycle 2), several challenges and opportunities were considered. Reviewing the voluntary Qualified Cash Match contributions as well as recognizing the substantial in-kind contributions have helped to shape the multiple funding structure options proposed for Cycle 2.

In the current SRI cycle, only 40% (17) of the 42 grantees were contracted to contribute Qualified Cash Matching Funds. On average, the QCMF represented 15% of the total grant amount (combination of First 5 LA and State Commission funds) and ranged from less than 1% to over 56% of the total grant award. These funds are subject to qualification based on the State’s QCMF definition, in which funds must be auditable and traceable, among other criteria.\(^8\)

As described above, many grantees have created opportunities to leverage alternative funding sources either through in-kind contributions or partnering with external funding sources. While it is not realistic to assume that each agency will have the appropriate structure or resources to leverage consistent levels of funding, First 5 LA does recognize the opportunity to formalize how SRI grantees report in-kind contributions to better reflect actual costs in Cycle 2. In addition, the opportunity to more accurately capture in-kind costs will complement First 5 LA’s sustainability efforts for SRI grantees.

The funding structure for Cycle 2 includes a required progressive cash match contribution for all grantees while formalizing First 5 LA’s recognition of in-kind contributions. The progressive cash match formula, along with the inclusion of funding for grantee-level sustainability positions, is designed to achieve these goals while leveraging substantial State funding.

---

\(^8\)Cash Match Contributions can be defined as cash match coming from any source as long as it is a real cash contribution. No in-kind services of any kind are allowed as part of qualified cash match. Any State First 5 CCFC funds received from any other State initiative cannot be used as cash match. Percentages of existing positions are not considered a qualified cash match because staff positions are considered to be “in kind” contributions. Dollars that are traceable and auditable to the SR Program can be counted as cash match. There must be a clear trail for the exchange of funds between partners (e.g., MOU with local partners that clearly specifies the new funds). To avoid supplantation, First 5 CCFC funds “can in no way be used to fund any levels of service that were or are currently in existence at the time of the purported expenditure.”

All definitions have been adapted by the California Children and Families Commission—[http://www.ccfo.ca.gov/PDF/SRI/SR-FAQ-6-03.pdf](http://www.ccfo.ca.gov/PDF/SRI/SR-FAQ-6-03.pdf)
FUNDING CRITERION #4: Create linkages between countywide systems and agencies as well as First 5 LA-funded projects, initiatives and partnerships.

Strong collaborative efforts are in place among SR Programs, First 5 LA-funded projects and countywide systems. As a result of this coordinated work, SR Programs provide quality, comprehensive services to children and families while avoiding duplicative programming. Through extensive linkages, SR Programs have strengthened the capacity of parents and communities, increased the overall effectiveness of their programs, and multiplied services to more successfully serve Los Angeles County’s children and families. In several communities, promising practices, lessons learned and information gained through the SR Program has influenced the planning, organizing and implementation of other community programs including other First 5 LA initiatives. The following will identify existing collaborative activities among SR Programs, First 5 LA initiatives and countywide systems including formalized joint planning, written collaborative agreements, regular meetings of program staff, cross-training of staff, operational multi-disciplinary teams and co-location of services and major events.

SRI's connection with other First 5 LA-funded Initiatives

Healthy Kids provides health insurance coverage for eligible children ages 0-5 living in Los Angeles County. Healthy Kids is sponsored by First 5 LA and administered by L.A. Care Health Plan. Through the Health and Social Services component of many SR Programs, agencies provide outreach services such as health plan enrollment to multiple health insurance plans including Healthy Kids. Most SR Program staff members have been trained in Healthy Kids insurance enrollment. The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) administers the countywide, community-based Healthy Kids Outreach Partnership, which includes CBOs that assist clients with screening and enrollment for Healthy Kids and other free to low-cost health insurance programs.

Healthy Births addresses barriers to achieving healthy birth outcomes and works to fill in programmatic gaps and improve the coordination of the multiple systems that impact birth outcomes, while developing and linking existing perinatal service networks. The Los Angeles Best Babies Network is implementing the Healthy Births project for First 5 LA. Linkage between SR Programs and Healthy Births is demonstrated through key SR Program staff/leadership participation in the Network. Direct results of this collaboration include shared outreach and referrals, involvement and co-location of annual events (Healthy Births Fair), joint staff training and learning opportunities and shared collaborative partners. SR Programs that also serve as the lead agency and/or participate fully in the Healthy Births collaborative in their community include St. John’s Well Child and Family Center, and Children’s Center of Antelope Valley.

Family Literacy assists in the implementation of comprehensive family literacy programs that promote the academic achievement of both parents and children, strengthen parenting skills and knowledge, and promote economic self-sufficiency in the family. Several SR school districts and community-based agencies also have a Family Literacy grant which has presented substantial opportunity around cross-training of staff, joint participation in community collaboratives/coalitions, shared outreach and referrals, and support and guidance. Dual Family Literacy/School Readiness grantees include, Children’s Center of Antelope Valley, California Hospital Medical Center-Hope Street Family Center, Children’s Bureau of Southern California, Los Angeles Unified School District (Cudahy), Rowland Unified School District, and Long Beach Unified School District.

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) provides high-quality preschool to four-year-old children in Los Angeles County whose parents choose to participate. Many SR Programs have extended
their SR activities to LAUP children, families and staff including health screenings, health education workshops, parent education, and preschool teacher trainings and development. This collaboration has increased access to needed services, increased parent knowledge of child development issues and school readiness techniques, enhanced the quality early education teaching skills and techniques and increased overall health and well-being of children and families served. Furthermore, operating both programs has produced joint staff participation on committees, shared development and implementation of program tools, shared information and resources, and joint referral and training. Dual SRI/LAUP agencies include Hope Street Family Center, Lennox School District, Mountain View School District, Para Los Niños, Pomona Unified School District, and Human Services Association.

New Schools, Better Neighborhoods (NSBN) created small, neighborhood-centered schools which: (1) function as community centers open at night and on weekends by providing other social services such as day care, health clinics, libraries, and recreation space, and (2) reduce sprawl development and suburban migration by more efficient and imaginative use of limited urban land. NSBN began by searching for interested community stakeholders and sites in areas of high need that fit within First 5 LA SR criteria. Several SR Programs and their staff were brought into the planning process of NSBN to facilitate and offer community dialogue and input. Relationships were built among NSBN and SR staff and collaborative community building was established. Many sites have completed the development and adoption of the site master plan, have signed MOUs and are moving steadfastly toward the physical development of new mixed-use community-centered schools. SR Programs that have played a key role in the planning and development of these pilot neighborhood school sites include: Lennox School District, Lawndale Elementary School District and Paramount Unified School District.

Kit for New Parents is a comprehensive resource for new and expecting parents that translates emerging science about the importance of the early years into practical information parents can incorporate into their daily lives. Many SRI grantees participated in an orientation and training regarding how to use the Kits which has facilitated distribution of the Kits separately or as part of the program’s curriculum.

Partnership for Families (PFF) aims to create a network of resources designed to provide opportunities for families, communities and county systems to meaningfully participate in the prevention of child maltreatment. PFF creates a web of local-level partnerships between new and existing service agencies and groups that are coordinated, accessible and responsive to the unique needs of children and families. Several SRI grantees were chosen as lead agencies for PFF including Para Los Niños, Children’s Bureau of Southern California, and Bienvenidos. Future opportunities exist for considerable collaboration between the SRI and PFF as both initiatives have a strong early care and education component.

Early Developmental Screening Intervention and Initiative (EDSI) will coordinate and implement a learning collaborative among a broad range of health and social service providers to: (1) conduct developmental screening and early intervention; (2) educate and support parents to promote healthy behavioral development of their children; and (3) impact policies related to early identification and intervention services. Significant collaboration opportunities exist between SRI grantee Westside Children’s Center and EDSI. Westside Children’s Center manages a SR Program as well as the Special Needs Demonstration Project and has been identified as a key community agency for the EDSI project and will participate on the EDSI Steering Committee which will provide expertise and advice on leveraging and dissemination during the five year contract period.

Workforce Development addresses the range of issues and needs of the early care and education workforce in Los Angeles County including education and training (from both the individual and institutional perspectives), recruiting, compensation, and career image. Several SR Programs
provide program activities that target child care workers and family child care settings to increase access to training and support to strengthen and enhance skills. SR Programs that offer these services to the childcare workforce include Child Care Resource Center, Urban Education Partnership, International Institute of Los Angeles, Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services, Estrada Courts Residents Management Corporation, Rowland Unified School District, and Westside Children’s Center. Specific activities include: recruitment of exempt providers to begin the licensing process, licensing workshops followed by continuing support and mentorship, a Mobile Resource Library Van targeting license-exempt providers to reduce isolation, offer training and support, and provide education materials.

**Best Start (Prenatal Through Three)** seeks to optimize the early development of children from the prenatal stage through age three and to increase the number of children who achieve appropriate social, emotional, cognitive, language, physical and motor developmental milestones to the best of their potential. SRI and Best Start (Prenatal Through Three) share multiple programmatic strategies and activities including improving access to care for infants and toddlers, provider training on children with special needs, increasing the capacity of individuals and organizations with an emphasis on parents and providers, and improving linkages across different disciplines of service. Through SRI, an investment has been made in the 0-3 population as demonstrated by the numbers served in 2006-2007 when nearly 47% of the estimated 29,618 children served were within the 0-3 population. Given the large number of children ages 0-3 served, multiple future opportunities exist for SRI grantees to link with Best Start (Prenatal Through Three).

**SRI’s connection with Countywide Systems**

**Los Angeles County Office on Education (LACOE)** administers Head Start-State Preschool through a contract with delegate agencies and Child Care Contractors. The LACOE Head Start-State Preschool office provides program oversight, program monitoring, technical assistance, and staff training to each site to ensure there are excellent learning programs, parent participation, community organizations and resources available to help enrich children academically and socially, while strengthening the entire family. For SRI grantees, LACOE provides staff training and workshops, child development classes and workshops for parents, joint participation and involvement at program staff meetings and participation on program collaboratives. SR Programs include: Lennox School District, Children’s Bureau of Southern California, Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District, and Children’s Center of the Antelope Valley.

**Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** operates a comprehensive child protection system of prevention, preservation, and permanency for Los Angeles County. DCFS serves SR Programs through key staff participation on SR collaboratives and Advisory Boards, regular attendance at staff and community meetings, and shared referral. SR Programs with a strong connection to DCFS are Children’s Center of the Antelope Valley, Westside Children’s Center (Special Needs Demonstration Project), and People Coordinated Services of Southern California.

**Cal-SAFE/Cal-Learn** offers case management, health and social services, parent information, child development support, child care or payments for child care, transportation and education expenses for teen parents. Cal-SAFE/Cal-Learn is involved with several SR Programs that have a teen parent component. These programs include El Rancho Unified School District, Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District, Paramount Unified School District and Intercommunity Child Guidance Center.

**Regional Centers** are nonprofit private corporations that contract with the Department of Developmental Services to provide or coordinate services and supports for individuals with developmental disabilities. Most SR Programs refer and/or link children and their families to a Regional Center to provide further services once a developmental disability has been identified.
Westside Children’s Center (Special Needs Demonstration Project) maintains a strong relationship with Westside Regional Center due to the specific focus of their program.

Women, Infants, Children (WIC) supports many SR Programs through the delivery of parent workshops and classes on nutrition and childhood obesity, shared outreach, recruiting and referral through WIC locations, designation of space for program events and activities and joint participation on program’s collaboratives. SR Programs that coordinate services with WIC include: Lennox School District, Children’s Center of the Antelope Valley, El Rancho Unified School District and Paramount Unified School District.

FUNDING CRITERION 5: Build on Existing Community Assets

The design of SRI provides an opportunity to build a system of coordinated quality early care and education, parental education and involvement, health and social services, and schools’ readiness for children. A major effort for creating a successful SR Program was the development process. This component called for county agencies and their perspective programs to engage in a developmental process where plans for a unified and integrated system of school readiness would be realized for children and families in Los Angeles County.

SR Programs participate in a five-step process for developing the framework for their community program. As depicted in the diagram included below, these steps include: (1) collaboration, (2) assessment, (3) choosing results, (4) implementation, and (5) evaluation. A key activity of the funding process was the requirement for SR Programs to conduct a community assessment. The intent was that each program would build on existing community infrastructures and services to respond to local school readiness needs.

Diagram 1:

The community assessment specifically sought to understand the needs and strengths/assets in each targeted community. Through this community assessment, programs determine: (a) What services were available and already working; (b) What services could be/needed to be restructured; and (c) What services were missing from the landscape and needed to be created.
Determining the strengths and needs of children, families, and the community was addressed within the context of the targeted population and the school/educational environment. To examine community strengths/assets and needs, programs directly involved community stakeholders such as parents, community groups, early care and educational providers, teachers, and many others that were considered the fabric of their community’s infrastructure. Participating in this process at the community-level allowed programs to explore how community partner goals and services aligned with one another, and how collectively their programs could better fit the needs of children and families. This exercise was aimed at leveraging existing resources while eliminating the often fragmented nature and redundancy of services in the community.

Some examples of activities occurring at the community-level which address this redundancy and fragmentation are as follows:

**Maximizing Existing Resources:** During the community assessment process a direct-service collaborative was formed for the SR Program. With the lead agency providing coordination of services and linkages, some important community partners emerged. An early education institution, that is considered a premier practitioner of high quality childcare in Southern California partnered with the lead agency to provide the Early Care and Education component of the program. For the program's Parenting and Family Support component, a well-recognized center specializing in non-violence and parenting provides home-based parent education and support to families. Additionally, an agency focusing on child care resources provides family support services in the areas of early care and education, and offered particular expertise in serving children with special needs. These direct services providers in concert with several elementary schools provide quality early childhood and adult education services to children ages 0-5, their parents, childcare providers, and educators.

**Eliminating Redundancy:** A school readiness lead agency that historically convened a community collaborative comprised of comprehensive child and family service providers expanded their partners to encompass additional institutions involved in the SR Program. This infusion of additional community partners strengthen the collective body, and supported a larger network of coordinated agencies focusing on services of children ages 0-5 and their families. This process helped to reduce duplication and built on existing community infrastructures.

Prior to the infusion of Initiative funding, communities were implementing some of the identified strategies and activities either directly or through existing partnership which addressed the 4 Result Areas (e.g., Improved Family Functioning, Improved Child Development, etc.). Given the unique nature of each community these existing strengths/assets reflected many different structures. SRI funds provided for the expansion or creation of services and activities that supported the comprehensive delivery of school readiness services to children and families.

**FUNDING CRITERION #6:** *Demonstrate that outcomes justify the investment where appropriate.*
(See appended Evaluation Reports)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Plan Objective: Increase the quality of early learning programs.</th>
<th>First 5 LA Role:</th>
<th>Policy Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECE Workforce Development, LAUP, School Readiness Initiative, Lead</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Plan Objective: Improve the ability of parents to support their children’s learning and development.</th>
<th>First 5 LA Role:</th>
<th>Policy Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent, Friends &amp; Neighbors, Family Literacy, School Readiness Initiative, PreK Start (PreK Start), LAUP, School Readiness Initiative</td>
<td>Lead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Partnership for Families, Best Start (PreK Start, Through 5), LAUP, Family Literacy | Active Participant | |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education teacher and early childhood education</th>
<th>First 5 LA Role:</th>
<th>Policy Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher and early childhood education</td>
<td>First 5 LA Role:</td>
<td>Policy Items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Alignment with First 5 LA's recently adopted Policy Agenda:**

APPENDIX 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Readiness Initiative</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Developmental Screening Initiative, ECE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Developmental Screening Initiative, ECE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link to Investments:</th>
<th>First in LA Rule:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Plan Objective:</strong> Improve the access to and the quality of developmental and behavioral health resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Through Title</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Helping, LAHP, Best Start (Prenatal)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy Kids, School Readiness Initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Link to Investments:</th>
<th>First in LA Rule:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Plan Objective:</strong> Increase the percentage of eligible children enrolled in and retained in health care programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

January 10, 2008
Item 8 - STR Full Cycle 5 Funding
FIRST 5
LA
Champions For Our Children

School Readiness Initiative
Evaluation Summary Report

January 3, 2008
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Description</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready Children</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready Parents and Families</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready Schools</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systems Development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations &amp; Future Implications</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix C</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

In 2002, First 5 LA partnered with First 5 California to fund 42 programs to deliver school readiness services in high need communities throughout Los Angeles County.\(^1\) The purpose of the initiative is to link school, community, and family resources to support children's readiness for school.\(^2\) The School Readiness Initiative was developed as a systems change effort involving community-based organizations, schools, parents, and service providers. It sought to build upon and integrate existing early childhood development programs and services with the aim of providing a solid foundation for children to succeed when they enter kindergarten. School Readiness Centers are school-based and/or school-linked and are required to provide services across five essential and coordinated elements: Early Care and Education, Parenting and Family Support, Health and Social Services, School Capacity, and Program Infrastructure, Administration and Evaluation.

In addition to providing services in the five elements, grantees were required to collaborate with other organizations within the respective communities. This was to ensure that SR programs were coordinating with community resources and building upon existing infrastructures. Collaborations include partnerships with schools and social service agencies with the intent of providing comprehensive services to children ages 0-5 and their families.

Evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative

In July 2006, First 5 LA spearheaded a one-year evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative. This was in direct response to a request by First 5 LA's Commission to conduct a focused outcomes study. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide outcomes data on children and families participating in SR programs and to answer questions about other key components of the initiative e.g., school preparedness for children, transition from early education settings and systems change efforts. A mixed method quantitative and qualitative approach was utilized to identify key outcomes and learning from the five-year implementation of the initiative. The evaluation sought to answer the following overarching questions:

1. How has the School Readiness Initiative been implemented in Los Angeles County?
   a. Who participated in SR programs and which communities were served?
2. What are outcomes for children participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?
3. What are outcomes for parents and families participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?
4. How have schools been prepared for children entering school and their families?
5. What systems of care have been developed and/or cultivated to support children's readiness for school?
   a. What are similarities and differences between school led and community led SR programs?
   b. What has been learned about collaboration and coordination?

---

\(^1\) The School Readiness Initiative aimed to provide early learning opportunities in communities with schools that scored in the lowest three deciles of the Academic Performance Index (API) based on 1999 data.

\(^2\) The initiative was designed based on the National Education Goals Panel definition of School Readiness.
First 5 LA worked with several partners to help answer the evaluation questions. Given the distinction of the questions and foci of the evaluation, data collection efforts occurred at different points in time using specific methods. In addition to this summary report, three reports were developed to address specific components of the evaluation. Reports were developed on the following: (1) parent and child outcomes which was the result of a study conducted by the American Institutes for Research, (2) grantee evaluation and program report findings titled *Community Pathways to School Readiness*, and (3) a case study conducted by First 5 LA on collaboration (see Appendices A, B and C respectively).

A brief overview of the methodology of each study and data sources drawn upon to communicate overarching thematic findings are outlined below. Given the nature and design of each of the studies and the uniqueness of the data collection approaches, this report identifies key overarching themes, challenges and limitations, recommendations and implications of evaluation findings.

**Methodology**

The methodology utilized to answer the initiative-level evaluation questions varied and provided key insights on different aspects of the initiative. First 5 LA worked with the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a focused parent and child outcomes study. The study included a parent survey, focus groups with parents participating in SR programs and direct child assessments. The parent survey was administered at two points in time (referred to as Time 1 and Time 2) by telephone during the summer and winter of 2007. The study spanned an average of four months and the analysis included comparison data, when possible, on certain survey questions. Additionally, AIR conducted parent focus groups at five SR sites with 41 parents and addressed topics of program impact on parents, program impact on children, parents' knowledge and comfort with the child's school and strengths and weaknesses of the School Readiness program along with suggestions on improvements.

AIR also conducted direct child assessments of 240 children during spring and summer of 2007. The assessment tool included primarily cognitive measures to determine the children's developmental status using measures from a battery of assessments. AIR partnered with UCLA's Center for Improving Child Care Quality to assess the children. The analyses of the child data included comparison data with other studies when feasible.

AIR also reviewed grantee year-end evaluation reports for the 2005-2006 grant year. These reports are submitted to First 5 LA annually and provide information on grantee local evaluation findings. AIR reviewed evaluation findings reported by grantees specifically on parent and child outcomes and identified common themes. Detailed information on the methodology used for the parent and child outcomes studies are comprehensively described in AIR’s full report (see Appendix A).

In addition to focusing on parent and child outcomes, First 5 LA conducted a review of grantee evaluation reports. Each school readiness grantee conducts an evaluation of its School Readiness grant for the purposes of program improvement. At the end of each grant year, grantees submit an evaluation report summarizing evaluation findings. First 5 LA worked with consultants to review a sample of School Readiness reports and provided thematic findings. School Readiness program evaluations are unique to the specific needs
of the programs and provide insightful information about what programs have learned from an evaluation standpoint. The report titled *Community Pathways to School Readiness* summarizes grantee findings and highlights key programmatic strategies, grantee evaluation findings, challenges and future directions based on learning at the program level. More details about the methodology used to review grantee reports and findings are located in Appendix B of this report.

First 5 LA also conducted a case study on collaboration. The study was exploratory in nature with the purpose of understanding collaborative partnerships in the context of the School Readiness initiative. The study was conducted with seven grantees (four community based organizations and three school districts). Staff from each of the programs was interviewed about the partnership using questions based on the literature. One collaborative partner from each of the sites was also interviewed. In-depth information about the design, approach, evaluation findings and recommendations are detailed in Appendix C.

First 5 LA conducted focus groups with seventy-nine parents from eight School Readiness sites. Half of the programs that participated in the First 5 LA parent focus groups were CBO-led and the other half were school-led programs. The purpose of the focus groups was to better understand parents’ perspectives about what they have learned to support their child’s readiness for school. Parents’ were also asked questions about their sense of belonging in their community and whether they felt like they had a voice in their child’s school.

Finally, First 5 LA analyzed descriptive data provided by School Readiness grantees as part of mid-year and annual reporting. This includes demographic information on the participants served e.g., number of children and families served, ethnicity, primary language, children served with special needs, etc.

**Data Sources**

As mentioned, several sources of information were drawn upon to help answer the overarching evaluation questions outlined above. This report draws upon information from the following sources:

- **American Institutes for Research (AIR) - First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative Evaluation Findings: Parent and Child Outcomes.** The parent and child outcomes study conducted by the American Institutes for Research which describes methodology, results and implications of parent survey, parent survey and direct child assessment data. (More details are provided in Appendix A.)

- **Community Pathways to School Readiness.** A review of grantee program and evaluation reports which draws from a sample of grantee reports to identify key program activities; grantee reported evaluation findings and implications of the findings. The report also draws upon qualitative information from grantees gathered at program and evaluation convenings and a monthly School Readiness Project Evaluators Advisory Workgroup. (More details are provided in Appendix B.)
First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative
Evaluation Summary Report

- **First 5 LA Collaboration Case Study – Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs.** A collaboration case study conducted by First 5 LA to identify key practices related to community partnerships, insights on school-community linkages, and key lessons for future implementation of collaborative efforts. The study examines various developmental frameworks and themes such as leadership, decision making and parent involvement that could influence the success of collaborative partnerships. (More details are provided in Appendix C.)

- **First 5 LA Parent Focus Groups.** First 5 LA conducted qualitative parent focus groups at eight School Readiness grantee sites in different geographic regions in Los Angeles County.

- **School Readiness Initiative Descriptive Data.** Descriptive data collected on the School Readiness programs is utilized to provide a context of demographic information such as who was served and in which geographic areas. This information is collected from grantees annually and semi-annually by First 5 LA.

It is the goal of the evaluation to provide a comprehensive view of the initiative and identify areas that are working well and areas that could be improved. This report provides an analysis of the evaluation findings across our respective studies and an overview that ties together the various components of the evaluation.

**Approach**

This report is organized around the evaluation questions and draws upon the various data sources to provide over-arching analyses. Each section provides brief bullet points of key findings and identifies common themes and analyses from the various studies and data sources. Note that the themes highlighted in this report are not exhaustive and do not go into the level of detail provided in each of the individual reports. Those details are provided in the attached reports under Appendices A, B and C. This report seeks to summarize key findings and highlight central themes from the various studies. It also identifies, promising practices, challenges, learning and implications to the findings.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: How has the School Readiness Initiative been implemented in Los Angeles County? Who participated in SR programs and which communities were served?**

In order to understand the evaluation findings, below are descriptive data about the SR initiative. This information provides a context of the initiative and gives insight on who has been served in Los Angeles County. It also informs key stakeholders of successes with serving particular populations and areas that may be improved. Below are highlights of descriptive themes:

- The initiative has served a substantial number of children and families from 2004-2007.
- Nearly half of the participants served are children ages 0-3 and all of the SR programs provide a range of services based on community needs assessments.
• Approximately 200 Elementary Schools and 15 School Districts are participating in the initiative.

Key Themes

The initiative has served a substantial number of children and families from 2004-2007. The School Readiness Initiative has committed to serving children ages 0-5 in their communities. Since 2004, the 42 grantee programs have served 75,040 children and 71,257 families through the initiative. Over the course of the same period, an average of 25,013 children and 23,752 families has been served per year. The majority of children and families served are Latino/Hispanic (85%). The ethnicities of the remaining fifteen percent of participants are Caucasian (6%), African American (5%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (2%) and Other (2%). First 5 LA analyzed 2000 census data for the zip codes served and found that the ethnic populations were similar to the populations served by SR programs.

Nearly half of the participants served are children ages 0-3 and all of the SR programs provide a range of services based on community needs assessments. The School Readiness Initiative serves a range of participants. SR programs work with children in their early years (ages 0-3) and with Pre-School age children (3-5 years). In 2006-2007 fiscal year, SR programs served 47% of children younger than age 3 and 53% were ages 3-5. On average, a total of 10, 221 children younger than age 3 have been served each year, from 2004-2007, and 13,653 ages 3-5 years of age have been served.

Approximately 200 Elementary Schools and 15 School Districts are participating in the initiative. There are a range of 1 to 21 schools participating in each grant. However, First 5 LA has worked with grantees to identify a primary school in their efforts. At least 15 School Districts are participating as lead agencies or collaborative partners which include: Antelope Valley, Azusa, Bellflower, Compton, El Rancho, Lawndale, Lennox, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Montebello, Mountain View, Norwalk, Paramount, Pomona and Rowland.

READY CHILDREN: What are outcomes for children participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?

One of the essential components of school readiness is specifically children’s the ability to demonstrate outcomes in children ages 0-5. In an effort to identify key outcomes in children participating in SR programs a number of sources were drawn upon to communicate changes in children. Below are key themes to help identify children’s readiness for school:

• Pre-LAS scores for children attending School Readiness program activities including preschool programs, parent-child activities, kindergarten transition programs, and home visits were significantly higher, on average, than scores for a demographically similar population of children enrolled in State Preschool.
• Positive and developmentally appropriate growth in children’s language development was found as reported by parents on the parent survey.
• School Readiness programs appear to be preparing children well – and on average, better than State Preschools – to know the names of numbers, letters, and colors.
Key Themes

Children’s language skills were measured using a Pre-LAS 2000, screener tool used to determine which language the child should be assessed i.e., English or Spanish. Pre-LAS scores for children attending School Readiness program activities including preschool programs, parent-child activities, kindergarten transition programs, and home visits were significantly higher, on average, than scores for a demographically similar population of children enrolled in State Preschool. In addition, mean scores of receptive language, as measured by the PPVT/TVIP (English and Spanish versions) were comparable to scores for similar populations of children enrolled in State Preschool and those participating in the Early Head Start study, although in all three cases, children scored just over 10 points (out of 100) below the age norms for these measures.

Parents also reported changes that were statistically significant with regard to their child’s use of increasingly sophisticated communication strategies at Time 2 compared to Time 1. In focus groups, parents echoed these findings, commenting on the growth in their child’s use of vocabulary and communication strategies as a result of their participation in SR programs.

The data from a single point in time – close to the end of their participation in SR programs, suggest that the programs may be helping children to keep pace with their counterparts in other state and federal programs, but due to the limitations of the SR study design, we cannot estimate how they would have performed had they not attended SR programs. Nonetheless, SR programs should continue to focus on and support children’s acquisition of English, receptive language and vocabulary development, and their growing communication skills.

In addition, School Readiness programs appear to be preparing children for school— and on average, better than State Preschools— to know the names of numbers, letters, and colors. While this finding is encouraging, SR programs could be doing more to help children learn story and print concepts (concepts of print and basic comprehension), where their performance was lower than that of demographically similar children participating in the Early Head Start study.

Results also suggest a significant correlation between the number of months spent in SR programs overall and children’s scores on the Applied Problems (math) subtest, at least for Spanish speakers. Children who were assessed in English scored very close to the national norm on this measure, with more than 90 percent scoring above the “at risk” cutoff of 85 percent, with scores very comparable to demographically similar children in State Preschool programs. Given these results, programs should continue to support children’s development of math and problem-solving skills.

Although direct measures of children’s social-emotional development are limited (which reflects limitations in the field, in general), parent survey results include small but statistically significant changes between Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2) on a scale comprised of 9 items related to social-emotional status. In focus groups, parents also reported important developments that they attributed to SR programs in areas such as children’s growing independence, confidence, and interpersonal skills, such as the ability to share with others and develop friendships. Clearly, parents reported being very satisfied with SR
program activities; the overriding suggestion that many of them offered was to increase the frequency or length of SR classes.

**READY PARENTS AND FAMILIES:** *What are outcomes for parents and families participating in School Readiness Initiative programs?*

Key learning opportunities have been gained from evaluating parent and family outcomes. Since parents are their children's first teacher, it is critical to examine the extent to which parents have been engaged in their children's readiness for school. This section draws upon information and analyses from the parent outcomes study, parent qualitative data and grantee reported findings. Some of the thematic findings are:

- Parents demonstrate knowledge of their children's development.
- Parents support children's literacy in the home.
- Home visiting strategies provide opportunities to engage families that are isolated and possibly less likely to access center- or school-based programs.
- Parents are empowered to interact with the school and express confidence in their role as parents and members of the community.

**Key Themes**

Parents demonstrate knowledge of their children’s development. School Readiness parents communicated knowledge of their children’s development. When comparing Time 1 and Time 2 data of the parent survey, parents believed it was important to begin reading to children at an earlier age at Time 2 compared to Time 1. Parents also reported, on average, the importance of reading to children at an earlier age at Time 2. The outcomes study also revealed that parents showed improvement in their knowledge of their child’s development.

Nine-teen grantees also reported increases in parent knowledge. Reports identified improvements in the following: parents’ understanding of child development concepts (i.e., language development), social and emotional development, cognitive development, and physical-motor development, and their ability to manage their child’s behavior.

Parents support children’s literacy in the home. Parents participating in SR programs indicated that they support their children's literacy at home. For example, in the parent survey, parents reported significantly more books in the home at Time 2 of the survey compared to parents’ report at Time 1. In addition, School Readiness parents reported similar number of books as parents participating in First 5 LA's Family Literacy Initiative.

Grantees also reported increases in children's literacy skills. Specifically three programs indicated that ninety percent more of their parents reported an increase in literacy activities in the home. These activities included reading to the child at home, teaching the child new words and picture reading in books. Grantees also reported parents possessing a library card. The parent survey also revealed that parents reported, on average, significantly greater frequency of use of the public library i.e., borrowing books or materials.
Parents who participated in the First 5 LA focus groups reported reading and engaging in literacy activities with their children. For example, one parent reported the literacy activities that she does with her children:

Also participating, taking them to the schools for story times, and going to the libraries to get books for reading and music.

Another parent shares the literacy activities that she does with her children:

I have learned too, with a simple book, there is no need to have too beautiful a book, it does not matter whether you know how to read or not, just to write the sheet they are reading in your own words and, at the same time you are playing with him, you are describing, for example, if he’s eating an apple, the apple, you cut it, it’s green, the flavor it has, describing it to him at the same time you are giving him food. That is what I use with my children.

Home visiting strategies provide opportunities to engage families that are isolated and possibly less likely to access center- or school-based programs. The grantee findings indicates that home visiting strategies create opportunities to reach isolated populations i.e., children and families who are unable or uncomfortable to participate in center-based programs. These services provide access to resources that parents and children would not otherwise or experience. It is noteworthy, however, that the parent outcomes study revealed that participation in home visiting programs did not fare as well in the social support measures of the parent survey from T1 to T2 as compared to parents participating in center-based on onsite programs. This issue may be further explored as well as possible strategies to create opportunities for parents participating in home visiting programs to interact with other parents.

It is noteworthy that most grantees, in the sample of reports reviewed, providing home visiting programs use the Parents as Teachers (PAT) curriculum. This program fosters parents' ability to become their child’s first teacher by teaching parents about child development milestones, appropriate home-based activities to encourage child development, and child health information. Grantees reported having bilingual staff who conducts the home visits in either English or Spanish; and two grantees reported using home visits as a supplement to other parenting classes or workshops.

Parents are empowered to interact with the school and express confidence in their role as parents and members of the community. Seven grantees reported positive changes in parent feelings about involvement in their child’s school. It is noteworthy that T1 data on parent comfort with the school was high compared to T2 which may explain why the parent survey did not show statistically significant changes from T1 to T2. Nine grantees reported increased confidence in their role as parents and members of the community. In the focus group data revealed that some of the parents reported having a voice in their child’s school. Once parent stated:

We do have a voice, because when we talk, the teachers pay attention to us. They take our comments into account, and I think our voice is valuable.

Another parent shared her experiences with being empowered to advocate for her child:

What I’ve learned in this group is that I don’t have to keep quiet. And in relation to that, when my boy was in fifth grade, I think the teacher was failing. I even volunteered to help
her. And now that he’s in sixth grade, also... there are like five teachers and the five of them already know me. And you have to speak so they realize that you are interested in the education of your children. So, what I have learned here is that we have to speak up.

The information that the parent gained at her SR program supported her ability to not only advocate for her child younger than age 5 if needed, but also to speak up for her older child who in his elementary school.

**READY SCHOOLS: How have schools been prepared for children entering school and their families?**

Grantees have spent the last four years designing, implementing, and adapting a variety of services to improve the flow of education and learning for the young children and families they serve. The efforts toward collaborative articulation and/or transition activities were not only designed to connect children, families, and pre-schools to area schools, but also to connect children, families, preschools, and an array of health, mental health, and social service agencies to each other. Information on schools’ readiness for children and their families primarily qualitative in nature and provides insights on strategies utilized by grantees to prepare schools for children. More details are outlined below:

- Many School Readiness programs provide two primary types of activities designed to create a seamless system of learning for families and children: 1) Transition activities with parents and children involving the schools and 2) Communication strategies to bridge gaps between parents, principals, early care staff, K-teachers, etc.

**Key Themes**

**Transition Activities** help prepare preschool children for the transition to kindergarten. Activities include talking about the differences between preschool and kindergarten, giving children an opportunity to express their feelings and fears about the transition to kindergarten, and conducting visits to elementary schools and kindergarten classrooms. Trips to the elementary school include a visit to the kindergarten classroom, as well as a tour of the playground, cafeteria, and administrative offices. Visits to kindergarten classrooms give preschoolers an opportunity to learn classroom routines, rules, and expectations. Sometimes visits to kindergarten classrooms also include an opportunity for preschoolers to participate in a group literacy experience. The following grantee program report excerpt is an example of how these transition activities help to prepare preschoolers for kindergarten.

>"Transition activities give children an opportunity to express their feelings about going to Kindergarten by reading a book about a child who is going to Kindergarten, and how he feels about it. The facilitator then encouraged each group of children to share their own thoughts and feeling about his/her transition. The children who were not comfortable and/or not able to verbally express how they felt were given the opportunity to point to pictures that described their feelings. Next, they discussed what would be different from pre-school when they go to kindergarten, and what would be the same. After the discussion, all classes went to the kindergarten classroom to take a tour, and to meet the kindergarten teacher.”
Communication Strategies involve working with parents, school principals, kindergarten teachers, and early education teachers to design new methods to communicate with parents about their child's transition to kindergarten. For example, parent workshops, meetings, and/or councils that inform and educate parents about the skills and experiences their child needs in order to have a smooth transition to kindergarten. Specifically, these activities discuss developmental milestones, introduce school readiness activities that can be conducted in the home, outline the documents (medical and other) needed to enroll; present kindergarten standards and school district policies; and sometimes provide one-on-one assistance in choosing a kindergarten, among others.

Another communication strategy is to hand out transition packets or backpacks with school-readiness related activities that the parent and child can engage in together. The packets and backpacks might also contain information about the elementary school, the Kindergarten academic curriculum, and the processes and procedures for enrolling. Kindergarten school supplies are sometimes also distributed along with the other materials. Below is an example of an activity that combines a parent event with the distribution of transitional backpacks.

"These events were designed to teach families how to properly use the items included in the backpack. Each family was required to rotate through interactive stations that focused on Art, Music, Math, and Literacy. Once the family took part in all four stations, they were able to receive the backpack. Both parent and child were required to participate in each station in order to promote family engagement. Another positive aspect of these events was having Early Education Preschool teachers involved. These teachers helped with the learning stations and the Kindergarten teacher was available to the parents to answer questions about their child’s new school."

SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT: What systems of care have been developed and/or cultivated to support children’s readiness for school?

Systems development was an important component in the design of the SR initiative. The initiative intended to link communities and schools as well as foster collaboration. Therefore First 5 LA sought to qualitatively address similarities and differences between school-led and community based organization-led programs. It is equally important to document learning as it relates to grantee collaboration all with the purpose or coordinating efforts and resources to prepare children and families for school. Below details related to systems development, collaboration and coordination:

- Among the 42 grantees, there are 519 collaborative partners of SR agencies in Los Angeles County.
- There is a range of 4 to 28 collaborative partners per agency.
- The types of collaborators include: Higher education institutions, Adult education programs, Family social service agencies, Early childhood education/child care agencies, Special Education programs, K-12 Schools, Health related organizations, Literacy focused agencies and other organizations.
Key Themes

Some CBO led SR programs experienced more challenges partnering with schools and penetrating schools' leadership structure. This is particularly important given transition activities. Some schools and particularly school districts tend to be in a better position to leverage funds using federal Title I funding and possibly state pre-school funds to provide SR services. Additionally schools tend to be in a better position to facilitate collaboration with school and community partners given the structure and nuances of school-district governance.

Grantees reported building relationships with schools is a slow and sometimes iterative process particularly for community-based organizations. The report cites the following as a challenge:

Some transition activities are more difficult for community-based programs than school-based programs, which have more direct access to school district personnel and elementary school administrators. Specifically, some grantees have difficulty gaining access to Kindergarten classrooms and teachers. Locating space at elementary schools in which to conduct some of the activities is also challenging. Program, administrative and school staff turnover among the grantee programs and at the elementary schools also slows collaboration efforts.

Community-based organization (CBO) led programs provide opportunities for children and families where schools and community systems fall short. These programs often provide early learning experiences (i.e., center-based as well as home visiting programs) in some of the high need communities that do not have access to Pre-Schools and comprehensive school readiness services. This approach is certainly an innovation in Los Angeles County which has the most CBO led School Readiness programs in First 5 California's School Readiness Initiative partnership with County First 5 Commissions.

First 5 LA launched an exploratory study about collaboration among school readiness grantees, examining seven programs engaged in collaborative ventures in 2006. According to the study, while there are general elements of successful collaborations, such as frequent communication and shared resources and information, each program is individualized to meet the needs of its surrounding community. Some agencies focus on increased staff involvement, regularly scheduled meetings, parent involvement, shared leadership and decision making. Others emphasize service provisions and subcontracting relationships that serve as a primary focus of their efforts.

The collaborative experiences for the SR grantees that were studied were mixed. As noted in the collaboration case study:

The interviews have served to demonstrate that organizations working collectively to assist some of the neediest clients in the county vary widely across a number of domains. Some collaborative partnerships were marked by multi-level staff involvement, regularly scheduled meetings, parent involvement, and shared leadership and decision-making, each of which has been cited in the literature as a means to foster functional, successful alliances. Other agencies were not engaged in a collaborative as described in the current literature, keeping service provision as the primary focus of their efforts and demonstrating subcontracting relationships rather than more developed collaborative partnerships. And finally, according
to the interview data collected from lead and partner agency staff members, only a small portion of the sample has attempted to influence change in the areas of funding allocation or state or federal policy initiatives, activities highlighted in the literature as paramount to the advancement of the social service delivery system.

CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

There were several challenges to evaluating the School Readiness Initiative. Some of the key challenges are inherent in the design of the initiative. Specifically, programs conducted community needs assessments to identify services needed within the respective service areas. This approach was an asset in terms of programs being responsive to community needs. However, this approach resulted in an initiative design that was relatively difficult to evaluate given the diversity of program strategies as related to the type, intensity and duration of services provided. First 5 LA will make concerted efforts to identify more standardized approaches to evaluating the initiative in the future (more details are provided in the recommendations and future implications sections below).

Another key limitation of the evaluation is that in a one-year period of conducting a focused outcomes study, a Time 1 and Time 2 survey was administered after programs were well into full implementation. This meant that several of the parents surveyed may have already received services and/or intervention prior to the Time 1 survey. This may have resulted in ceiling effects which means that there was very little growth to be made amongst participants that may have experienced the most growth in their first year of program. This issue was compounded with a short period between administering the Time 1 and Time 2 survey which may also show little or no changes in parents’ knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviors. In the future, it would be ideal to conduct a true baseline period prior to the participants receiving services which would provide better indication of growth over time.

CONCLUSION

Children and parents participating in School Readiness programs have demonstrated some changes in their knowledge, skills and abilities during their participation in the School Readiness Initiative. Parenting practices and behaviors have changed, generally, in a positive direction based on the Time 1 and Time 2 parent survey. Additionally, grantee program evaluations support some of the findings of the parent survey. Qualitatively, some parents expressed feeling like they have more of a voice in the school and community which provides an opportunity for them to advocate for their children.

Based on examination of schools’ readiness for children and their families, it is evident that there are activities led by SR CBOs and schools which have provided a smooth transition for children and their families from early care settings into school settings. Evaluation of these types of efforts could be more systematic and deliberate so that key stakeholders are more aware of what strategies tend to be most effective.

The community/school dynamic is particularly insightful when analyzing the issue of systems change and implementation of an initiative that supports both school and community based programs as lead agencies. Each type of SR program structure has its own strengths and its own set of challenges. School systems tend to operate under very
different structures than community based programs. This has led to proactive efforts on First 5 LA’s part to ensure that implementation within both pretenses are seamless. These structures also have implications in terms of resources that are available to CBOs compared to schools districts. It is noteworthy that both structures may address very different populations which may also be further explored by First 5 LA.

RECOMMENDATIONS & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

School Readiness Evaluation & Program Improvements

1. Design and implement an evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative using quantitative and qualitative methods and includes longitudinal qualitative studies on families i.e., case studies, interviews, focus groups, etc.

2. Identify a common set of measures to be collected by all SR grantees to ensure consistency and standardization of measures across the initiative. Implement a parent survey across the initiative to identify changes in parent knowledge, attitudes and behavior over time and include measures that can be compared to local and national data.

3. Utilize a potential future three year period to identify opportunities to build on the initiative’s infrastructure, evaluation and data collection foundation developed through the web-based online reporting system (AJWI formerly JMPT DCAR system).

4. Outcomes study results indicated that parents who participated in more SR program activities between T1 and T2 showed significantly greater growth on survey measures compared to those that participated less. Therefore programs may identify strategies to optimize parent participation.

5. Programs must work with First 5 LA to identify strategies to maximize participation of hard-to-reach populations which includes but is not limited to African American, Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American populations. While programs have done a great job at providing services to primarily Spanish-speaking Latino populations, innovative strategies must be developed to ensure that other families feel comfortable to attend SR programs. This is an issue that may be further explored by First 5 LA.

Coordination with Existing First 5 LA Efforts

1. Given that the School Readiness Initiative serves approximately 50% or more of children ages 0-3 (up to the forth birthday), it is imperative that First 5 LA makes more concerted efforts to coordinate the School Readiness Initiative with Prenatal through Three planning. While the potential to tap into opportunities currently exist, First 5 staff and key stakeholders may be more explicit about coordination efforts.

2. First 5 LA currently has 519 collaborative partners among the 42 grantees. A strong infrastructure has been established in high-need communities that should be

---

3 See additional recommendations in the AIR Outcomes Study Report and the Community Pathways to School Readiness Report.
leveraged to coordinate Prenatal through Three efforts. Additionally, several of these partnerships include home visiting as part of service delivery which provides access to families through this strategy which is central to the Prenatal through Three design. While many of the home-based programs vary, the School Readiness programs provide First 5 LA with entrée to potentially marginalized populations who receive services through home visiting strategies. Prenatal through Three planning can build upon this pre-existing infrastructure which has been developed over a five-year SR implementation period. Therefore it is critical to identify opportunities to link and/or leverage the SR Initiative collaboration and relationships with schools to coordinate with Prenatal through Three focus area planning and implementation.

3. Additionally, the plethora of early learning programs school- and center-based provide key opportunities for First 5 LA to build upon recent developments with Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) and specific opportunities to participate in Early Learning Planning recently passed by First 5 LA’s Commission.

4. The School Readiness Initiative comprises a significant proportion of services across the three goal areas: Early Learning, Health and Safety. Specifically, the initiative comprises the largest service distribution of in the early learning goal area (43%) and the health goal area (44%). The initiative also provides 21% of services in the safety goal area which is the second largest initiative to provide services this goal area with Partnerships for Families being having the largest service distribution. This is another reason why the SR service infrastructure should be leveraged as a resource for current and future planning. (Note that the initiatives represented in the service distribution were the following: School Readiness Initiative, Community Developed Initiative, Family Literacy, Healthy Births, Healthy Kids, and Partnerships for Families.)

5. The Initiative also demonstrates opportunities to engage in First 5 LA strategic planning which has already begun and will continue to develop into 2009. This includes explicit consideration in terms of implementation of the Revised Accountability Framework which includes place-based strategies.

Future Collaboration

1. Grantees embarking upon collaborative partnerships should be encouraged to consult the literature addressing collaborative functioning and spend time planning how to effectively implement processes such as data collection, staff involvement, meeting scheduling and formats, and decision-making processes prior to program implementation. In this vein, First 5 LA may consider more deliberate appropriate approaches to evaluating collaborative efforts and feasibility to implementing course corrections.

2. A collaboration learning community should be fostered where organizations with successful collaboration strategies and lessons learned can share their experiences with others.

3. Funding agencies ought to provide technical assistance in the area of collaboration functioning, require grantees to incorporate measures to evaluate their collaborative into their evaluation plans, and finally, compensate program staff and community stakeholders for their participation in collaborative planning and operational activities. Additionally, funding agencies should also provide clear expectations
regarding the composition and measurable outcomes expected of collaborative partnerships.

4. And finally, research addressing interagency collaboration should be continued in order to gain a clearer understanding of the influence of collaborative partnerships on the quality and quantity of school readiness programming offered in Los Angeles County. By correlating variables such as decision-making and communication processes, the number and typology of collaborative partners, and parent and community stakeholder involvement with outcome indicators, it will be possible to identify key components of successful collaborative partnerships.
APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

Community Pathways to School Readiness
APPENDIX C

Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs
First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative Evaluation Findings: Parent and Child Outcomes

DRAFT FINAL REPORT

Prepared by
American Institutes for Research
1070 Arastradero Road, Suite 200
Palo Alto, California 94304

Deborah Parrish, Principal Investigator
Heather Quick, Project Director
Alison Hauser, Deputy Project Director

December 21, 2007
# Table of Contents

BACKGROUND ...................................................................................................................... 1
  Methodology .................................................................................................................. 1
  Demographics ............................................................................................................... 5

PARENT OUTCOMES ........................................................................................................ 8
  Parent Knowledge ......................................................................................................... 8
  Supportive Environments for Learning – Home Literacy Resources ......................... 11
  Support for Children’s Learning and Development – Parent-Child Engagement ........ 13
  Parent Involvement and School Comfort ..................................................................... 18
  Parent Support and Resilience ....................................................................................... 22

CHILD OUTCOMES .......................................................................................................... 23
  Cognitive Development ............................................................................................... 23
  Social-Emotional Development .................................................................................... 30

FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS ........................................................................................... 31

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR GRANTEES ............................................................ 32

CONCLUSIONS .................................................................................................................. 34

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION WORK ........... 35

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................... 36
BACKGROUND

The purpose of the School Readiness Initiative Outcomes Study conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) is to explore the extent to which School Readiness (SR) programs supported by First 5 LA are meeting the key goal of ensuring that both children and parents are ready for children’s transition to kindergarten. Although SR programs have other goals as well (e.g., increasing schools’ readiness for children), the SR Outcomes Study focused exclusively on outcomes for parents and children. To assess SR grantees’ progress toward the goal of preparing children and parents for school, AIR partnered with Dr. Carollee Howes and her team at the UCLA Center for Improving Child Care Quality, and in collaboration with First 5 LA, developed a mixed-methods study design. The study was conducted primarily from January through August of 2007, and incorporated parent phone surveys and focus groups, program surveys, direct child assessments, and document reviews. AIR staff also consulted periodically with the “First 5 LA School Readiness Evaluation Workgroup,” comprised of grantee staff and their local evaluators, to reflect on study logistics and to assist with the interpretation of preliminary findings.

The following evaluation questions guided the study design:

1. How do program activities and services differ across grantees and for families with children of different ages (birth to 3 and 3 to 5 years)?
2. Is participation in SR programs associated with positive outcomes for children and families?
   a. Is participation associated with children’s readiness for school?
   b. Is participation associated with positive developmental outcomes for children birth to age 3?
   c. Is participation associated with families’ support for school readiness (including support for children birth to 3 years and 3 to 5 years)?
3. Are there differences in outcomes based on variations in program activities and services?

This document presents findings from the parent phone survey and focus groups, direct child assessments, and grantee report reviews.

Methodology

The primary data sources reported here are the parent survey, focus groups, and direct child assessments. In addition, grantees’ local evaluation reports from 2005-2006 were reviewed by AIR, and information from these reviews is included where relevant to the findings from the 2007 AIR/UCLA child and parent outcomes data collection. The methodology used for collecting each of these data sources is described below.

Parent Survey

Telephone surveys were administered to parents participating in First 5 LA School Readiness programs in the winter and summer of 2007 to assess changes in parents’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors as well as changes in parent reports of children’s developmental status. The following methodology was used for data collection:

1 School Readiness programs receive funding from First 5 LA as well as state-level matching grants.
• Program staff at each of the 42 grantees completed “Data Capture” forms, which provided basic information on all program services and activities for parents. Sampling of parents was based on responses to the Data Capture forms.

• Activities that involved the most parents were parent classes, parent-child activities, and home visits; parents were selected from these activities proportionate to reported enrollment.

• Study liaisons at each site submitted lists to AIR of parents newly enrolled in these selected activities. (Newly enrolled parents were anticipated to be relatively new to the School Readiness program and not involved in activities previously.)

• AIR randomly selected parents from these lists and returned the sample selections to liaisons for recruitment. Liaisons explained the study to parents and provided AIR with parent contact information.

• Parent contact information was sent to Synovate, the phone survey center used for conducting the survey, and trained interviewers contacted parents and obtained informed consent for participation.

• Calling for the Time 1 survey began in March 2007 and ended in the middle of April 2007. A total of 320 parents were surveyed at Time 1, for a response rate of 63 percent.

• The same parents were contacted for the Time 2 survey, which began in June 2007 and ended at the end of July. A total of 205 parents were surveyed at Time 2, for a 67 percent response rate.

• At both time points, 13 separate attempts were made to contact parents at different times of the day and week, including evenings and weekends. The telephone surveys took approximately 30 minutes to complete, and there was an average of four months and four days between the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys.\(^2\)

Analysis of the parent survey data was completed in several steps:

• First, since many of the survey questions were designed to measure similar constructs, items were combined to form scales for data reduction as well as reliability purposes. Scales included in the final analysis have a Cronbach’s alpha of .70 or higher, which is considered high by educational research standards. When a scale was not considered highly reliable, or when it was not feasible to create a scale, the individual question items were analyzed.

• Second, sampling weights were applied to all SR parent survey data presented here. Sampling weights are adjustment factors applied to the data to take into account differences in probability of selection and participation. These corrections allow us to draw generalizations from the sample to the population of parents participating in the three activity types selected.

• Third, paired t-tests were performed to analyze mean differences in ratings at Time 1 and Time 2. Weighted means from these paired t-tests are presented below.\(^3\)

\(^2\) The median time period between Time 1 and Time 2 was three months and twenty-eight days.

\(^3\) Significance values are based on change scores from Time 1 to Time 2 and adjusted standard errors not presented in this report.
- Fourth, to investigate the influence of factors such as the type of activity the parent was participating in, the amount of time the parent spent in an activity, or the age of their children, we examined differences in mean scores by activity type, parent-reported intensity of participation in the activity or whether their child was in the birth-to-three versus the three-to-five age range. Results from these analyses are presented below where relevant. (Comprehensive results for all comparisons will be presented in appendices in the final report to be completed in March of 2008.)

- Finally, when possible, comparison data from national, regional, and local studies were examined to provide context for the observed results of SR parent survey responses. Comparison data presented here includes data from three studies:
  - Early Head Start Research and Evaluation (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2004) Parent Interviews conducted in 1996 through 2001. Parents in this study were less likely to be Latino (37% White, 35% African American, 23% Hispanic or Latino among the EHS sample), though education levels were more comparable with the SR parents (48% of EHS parents had less than a high school diploma, as compared to 56% in the SR parent survey sample).  
  - Evaluation of the First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative (Quick, Rice, Makris, Parrish, Waugh, & González, 2005) Child Outcomes Study Parent Interviews conducted in Year 2 of the intensive parent-child initiative. Parents in this study were comparable to SR parents in terms of ethnicity (98% Hispanic or Latino, 1% African American, 1% Asian) but had somewhat lower incomes (79% earned a household income of $20,000 or less) and education levels (68% had less than a high school diploma).
  - United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta Born Learning Campaign Evaluation (Phillips, Parrish & Manship, 2006) self-administered parent surveys conducted in 2005 with parents who received information on child development and parenting in the form of direct services, such as one-on-one parenting sessions, assistance in finding answers to their parenting questions, parenting workshops, and other training and technical assistance. Pretest and posttest surveys were administered approximately four to five months apart. Parents in this study were somewhat different in terms of ethnicity (56% African American, 36% Hispanic or Latino, 3% White, 3% Asian 1% American Indian, 1% Other) and had high education levels compared to SR parents (16% of the parents in the Born Learning study had less than a high school diploma, as compared to 56% of the parents in the SR parent survey sample).

**Parent Focus Groups**

For more in-depth information on parent experiences with the SR programs, five focus groups were conducted with a total of 41 parents at five First 5 LA School Readiness programs in August of 2007:

- Spanish bilingual interviewers facilitated the focus groups when Spanish-speaking parents participated.
- Questions included topics such as:

---

4 EHS programs are generally considered more comprehensive and intensive than many of the First 5 LA-funded SR activities.
First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative Evaluation Findings: Parent and Child Outcomes,
DRAFT FINAL REPORT

- Program impacts on parents (including changes in the way they feel about their role as a parent, in their understanding of how children learn, in their interactions with their child, and in their support for their child’s learning and readiness for kindergarten)
- Program impacts on children (including children’s learning and other changes, and children’s readiness for school)
- Parent’s knowledge about, comfort with, and involvement in their child’s school
- Strengths and weaknesses of the SR program and suggestions for improvement

- Focus group discussions took 60 to 90 minutes.
- Data were analyzed using qualitative methods to identify common themes across groups. Highlights from these analyses are presented in this document.

Direct Child Assessments
Child assessments were administered to children participating in First 5 LA School Readiness programs in the spring/summer of 2007 to determine their developmental status on a variety of primarily cognitive outcome measures. The following methodology was used:

- Similar to the parent survey approach, program staff at each of the 42 grantees completed “Data Capture Forms,” which provided basic information on all program services and activities for children.

- Activities that had the most children were preschool programs, parent-child activities, kindergarten transition programs, and home visits. One or more activities within these categories (meeting a minimum level of participation intensity of at least eight activity hours per week) were selected from each grantee that offered such activities.

- Information about the study, consent forms, and short questionnaires about the child and family were distributed to parents of children participating in selected activities and collected by study liaisons.

- Trained assessors from UCLA’s Center for Improving Child Care Quality visited programs and assessed consented children who were present on the assessment day, which was scheduled as close to the end of the program activity as possible to enable children to have maximum exposure to the activity before the assessment.

- Assessments included:
  - Pre-LAS 2000 (Duncan and De Avila, 1998) for children whose home language is not English, as reported by teachers: Simon Says, Art Show, Human Body sub-tests. This screener allows for determination of which language to use (English or Spanish) for the rest of the assessment.
  - Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT-III; Dunn and Dunn, 1989) and Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP; Dunn, Padilla, Lugo, & Dunn, 1986). A non-verbal test of receptive vocabulary.
  - Letter naming, number naming, color naming, and counting (FACES research team, modified from Mason & Stewart, 1989).

5 Because of the prohibitive costs of assessing children in their individual homes, home visit activity participants were not included in the direct child assessments.

- Name writing task (for four- and five-year-olds only)
- Story and Print Concepts (Zill et al., 1998; modified from: Mason & Stewart, 1989). Test of emergent literacy, including print and book knowledge and story comprehension.
- Assessment Behavior Scale (FACES Research Team). Upon completion of the above assessment battery, the child assessor rated each child’s attitude and behavior during the assessment. Eight items covered task persistence, attention span, body movement, attention to directions, comprehension of directions, verbalization, ease of relationship, and confidence. The assessor also completed a seven-item checklist of special conditions that might apply: nonverbal responses, nonstandard English, English as a second language, limited English proficiency, child has difficulty hearing or seeing, and child’s speech is difficult to understand.

- In total, 240 children were assessed.
- To analyze the data, we examined mean scores on each of the assessments used, including standardized scores for the two normed assessments (the PPVT/TVIP and the Woodcock-Johnson/Woodcock-Muñoz).
- As with the parent survey analyses, we also compared groups of children to assess differential impacts of program participation. Specifically, we compared the performance of children from different activity types, and we calculated correlations between assessment scores and length of participation in the program.
- In addition, for comparison purposes, a Hispanic/Latino subsample was selected from two national studies with similar populations. The two comparison samples were from the State Pre-K (Early et al., 2005) and Early Head Start studies (Love et al., 2005). Significant differences between these Hispanic/Latino subsamples and the Hispanic/Latino subsample from the SR direct child assessments are noted in the text.

Grantee Report Reviews
In addition to the new data collected from participants in grantee programs, as described above, AIR also conducted an analysis of extant data — namely grantees’ summaries of their own evaluation findings in their 2005-06 year-end reports — as part of the SR Outcomes Study. In order to maximize the utility of the information collected by grantees through their own program-level evaluation efforts, AIR conducted a thorough review of grantees’ evaluation findings related to parent and child outcomes and highlighted common themes. These findings are highlighted in this report where relevant.

Demographics
Demographic characteristics for the parents and children who participated in the parent survey and the direct child assessment components of the outcomes study are presented below.
Parent Survey

- The majority of parents (94 percent) reported that they were Hispanic or Latino, and 79 percent spoke Spanish as their primary language.\(^6\)
  - 94% Hispanic or Latino
  - 1% African American
  - 3% Asian
  - 1% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
  - 1% White

- Slightly more than half of the parents who were surveyed (56 percent) reported that they had an education level of less than a high school (HS) diploma.
  - 56% Less than HS diploma
  - 21% HS graduate
  - 17% Some college
  - 6% Bachelor’s degree or more

- The average age of parents participating in the survey was 32 years. Parents’ ages ranged from 18 to 66 years old, which included some grandparents who participated.
  - 16% ages 18-24
  - 26% ages 25-29
  - 29% ages 30-34
  - 18% ages 35-39
  - 11% ages 40+

- One child was randomly selected from each family to serve as the focus child\(^7\) for parent survey questions about children’s developmental status. Ages of the randomly selected children ranged from 4 months to 5 years and 11 months.
  - 2% Less than 12 months
  - 11% 12-23 months
  - 15% 24-35 months
  - 24% 35-47 months
  - 48% 48+ months

- Annual household incomes of the parents were generally low. Sixty percent of parents earned $20,000 or less, while only 11 percent earned $40,000 or more.
  - 23% Less than $10,000
  - 40% $10,000-$20,000
  - 21% $20,000-$30,000
  - 6% $30,000-$40,000
  - 2% $40,000-$50,000
  - 8% $50,000 or more

Direct Child Assessments

- The average age of children participating in direct child assessments was 60 months. Children’s ages ranged from 46-75 months. Half of the children were under 60 months old and half were 60 months old or older.

---

\(^6\) It was only possible to conduct the parent survey in Spanish and English languages; therefore the findings presented in this report are only generalizable to parents who speak these languages.

\(^7\) The focus child is referred to as “[your child]” within the graphs in this report.
• 95 percent of children were identified as Hispanic or Latino and 50 percent were assessed in English, as determined by the Pre-LAS (the screener used to determine the language of assessment).

• On average, assessed children were in the program for 13 months.

• Parent reports revealed that 8 percent of children had been identified as having special needs or had an IEP or IFSP.

• Forty-two percent of the parents of the assessed children reported that they had an education level of less than a High School diploma.
  o 42% Less than HS diploma
  o 24% HS graduate
  o 24% Some college
  o 10% Bachelor's degree or more

• Half of the parents reported that they were currently employed, working 34 hours per week, on average.

• Annual household incomes of the parents of the assessed children were similar to those of parents who participated in the parent survey. Just over half of the parents earned $20,000 or less, while 17 percent earned $40,000 or more.
  o 21% Less than $10,000
  o 32% $10,000-$20,000
  o 16% $20,000-$30,000
  o 13% $30,000-$40,000
  o 7% $40,000-$50,000
  o 11% $50,000 or more
PARENT OUTCOMES

As mentioned above, parent outcomes were obtained primarily through analysis of change scores from the parent phone survey. These results are presented below. Results from parent focus groups and grantee report reviews are also incorporated where relevant.

Parent Knowledge

Changes in parents’ knowledge and understanding of child development from Time 1 to Time 2 was assessed by asking parents about basic parenting information related to preparing their children to be ready for school. We found that even in this relatively short period of time, parents demonstrated modest increases in knowledge across several areas. Although small, changes noted are statistically significant. For example:

- On average, parents reported that they believed it was important to begin reading to children at an earlier age at Time 2 compared to Time 1. SR parents’ views on when to begin reading to children at Time 2 were not significantly different from parents responding to the Atlanta Born Learning Campaign survey at Time 2.

Figure 1: Parent Report on the Best Time to Start Reading to Children

![Bar chart showing parent responses on the best time to start reading to children.](chart)

Source: Parent Survey

*"p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001
• Significantly more parents at Time 2 than at Time 1 reported that they believed a child’s experiences in the first year of life had a greater impact on school performance.

Figure 2: Parent Report on First Year Impact on School

![Bar chart showing the percentage of parents agreeing with different statements about the impact of the first year on school performance at Time 1 and Time 2.](chart)

Source: Parent Survey

• Parents also showed improvement in their understanding of the importance of monitoring their child’s development. On average, parents at Time 2 reported that one should begin discussing his or her child’s development with a health professional at an earlier age compared to the parent reports at Time 1.

We did not find significant growth in parents’ knowledge in the following areas, though parent responses at Time 1 were already close to the high end of the scale, making it more difficult to demonstrate growth at Time 2 (i.e., ceiling effects noted for these items):

• The learning benefits of involving children in everyday learning activities
• The importance of responding to children’s cues for showing children they care
• The importance of play for children at different ages

Parents in focus groups described improvements in their knowledge about child development in a number of areas. Twelve parents across the five programs visited said the program had taught them more about what to expect from their children at different ages and about how children learn. Parents

---

8 Parents who reported having had more SR program participation at Time 1 rated the importance of play significantly higher than parents who reported receiving less service at Time 1.
reported learning that children start learning from a very young age, so stimulation in the early months is important. For example, one parent said:

*I have learned that from a very young age a child is learning, and before we didn’t pay much attention like we do now... before I would say to myself, “Oh he is still young,” but one doesn’t realize their capacity from when they are in the womb.*

Another parent also reflected on the importance of understanding the stage of child development in order to support their child’s learning:

*When I understand their age and their development, then I will be able to guide them the right way and not give them hard things to do when actually [they’re at a different] developmental level. It is good for me to know what to give them to do, what they can do, this kind of stuff. [The program was] giving us this knowledge. They talk about lots of issues in Mommy and Me.*

Although we did not see statistically significant growth in this area on the parent survey, focus group parents (five parents across three different programs) reported learning about the importance of playing with their children. Some parents mentioned that they have learned how to play with their children as a mechanism for teaching them. For example:

*I’ve learned to play with them. And by their playing I know that they are learning, and it’s fun. Learning doesn’t have to be tough or serious stuff, especially at their age. It has to be lots of fun. And even though I’m much older than my kids, I have to have fun with them too.*
Supportive Environments for Learning – Home Literacy Resources

Next, we explored resources available in the home to support children’s learning, particularly language and literacy development. We found small, but statistically significant, growth on each of the measures used to assess home literacy resources among parents surveyed. Specifically:

- Parents at Time 2 reported significantly more children’s books in the home, compared to the same parents’ reports at Time 1. When compared with parents participating in the intensive Family Literacy Initiative, SR parents at Time 2 reported similar numbers of books in the home.

Figure 3: Parent Report on Children’s Books in the Home

![Bar chart showing the number of children's books owned by parents at Time 1 and Time 2.](chart)

Source: Parent Survey
- We also considered use of the public library as an alternative to book ownership. On average, parents reported significantly greater frequency of use of the public library to borrow books or materials for their child at Time 2, compared to Time 1.

Figure 4: Parent Report on Visits to the Library with Their Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Responses</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you go to the library to borrow books or materials for [your child]? (All ages)

- Never □, Several times a year □, Once a month □, Several times a month □, Once a week + □

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Source: Parent Survey

- Grantees also measured changes in home literacy materials in their year-end reports. In addition to considering the number of books in the home and trips to the library, grantees also assessed the availability of writing and other literacy materials in the home, such as crayons, paint supplies, paper, and so forth. All six grantees reporting on this area indicated increases in the use or availability of literacy resources among parents; four of the six reports highlighted statistically significant growth.
Support for Children’s Learning and Development – Parent-Child Engagement

In addition to creating a supportive learning environment at home, parents can also engage their children in interactive activities that support their learning and healthy development. We asked parents at Time 1 and Time 2 about the frequency with which they engaged their children in a variety of interactive activities. We found small, but statistically significant, growth in a number of areas:

- Among parents of children 2 to 5 years of age, we found statistically significant increases from Time 1 to Time 2 in the frequency with which they engaged their children in language and literacy activities such as telling stories, learning about rhyming words, and practicing the sounds that letters make.

Figure 5: Parent Report of Engagement in Literacy Activities with Their Child

- In addition, when we consider a wide variety of activities, from language and literacy activities to playing games and working on art projects together, we found significant increases from Time 1 to Time 2 on interactive activities in general.

Parent focus group results supported the survey findings. Fourteen parents across the five programs visited said they felt the SR programs had taught them how to support their children in learning language and literacy skills. Learning by playing was the most common strategy reported by parents, but there were many other good examples of activities teachers have taught parents to use to support their children’s learning. For example, one parent said:

Source: Parent Survey
I remember in one of the workshops, the presenter said to speak 2500 words to your children everyday. I said “I think we already do that” and they said, "No, count your words." So if [our children] ask, “Are we leaving?” instead of saying “Yes,” you should say, “Yes, we are leaving in 10 minutes. We are going here and doing that. Then we will come back.”

In cases where children have a speech delay, parents were told to motivate children to speak. For example, one parent said:

They explained that we had to ask them why they are pointing – what it is that he wants. And then say, “This is called this – try to say it.” And, “What do you want it for? To look at it? To play with?” So he would say, for example, “Mom, I want that book to read,” and we motivated him to speak.

We did not find consistently positive growth in parent-child engagement on other measures in the parent survey, however. For example:

- We did not find significant increases in the frequency with which parents of children birth to age five reported reading to their children. However, it is important to note that overall, parents reported relatively frequent reading with their children at Time 1, leaving little room for growth at Time 2. When asked how many times in the past week parents read to their child, parents reported an average of 1.86 at Time 1 and 1.87 at Time 2 where zero equals no reading during the week and two equals reading three or more times a week.

- In comparisons with parents from Family Literacy programs, SR parents read to their children significantly more at Time 2 (1.87 times per week) than Family Literacy parents who had an average of reading to their children 1.58 times per week.

- When comparing with Early Head Start samples, we looked at the percentage of parents who said they read to their child at least everyday. SR parents at Time 2 were significantly less likely than Early Head Start treatment group parents to report reading to their child at this rate, though they were no different from control group parents from the EHS study.

On the other hand, parents in focus groups talked about strategies learned for reading with their children. This was mentioned by four parents in two different programs. These parents talked about how they and their children learn together. For example:

With books for instance, before we would read books, but it wasn’t explained. I would read, “The strawberry is red. You eat it.” And that’s it. After taking parenting classes, we read, and [the teachers] would explain, “You should say, ‘The strawberry is good. Do you like to eat strawberries?’ And, ‘What color is the strawberry?’” To engage and open up the children’s minds. And my own mind opens up too because I didn’t know the strawberry was “red” [meaning the word red in English]. When I went to that class now I do that. If we go out somewhere, I ask things like, “What are you doing?” “Do you like it?” “What did you do?” and he asks me too. He will ask me more, and it has helped me a lot in the sense of opening up my mind.
In the parent survey, we also asked parents of children birth to age 3 about activities in which they engage their children. Specifically:

- We asked parents about the likelihood that they would engage their children in a variety of activities (including singing to them, reading to them, and playing with them) in the next week. Although changes were in the positive direction (from 8.58 at Time 1 to 8.71 at Time 2), we did not find statistically significant growth among these parents from Time 1 to Time 2; but again, ratings were very high at Time 19.

### Figure 6: Parent Report on Likelihood of Engaging Their Child in Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood Rating of Parent Playing, Reading or Singing to [Your Child] in the Next Week (Scale of 3 Items) (0-35 months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very likely 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unlikely 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Parent Survey

- Parents of children birth to age 3 who participated in program activities that involved parents and children interacting together (such as “Mommy and Me” classes) did demonstrate statistically significant growth on this measure, reporting increased likelihood of engaging in these activities at Time 2 when compared to Time 1.

**Parenting Style**

We asked parents about their parenting style, including their use of routines for their children, their approach to discipline, and their role as a parent. We found some mixed results in this domain.

---

9 It should be noted that these particular items ask about the likelihood of doing a particular activity with their child. This type of question may lead to more socially desirable responses than questions that ask whether the activity was actually done in the past week.
Routines

We asked about parents’ use of regular routines with the children through the parent survey but did not find significant changes from Time 1 to Time 2. Specifically:

- Parents appeared to be slightly more likely to report that they had a consistent bedtime routine for their children at Time 2, compared to Time 1. However the difference was not statistically significant.

- When comparing these results with those in the Family Literacy and Early Head Start samples, we considered the number of parents who said they had a routine and followed the routine 4 or 5 days during the work week. No differences were found when SR parents were compared to these samples.\(^1\)

- This topic was also not a major focus of grantees’ own evaluation efforts. Only two grantee year-end reports measured parents’ use of regular routines, though both reported positive change over time. Only one of these reports discussed their findings in terms of statistical significance; that grantee did report statistically significant growth in parents’ use of regular routines.

Discipline

Although learning about discipline was one of the most commonly cited benefits of parents’ participation in School Readiness programs in focus group discussions with parents at all five sites, we did not find significant changes in parents’ reported use of or dispositions regarding discipline.

- There were no changes in parent reports of their ability to stick to their rules or feeling that they had the “energy to make [their] child behave” from Time 1 to Time 2. Parents rated their behavior on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “exactly like me” and 5 is “not at all like me,” mean scores at Time 2 on these items were 2.62 and 2.87 respectively.

- There was also no change in parent reports of spanking their children when they misbehave or act up from Time 1 to Time 2 among parents of children 1-5. Less than one quarter of parents at each time point reported spanking their child. Similar percentages of parents participating in the Family Literacy Initiative reported spanking their children.

Change in discipline strategies was a major theme in parent focus group discussions. Eighteen parents across five programs mentioned that they have learned effective techniques for supporting their children by teaching them with appropriate discipline techniques and by becoming more patient themselves. One strategy parents described for becoming more patient with their children was to develop their understanding of the way children communicate. Many parents proudly talked about how they now are able to talk to their children in a way that will help control their child’s frustration when they are having trouble expressing themselves. Parents also mentioned being able to control their own temper and frustration with their children. For example, one parent said:

> Now I try to calm down and calm him down. I let him know I am there for him and would like to know what the problem is and maybe show him how to solve it.

\(^1\) Significantly more SR parents had a regular routine compared to the parents of 24-month-old children in the control group of the Early Head Start study.
Parents also reported learning about how to discipline their children in a different way. They mentioned cultural differences between the U.S. and their home countries in the ways that children’s misbehaviors are handled. Parents talked about the process of incorporating techniques from the new culture:

*The truth is, and I think it happens to many of us is that we are used to doing things differently in our own countries and disciplining in a different way. One thing we do is we spank them, and we speak to them harshly so that they recognize and differentiate the tone of voice when we are mad or even happy so that they understand what we want from them. Here I have learned to be more patient and understanding when they cry and when they throw a tantrum.... I was very impulsive with my first child. When I brought him, I would get mad at him very suddenly. I would yell and spanked him. Here at the [SR] program they would explain to us that instead of yelling and spanking, to put ourselves in their place, to speak to them and try to understand them. They are not able to express themselves, so they throw tantrums, but we need to be able to differentiate their behavior to know what they want – attention, if they are hungry or want to play.*

Nine grantee year-end evaluation reports assessed parent growth in patience and discipline. All but one reported positive change over time; two reported statistically significant growth (the other reports did not share such analyses). The ninth report found no change from pre- to posttest.

**Parent Role and Disposition**

Parents in focus groups had much to say about their changing views on their role as a parent. Fifteen parents across four programs mentioned that they feel their role as a parent has changed after being in the program. Some parents thought the way they interact with their children has changed since they started participating in SR activities. For example, one parent described her increased level of involvement with her child:

*I think it taught me to pay more attention to my child, to play with him, help him, and show him more things. Before I would sit him down and let him do things on his own. But we do have to show them things and help them out.*

Focus group parents also reported that they felt they were learning how to become a role model for their children. For example, one parent described it this way:

*I learn that it’s not what I say – they learn from what I say and actually from what I do.*

Another parent added:

*If I say something, it doesn’t mean [anything], but if I do it, they see that I do it, [and] they will learn from me. That’s what I learn here too – it’s not just talking.*

Parents in focus groups also discussed how they have learned to support their children emotionally, by helping them become ready for the separation with their mothers when their
children go to preschool or kindergarten.

[The program has helped me] to let him to be independent – that I don’t have to be there taking care of him all the time.

I learned to let go a little bit. To not be so possessive. I have always been overprotective.

Parent Involvement and School Comfort

We examined parents’ “school readiness” by exploring their comfort with and involvement in school (and program) activities as well as their concerns and beliefs about what it means for their child to be ready for school. To assess parent involvement and comfort, we asked parents how comfortable they felt visiting their child’s school or program, how comfortable they felt talking with their child’s teacher, and the extent of their involvement in volunteer activities at the school or program.

- We found no significant change from Time 1 to Time 2 in parents’ reported involvement and comfort with the school among parents whose children were 3 to 5 and attending preschool or childcare. However, parent responses at Time 1 showed they already reported “a lot” of comfort with the school and their child’s teacher, leaving little room for continued growth on this item at Time 2.

Figure 7: Parent Report on Comfort Level with School and Teachers

![Bar chart showing parent level of comfort with school and teachers.](chart)

Source: Parent Survey
• We did find that parents who received more SR program service during the period between Time 1 and Time 2 surveys showed a significant difference on this scale. That is, even though the average change among all parents who were asked these questions was small, parents who participated more showed significantly greater growth compared to those who participated less.

In the review of grantee reports, seven grantees that assessed parents’ feelings about, and involvement in, their child’s school or program reported positive change overall; two reported statistically significant growth. Two of these grantees also reported mixed results. None of the grantee reports included an analysis of changes in comfort with the school system or parent involvement for parents of children from birth to age 3.

Parents in focus groups were also eager to talk about what they had learned about the K-12 public school system in Los Angeles. Seven parents mentioned learning about how to talk to the school staff to support their child academically or emotionally. For example, one parent said:

Right now I don’t have children in the school, but what I have learned is that if I see that my child is sad [and] he doesn’t like to go to school, then something is wrong. And [I learned] what I can do to approach the school. I can’t simply walk up to the teacher, because there is a process to find out what is going on with my child. ...[I learned] how I can ... set up an appointment, what rights I have as a parent to know what is going on with my child, to get him to school so that he gets the education he needs.

Parents in focus groups at two sites mentioned they received specific workshops about how to participate in school and why it is important. Parents felt these workshops had given them useful tools to help them feel more confident when participating in their children’s school. For example, one parent said:

The director [of a local pre-school] even gave us his mobile phone number. He gave the workshop and now many of us are not afraid of speaking to the teachers because here they teach us we have rights and obligations. ...The workshop leader also gave us a letter for the parents who might feel intimidated speaking to the teacher.

Another parent added:

[The director] said she didn’t want us to see them as inaccessible. Maybe for outgoing people who are not afraid to speak up that is good, but for those who are still afraid, the letter was an excellent way. They show us how to communicate.

Another parent spoke about what she had learned in the program:

To always communicate with our children’s teacher. And if you have questions, to make sure and set up meetings with the teacher to see your child’s progress and not wait until it’s too late.
Surveyed parents were also asked about their understanding of expectations for kindergarten entry and their level of comfort with their child’s readiness for school at Time 1 and again at Time 2. No significant changes were observed. Specifically:

- Although parents appeared to be somewhat less likely to express concerns about their child’s readiness for school at Time 2 compared to Time 1, suggesting increased comfort levels with expectations for kindergarten entry, this difference was not statistically significant.

**Figure 8: Parent Report on Their Concerns about Child’s Kindergarten Readiness**

*Do you have any concerns about whether [your child] will be ready to start kindergarten? (36+ months)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Parent Survey

*P<.05, **P<.01, ***P<.001*
• When asked to rate the importance of various child-level skills for being ready for kindergarten (such as being able to count to 20, take turns, sit still, and pay attention), parents reported lower ratings at Time 2 compared to Time 1. Although the absolute difference in ratings over time was small, it was a statistically significant change. According to input received from the grantees and their local evaluators who comprise the “School Readiness Evaluation Workgroup,” this finding may relate to parents’ development of somewhat more realistic (and appropriate) expectations for what a child should know and be able to do by kindergarten entry through their participation in SR programs.

Figure 9: Parent Report on Importance of Specific Child-Level Skills for School Readiness

• In addition, only the two most academically focused individual items that comprise this scale – being able to count to 20 and knowing most of the letters of the alphabet – showed a statistically significant decline in parents’ ratings of importance from Time 1 to Time 2. Again, this may suggest that parents’ expectations (especially with regard to academic skills) were becoming more realistic through their participation in the program.

Parents in focus groups had more to say on this subject. Eleven parents from four sites stated that their program taught them about what their children needed to know before going to kindergarten. Ideas parents had about what their children needed to know varied widely. Some examples were related to physical and motor skills (e.g., knowing how to use the scissors, going to the bathroom on their own, washing their hands, putting on their shoes and clothes). Others talked about academic skills like knowing colors, shapes, and the alphabet. Other ideas involved language and literacy skills, such as improving their speech, knowing and being able to write their own name, knowing
how to interact with books, and knowing their address and phone number. Some ideas were more social-emotional, like knowing how to share. For example, one parent said:

I think that because when I took classes [the teacher] let us know what they needed to know to enter kindergarten, such as knowing and writing their own name, know their address, phone number, parents names, knowing and recognizing the alphabet, and knowing what each letter means. And, well, my son knows all this!

Two parents from the same program reported they did not receive this kind of information from their program, but that they would like to in the future.

Maybe it is something I would like added to the program, if they could to prepare something about who to speak to and things they need to learn before they go to school. These would be things we need to work on with them specifically and maybe something we can add.

Parent Support and Resilience

Another important outcome for parents involved changes in the support system that parents have around them to ensure that they will be able to continue to support their children’s learning and healthy development even without program services. We found positive changes on two measures of social support:

- When asked about supports available to them if they had a problem and were feeling depressed or confused about what to do, parents named more support people at Time 2 (2.2 people on average) compared to Time 1 (1.8 people), and the difference was statistically significant. This finding held up for parents in parenting classes as well as those participating in parent-child activities, but not for parents receiving home visits, suggesting that parents may be increasing their peer networks through participation in on-site program activities.

- In addition, when asked who they could go to for advice or information about the care of their child, parents named significantly more support people at Time 2 (1.6 people) compared to Time 1 (1.3 people).

Parent focus groups also reflected this finding. Five parents across four sites reported seeing their programs as a support network. Parents said that they feel they can bring their problems to the school and figure out how to solve them together as a group. Some examples that describe this feeling:

It’s like a support group. You learn from other parents what to do and what not to do

One thing is that here aside from learning we help each other out like family. We make new friends. It is overall good for our children, like for their birthday parties, we will call each other up and the children see each other again and they are so happy. So, it is like part of our family.

I don’t have any family here, so I like the support that they give me.

Not only have relationships with other parents been crucial for participants to feel supported, parents also feel they can trust staff and receive the support they need to become confident in their environment. Eight parents across three sites stated that they feel supported by staff and encouraged by them to be better parents. For example, parents said:
They have really qualified staff, not only the teachers, but also the people working in the offices. They are amazing – they know everything. You can ask them any question, and they always have an answer: ‘Yes, I can hook you up with somebody for that issue.’

I like the professionalism that the personnel demonstrate through the classes. The trust we have in them, the fact that they make us feel at ease and confident that we can talk and ask questions, and focus and participate.

I speak to the teacher about my concerns, and she gives me encouragement and lets me know that all children learn at a different pace.

Some other parents also said they feel more confident as mothers now. For example, one parent said:

I used to judge myself, ‘Oh, I'm a bad mom. I'm not doing it right.’ But I realize that we're figuring it out together.

CHILD OUTCOMES

To assess child outcomes, we used two approaches. The primary approach involved direct assessments of 240 children close to the end of their participation in School Readiness program activities. To supplement the direct assessments, which focused primarily on cognitive outcomes for 4- and 5-year-olds, we also asked parents participating in the parent survey to report on the developmental status of their children. Findings from these two study components are highlighted below.

Cognitive Development

We assessed children’s cognitive developmental status – their language and emergent literacy skills and early mathematics skills – through the direct child assessment component, and we asked parents to report on their children’s status as well.
Language Skills
Direct child assessments included a measure of children’s English language skills, as well as their receptive vocabulary in English (for those children who passed the language screener) or Spanish.

- Of the children that were identified by the teacher as having Spanish as their home language, approximately half of the children passed the Pre-LAS language screener, (a score of 31 or higher out of 40) which indicated they were proficient enough in English to be assessed in English. Pre-LAS scores for children in SR programs were, in fact, significantly higher, on average, than scores for a demographically similar population of children enrolled in State Preschool.

Figure 10: Mean Pre-LAS Scores for SR and State Pre-K Samples

Source: Direct Child Assessments
- Average receptive language scores on the PPVT/TVIP were below age norms, though this is not surprising for this population. Just over half of the children assessed in English scored above 85 percent, which is the cutoff for a child not being considered “at risk”; just under half of the children assessed in Spanish scored above this mark. Mean scores on both the English and Spanish versions of this assessment were comparable to scores for similar populations of children enrolled in State Preschool and those participating in the Early Head Start study. 11

Figure 11: Mean Standardized Scores for SR, State Pre-K, and EHS Children on the PPVT and TVIP

Source: Direct Child Assessments

11 Only Hispanic/Latino SR children are compared to Hispanic/Latino State Preschool and Early Head Start subsamples.
We found positive and developmentally appropriate growth in children’s language development as reported by parents on the parent survey:

- When asked to characterize the way their child communicates (ranging from mostly communicating needs by making sounds or pointing, to talking in long and complicated sentences), we found parents of children 6 months to 4 years reporting significantly more complex communications from Time 1 to Time 2.

**Figure 12: Parent Report on Description of Their Child’s Communication**

```
Which statement best describes the way your child communicates? (6-47 months)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>6-35 months**</th>
<th>36-47 months*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long sentences</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>2.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short sentences</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>3.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 word phrases</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-word sentences</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making sounds</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Parent Survey

- Significant growth in parent-reported communication strategies was found for children in both age groups, 6 to 35 months and 36 to 47 months.

These results were also reflected in the parent focus groups. Six parents from five programs mentioned that their children have learned to communicate better and have improved their vocabulary as a result of the SR activities.

*And more than anything she has developed in many areas. She speaks very well...I am sometimes surprised at how she is able to relate and associate different ideas. This is thanks to her participation in the program. At home I wouldn’t be able to do this...*
Emergent Literacy Skills

Direct assessments of children’s emergent literacy skills included several measures, including children’s ability to name letters and colors and their understanding of basic story and print concepts.

- On average, SR children were able to name approximately 15 letters, nine out of ten colors, and seven out of ten numbers. This is significantly more than demographically similar children participating in State Preschool, who were able to name ten letters, eight colors, and six numbers. In addition, a small but statistically significant correlation suggests children who had been participating in SR programs for a longer period of time could name more letters and numbers than children who had participated less.

Figure 13: Mean Letters, Numbers, and Colors Named for SR and State Pre-K Children
Children's awareness of story and print concepts, such as how to hold a book and where to start reading, as well as basic story comprehension, was lower for SR children as compared to demographically similar children participating in the Early Head Start study.

Figure 14: Mean Scores on Story and Print Concepts Scores for SR and EHS Children

As for children's emerging literacy skills reported by parents on the parent survey, we found no significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2 in survey responses for parents of children in the birth-to-three age range.

- When asked about pre-literacy skills such as taking an interest in books by playing with them or listening while parents read, parent reports of the frequency of emergent literacy behaviors among their young children — those birth to age 3 — did not show significant growth from Time 1 to Time 2.
Early Mathematics Skills

Children’s early mathematics skills were assessed using the Woodcock-Johnson (and its Spanish version, the Woodcock-Muñoz) Applied Problems subtest, as well as a measure of counting objects.

- Children who were assessed in English scored relatively high on an assessment of their problem-solving skills (Woodcock-Johnson Applied Problems), scoring very close to the national norm, with more than 90 percent scoring above the “at risk” cutoff of 85 percent.

- Children who were assessed in Spanish scored somewhat lower; half scored above the 85 percent “at risk” cutoff, and half scored below 85 percent. However, SR children outperformed children attending State Preschool on the Spanish version of the Applied Problems subtest. In addition, results suggest a significant correlation between the number of months spent in the SR programs overall and children’s scores on the Applied Problems subtest, at least for Spanish speakers.

Figure 15: Mean Standardized Scores on Applied Problems for SR and State Pre-K Children

- SR program children were able to count 17 objects on average, comparable to the counting skills of children in State Preschool programs.
Social-Emotional Development

Children’s social-emotional development was assessed primarily through parent responses on the survey.

- Parent reports of children’s social-emotional development (as measured by behaviors such as sharing toys with other children, paying attention well, and comforting other children who are upset) showed small but statistically significant increases from Time 1 to Time 2 among parents of children ages 2 to 5 years.

**Figure 16: Parent Report on Frequency of Their Child Demonstrating Social-Emotional School Readiness Skills**

![Graph showing frequency of child demonstrating social-emotional school readiness skills.](image)

- On the other hand, for younger children (birth to 3 years), parent reports of social and interpersonal skills (such as showing interest in other children by turning toward them, by watching them while they play, or by reaching for a toy they are playing with) did not show significant change from Time 1 to Time 2.

Parents also reported on their child’s social-emotional development during focus groups. Twelve parents from all 5 sites visited reported that SR activities have helped their children to be more independent and gain more confidence. Parents spoke about how their children have become more comfortable being away from them:

*My daughter is almost three so she’s going to start preschool. Now she is more comfortable, she can stay there by herself, she doesn’t need me as much. She knows that she’s going to be*
with more kids. I don’t think she’s going to be crying like in the beginning. She didn’t want to be a part of it.

Three parents from three different sites specifically reported that their children have learned how to share as a result of their participation in the program.

*My daughter didn’t know how to share toys. Now when her cousins come to the house and they start fighting for toys, she is the first one to say, well we have to share. She starts telling the kids to share, I was surprised, and everyone would say, “Oh, she’s so little and she knows this.” She learned that and she’s trying to share it with her cousins... [She learned this in] Mommy and Me... she remembered the song, ‘Sharing.’*

Nearly all (20 out of 22) of grantee year-end reports reviewed for children’s outcomes reported on positive changes in children’s social-emotional development, including children’s self-awareness, social and interpersonal skills, self-regulation, and communication and language skills. Seven grantee reports included findings related to self-awareness and self-concept. Six of these seven grantees reported positive changes among children; two of these reported statistically significant growth. Seven grantees also presented positive findings related to children’s social and interpersonal skills. Three of these reported statistically significant growth in this area. Four grantees addressed positive results in self-regulation in their evaluation reports. One grantee reported statistically significant growth.

A significant focus of those grantee reports that addressed social-emotional development was on communication and language. Fourteen grantee reports included such a focus with positive changes over time. Five reported statistically significant growth among children. One grantee reported some mixed results.

**SUGGESTIONS FROM PARENTS FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT**

The focus groups provided some important feedback for SR programs. All parents across all five focus groups conducted reported that they were very satisfied with the services received through their SR programs. However, several suggestions for program improvements came up during focus group discussions. The most striking proposals for program improvement were about the length of the classes. When asked for suggestions, 19 parents across all five programs said they thought classes should be longer in terms of the frequency of meeting times or the hours of the classes. This sentiment was also reflected in the Time 2 parent survey, where 18 percent of the parents said that they would like the program to expand more in terms of days, hours, or frequency of classes.

Parents across all sites included in the focus groups also indicated that they wanted additional classes to be offered, such as classes for husbands, classes for older children (six years of age or older), or summer classes.

Some parents also offered suggestions for changes in program operations and infrastructure. For example, four parents across two sites talked about the need to improve their building by either having the program in its own building or being able to put multiple activities in different rooms.
Three parents across two programs mentioned that the way information is communicated regarding current and upcoming SR program activities should be improved.

Other issues that some parents mentioned related to the difficulties in finding transportation to get to the activities, the need for more staff to conduct or assist in activities, and cancellations of activities that parents had enrolled in.

**IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR GRANTEES**

The following is a summary of the major findings about parent and child outcomes from this evaluation, with suggested implications for program practice:

**Parent Outcomes**

- At Time 2, we found increased frequency of library use by parents to borrow books or materials for their children. Programs should continue to encourage library use on the part of parents so that they and their children have ready access to literacy resources in the home.

- While we found statistically significant increases from Time 1 to Time 2 in the frequency with which parents of children from 2 to 5 years engaged their children in language and literacy activities overall, such as telling stories, learning about rhyming words, and practicing the sounds that letters make, programs should consider greater encouragement of parents’ daily reading (or reading at least 3 times or more per week) to their children, as this is an evidence-based practice that supports positive child outcomes.

- Parents of children birth to age 3 who participated in program activities that involved parents and children interacting together (such as “Mommy and Me” classes) did demonstrate statistically significant growth on the reported likelihood of the parent playing, reading, or singing with their child in the next week. This suggests that actively involving parents in interactive literacy activities (and providing good models and coaching for such interactions) may have a greater impact than other activities in increasing the likelihood of parents engaging in such activities on their own at home.

- We did not find significant changes with regard to parents’ reported use of regular routines and discipline strategies, so these areas of focus may benefit from increased attention on the part of programs. The consistent use of routines by parents (i.e., feeding, bedtime, etc) is associated with improved child outcomes. (APA Press Releases, 2002)

- Parents’ participation in SR program activities including parent classes, parent-child activities, and home visits, appears to be contributing to parents’ perceived comfort with the school environment and their teachers, along with their sense of agency to intervene on behalf of their child when they have a concern. Parents who participated more in SR program activities between Time 1 and Time 2 showed significantly greater growth compared to those who participated less. This foundation of familiarity and comfort with the school culture will likely be an asset to parents as they interact with K-12 school systems. Programs should continue to foster parents’ feelings of comfort and self-advocacy within the school context. In particular, programs should examine how they might increase (or optimize) parent participation in
program activities, as the intensity of their involvement appears to be related to stronger outcomes in this area.

- Programs appear to be helping parents to have realistic and appropriate expectations for what their child should know and be able to do by the time of kindergarten entry. Parent surveys and focus groups suggest that parents who participate in SR activities including parent classes, parent-child activities, and home visits, are learning about appropriate expectations. This knowledge on the part of parents can help them to guide their children appropriately, which in turn, can smooth the transition to kindergarten and alleviate potential anxiety on the part of both children and families. Programs should be encouraged to continue to provide parents with information and training in this area.

- We found positive changes on two measures of social support among parents in parenting classes and those participating in parent-child activities, suggesting that parent participation in these activities may be related to their perception of increased social supports available to them. This finding did not hold up for parents receiving home visits, suggesting that parents may be increasing their peer networks through participation in on-site program activities. Programs may wish to explore ways in which parents receiving home visits might also have access to social supports, such as by networking with other parents as well as by facilitating interactions with staff or other professionals whom they could go to for advice or information about the care of their child.

**Child Outcomes**

- Pre-I.A.S scores for children attending School Readiness program activities including preschool programs, parent-child activities, kindergarten transition programs, and home visits were significantly higher, on average, than scores for a demographically similar population of children enrolled in State Preschool. In addition, mean scores of receptive language, as measured by the PPVT/TVIP (English and Spanish versions) were comparable to scores for similar populations of children enrolled in State Preschool and those participating in the Early Head Start study, although in all three cases, children scored just over 10 points (out of 100) below the age norms for these measures. The data from a single point in time – close to the end of their participation in SR programs, suggest that the programs may be helping children to keep pace with their counterparts in other state and federal programs, but due to the limitations of the SR study design, we cannot estimate how they would have performed had they not attended SR programs. Nonetheless, SR programs should continue to focus on and support children’s acquisition of English, and receptive language.

- Parents also reported changes that were statistically significant with regard to their child’s use of increasingly sophisticated communication strategies at Time 2 compared to Time 1. In focus groups, parents echoed these findings, commenting on the growth in their child’s use of vocabulary and communication strategies as a result of their participation in SR programs. Programs should be encouraged to continue to focus on children’s vocabulary development and their growing communication skills.

- SR programs appear to be preparing children well – and on average, better than State Preschools – to know the names of numbers, letters, and colors. While this finding is encouraging, SR programs could be doing more to help children learn story and print concepts (concepts of print and basic comprehension), where there performance was lower than that of
demographically similar children participating in the Early Head Start study. Thus, programs may want to focus more heavily on developing these types of early literacy skills, which go beyond naming of numbers, letters, and colors.

- Results also suggest a significant correlation between the number of months spent in SR programs overall and children’s scores on the Applied Problems (math) subtest, at least for Spanish speakers. Children who were assessed in English scored very close to the national norm on this measure, with more than 90 percent scoring above the “at risk” cutoff of 85 percent, with scores very comparable to demographically similar children in State Preschool programs. Given these results, programs should continue to support children’s development of math and problem-solving skills.

- Although direct measures of children’s social-emotional development are limited (and are for the field, in general), parent survey results include small but statistically significant changes between Time 1 and Time 2 on a scale comprised of 9 items related to social-emotional status. In focus groups, parents also reported important developments that they attributed to SR programs in areas such as children’s growing independence, confidence, and interpersonal skills, such as the ability to share with others and develop friendships. Clearly, parents reported being very satisfied with SR program activities; the overriding suggestion that many of them offered was to increase the frequency or length of SR classes. From their responses, it appears that many parents would be receptive to offers of supplemental hours or days of program services.

CONCLUSIONS

Even though the time period for this evaluation was relatively short, a number of modest but encouraging results were found in the areas of parent and child outcomes that support school readiness. For parents, we found small but statistically significant gains on knowledge measures such as the parents’ knowledge of the best time to start reading to children and the importance of a child’s experiences in the first year of life. There were also small but statistically significant gains on parent’s home literacy resources for children, such as the number of books in the home and the frequency of library visits, as well as parents’ engagement in literacy and other activities with their 2- to 5-year old children, such as telling stories, teaching songs and letters, playing games and working on art projects together. Parents of children from birth to 3 who participated in parent-child oriented school readiness activities also showed significant growth in the frequency of parent-child activities which they engaged in (such as playing, singing, or reading to their children). Parent reports of their social and advisory support networks also showed a statistically significant gain from Time 1 to Time 2, and this finding was especially strong for parents participating in center-based as opposed to home-based services.

When looking at results for parents in relation to the intensity of participation in the SR program or the activity type we found few significant differences, however we found that parents who participated more in SR activities between the Time 1 and Time 2 surveys showed significant growth on measures of parent comfort and involvement with their children’s school (or program) and teachers, although a large proportion of parents expressed “a lot” of comfort with their child’s school and teachers at Time 1. In addition, parents who had participated more in SR activities prior to Time 1 rated the importance of play as a learning opportunity for young children significantly higher than those who had participated less. As discussed earlier, it was somewhat challenging to examine associations between parents’ intensity of participation and their outcomes because consistent and
reliable data on hours of attendance were not available at the participant level other than through the estimates provided by parents themselves.

For children, parents reported small but statistically significant gains in their child’s communication skills and their social-emotional school readiness skills. When children were assessed directly using standardized measures (in English and Spanish only), we found small but statistically significant differences for SR children compared to similar samples of children on the same measures. SR children had higher scores in English proficiency and could name more letters, numbers and colors than comparison samples. Spanish speaking SR children also had slightly higher scores on applied problems (math) assessments than comparison samples. Story and print concept scores were slightly lower for SR children compared to similar samples. There were also small but significant correlations between children’s intensity of participation in SR programs and their emergent literacy skills such as naming letters and numbers, and, for Spanish speakers, their scores on the applied problems measure.

NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE EVALUATION WORK

We have examined the relationships between levels of parent participation in School Readiness program activities and changes in parent reports of their own beliefs, their behaviors, and their child’s development. Parents who participated in more hours of service through the School Readiness programs between Time 1 and Time 2 (or on average, 4 months between Time 1 and Time 2 surveys) do not seem to demonstrate greater growth at Time 2, as was hypothesized. However, given the relatively high Time 1 ratings on many of the survey items and thus relatively low (but often significant) levels of change observed between Time 1 and Time 2, it is not surprising that we did not see strong relationships between growth and intensity of participation for most items. In addition, although we attempted to exclude parents who were identified by program staff as having been long-time participants, a moderately large number of survey respondents at Time 1 had actually been involved in School Readiness programs for some time. One might expect these parents to have experienced some growth prior to the Time 1 survey. Some of the noteworthy relationships we did see between growth and intensity of participation were related to parents’ reported level of comfort with their child’s school and teacher and in parents’ ratings of the importance of playing with their child.

In comparing SR parents to similar parents from other studies, we found that SR parents’ responses were generally similar compared to parents who participated in the Family Literacy Initiative, Early Head Start, or the Atlanta Born Learning Campaign.

Although the parent survey analysis has yielded some useful findings, future evaluation efforts could be improved in a number of ways. First, the very short timeframe for this study posed significant challenges for data collection. Study design, gathering of basic background information, instrument development, and parent recruitment all had to occur within a period of two months. The short timeframe also impacted our ability to survey parents at the true beginning of their participation and follow up with them at a later point in time to allow more opportunity for growth. Observed growth may also have been greater had we been able to track parents’ attendance in school readiness programs from the point of their initial entry into the programs, and well-documented data on any prior program experience would have enabled more fine-grained analyses based on individual-level intervention dosages.
A second recommendation for future evaluation efforts is to integrate a program quality assessment component into the study. Given timeline and resource limitations, we did not collect data on the quality and characteristics of program activities, such as the focus and goals of the activities, the curriculum used, and the quality of teacher-child interactions. The addition of this information would strengthen models of growth over time.

Finally, future evaluation efforts might incorporate grantee data collection efforts to a greater degree. Grantee program staff could administer a common parent survey, for example, to all parents upon entry and again at the end of the activity. This would yield cleaner “pre/post” results and would enable the inclusion of all parent participants. In addition, if programs could document additional information about parents’ hours of involvement in various program activities over time, a clearer picture of parents’ history and total level of service received could be captured and incorporated in analyses.

REFERENCES


Community Pathways to School Readiness

DECEMBER 2007

First 5 LA
750 North Alameda Street, Suite 300
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Prepared by Tronie Rifkin and Amy Schwartz (Consultants)
under the direction of First 5 LA Research and Evaluation Department
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1

II. A WHOLE THAT IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS .................. 2

III. COMMUNITY PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL READINESS .............................. 3

   A. Early Foundation for Children 0 – 5 ......................................................... 4
      • Pathways to Early Foundations ......................................................... 4
      • Grantee Findings on Early Foundations ........................................ 8
      • Implications of Early Foundations ............................................... 12

   B. Parent Engagement and Empowerment ............................................. 13
      • Pathways to Parent Engagement and Empowerment .................. 13
      • Grantee Findings on Parent Engagement and Empowerment ...... 15
      • Implications of Parent Engagement and Empowerment .......... 17

   C. Access to Health and Community Services .................................. 18
      • Pathways to Health and Community Services ........................... 18
      • Grantee Findings on Health and Community Services .......... 19
      • Implications of Health and Community Services .................. 20

   D. Seamless Education and Learning .................................................. 21
      • Pathways to Seamless Education and Learning ......................... 21
      • Grantee Findings on Seamless Education and Learning .......... 23
      • Implications of Seamless Education and Learning ................. 25

IV. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER ............................................................................. 25

V. CHALLENGES ............................................................................................................. 26

VI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS .............................................................................................. 28

VII. CONCLUSIONS ................................................................................................... 28

VIII. APPENDIX ............................................................................................................. 30
Community Pathways to School Readiness

I. INTRODUCTION

The School Readiness (SR) initiative was designed to respond to the unique needs of children ages zero to five and their families in specific high need communities across Los Angeles County. Although the program’s design is aligned with the National Education Goals Panel’s definition of school readiness as multi-dimensional, the adaptability of the Initiative to local communities is both a challenge for organizations and an opportunity for children and families. While every program includes services within all five essential and coordinated program elements, there is intentional variability in the modality of these services. The purpose of this report is to look closely at the SR initiative through a large lens that captures the essence of grantee programs and services, and their pathways to school readiness. The report will also describe the context in which programs have been operating and evaluating their progress in meeting the needs of their individual communities.

Over the last five years 42 grantee programs have received funding through the Initiative to develop school readiness services that will penetrate some of the most high need neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. The Initiative is funded and administered through a partnership between First 5 LA and First 5 California. Grantees’ budgets represent a dollar-to-dollar match between the state and the county commissions, in addition to in-kind and local cash contributions from the grantee organizations and collaborative partners. The partnership between First 5 LA and First 5 California creates dynamic layers of accountability for the grantees. For example, First 5 California and First 5 LA have specific data reporting requirements of grantees e.g., mid year and annual reporting to First 5 LA, State Annual Report requirements, and First 5 LA initiative-level evaluations. Grantees also conduct program-level evaluations of their SR efforts.

At the local level, each activity in each grantee’s scope of work includes performance measures and service targets. Many programs have more than 20 program activities. As part of this accountability, SR grantees conducted local evaluations for the purpose of improving their programs. These local level evaluations have enabled programs to overcome challenges, learn valuable lessons, and share best practices with each other. These uses match the statements about the purpose of local evaluations in First 5 LA’s Revised Evaluation and Accountability Framework. According to this document, the purposes of “grantee-level accountability are oversight and compliance, and program and organizational improvement.” As a result, evaluation protocols emphasize measurement of the breadth of the program rather than the depth of the program’s impact.

Methodology

This report acknowledges that the primary purpose of the data collected in grantees’ local evaluations was for program improvement and does not attempt to aggregate similar findings

---

from across grantee programs. Rather, this report is a qualitative analysis of a randomly selected sample of 23 grantee program progress and evaluation reports from a total of 35. Grantee program progress reports describe program services in terms of the number of participants served, what worked well, challenges, and any changes to the services provided. In contrast, grantee evaluation reports document grantees’ evaluation activities and their programmatic outcomes. Other supporting documentation, such as convening breakout session data and anecdotal data were also gathered, reviewed, and analyzed to augment the analysis of grantee program progress and evaluation reports.

Once the reports and supporting documentation were reviewed and the data categorized, an analysis was conducted to identify the common services, outcomes, implications, and challenges that are presented in this report. All services and evaluation findings discussed in this document reflect those reported in the documentation reviewed.

This report identifies common services and the outcomes of those services. Because grantee evaluations were designed locally to produce program tailored outcomes, rather than outcomes that could be systematically aggregated across grantees, an evaluation outcome was defined broadly for the purpose of this report as findings—qualitative or quantitative—documented in the evaluation reports. Therefore, when the number of grantees representing each of the general findings accompanies the finding, it simply represents the number of grantees (n) who provided evidence of the finding in their evaluation reports. It does not indicate that other grantees did not evaluate the area of interest or that other grantees measured but did not obtain the same results. Nor is it a reflection of the strength of grantees’ evaluations. The n is simply an indicator of the findings and accomplishments of the SR initiative as documented and reported across grantees. Together, the common services identified from grantee program progress reports and the outcomes of those services identified from program evaluation reports show that the SR initiative has developed a variety of distinctive pathways that lead to school readiness among young children in Los Angeles County.

II. A WHOLE THAT IS GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS

The SR initiative represents a child-centered systems approach to healthy child development and school readiness. In contrast to other child-centered initiatives, the SR initiative includes consideration of how the child exists within the family, how the child and family interact with the school and community, and how the school and community interact with the child and family. To address these interdependent relationships, grantees have spent the last four years developing a diverse array of programs and services in early care and education, parenting and family support, health and social services, and school capacity (also known as the Essential and Coordinated Elements). Their efforts have laid the foundation for a network of services and resources that bring families, schools, and community agencies together to work toward

---

3 LAUSD’s eight sites submitted a joint evaluation report, which counted as one report for the purposes of the analysis.

4 A detailed description of methodology and sample of grantees can be found in the Appendix.
children’s success in school and in life, thus creating a powerful model of interdependent elements that represent different pathways to school readiness.

Children and families can access individual elements of this network of services at any point of entry and still be guided along an intricate, yet holistic, path to school readiness as exemplified in the following typical scenario.5

Parents may enter the program looking for a preschool for their child, then be introduced to the benefits of learning more about their child’s development and school preparedness; as a result, they enroll in a parent education or enrichment class. In addition to the class curriculum, parents may learn about available health and developmental screenings for their children as well as other available community services. While the child is in preschool the parent, based on newly acquired knowledge of child development, notices that the child is having trouble pronouncing letters and words, and asks the teacher about it. The teacher has observed the same recent struggles and, after further observations, refers the child for a developmental screening.

The screening identifies speech delays and the family is further referred and guided through the appropriate channels to receive the support the child needs to prevent him/her from falling behind in preschool. As the child prepares to enter kindergarten, the parents are able to advocate for the child at the elementary school due to the knowledge they gained from program services. The preschool teacher has also communicated with the school and, as a result, the school is prepared to address the child’s special needs. The child and family smoothly transition from preschool to kindergarten, which allows the child to keep pace academically with the other children and do well in school.

As depicted above, when the effects of all the individual school readiness services available to and utilized by children and families are viewed cumulatively an image of a new product is formed that represents a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Unrelated programs targeting parent education, preschool service, and health needs would not have served this family as well as the integrated system created by the SR initiative.

The grantee level pathways to school readiness presented in the next section not only convey how individual elements of the SR initiative are leading to positive outcomes, but how those elements crossover, intertwine, and work together to bring about school readiness.

III. COMMUNITY PATHWAYS TO SCHOOL READINESS

The community pathways to school readiness were locally driven in response to community needs. Prior to the School Readiness Initiative, communities did not have the resources and/or

---

5 This typical scenario was constructed by drawing upon a series of qualitative data from focus group reports, grantee convenings and program and evaluation reports.
the capacity to offer the kinds of services and opportunities now available to residents. For example, the following resources were lacking or were identified by First 5 LA as issues within these high need areas of the county:

- Limited coherent systems for delivering programs and activities to children zero to three;
- Lack of early childhood education childcare providers;
- Few to no coordinated efforts for children zero to five and their families (e.g., limited communication between early education centers and Kindergarten classrooms);
- Limited opportunities for language and literacy development among children ages zero to five;
- Little focus on social and emotional development of children;
- Little or no support for developing parent skills and knowledge;
- Few parents participating in school or community governance;
- Often a lack of knowledge among parents about the need for health and developmental screenings;
- Sporadic systematic process for early identification of special needs; and,
- Limited coordinated linkages to resources in the community.

The following sections discuss the pathways that grantees have introduced into their communities to eliminate the above gaps in service delivery, joined by a discussion of the local evaluation findings realized as a result of those services, and the future implications of those pathways and findings.

A. Early Foundations for Children Ages 0 - 5

Readying children for school is at the heart of the first Essential and Coordinated Element—early care and education. Research has shown that establishing programs that offer children early learning experiences is critical for Kindergarten preparedness in at-risk populations (Magnuson, Ruhm & Waldfogel 2007). SR grantee programs, developed wholly in communities with limited preschool and childcare options for socially and economically stressed families, are providing quality early learning activities where few were previously available.

Pathways to Early Foundations

The pathways to developing quality and stable early care and education for children ages zero to five represent a collage of program services that touch upon and incorporate other Essential and Coordinated Elements such as parenting and family support, health and social services, and school capacity. This section presents grantee developed early care and education services that focus on children, but also involve families and tap into and utilize existing community services and systems to enhance and strengthen the early foundations of children served. It should be noted that although stand-alone services for children ages zero to three served.

---


requirement for SR, programs have adapted services to meet the changing needs of these communities, and are providing more services to this younger age group each year.

**Childcare Provider Training and Support Activities** target licensed Family Day Care Providers and unlicensed childcare providers to increase competence and help unlicensed providers acquire licensure. Childcare providers, particularly unlicensed providers, can be a challenging population to work with because they are difficult to identify. While licensed Family Day Care Providers are linked to a resource and referral agency for support and referrals, unlicensed childcare providers have much less formal organization.

Training and support activities took the form of workshops, in-home technical assistance, and support groups. The most common strategy for working with childcare providers is to offer workshops on various child development topics such as literacy, discipline, safety, and nutrition. Training on transition to kindergarten and community resources is also included.

Topics on school readiness and community resources are covered in provider trainings; and many trainings include technical assistance visits to Family Child Care Homes (FCCH). The purpose of these technical assistance visits is to increase the quality of providers’ home environments. Periodic visits to providers’ homes allow for assessments of the learning environment, and presents opportunities to provide technical assistance on implementing and maintaining quality programming. During the visits additional information is provided on safety hazards and how to address other child-care environmental concerns.

Support groups are also used to provide both family and center-based providers opportunities to learn from each other and support one another. These groups encourage participants to view themselves as professionals and to act accordingly.

**Preschool or Enrichment Programs** are the most common programs and primarily serve children ages three to five. These programs offer classroom-centered learning activities. Preschool classrooms are delivered either solely by the grantees or via partnerships with Head Start, school districts, or other community agencies such as health or mental health centers. The programs are provided anywhere from three to six days a week for either a half or full-day (of which a portion of the day is sometimes devoted to less-structured child care). In these classrooms children have an opportunity to participate in educational activities that increase their competencies in cognition, language, emotional, social, and critical thinking.

Enrichment programs differ from preschool programs only in that they require and/or encourage parent participation. These programs are designed to involve parents in their child’s early learning and to reinforce learning for both the parent and the child.

The following examples from grantee program progress reports, representing a Head Start preschool program and a preschool enrichment program, illustrate the early foundations that are being developed for children and their families.

> "**Head Start** is such a powerful program in preparing low-income (and special needs families) for not only school, but for life. We feel very fortunate to have this opportunity to partner with them. One of the many positive outcomes we have observed with the Extended Day classes was that
children were able to continue learning throughout the entire day. Typically children are only in a Head Start class for 3.5 hours per day, but now they are given the opportunity to be in a quality learning environment all day.”

“There continued to be a heavy importance placed on parent involvement within the three to five enrichment program. This was evident throughout the year as well as during the graduation ceremony. Each graduating family was asked to create a centerpiece with common household items that related to the Ocean theme of the event. The results were very creative and beautiful. Parents were also more involved in their child’s daily learning by participating during circle time on a more frequent basis. They were invited to sing with their children within the classroom. Parents and children also had the opportunity to learn more about various topics by interacting with live Community Helpers such as the local police.”

Short-Term or Summer Programs are the second most common early learning activities for children three to five years old. These programs provide opportunities for children and families who have not had the opportunity to participate in preschool or a center-based childcare program to do so. In most cases these programs provide short-term, intensive instruction prior to entering Kindergarten; in other cases, they simply provide an opportunity for children and parents to engage in simultaneous or parallel learning activities, such as knowledge and skill building activities in literacy, child development, and school readiness, among others. An excerpt from a grantee program report portrays the purpose of these short-term or summer programs.

“Kindergarten teachers, school principals, and parents are delighted that the program was able to serve students without prior preschool experience, students with limited preschool experience and struggling students entering Kindergarten in the fall. Our goals are to 1) increase children’s cognitive, social and mental readiness for school by “closing the gap” and providing appropriate preschool experiences; and, 2) increase school readiness and kindergarten preparedness for prekindergarten children and their families.”

In other cases, these programs provide opportunities for children and parents to engage in simultaneous or parallel learning activities that are similar to enrichment programs but of shorter duration. This approach allows SR programs to influence more children, but with less duration and depth, than a 6 or 12 month enrichment program.

Home Visits or In-Home Instructional Programs provide home-based instruction or follow-up for children ages zero to five and their parents. Home visits are often a supplementary component to the programs mentioned above (preschool/enrichment and short-term/summer programs) in which program staff visit the home to provide one or more of the following services: case management, developmental assessments or screenings, child and family progress reports, and/or additional parent support and education (Olds, Kitzman, Cole & Robinson 1997). Based on grantee program progress reports, home visits may be an effective way to reach families with children ages zero to three due to the challenges families with infants and toddlers

face getting themselves and their children to center-based programs. Some home visit programs target infants and toddlers who are at risk for developmental delay.

One grantee program exemplifies the use of multiple strategies during home visits to improve outcomes for children ages zero to three. Through collaboration with local hospitals’ neo-natal units and other community based partners, this program provides a home visiting component targeted at infants and toddlers who are at risk for growth and development difficulties. Participants in this infant/toddler home visiting program receive regular visits, case management, periodic developmental screenings, and parent support and education.

In contrast to home visits, in-home instruction typically centers on an academic curriculum that helps children ages three to five attain cognitive, language, psycho-motor, social and emotional skills while at the same time instructing parents to become their child’s first teacher, providing developmental support for siblings in the home, and identifying other social needs (Baker, Piotrkowski, & Brooks-Gunn, 1999). In-home instruction is provided by trained program staff and occurs on a regular basis, typically once a week or once every other week. For some families this strategy is more culturally comfortable, as parents are not yet prepared to enroll children in center-based care.

Two variations on this approach pulled from grantee program reports illustrate how in-home instruction programs target child development and parent education, while simultaneously identifying and addressing other social needs.

“This component addresses the four domains of child development from their best first teacher, their parents, who will be trained during personal home visits by qualified Parent As Teacher (PAT) Facilitators.”

“Our program works towards creating a learning environment in the home that promotes reading, storytelling, and use of age appropriate toys that stimulate the imagination, intellect and critical thinking skills for young children. These parents and their children receive an initial intake and a risk factor assessment. Parents also can receive linkages to resources to meet their own English language development and other educational needs.”

Infant and Toddler Programs, often called “mommy and me,” or new parent groups, provide opportunities for parents and children ages zero to three to come together at a common location. In this way, participants interact with other children and parents while experiencing classroom environments and early learning activities. In addition to their immediate impact on children, these programs help parents learn about appropriate child activities that can be enacted in their home.

The instructional themes used in these programs are very varied, and include: pre-reading, safety and health promotion, pre-math concepts, fine and gross motor development, socialization and emotional literacy, civic enrichment, science, fine arts, music and movement. The following

---

example pulled from a grantee program progress report reflects how the instructional themes contribute to the development of essential school readiness skills.

“During the classes, children had the opportunity to engage in activities focused on developing their motor, social and language skills, engaging their senses, and fostering exploration and independence. Activities included an obstacle course to foster motor skills, making “mud” and finger painting to explore new textures, and group activities to promote social skills. Staff worked with parents to help them assist the children, and talked with them about how to use everyday activities at home to continue to stimulate children’s development.”

**Supplemental Child Centered Activities** include a number of additional services that grantees provide as part of the programs described previously. Examples of these services are case management, developmental and health assessments, library vans and backpacks, health education, art workshops, and school readiness transition activities. The way in which supplemental child-centered activities are combined with other programs is exemplified in the following quote taken from a grantee program report:

“The Backpack library program is an activity where our Parent Educator takes backpacks which contain age appropriate children’s books to the elementary schools and Early Education Centers, and checks them out to parents who have children birth to five, so that they can read the books at home with their child. The intention is to encourage literacy and school readiness for the family. After one week, the parent returns to the school and trades the backpack for another one with different books. The parents do this while participating in a four-week class which is a literacy education workshop by our Parent Educator to enhance parent’s and children’s literacy skills and encourage the parent to start a routine of reading to their child every night or whenever possible.”

**Grantee Findings on Early Foundations**
These pathways to school readiness represent a heterogeneous combination of approaches to delivering early care and education that are developing essential school readiness skills children ages zero to five need. Of the sample of evaluation reports reviewed (N=23), all documented positive outcomes for children who have been participating in various early care and education activities over the last year. A number reported either statistically significant increases or substantial gains over the course of their programs on the DRDP (Desired Results Developmental Profile) (n=10). Many\(^9\) reported statistically significant or positive gains on other standardized assessment instruments that measure various aspects of physical, language, and social emotional development (n=15).\(^10\) Some also validated their quantitative findings with qualitative data from focus groups and interviews (n=6). Across the grantee programs, the results reveal the following general findings for children ages zero to five.

**Licensed and unlicensed family childcare providers are improving the quality and safety of their homes and increasing their knowledge of child development, school readiness, and community resources.**

---

\(^9\) Includes some of those grantees who also reported positive outcomes on the DRDP.

\(^10\) Measures used by grantees included: E-LAP (Early Learning Accomplishment Profile), PEDS (Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status), ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire), PPVT (Peabody Preschool Vocabulary Test), PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening), K-Seals, Child Observation Record, TROLL (Teacher Rating of Oral Language), Concepts about Print, Codebreakers Early Literacy Assessment, Behavior Outcomes Index, Second Step Evaluation Interview, Modified Social Attributes Checklist.
About one half of the grantee sample reported findings on child care providers (n=12). A few grantees conducted pre and post observations using the Family Day Care Provider Rating Scale in provider homes (n=4). These revealed positive findings regarding quality of care; indicated either as positive increases from pre to post assessment or as subscale scores that indicate quality environments on all of the scale domains. Gains in knowledge of child development, special needs, and safety were also found for other grantees (n=6). The following anecdote conveys an example of a grantee’s success with a special needs workshop, as reported in the grantee’s evaluation report.

“100% of provider workshop participants gained a better understanding of how to work with the children in their class whose special needs they were concerned about. Participants also reported an increase in their comfort level in screening children for special needs, talking with parents about concerns with their child’s special needs, and how to link children with special needs to additional services.”

Children ages zero to five are engaging in high quality learning experiences, and are steadily developing a general readiness to learn, as well as developing their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills.

Specifically, 10 of 23 grantees reported using the DRDP and reported positive results. Results either indicated substantial and significant increases in the proportion of children who mastered one or more of the DRDP developmental domains (personal and social competence, effective learners, physical and motor competence, and safety and health); or increases in the proportion of children who progressed from one level to another within and across domains; or increases in the number of skills within each domain that were mastered. Grantee focus group and interview findings support the increases across different domains (n=6).

“Without exception, children have blossomed in the program. They have learned physical skills such as dressing and eating without help, intellectual skills such as identifying shapes, and social skills such as sharing their things and adjusting to change. According to one mother, ‘My daughter has learned her letters. She can memorize long phrases and is fluent in English. She has learned to relate well to others and to be more flexible and pay attention in the classroom.’”

“In describing the program and its benefits for children, one parent stated that the program ‘develops their minds, builds their creativity so that they grow up to be smart students. They are more advanced by the time they enter school compared to the older children who might have not participated in a program like this.’ Several parents reported that their children now knew their colors, shapes and how to cut and color within a line.”

Positive outcomes concerning children’s social and emotional development also were reported on other measures than the DRDP, such as focus group and one-on-one interviews. About one-third of the grantee evaluation reports reviewed (n=7) reported findings in this area. A couple of quotes pulled from the focus group and one-on-one interviews characterize children’s social and emotional growth.

“Children also developed social skills through their interaction with other children in the program; parents felt these skills would help their children in making the transition to school. One participant said that children ‘are able to follow rules better so that when they enter school they understand why the teacher uses them.’”
“The parents comment on the children's newfound independence, maturity, and ability to follow the rules. Many of the children have learned to get along with others and to follow the rules. According to the mother of a four year old: 'She used to hit other children, but now she has learned to share with others. One time a child hit her in the grocery store, and my daughter didn’t hit her back. She said, 'That’s not nice.' She learned that at the program.'”

**Children ages zero to five are gaining English language proficiency before entering Kindergarten.**

One-third of the grantees (n=8) reported positive findings on a number of instruments measuring language and literacy proficiency, particularly for non-English speaking children. Outcomes include movement from below average to average on the K-Seals, and significant gains in letter recognition and English proficiency on the PPVT, E-LAP, LAP-D, TROLL, Codebreakers Early Literacy, and other assessments. These measures complemented grantee DRDP results. Qualitative findings from grantee focus groups and anecdotes add texture to these quantitative outcomes.

“Another area where parents reported noticing growth was in their children’s language development both in English and Spanish. One parent said, ‘My child was able to learn more English since I only speak Spanish to him at home. When we come to the reading classes we both get to learn new words in a new language.’ Another parent commented that her ‘child learned more words in Spanish, which is good since most of his older siblings only speak English. He will be able to learn both languages.’”

**Children with disabilities are increasing their school readiness through the IEP process due to early identification, intervention and support to families.**

A supplemental activity that has become an integral part of the grantee early care and education program efforts described earlier is developmental assessments and screenings. Grantees detect developmental delays and special needs among children ages zero to five through measures such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, PEDS (Parents Evaluation of Developmental Status), and the DRDP. They then use referrals to assist families in determining appropriate diagnoses and interventions.

Early detection of special needs is becoming more important as research documents the importance of early intervention (Barnett & Boocock, 1998).¹¹ Large numbers of children with special needs enter elementary schools without having been detected, been diagnosed, or received services. The academic and life outcomes for these unserved children are significantly less positive than for similar children receiving services prior to Kindergarten. In addition, research suggests that children with undiagnosed special needs may be disproportionately

---

expelled from early education settings, compounding their learning difficulties (Frede, Barnett & Lupo, 2001).\textsuperscript{12}

One grantee program reported that three year-olds had the highest percentage of referrals for special needs, indicating the importance of early detection. Twenty-six percent of the three year-olds in this program were referred for professional evaluation and 37 percent were given a more in-depth screening. The greatest developmental concerns for three year-olds were expressive language, behavior, and social/emotional.

Some grantees also report related findings regarding the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) process, which occurs after students ages three to five are screened and identified as having a special need. For example, one grantee reported that during the program year, nearly half of the enrolled special needs children received their annual IEP review, and all of their objectives were met. Other students were scheduled to participate in their reviews during the next six months, and were expected to be on track for meeting their educational objectives. This is important because IEPs are often not appropriately implemented during the preschool years.

Another program interviewed parents of children with special needs and found that the IEP process was very intimidating to them, and the parents often did not understand what an IEP plan is, or what it means for their child. SR Social workers were able to intervene in the process and educate parents about the system and about special needs, thus alleviating many fears and frustrations, allowing the IEP process to proceed as planned. The following anecdote from a grantee evaluation report clearly suggests that early identification of special needs and interventions with parents is paramount to some children’s success in Kindergarten.

“One family has a five-year-old son who had trouble talking. After his hearing was checked, he received special educational services four times each week. His mother later reported that he learned how to communicate and ask questions. Although he used to be very timid, and have tantrums, he has now learned how to calm himself down and pay attention. The parent reported that the teacher did a terrific job showing him how to communicate. Further, the parent believes that all of this support really helped her son, and eventually he learned. This boy has just started kindergarten.”

Children ages zero to three are developing age appropriate physical, language, cognitive, social, and emotional skills; and they are undergoing developmental and health screenings and receiving referrals for early intervention services as needed.

Specific findings for children ages zero to three were noted among approximately one third of the evaluation reports reviewed (n=9). As this was not required, not all grantees filtered their evaluation data by child age to report these results. This group of grantees included community-based programs only. As with children zero to five, children zero to three were assessed on a variety of measures including some of the same measures that resulted in the findings above.

Therefore, it is not surprising that general findings for children zero to three follow a similar pattern as those for children zero to five.

**Implications of Early Foundations**

The strength of the early care and education programs that grantees have developed begins with their effects on young children. Through various pathways, grantees are fostering positive growth in all areas of children’s development. Grantee level findings suggest that children participating in SR programs are being exposed to learning experiences and environments that help prepare them physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally for preschool (children ages 0-3) and Kindergarten (children ages 3-5).

By supporting children’s development, the SR initiative is increasing the likelihood of academic success (Duncan et al., 2007). Although not required by the SR scope of work, some programs are tracking students into the elementary period. Program and comparison group studies conducted by one grantee reported that at the end of the Kindergarten year, preschool treatment students performed significantly better and showed greater mastery of academic skills compared to the non-preschool comparison students. Another program-comparison group study conducted in Kindergarten found that teacher ratings of SR program students’ self-confidence were better than teacher ratings of students who had not attended a pre-K program.

SR programs have enabled non-English speaking children to begin their English language learning before they enter Kindergarten (in 0-3 or 3-5 programs), and therefore advance to proficiency sooner. One grantee conducted a program-comparison study with results indicating that the students who had attended preschool were more likely to be classified as proficient in English in 1st grade, and they were more likely to do better on language development than children who had not attended preschool.

Furthermore, more children are receiving early intervention services supporting seamless education and learning from infant and toddler programs to preschool to Kindergarten. Corollary implications are that children, through coordinated IEP services, are successful in school because they have all the necessary supports in place when they start, and as a consequence are better able to manage their disabilities without disruption in their education.

Finally, by increasing the quality of care in family child care homes and the quality of parent-child activities, the SR initiative is having a broader impact beyond center-based and preschool environments. In this way, gains provided by early childhood education are likely to be maintained as children move through elementary school.

The outcomes for children presented above are due to an amalgamation of services related to other service components of the SR initiative such as parenting and family support, health and community services, and school capacity. The overlapping and interconnected nature of SR

---


services and outcomes will become evident as each of the services just mentioned and their outcomes are discussed in the sections that follow.

**B. Parent Engagement and Empowerment**
Parents have one of the most important and rewarding jobs in the world. At the same time, the challenges parents face are considerable. That is why working with families early on to develop effective parenting practices is one of the essential components of SR. Highly cognizant of the pivotal role parents play in a young child’s life, the SR initiative places a significant emphasis on activities that strengthen the capacity of parents to nurture the learning, growth, and health of their children, as well as themselves.

**Pathways to Parent Engagement and Empowerment**
Grantee services that support and strengthen families are complementary to and often overlap with services that focus on the early care and education of the child. In essence, they go hand in hand to provide a holistic approach to readying children for school. Research upon which the SR initiative was conceived indicates that services that strengthen parenting skills as well as parent’s overall well-being result in better outcomes for their children (e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 1999; Cotton & Wikeland, 2001). The predominant services offered and evaluated by grantees provide parents different opportunities to engage in their young child’s development and education while at the same time teaching parents skills that will empower them as individuals.

**Parent-Child Activities** provide opportunities for parents to interact with their child in a supportive setting. Parents engage in different learning activities with their child while receiving guidance on how to use and incorporate desirable educational strategies into their interactions with their child. These activities offer academic- and literacy-focused parent/child activities while simultaneously demonstrating how to handle different behavioral situations with their child. Some of these activities are provided through home visitation programs, others through family workshops. The following excerpts from grantee progress reports convey the ways in which parents learn to interact and engage with their child.

> “Throughout the workshops, staff worked with parents to help them gain emotional awareness, literacy and vocabulary. Parents were very involved in the discussions and activities and shared their personal experiences of being parented and how they would like to be as a parent. Staff used naturally occurring opportunities such as separation times to model for parents how to negotiate such situations and provided support and encouragement to parents. At the conclusion of the groups, parents demonstrated an increased awareness of their own as well as their child’s needs, as well as positive strategies to redirect children’s behavior when parent and child’s needs seemed to be in conflict.”

---


“Classes are structured in a series of ten 2-hour classes designed to encourage parents to read to their children and understand dialogic principles and activities which help their child learn to read. This also enables them to be their child’s first/best teacher of reading fundamentals. Parents are asked to read books in the class and recognize the importance of selecting age-appropriate books for their children. To assist with this effort, parents are given books to keep so they will read to their children at home.”

**Parent-Only Classes, Meetings, and Workshops** focus on all aspects of early care and education, special needs, and parents’ role as child’s first teacher, as well as developing parent language, computer, financial, vocational, and advocacy skills. Examples of parenting education topics are computer skill development, ESL, stress management, parental roles, family health, temperament, family communication, discipline and behavior, school readiness, first-aid, literacy, nutrition, community resources, mental health and self-esteem, and women’s health, among others.

The most important aspect of the parent classes, meetings, and workshops are that grantees conduct them at times, locations, and on subjects that respond to the needs of their communities. Thus, each grantee is offering a unique menu of parent education activities. Some offerings are held while the children are in grantee programs, others take place in the evening or in the home, and one grantee conducts programs online. Overall, these workshops are designed to provide parents with the tools they need: to learn a variety of new skills (promoting self-sufficiency as well as parenting skills), to feel confident, to observe and understand their children, and to communicate with them. Moreover, these workshops often touch upon and integrate an array of topics and/or skills that address and strengthen different aspects of child and family well-being, as portrayed in the anecdotes from grantee program progress reports presented below.

“This activity is very successful and highly rated by the participants. Our Parent Educator teaches this three-part curriculum designed by the Casey Family Program, part of the Casey Family Foundation. The components are: Community Involvement, Advocacy, and Financial Literacy. It turns out the most powerful component, if you will, is the financial literacy piece. Our clients are targets for predatory lending and associated practices, such as check cashing. Through this class, many parents learn to avoid such costly practices and learn how to manage their finances constructively, including opening a checking account.”

“The class read a book together called Caldo, Caldo, Caldo or Slip, Slurp, Soup which is a bilingual book that describes how some children watch their mother make soup, and they go with their father to get tortillas before enjoying the soup together. The group then discussed how including their children in a cooking activity that includes measuring, adding, etc. teaches early math concepts. They also talked about how teaching children to contribute to the family’s meal nourishes the child’s self-esteem because they learn to see themself as a capable and needed member of the group. Lastly, the group talked about the emotional importance of passing on pieces of their family’s culture through things like recipes. The women shared how they each have a recipe that was passed down to them, and how each recipe was very different. Each participant brought in a copy of the recipe that they had shared about the week before. The teacher then made copies of the recipes, created a cover page with the title, ‘Recetas de Caldo’ (Broth or Soup Recipes). She put them in a plastic report binder for the participants, and upon graduation each parent received a copy of the recipe book with their name on it and their certificate of completion.”

“The ESL instructor does an excellent job incorporating the goal of English language acquisition with their role as a parent of a young child. For example, students spend a couple of hours each week preparing for their PACT time activities that they will present in the preschool classroom.
with their child the following week. Parents are also encouraged to take part in their child’s learning by promising to help tutor them in English and by speaking English outside the classroom setting.”

**Home Visits and In-home Instruction Programs** are similar, if not the same, as the home visit and in-home instruction programs discussed under early care and education. Again, these programs offer a way to reach isolated or high-risk families and provide them with assistance in developing parenting, home management, and life skills. Not only are the grantees serving the parent and children ages zero to five during the home visit, but any other children, regardless of age, in the home at the same time also benefits from the activities.

Most grantees use the Parents as Teachers (PAT) course, which fosters parents’ ability to become their child’s first teacher by teaching parents about child development milestones, appropriate home-based activities to encourage child development, and child health information. A couple of the grantees reported having bilingual staff who conduct the home visits in either English or Spanish; and two grantees reported using home visits as a supplement to other parenting classes or workshops.

The following description of an in-home instruction visit describes how these programs are realized in the home.

“This program year we purchased more learning materials to leave developmentally appropriate supplies that complimented the activity our Home Visitors facilitated with the family. Parent feedback and questions presented to children on the following visit indicated that families were willing and happy to continue practicing the activity as their ‘homework.’ The children seemed very excited to have opportunities to do their ‘homework’ throughout the month. We believe this reinforced their cognitive learning as well as provided more opportunities for parent child interaction”

**Grantee Findings on Parent Engagement and Empowerment**

The service pathways discussed above are introducing parents to new ways of knowing and interacting with their child and community. Specifically, grantee findings indicate that parents are broadening their repertoire of knowledge and skills that allow them to take care of themselves and raise their children to be ready for school. Parent findings were derived from parent pre-post activity-specific surveys and checklists, satisfaction surveys, and parent interviews and focus groups, as well as anecdotal observations made by grantees. All of the grantee sample (N=23) provided one or more of the services described above and all reported findings for parents in at least one of two key areas: 1) Parent engagement with their child; and, 2) Parent empowerment.  

Parents are engaging their child in literacy, behavior management, or other learning activities.

---

15 Grantee evaluation reports devoted their discussions to findings for parents of children ages zero to five. While there was some differentiation between parents of children ages zero to three and three to five, the findings were limited and could not be generalized.
Over half of the grantees sampled (n=14) measured these outcomes and reported positive findings. Pre-post gains in parent-child engagement in these activities were reported by nine of 14 grantees; some gains were statistically significant, others were not. Most of the grantees measured and reported statistics on increases in children’s literacy skills and the amount of time parents spent engaging in learning activities with their child. In three cases, 90 percent or more of parents reported an increase in literacy activities in the home, such as increases in the frequency of reading with their child, teaching their children new words, looking at pictures books with their child, or possessing a library card. Other activities showing positive findings using pre-post measures, retrospective surveys, or focus groups and interviews were learning mathematical concepts, such as numbers and counting; singing songs; and explaining and communicating about different topics. In addition, a few grantees reported comments from parents regarding the ways in which the services have helped them handle the social-emotional development of their children, as represented by the following quote:

“Families reported that the program helps them with social emotional development, specifically instances of controlling temper, learning discipline, sharing and socializing, learning responsibility, and expressing their feelings”

Parents are becoming empowered as a result of growth in their cognitive and personal development.

Grantee evaluation reports documented gains in parents’ knowledge of different aspects of parenting (n=19). Specifically, evaluation reports highlighted improvements in parents’ understanding of child development concepts such as language development, social and emotional development, cognitive development, and physical-motor development; or, their ability to manage their child’s behavior.

Evaluation report findings discussed parents’ increased confidence in their role as parents and members of the community (n=9). In several cases, gains in parenting knowledge as a result of attending parenting workshops and classes also coincided with increased parent confidence in their role as parents.

For example, interviews and focus group discussions conducted by grantee evaluators reported that parents participating in parenting activities not only increase their knowledge, but also increase their confidence in their parenting skills:

“Parents continue to report that the workshop has helped them to resolve issues with their children in a more positive manner.”

“I used to get impatient with the children. My social worker would tell me how to deal with my frustration, how to control myself and talk in a lower tone of voice….Before we didn’t pay attention to what we do as parents. We have experienced tremendous mental growth.”

“Rapport building activities resulted in an increase in parents’ motivation to learn more about topics that impact their child’s development.”

Findings from parenting and vocational skill workshop surveys also reported high percentages of parents who indicated increased confidence due to the services in which they participated.
Anecdotes, focus group discussions, and interviews from grantee evaluation reports help reinforce these findings.

“I have changed 360 degrees. The Center has motivated and made both of us more responsible. It has improved our morale as parents and motivated us to spend more time with our daughter.”

“Having their children at the center has enabled many mothers to learn English, and this has helped them get jobs and learn a trade: ‘Without the center and its services, I would not have been prepared for work and school. I felt free to focus on myself knowing that my daughter was being well cared for here.’”

“Participation in the parent leadership group gives individuals self-confidence. The group is a close social network, conscientious of maintaining group cohesion. The group feels confident about being able to accomplish its goals. The group actively networks and collaborates with other parents, parent groups, and community partners.”

“Parents have more follow-through and are beginning to feel empowered to call for help and advocate for their children.”

Evaluation findings indicate that parents gained a better understanding of how to teach their child (n=9).
Workshops, classes, and home visits focusing on how parents can become their child’s first teacher and prepare their child for Kindergarten achieved positive results. The following anecdotes and focus group responses represent those results:

“We are learning to grow as parents and teachers, and we know how to help our daughter with her homework. When we help our children with school, they get a more effective education.”

“We need help a lot because like I told you, nobody teaches us how to be a parent.”

“When parents begin the program they often lack the social and communication skills between themselves and their children. Once the parents work with the staff in their homes, parents begin to open up and begin to understand their role as their child’s first teacher.”

Implications of Parent Engagement and Empowerment
The pathways that lead to parent engagement and empowerment complement and reinforce the pathways to early care and education. Through the SR initiative parents are encouraged to not only develop behaviors and attitudes that increase engagement with their child and their own empowerment, but to maintain and build upon those behaviors and attitudes throughout the child’s educational career in order to increase the child’s success in school and in life. As such, the value of the parenting activities offered by the SR initiative goes beyond what other programs that integrate parent education and early childhood education, such as Head Start and SRLDP (School Readiness, Learning, and Development Program), can provide. (e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 1999; Cotton & Wikeland, 2001).16


First, as parents interact more with their children and better understand how to prepare children for Kindergarten we can expect them to become more confident in their role as parents than they currently are, and, thus, become further empowered as individuals. Second, as already demonstrated, participation in parent engagement and empowerment activities results in greater parent involvement in the child’s school and overall education. And as research suggests, schools that have an engaged parent body lead to greater success for the children attending those schools (e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 1999; Cotton & Wiklund, 2001). Third, self-confident parents are likely to transform into self-confident members and potential leaders of the community. One grantee reports that “having their children participate in the program has enabled many mothers to learn English and this has helped them to get jobs and learn a trade.”

C. Access to Health and Community Services

One of the key premises on which the SR initiative is based is that children learn better when they are physically and emotionally healthy (Duncan et al., 2007). It is difficult to promote children’s psychological well-being in families suffering from social-emotional discord. If they are physically and emotionally healthy, parents and families are better able to support their child’s development. Since many health and social disparities originate in early childhood and affect the entire family unit, early screening and identification of health and social service needs is also important. Overall, the goal of SR is to secure the well being of the child and family for their future functioning in school and society.

Pathways to Health and Community Services
Grantees offer services that support the health and well-being of children and families in different ways—from direct health and mental health services to indirect services such as referrals and outreach. Among the variety of services offered, three service areas arose as key avenues by which children and families gain access to the health and community services they need: 1) screenings, 2) referrals and resources, and 3) case management.

Grantees screen and refer children and families for a host of different services. Grantees who provide access to health and community services use screenings to help identify health, dental, and developmental needs (including immunizations), as well as health and dental insurance

---


status, and refer children and families accordingly. One site reported screening over 2000 children for hearing, vision, and BMI; another screened 1,600 families for medical insurance and established a medical home for 700. Without these screenings, these children and their families would likely not receive these services until elementary school or later.

Grantees use **referrals and resources** to identify and link children and families to a plethora of 1) medical, dental, and mental health agencies and services including clinics and mobile van services; 2) educational resources such as adult education for parents, libraries for children; and, 3) community resources such as transportation, food stamps, and housing.

**Case management** (Duncan et al., 2007)\(^\text{20}\) serves as a holistic approach by which grantees are able to identify and work with the health and social issues of children and families. Beyond directing families to services that improve family functioning (transportation, education, medical, mental, social, etc.), case management allows grantees to guide families through community, medical, and mental health systems. This increases the likelihood that parents will take advantage of available resources while improving communication among different agencies and individuals working with a single family. For example, as reported by one grantee, case management staff assists families not only to access services, but also to troubleshoot problems, fill out forms, make telephone calls, and even attend medical appointments with children and parents. In this way, the SR initiative is meeting the First 5 LA goal of increasing collaboration and integration among service providers.

**Grantee Findings on Health and Community Services**

Evaluation reports consistently reveal that SR initiative grantees are providing children and families **access** to health and community services through the pathways discussed above. Findings were reported in terms of counts and interview and focus group anecdotes. From both types of data, two key outcomes emerged:

**Children and families are being introduced to a system of prevention, early intervention, and coordinated care that can assist them with their medical, dental, and mental health and social needs.**

Of the 23 grantees in the sample, 21 of them offer health and community services. All 21 reported findings on how children and families are benefiting from grantee services in this area. The following grantee evaluation report statistics and observations provide a flavor of the benefits access to health and community services offer families.

\(^\text{20}\) Case management is differentiated from providing resources and referrals by the intensity of the service, as discerned from reviewing the reports.


“100% of parents reported that their children had health insurance and received ongoing preventative care.”

“Over 80 percent of families reported getting information about services that help them with their child.”

“The case managed families were asked to set family goals and almost half achieved them.”

“The mobile service was a benefit to the many families that have limited transportation and no health insurance. The onsite visits provided them with an opportunity to access the same level of services offered at a walk-in medical clinic. Without the mobile unit families would have to travel outside of the community to access the local health department for similar services. Some parents no longer have to miss work or have their children miss school to keep scheduled medical appointments.”

“Parents presented with numerous concerns including lack of disciplinary skills, advocacy for legal and health needs, financial assistance, and general emotional support. Families were provided direct counseling services for the support, in-home parenting skills, budgeting skills, and information on child development milestones, literacy, and school readiness preparation. Based on results of the family assessment, families received linkages to additional services including some families being referred to therapy.”

Children with developmental delays and/or special needs are being identified early and families are provided assistance to acquire needed services.

Of the 21 grantees reporting on health and community services, eight included evidence in their evaluation reports of early identification. With respect to special needs, screenings have been particularly useful in reporting proportions of children identified with special needs through grantee services. This finding was also documented in the Early Foundation for Children section of this report, highlighting the fact that screenings are not necessarily a separate service, but integrated into other SR programs and activities.

Through a special needs tracking form one site is able to document that 100 percent of children who have been identified with special needs are referred and receive service or some form of intervention. Other sites report on the proportion of special needs children identified and referred—one site reported that almost one-quarter of preschoolers served were identified as special needs students and referred. This example is important in that it illustrates how the SR initiative links those infants and toddlers who are vulnerable to delays due to poor birth outcomes or for other reasons to identification and support services at an early age, providing a safety net until they enter the formal school system.

Implications of Health and Community Services
The implications of these services go beyond the numbers. The grantees provide children and families a single point of entry for the direct and indirect services they need through screenings, case management, providing referrals and connecting them to resources. By making health and community services more accessible and tangible to children and families, the grantees are reducing the barriers to physical health and social well-being. The numbers of children served is a clear indicator that children and families in Los Angeles County that might not otherwise have been identified as needing services have been identified; children and families that might not otherwise have been linked to potential services have been linked to them; and anecdotal reports
indicate that at least a proportion of children and families in Los Angeles County who might not otherwise have received needed services are receiving them. This shows the SR initiative’s ability to fill an important gap in the continuum of care and development in early childhood.

"Some of the children screened had not attended preschool, which made the screening very helpful for these families who would not have received a screening otherwise. Parents did seem to feel a sense of relief when some of their concerns were validated and the appropriate referrals or information was given."

"IEPs are crucial for the increasing number of children with speech delay, and the social workers play a critical role in ensuring that the families of special-needs children get the support they need. When social workers provide support, school representatives are open to considering what parents need. An example is transportation: Parents are expected to drop off their child for an hour of speech therapy every weekday, and yet most parents have to work. Because social workers advocated for these children and their family’s needs, the district is providing transportation services to children who need them."

This child will now be able to start school developmentally on par with peers and have the confidence to be successful. Without services this child would have been behind and not engaged and quite likely might have exhibited negative behavior in school. Ultimately, providing access to health and social services is one key pathway toward ensuring that early intervention, prevention, and coordinated care facilitates improved family functioning and school readiness. Grantee evaluation findings from intensive focus groups with parents speak to this very goal of the SR initiative.

"Another family has a five-year-old boy at the ECC with speech problems: Our son’s behavior has gotten much better. He used to get very angry and stubborn. Since getting speech therapy, he has learned to share with others. He gets along better with the other children and plays with them. His speech is much, much better. He is more organized and understands things better. He has settled down a lot. His preschool teacher commented, “He exited his IEP three months ago and is one of the most outspoken children in my classroom. He uses complex language in English, and his stuttering has improved. His language and social skills are very good. He is one of my good students.”"

Other implications embedded in the evaluation report findings represent two trends worth noting. The first is that community-based programs seem to have a wider network of community resources and referrals, and are more likely to provide case management to children and families than university or school-based programs. The second trend follows from the first, and, in essence, expands upon it. Community-based programs directly linked to a hospital or medical center seem to be a successful model in terms of providing direct, coordinated, and comprehensive health and social service care to children and families, as depicted in the evaluation report quote below.

"One of the major benefits for our school readiness program is being co-located with a community health center which allows for immediate access to participants to medical and dental services. During this year 1,163 children, ages 0-5 were provided medical services. The services provided included: immunizations, complete primary care and treatment, case management; free pharmaceutical and laboratory testing services; complete physical examinations, including hearing and vision; lead screenings and tuberculosis testing; and asthma health care and education. In addition to medical services, 148 children received dental services equaling 241 dental visits.”
D. Seamless Education and Learning

Children’s chances for overall success do not solely rest on what happens from kindergarten forward. They are also shaped by experiences and family behavior through the pre-school years and by a positive transition from pre-school to elementary school. The other aspects of school readiness discussed up to this point have devoted direct attention to the child’s early learning experiences and school readiness, the parents’ educational and personal development and their role as the child’s first teacher, and the overall physical and mental well-being of the child and family. Now the discussion turns to fostering a system of seamless transition between early childhood education and elementary schools.

Pathways to Seamless Education and Learning
Grantees have spent the last four years designing, implementing, and adapting a variety of services to improve the flow of education and learning for the young children and families they serve. The efforts toward collaborative articulation and/or transition activities were not only designed to connect children, families, and pre-schools to area schools, but also to connect children, families, preschools, and an array of health, mental health, and social service agencies to each other. The services in this area represent three types of activities designed to create a seamless system of learning for families and children: 1) Transition activities; 2) Communication; and, 3) Collaboration.

Transition Activities help prepare preschool children for the transition to Kindergarten. Activities include talking about the differences between preschool and Kindergarten, giving children an opportunity to express their feelings and fears about the transition to Kindergarten, and conducting visits to elementary schools and Kindergarten classrooms. Trips to the elementary school include a visit to the Kindergarten classroom, as well as a tour of the playground, cafeteria, and administrative offices. Visits to Kindergarten classrooms give preschoolers an opportunity to learn classroom routines, rules, and expectations. Sometimes visits to Kindergarten classrooms also include an opportunity for preschoolers to participate in a group literacy experience. The following grantee program report excerpt is an example of how these transition activities help to prepare preschoolers for Kindergarten.

“Transition activities give children an opportunity to express their feelings about going to Kindergarten by reading a book about a child who is going to Kindergarten, and how he feels about it. The facilitator then encouraged each group of children to share their own thoughts and feeling about his/her transition. The children who were not comfortable and/or not able to verbally express how they felt were given the opportunity to point to pictures that described their feelings. Next, they discussed what would be different from pre-school when they go to kindergarten, and what would be the same. After the discussion, all classes went to the kindergarten classroom to take a tour, and to meet the kindergarten teacher.”

Communication Strategies involve working with parents, school principals, kindergarten teachers, and early education teachers to design new methods to communicate with parents about their child’s transition to Kindergarten. For example, parent workshops, meetings, and/or councils that inform and educate parents about the skills and experiences their child needs in order to have a smooth transition to Kindergarten. Specifically, these activities discuss developmental milestones; introduce school readiness activities that can be conducted in the home, outline the documents (medical and other) needed to enroll; present Kindergarten
standards and school district policies; and sometimes provide one-on-one assistance in choosing a Kindergarten, among others.

Another communication strategy is to hand out transition packets or backpacks with school-readiness related activities that the parent and child can engage in together. The packets and backpacks might also contain information about the elementary school, the Kindergarten academic curriculum, and the processes and procedures for enrolling. Kindergarten school supplies are sometimes also distributed along with the other materials. Below is an example of an activity that combines a parent event with the distribution of transitional backpacks.

"These events were designed to teach families how to properly use the items included in the backpack. Each family was required to rotate through interactive stations that focused on Art, Music, Math, and Literacy. Once the family took part in all four stations, they were able to receive the backpack. Both parent and child were required to participate in each station in order to promote family engagement. Another positive aspect of these events was having Early Education Preschool teachers involved. These teachers helped with the learning stations and the Kindergarten teacher was available to the parents to answer questions about their child's new school."

An additional form of communication is the development of formal systems by which information about the child’s academic and developmental progress, such as the DRDP results, is exchanged between preschools and Kindergarten classrooms. This includes the transfer of IEPs (Individual Education Plan) of special needs children.

**Collaborative efforts** are implemented to encourage a host of individuals such as early childhood education teachers, SRLDP (School Readiness Language Development) teachers, Math and Literacy Coaches, Kindergarten teachers, and district and local school administrators, among others to work together to put into place strategies that foster seamless education and learning. Collaborative efforts include developing and implementing formal transition plans, facilitating and creating curricular alignment agreements; and, exchanging information and idea planning among community partners—all for the purpose of ensuring school readiness at the pre-K level.

"Our partnership meetings have been very productive for both parties. We were able to introduce our SR services to new Kindergarten Teachers, Math and literacy coaches and the outcomes of these introductions has already proved to be very successful. We recently had our Child Development Educators/Teachers participate in a training given by two Math Coaches. This training was also given to teachers. The Math Coaches were very pleased with the involvement of our teachers and would like to invite them to future trainings and workshops that are relevant to the work that they do."

**Grantee Findings on Seamless Education and Learning**
It is evident that grantees have devoted considerable energy to forging community-school relationships through collaborative articulation and/or transition activities with local schools. Almost three-quarters of the grantees sampled (n=15) highlighted findings resulting from these services. Because there is great variability in the form of these activities and in the data reported, it is difficult to determine the level and efficacy of inter-agency collaboration. Local evaluation findings point to two ways in which grantees are experiencing individual successes fostering seamless education and learning in the local communities. These findings are based on varying
quantitative and qualitative methods, including interviews, focus groups, anecdotes, pre-post collaborative surveys, pre-post control group DRDP comparisons, and satisfaction surveys.

**Mechanisms by which children, including those with special needs, can experience a positive transition are being developed and implemented.**

Eight grantees reported findings specific to this area. Successful mechanisms include the following activities (occurring in the months prior to Kindergarten): visits to elementary schools and Kindergarten classrooms, parent-child transition orientations, and dissemination of information on the documents and medical information required for enrollment. With parental permission, preschool records of children’s development and skills (including IEPs of special needs children) are provided to elementary schools according to the evaluation reports of a few grantees. One grantee reported preparing families for the transition to Kindergarten through a comprehensive package of services:

> “Parent information on transitioning to Kindergarten and preparing their child for Kindergarten consisted of children receiving backpacks which contained necessary items for kindergarten, parents receiving information on how to enroll their child in kindergarten and what to look for when choosing a Kindergarten. In addition, parents received one-on-one assistance in choosing a Kindergarten, whether it was public, private, or magnet school. Children and parents also participated in field trips.”

Another grantee reported that preschool teachers use the Kindergarten benchmarks to infuse prerequisite skills into their curriculum throughout the year, “Staff continued to take an in-depth look at Kindergarten benchmarks to align their curriculum, most especially in the area of literacy.”

**School articulation and transition collaborative efforts are fostering increased levels of communication, information exchange, referrals, resource sharing, joint-planning and decision-making.**

A total of eight grantees reported outcomes of their school articulation and collaboration efforts. Collaboration survey results indicate that the collaborative efforts with area schools have been positive. Increased levels of collaboration are reported as well as interest in continuing the collaborative work that has begun. These collaborations are leading to joint program development that meets the needs of local communities. Different programs now know each other by name leading to increased responsiveness, direct referrals, and future opportunities. Also, grantee evaluation reports are citing increases in the level of communication and interaction among the agencies involved in different collaborative efforts. Two representative examples are:

One grantee created a collaborative “transition program that includes articulation between PAT Facilitators and the receiving Kindergarten teachers; the articulation of the Kindergarten curriculum, state standards, and the District checklist; and regular articulation meetings with school district, preschool, and SR staff.”

Another grantee is conducting a “transition forum in which early childhood education teachers, providers, SRLDP, and Kindergarten teachers have regular meetings to continue training on topics of common interest as well as to evaluate transition activities and develop a formal written transition plan.”
Implications of Seamless Education and Learning
Grantees’ endeavors to build articulation and transition relationships among families, schools, and other community organizations already show distinct signs of a seamless system of education and learning. Children are getting services they need whether special education, health or social services, or educational support. Problems are being addressed before children start school and parents are a part of the effort. As a result the burden is not just on the school and child. We expect more evidence of this kind to surface in the near future. In the meantime, current findings represent a preview of the outcomes that the research suggests should accompany such activities (Duncan et al., 2007). In fact, in the following instances, grantees provide a glimpse of what those outcomes might look like as grantees continue on the same pathway they currently are pursuing.

Focus group findings state that participating parents of children who have transitioned to Kindergarten reported academic, developmental, and social successes for their children. In particular, special needs children were well prepared, despite the learning challenges they face.

Program and comparison group studies conducted by two grantees reported greater and greater self-confidence among SR students in Kindergarten compared to students who had not attended pre-school. In addition, students from the SR initiative were more likely to be classified as proficient in English in 1st grade and show positive language development compared to children who had not attended preschool.

IV. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

The SR initiative was envisioned as a systems approach to healthy child development and school readiness. Although the pathways to school readiness are discussed and reported on by component, the strength of the initiative is the comprehensive and integrated nature of its services across components. What makes the pathways so crucial to communities is that these pathways facilitate systems development that is promoting the National Education Goal Panel’s definition of school readiness and, at the same time, helping families access and navigate a complex system in which services for their children, themselves, and their communities are being expanded and enhanced. The grantees have not just developed separate pathways to early care and education, parent empowerment and engagement, health and community services, or seamless education and learning, rather the SR initiative programs provide all of these pathways, thereby connecting families to a comprehensive system of care and education intended to facilitate the optimum development of children and families. In addition, by virtue of developing and building upon these systems, children and families are part of the long-term change of how their communities evolve and sustain themselves.

---

Some examples of how interconnected systems of education, care, and support are developing across SR initiative components are available among the grantees. One grantee represents a family health center that hosts a preschool program on site. The preschool program connects children and families to all the health services available at the site. Case managers are assigned as needed. If there are needed services that are not available on site, the grantee refers children and families out to their many collaborative partners, such as Best Babies, state preschools, LAUP, among others. Also, case managers are assigned to four local elementary schools to assist pre-school children and families with the transition and provide continued developmental, health, and social service support to existing families.

Another example is a community and parent advisory board that has been established to respond to all the Essential and Coordinated Elements and ensure their success. Through the advisory board’s association with a well established community-based collaborative that specializes in connecting children and families to community agencies and services, children and families’ educational, developmental, health, and social service needs are being met in a timely and efficient manner.

In addition, several grantees reported using SR case managers or social workers to work with children and families to identify their specific and individual educational, health, and social needs. The case managers or social workers serve as the link that connects all of these services, schools, and early childhood programs to each other. Moreover, children and families are being connected to these services earlier so that they experience a positive start in school. Also, SR is demonstrating that education and support services can be more effective with children and families when working together than when working separately. This is especially true when identifying and supporting children with special needs.

The discussions in this report and the examples above substantiate how the systems of service that are developing and contributing to an integrated approach to school readiness are greater than the sum of its individual components.

V. CHALLENGES

Over the last four years, grantees have experienced a number of challenges with implementing programs and conducting local evaluations of their programs while simultaneously responding to state-wide evaluation needs. At the same time, they have worked diligently to address these situations by modifying and adjusting their programs to better meet the needs of children and families and produce positive outcomes. As with any large, long-term initiative, there are some challenges that are more difficult to resolve than others. The challenges presented below did not only arise from program progress and evaluation reports, but also from convening break out and advisory group sessions.

Meeting the needs of hard to reach populations, including undocumented families. Grantees are using a variety of strategies to educate families about available services and resources, the benefits of those services and resources, and the safety in accessing those resources. However, social barriers, fear, resistance, and lack of knowledge or understanding of the SR initiative are still preventing some populations from accessing and using services.
challenge for grantees, however, is how to attract and engage those who need the services but are not accessing them currently. Attracting hard to reach populations is likely to require new approaches and strategies, challenging grantees to discover new ways to extend the depth and breadth of their services.

**Building relationships with schools is a slow and sometimes iterative process.** Some transition activities are more difficult for community-based programs than school-based programs, which have more direct access to school district personnel and elementary school administrators. Specifically, some grantees have difficulty gaining access to Kindergarten classrooms and teachers. Locating space at elementary schools in which to conduct some of the activities is also challenging. Program, administrative, and school staff turnover among the grantee programs and at the elementary schools also slows collaboration efforts.

**Sustaining parent engagement and empowerment after their children transition to Kindergarten.** As revealed in this report, SR programs teach parents how to engage in learning activities with their children as well as empower them with the confidence and skills they need to become involved in school and community activities and governance. However, once these parents transition with their children to the elementary school, the mechanisms that supported their growth and development are not always readily available. The challenge for grantees is to cultivate a seamless transition for parents so that they can continue to build upon the skills they have developed for the continued benefit of their children.

**Following-up with families to ensure that their overall needs are met.** As programs grow, grantees are finding that following-up with families to ensure follow-through on referrals, sufficient engagement levels in services, and compliance with health and special needs recommendations is an important part of service delivery, but a time consuming and labor intensive one. The challenge is to balance the staff and funding required to sustain existing services with the staff and funding required to follow-up with families.

**Appreciating program-level evaluation findings and successes.** Grantees were originally responsible for designing local evaluations for the benefit of grantees—to ensure compliance with program objectives and target program and organizational improvements—and not for the purpose of systems evaluation. As a result, SR grantees emphasized the measurement of the breadth of the program rather than the depth of the program’s impact. This evaluation approach has enabled grantees to overcome challenges, learn valuable lessons, and share best practices with each other. However, it has not allowed grantees to look at and convey the effectiveness of their programs from a systems-level perspective. Despite the inherent challenges the differences in their methodologies, measures, and reporting present, grantees are evaluating similar services and those services are producing similar outcomes, as evidenced in this report.

**Recognizing that a comprehensive community system like SR takes time to develop and its effects take time to become evident.** It is important to remember that the SR initiative is a unique long-term community effort that is responsive to community needs, and, as such, requires the necessary time and investment to evaluate and observe its full impact. Systems are still developing, moving from formative stages of development to fully functioning.
VI. FUTURE DIRECTIONS
This section presents the following recommended future directions of the SR initiative.

Design and implement a systems-level evaluation of the SR initiative that will capture the longitudinal impact of grantee programs in the communities they serve. This should include developing common systems-level measures specific to the Essential and Coordinated Elements, and identifying best practices. At the same time, provide additional support and guidance to local evaluation efforts.

Continue to support and strengthen community capacity building. This report has discussed ways in which the SR initiative is building the foundation for school success by strengthening communities through early care and education, parent engagement, health and community services, and seamless education and learning. Therefore, it would be imperative to use the SR initiative to continue to develop and strengthen the integrated service infrastructure that has arisen in the communities served by SR programs.

Continue to build relationships between early childhood education, elementary schools, and service providers; involve parents. Use the strength of First 5 LA and the SR initiative to continue to build sustainable models of collaboration among early education programs, schools, and service providers in grantee communities. Involving and engaging parents in developing these collaborative relationships is integral to the sustainability of these relationships. Involving parents is also a way to nourish continued parent engagement and empowerment beyond participation in SR programs.

Enhance and expand relationships with entities that identify and service children with special needs. The role the SR initiative plays in the early identification and assistance of special needs children and their families was clearly evident among the findings presented in this report. The SR initiative can continue to be instrumental in advocating for early assessment, connecting children and families with appropriate services, and building relationships between schools and services.

VII. CONCLUSIONS
Although the findings above describe the interconnected systems of care within SR programs, comprehensive child development and school readiness are the ultimate outcomes of each program element. Only this type of comprehensive approach addresses young children’s needs in the context of their families, schools, and communities. SR grantees have spent the last four years laying the foundation for a network of services and resources that bring families, schools, and community agencies together to work toward children’s success in school and in life; thus creating a powerful model of interdependent elements that represent different pathways to school readiness.

Individual school readiness services create independently meaningful outcomes. However, when these outcomes are viewed cumulatively, a new, dynamic picture is created which represents a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In the same vein, the interaction effects between
the individual outcomes have not yet been fully analyzed, although they continue to be realized by children, families, practitioners, and systems on a daily basis.
VIII. APPENDIX 1 METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to obtain the information and data to write this report is described in detail here.

The content of this report is a result of a qualitative analysis of a randomly selected sample of 23 2006-07 year-end grantee evaluation reports from a total of 35 reports.23 To augment the analysis of the grantee evaluation reports, program progress reports from the same sample were also reviewed, as well as convening break-out session transcripts and data, First 5 Advisory Group discussions, and grantee anecdotes. The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to collect information on the types of services grantees offer, the evaluation outcomes grantees are reporting, the implications of those services and outcomes, and the challenges faced.

An evaluation tool covering the Essential and Coordinated Elements was developed to review and analyze the grantee evaluation reports only. The specific types of data collected on the outcomes cited in the grantee evaluation reports were:

- Type of data collected: quantitative or qualitative;
- Type of methodology: descriptive, pre-post, comparison group, etc.;
- Specific evaluation tools used;
- Finding(s): positive, negative, or not clear;
- Implications of the finding(s): and,
- Challenges and/or lessons learned.

Once the grantee evaluation reports had been reviewed and the data categorized, an analysis was conducted to identify common findings, challenges, implications, and trends. The program progress reports and other supporting documentation were reviewed to identify common services, challenges, implications, and trends that aligned with the common findings discerned from the evaluation reports.

The following questions then directed and shaped the results of the analysis to produce the current report:

- What are the common service pathways among the grantee sample?
- What are the general outcomes of those service pathways among the grantee sample?
- What are the implications of the findings that emerge from program services?
- What are the challenges that confront grantees in providing these services?

23 LAUSD's eight sites submitted a joint evaluation report, which counted as one report for the purposes of the analysis.
LIMITATIONS

As with any evaluation or research study there are limitations that should be noted. As discussed in the introduction, the grantees designed their local evaluations to measure program implementation and accountability, not to measure systems-wide impact. Therefore, the differences in grantee methodologies, measures, and reporting styles were anticipated, and led to a higher level of synthesis and analysis.

More specifically, all outcomes, regardless of the methodology, measure or reporting style, were included in the analysis and then synthesized into common findings categorized by the Essential and Coordinated Elements. As a result, the report does not provide details of the evaluation design, methods, measures, or sample size that produced the evaluation findings.

It should be noted that differences in the methodologies, measures, and reporting styles of the grantees do not necessarily reflect differences in the quality or detail collected or the analyses used by the grantees. However, the lack of standardization across grantees does limit the report’s ability to understand the depth of the SR initiative’s impact.
### GRANTEE SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee Number</th>
<th>Grantee Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>505</td>
<td>Bienvenidos Children's Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>230</td>
<td>California Hospital Medical Center-Hope Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>494</td>
<td>California State University-Dominguez Hills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>507</td>
<td>Child and Family Guidance Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>508</td>
<td>Child Care Resource Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241</td>
<td>Children's Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>509</td>
<td>Children's Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>510</td>
<td>Drew Child Development Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>511</td>
<td>El Rancho Unified School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512</td>
<td>Estrada Courts Residents Management Corp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>496</td>
<td>Hathaway Sycamores Child and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>516</td>
<td>International Institute of Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX</td>
<td>Los Angeles Unified School District&lt;sup&gt;24&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>233</td>
<td>Norwalk-La Mirada USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>519</td>
<td>Para Los Ninos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>520</td>
<td>Paramount USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>498</td>
<td>People Coordinated Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500</td>
<td>Rowland USD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>523</td>
<td>St. John's Well Child and Family Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>691</td>
<td>St. John's Well Child and Family Center-Compton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>234</td>
<td>Vaughn Next Century Learning Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>525</td>
<td>Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>526</td>
<td>Westside Children's Center</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>24</sup> LAUSD’s eight sites submitted a joint evaluation report, which counted as one report for the purposes of the analysis.
Executive Summary
Community Pathways to School Readiness

This executive summary will provide a synopsis of the report, summarizing the purpose and methodology of the study as well as key findings, implications and recommendations. Additional details may be found in the full report.

Overview
The School Readiness (SR) initiative was designed to respond to the unique needs of children ages zero to five and their families in specific high need communities across Los Angeles County. Although the program’s design is aligned with the National Education Goals Panel’s definition of school readiness as multi-dimensional, the adaptability of the Initiative to local communities is both a challenge for organizations and an opportunity for children and families. Over the last five years 42 grantees have received funding through the Initiative to develop school readiness services that will penetrate some of the most high need neighborhoods in Los Angeles County. While every program includes services within all five essential and coordinated program elements, there is intentional variability in the modality of these services. The purpose of this report is to look closely at the SR initiative through a large lens that captures the essence of grantee programs and services, and their various pathways to school readiness.

Methodology
The content of this report is a result of a qualitative analysis of a randomly selected sample of 23 2006-07 year-end grantee evaluation reports from a total of 35 reports. To augment the analysis of the grantee evaluation reports, program progress reports from the same sample were also reviewed, as well as convening break-out session transcripts and data, First 5 Advisory Group discussions, and grantee anecdotes. The purpose of the qualitative analysis was to collect information on the types of services grantees offer, the evaluation outcomes grantees are reporting, the implications of those services and outcomes, and the challenges faced.

The following research questions guided the design of the study:

- What are the common service pathways among the grantee sample?
- What are the general outcomes of those service pathways among the grantee sample?
- What are the implications of the findings that emerge from program services?
- What are the challenges that confront grantees in providing these services?

Findings

---


26 LAUSD’s eight sites submitted a joint evaluation report, which counted as one report for the purposes of the analysis.
Pathways to Early Foundations
The pathways to developing quality and stable early care and education for children ages zero to five represent a collage of program services with a focus on the child but also incorporate parents, health and social services, and school and community partners. It should be noted that although stand-alone services for children ages zero to three have not been a requirement for SR, programs have adapted services to meet the changing needs of these communities, and are providing more services to this younger age group each year. The types of services and activities which create various pathways to early foundations are: 1) childcare provider training and support activities, 2) preschool or enrichment programs, 3) short-term or summer programs, 4) home visits or in-home instructional programs, 5) infant and toddler programs, and 6) supplemental child centered activities. The following represent grantee findings based on this heterogeneous combination of approaches to delivering early care and education.

- Licensed and unlicensed family childcare providers are improving the quality and safety of their homes and increasing their knowledge of child development, school readiness, and community resources.

- Children ages zero to five are engaging in high quality learning experiences, and are steadily developing a general readiness to learn, as well as developing their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills.

- Children ages zero to five are gaining English language proficiency before entering Kindergarten.

- Children with disabilities are increasing their school readiness through the IEP process due to early identification, intervention and support to families.

- Children ages zero to three are developing age appropriate physical, language, cognitive, social, and emotional skills; and they are undergoing developmental and health screenings and receiving referrals for early intervention services as needed.

The strength of the early care and education programs that grantees have developed begins with their effects on young children. Through various pathways grantee programs are fostering positive growth in all areas of children’s development. Grantee level findings suggest that children participating in SR programs are being exposed to learning experiences and environments that help prepare them physically, socially, cognitively, and emotionally for preschool (children ages 0-3) and Kindergarten (children ages 3-5). In addition, non-English speaking children are beginning their English language learning before they enter Kindergarten (in 0-3 or 3-5 programs), and therefore advance to proficiency sooner. Furthermore, more children are receiving early intervention services supporting seamless education and learning from infant and toddler programs to preschool to Kindergarten. Finally, by increasing the quality of care in family child care homes and the quality of parent-child activities, the SR initiative is having a broader impact beyond center-based and preschool environments.
Pathways to Parent Engagement and Empowerment
The predominant services offered and evaluated by grantees provide parents different opportunities to engage in their young child’s development and education while at the same time teaching parents skills that will empower them as individuals. The following types of activities created several pathways to parent engagement and empowerment: 1) parent-child activities, 2) parent-only classes, meetings, and workshops, and 3) home visits and in-home instruction. The entire grantee sample provided one or more of these services, and all reported findings for parents in at least one of the following two key areas:

- Parents are engaging their child in literacy, behavior management, or other learning activities.
- Parents are becoming empowered as a result of growth in their cognitive and personal development.

The implications for these results go far beyond the preschool parenting years. SR programs are successfully working towards maintaining parents’ positive and supportive attitudes and behaviors toward their children before Kindergarten and throughout the child’s educational career. Parents are becoming more confident in themselves, more involved in their children’s schools, and more engaged in their communities.

Pathways to Health and Community Services
The most common pathways to facilitate greater access to better health and community resources for children and families were through the following services: 1) screenings, 2) referrals and resources, and 3) case management. These services led to two predominant findings:

- Children and families are being introduced to a system of prevention, early intervention, and coordinated care that can assist them with their medical, dental, and mental health and social needs.
- Children with developmental delays and/or special needs are being identified early and families are provided assistance to acquire needed services.

The implications of these findings further exemplify the exponential benefits of the comprehensive SR Initiative model. By creating greater access to health and community services at an early age, grantees are reducing the barriers to physical health and social well-being, therefore creating a continuum of care and development among agencies serving young children and their families. Children’s health, developmental, and social needs are being identified and they are being linked to service providers before they reach Preschool and Kindergarten. Providing access to health and social services is one key pathway toward ensuring that early intervention, prevention, and coordinated care facilitates improved family functioning and school readiness.

Pathways to Seamless Education and Learning
Grantees have spent the last four years creating collaborative articulation and/or transition activities that improve the flow of education and learning for the young children and families
they serve. The services in this area represent three types of activities designed to create a seamless system of learning for families and children: 1) transition activities; 2) communication; and, 3) collaboration. These unique activities connect children, families, preschools, area schools and an array of community resources. Grantees reported the following findings in this area:

- **Mechanisms by which children, including those with special needs, can experience a positive transition are being developed and implemented.**

- **School articulation and transition collaborative efforts are fostering increased levels of communication, information exchange, referrals, resource sharing, joint-planning and decision-making.**

When children transition to Kindergarten with the guidance of SR programs, they benefit from the seamless system of collaborative partnerships between schools, preschools, and community organizations. Children are getting services they need and their needs are being met before they begin school. As a result of SR programs, the challenge of transition is not just on the school, the Kindergarten Teacher, and child, but has become a shared responsibility including parents and community partners.

**Challenges**

During the intense start-up and continued development of the SR initiative, grantees have communicated many challenges in implementing SR programs and conducting both local evaluations and contributing to the state-wide evaluation. At the same time, they have worked diligently to address these situations by modifying and adjusting their programs to better meet the needs of children and families and produce positive outcomes. As with any large, long-term initiative, there are some challenges that are more difficult to resolve than others. The challenges presented below did not only arise from program progress and evaluation reports, but also from convening break out and advisory group sessions.

- **Meeting the needs of hard to reach populations, including undocumented families.**

- **Building relationships with schools is a slow and sometimes iterative process.**

- **Sustaining parent engagement and empowerment after their children transition to Kindergarten.**

- **Following-up with families to ensure that their overall needs are met.**

- **Appreciating program-level evaluation findings and successes.**

- **Recognizing that a comprehensive community system like SR takes time to develop and its effects take time to become evident.**

As grantees look toward the future, they have communicated their commitment to work together to learn from one another, and with one another to continue to overcome these challenges within the SR initiative.
Conclusion
The SR initiative represents a child-centered systems approach to comprehensive child
development and school readiness. In contrast to other child-centered initiatives, the SR
initiative includes consideration of how the child exists within the family, how the child and
family interact with the school and community, and how the school and community interact with
the child and family. To address these interdependent relationships, grantees have spent the last
four years developing a diverse array of programs and services in early care and education,
parenting and family support, health and social services, and school capacity. Their efforts have
laid the foundation for a network of services and resources that bring families, schools, and
community agencies together to work toward children’s success in school and in life; thus
creating a powerful model of interdependent elements that represent different pathways to school
readiness.

When the effects of all the individual school readiness services available to and utilized by
children and families are viewed cumulatively, an image of a new product is formed that
represents a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. In the same vein, the interaction
effects between the findings listed above have not yet been fully analyzed, although they
continue to be realized by children, families, practitioners, and systems on a daily basis.

Recommendations
Many lessons have been learned through the first four years of the SR initiative. Building upon
these learned lessons, the following are recommendations to consider when moving forward:

- Design and implement a systems-level evaluation of the SR initiative that will
capture the longitudinal impact of grantee programs in the communities they serve.

- Continue to support and strengthen community capacity building.

- Continue to build relationships between early childhood education, elementary
  schools, and service providers; involve parents.

- Enhance and expand relationships with entities that identify and service children
  with special needs.
Literature Review and Final Report: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

Submitted to:
First 5 LA
School Readiness Initiative
February 23, 2007

Under the Direction of Bill Gould, Research and Evaluation Department
FIRST 5 LA

INTRODUCTION

In response to research supporting the value of school readiness programming (Shirley–Kirkland, 2002) and the influence that collaboration may have on the effectiveness of service provision (Kunesh & Farley, 1993, Gardner, Kloppenburg, & Gonzalez, 2002, Johnson et. al., 2003, Bruner, Kunesh, & Knuth, 1992), First 5 LA has funded the School Readiness Initiative (SR). The Initiative provides grant funding to programs and services designed to facilitate children's readiness for school and schools’ readiness for children. Grantees include but are not limited to community-based organizations, school districts, and family resource centers that provide a wide range of services such as preschool programs, kindergarten transition activities, health, mental health, and parenting education, among others. First 5 LA heavily encouraged that requests for SR funding include interagency collaboration, calling for grantees to work collectively to meet the needs of children and families in Los Angeles. The sections to follow provide more detailed background on First 5 LA and the School Readiness Initiative, and describe the framework developed to evaluate the Initiative.

BACKGROUND

First 5 LA is committed to creating a future throughout Los Angeles' diverse communities where all young children are born healthy and raised in a loving and nurturing environment so that they grow up healthy, are eager to learn, and reach their full potential. First 5 LA is governed by a Board of Commissioners and has as its mission to make significant and measurable progress toward its vision by increasing the number of children from the prenatal stage through age 5 who are physically and emotionally healthy, safe, and ready to learn. To accomplish its vision and mission, First 5 LA works with child care providers, educators and school districts, community-based organizations, businesses, foundations, and government entities.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

The School Readiness Initiative (SR) is one of a variety of projects implemented by the Commission to meet the needs of children and families in Los Angeles. SR is a $134 million partnership between First 5 LA and First 5 California. Currently, there are 42 programs located throughout Los Angeles County receiving SR funding.

First 5 LA uses the California Children and Families Commission (CCFC)–adapted National Education Goals Panel (NEGP) definition of school readiness:

- Children’s readiness for school.
- Schools’ readiness for children.
- Family and community supports and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success.

The three parts of the NEGP definition are the framework for the “Five Essential and Coordinated Elements” put forth by First 5 LA which address the multiple barriers that prevent children, families, and schools from achieving school readiness:

- Early Care and Education
- Parenting/Family Support
- Health and Social Services
- School Capacity
- Program Infrastructure and Administration

Using local, state, and national data as well as input from diverse communities and using the Essential and Coordinated Elements as a framework, First 5 LA developed its strategic plan for 2004–2009. The plan continues to strive toward the Five Desired Outcomes for Children, adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and First 5 LA: Good Health, Safety and Survival, Economic Well-Being, Social and Emotional Well-Being, and School Readiness. First 5 LA continues to contribute to the effort to improve these outcomes through three goal areas: Early Learning, Health, and Safe Children and Families.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

The Next Five Strategic Plan highlights the importance of the relationships among families, communities, resource networks, environmental conditions, and public policy to effectively address child and family outcomes. As such, SR-funded programs are encouraged to work collaboratively to provide quality services. The SR evaluation plan includes items that address collaboration in terms of both process and outcomes.

SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE (SR) EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In order to evaluate the full scope of processes and outcomes produced by SR grantees while capturing the diverse nature of their services and modalities, First 5 LA is conducting a multi-level quantitative and qualitative research and evaluation project that investigates the effects of the Initiative on families, schools, and targeted communities in Los Angeles County. Three primary research questions are under study:

1) How has the School Readiness Initiative been implemented in Los Angeles County?
2) What are the effects of the School Readiness Initiative on families, schools, and communities?
3) How does the School Readiness Initiative link to other First 5 LA efforts?

The research focus of the evaluation seeks to identify the value of the Initiative to children, families, schools, and social service providers in communities with low performing schools. Research methods include focus groups, interviews, ethnographic observations, program evaluation data, and State Commission data. Case studies are also an integral part of the evaluation design, serving to highlight the stories behind each research question listed above. A major focus of the case studies is to probe the importance of collaborations in implementing school readiness programming.

CASE STUDY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY
In order to better understand how First 5 LA’s School Readiness grantees work collaboratively to serve children 0–5 and their families, a Collaboration Literature Review was conducted (see Complete Literature Review on page xx). After completing the literature review, seven programs engaging in collaborative ventures were identified for participation in the collaboration component of the SR Evaluation Framework. While randomized sampling techniques were not possible given the voluntary nature of the study, efforts were made to include grantees that effectively represented the breadth of the total SR program population (n=42) according to a number of domains. More specifically, lead agencies, defined as direct recipients of SR grant funds, were identified using the following criteria:

1) Collaborative partners were identified in the program proposal.
2) Collaborative partners had provided direct services to program participants.
3) Programs demonstrated diversity in terms of organization typologies (e.g. community based organizations, early care and education centers, school districts, mental health, health, school–community partnerships, etc.).
4) Programs demonstrated diversity in terms of demographic and geographic composition.

Research questions developed to drive the interviews with lead and partner agencies are listed below. The questions are organized by area of inquiry and emphasize the exploratory nature of the study.

1) Development
   • How are collaboratives initiated?
   • Does a history of shared projects influence partner selection and/or partnership development?
   • How are collaboratives implemented?
   • What factors influence collaborative development?

2) Membership
   • What criteria are used to select members?
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- What job roles do collaborative members hold within their organizations?
- How are member roles and responsibilities defined?
- How are parents or other members of the surrounding community included in the collaborative?

3) Internal Processes
- What communication processes are put into place among collaborating agencies and which are most beneficial (i.e. email, staff meetings, master calendar, staff orientations, cross-agency task forces?
- How often do members meet and for what purpose?
- What leadership models/structures are used?
- How do members make decisions? How are disagreements handled?
- How do collaborating agencies solicit input from parents/community members?

4) Evaluation and Outcomes
- Was an evaluation component included in the collaborative design?
- How do agencies share data?
- What impact(s) do the collaborative have on children 0–5?
- What successes/challenges do collaboratives experience?

5) Sustainability
- Have efforts been made to institutionalize the collaborative or achieve sustainability?

6) Broader Impacts
- To what extent has the collaborative been active in local/state policy?

Lead agencies were contacted on an individual basis and provided with a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study and their proposed role, asking that they participate in a one to two hour semi-structured interview with
an external consultant hired by First 5 LA. Lead agency contacts were also asked to schedule a similar interview between the researcher and a representative from a collaborative partner. It was requested that agencies selected for partner agency interviews be involved in direct service provision to program clients through the School Readiness Initiative.

Agencies/individuals agreeing to participate were provided with copies of the Lead and Partner Agency Interview Questionnaires prior to the scheduled interview date, as well as a copy of an Informed Consent Form.¹ Site visits were conducted from June to December, 2006 and in most cases, lead agency interviews were conducted with the Program Director and/or Program Coordinator. Partner agency interview participants were the individuals identified by the lead agency as the primary contact(s) for the collaborative venture and included Executive Directors, administrators, Program Coordinators, and in one case a mental health counselor.

Table 1 on the following page displays the composition of the grantees included in the study and their collaborative partners.²

¹ Copies of the Lead and Partner Agency Interview Questionnaires and the Informed Consent Form can be found in the Appendix.
² For the purpose of confidentiality, identifying information for the participating sites will not be disclosed. Sample composition is presented in the aggregate in Table 1. Comments from interview participants presented in this report will not be tied to the organizations or the individuals interviewed.
### Table 1
Sample Composition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead Organization Typologies</th>
<th>Number of Partners</th>
<th>Partner Organization Typologies</th>
<th>Services Provided by Partners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Community-based organization (n=4)</td>
<td>Mean = 11&lt;br&gt;Min. = 4&lt;br&gt;Max. = 19</td>
<td>• Adult education provider&lt;br&gt;• Child welfare agency&lt;br&gt;• Childcare and human services agency&lt;br&gt;• Community-based organization&lt;br&gt;• Counseling center&lt;br&gt;• Educational transformation organization&lt;br&gt;• Elementary school&lt;br&gt;• Family literacy program provider&lt;br&gt;• Family resource center&lt;br&gt;• Food bank&lt;br&gt;• Governmental organization&lt;br&gt;• Healthcare provider&lt;br&gt;• Job preparedness skills center&lt;br&gt;• Legal center&lt;br&gt;• Local councilperson&lt;br&gt;• Middle school&lt;br&gt;• Non-violence education and parenting education provider&lt;br&gt;• Preschool/childcare center&lt;br&gt;• Private foundation&lt;br&gt;• Regional educational agency&lt;br&gt;• Resource and Referral&lt;br&gt;• School district&lt;br&gt;• Special education provision and parent</td>
<td>• Adult education&lt;br&gt;• Assistance with field trips&lt;br&gt;• Case management&lt;br&gt;• Developmental screenings&lt;br&gt;• Facilities/classroom space&lt;br&gt;• Family support services for special needs&lt;br&gt;• Food and clothing distribution&lt;br&gt;• Health education&lt;br&gt;• Health fair&lt;br&gt;• Health insurance enrollment&lt;br&gt;• Health services/outreach&lt;br&gt;• Home visitation&lt;br&gt;• Kindergarten orientation fair&lt;br&gt;• Legal services&lt;br&gt;• Liaison to the Department of Education&lt;br&gt;• Literacy fair&lt;br&gt;• Materials and staff training&lt;br&gt;• Mental health counseling&lt;br&gt;• Multicultural fair&lt;br&gt;• Parent education&lt;br&gt;• Prenatal and postnatal care&lt;br&gt;• Preschool and pre-kindergarten education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Programming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State university</td>
<td>Provider/staff training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television station</td>
<td>Resource and referral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School-based program provision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speakers for special events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff supervision</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop presentations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDINGS

Program Planning and Selection of Collaborative Partners

Each agency funded under the auspices of the School Readiness Initiative received a one-year planning grant prior to receipt of implementation funding in order to conduct a needs assessment and design a school readiness program that would begin the following year. When asked how the collaborative determined what types of services to provide, most interview respondents cited the findings of their needs assessments as driving program design.

- "What I learned was there were many parents whose children did not go to preschool although they had every opportunity to. A school within walking distance and so on. But they felt that their children were too young to go to school and kindergarten was quite early enough for them. So the home visiting has been something that has really been able to take care of that." 3

- "The existing resources in the community were pretty much tapped out, and were not able to meet the needs...The normally developing child had resources available. The severely identified delay or special needs had resources available. But the in-between group, some of the unidentified special needs, some of the high-risk related more to psycho-social/environmental factors rather than medical or developmental delay, all of those were actually in need of significant resources."

- "We did a survey of school administrators. Principals, Vice Principals, and teachers, and asked them, 'What are you seeing in terms of your kindergarten class? What are the things, how are children not prepared and what would be the ideal child or parent coming into your class prepared? What does that look like?' I think 90 percent of the responses were around social skills."

3 Some quotes have been edited for grammar and readability.
"According to the proposal there was a dearth of services that were needed. And so this program was created to serve that. I think there’s only one [Early Care and Education] program...in that particular zip code.”

Using the findings described above, several interview respondents intentionally sought out organizations that could provide the services they had identified during the needs assessment phase of program development. Interestingly, in some cases the needs assessment also resulted in the exclusion of collaborative partners from the program design process. For example, one Project Director related, “We are the ones who said to them, this is what we need. Who can provide this part? And then the collaborator would say, ‘I can do this for you.’ Then they’d become specific because they know their own program.” Another Preschool Director offered a similar explanation. As a result of the needs assessment she knew that home visitation would fill a key service gap in the community and asked potential partners if they would be willing to provide home visitation as had already been outlined in the Work Scope. However, she did indicate that, “as we got to know them, of course, they had many other services that we could certainly refer our parents to.”

However, while some interview respondents described how the needs assessment circumvented the inclusion of collaborative partners in the program planning process, others used the planning grant funds to identify potential partners through an inventory development process. For example, one family resource center developed, “A listing of almost 20 organizations that we invited to a special meeting before the RFP came out because we were just hearing that something like this was going to be launching out of First 5... we were discussing needs assessments, what gaps are there in the community, what would we envision if we could create this program, what types of elements would we want. So it was a brainstorming session but we were also gathering information.” Rather than solely use the needs assessment process to identify community needs, the planning funds were also beneficial in identifying potential partners.
A school district participating in the study described a similar process, during which “We did a need assessment and asset mapping... We tried to find every agency that was around [the preschool site]...We actually contracted with [an evaluation firm] to do a data search and address search to find every single agency in the area.” After completing the asset mapping process, the district submitted a Request for Proposals to the agencies that had been identified, soliciting their interest in contributing to a school readiness program spearheaded by the district.

Other agencies selected partners as a result of collaborative history; they had worked together previously on past projects, some of which had been engaged in joint efforts for many years. In fact, this was the most commonly cited reasoning behind approaching agencies for inclusion in the programs under study.

- “So it goes back a number of years in terms of the agency. We were in the same place, provided the same type services, and I had a lot of respect...for the quality of services that they provided the community, and I believe they have respect for what we do.”

- “We each had a handful of collaborators that we had worked with in the past, and then now we reached out and said, ‘Hey, we’re trying to develop this big major program. Come and work with us, and we’ll all will help each other out.’ And so then... we all met each other’s collaborators and that’s how we started the one big family.”

- “In some cases we had previous contracts with the agency and had an idea of how well they’d done in the past and their interest.”

In fact, the interview respondents from one of the interviewed SR organizations reported that they had worked with some of their partners for over 20 years previous to receipt of the First 5 LA School Readiness grant. Respondents’ comments suggest that as a result of collaborative history, lead agencies had an understanding of the types and quality of services potential partners would be able to provide, as well as established mutual respect and a social rapport
that facilitated the development of their partnerships. Other reasons provided for approaching potential partners included that they were recommended by a “trusted source,” or because they had a “good reputation.”

Loss of Partners

Interview respondents were also asked if they had lost any collaborative partners over the course of program implementation. Two sites discussed the loss of partners due to the amount of time that lapsed between identifying them and submitting a proposal to First 5 LA and when grant funds were received.

- “From the moment we started planning to when we actually got funded was two years... It was really stressful and executive directors wondered whether or not this was worth it.”

- “Some of the other elementary schools that were initially on board... priorities changed. For instance, [an elementary school] completely did away with their ECE component.”

Other sites lost partners because they went out of business or lost additional funding that would have allowed them to provide services to school readiness program clients. Interestingly, individuals interviewed were most likely to discuss the loss of partners slated to provide health services.

- “...it would have been good to have a medical piece that would be a [contracted partner], a formalized part. [Two healthcare providers were] initially [supposed to be involved in the project]... And then once the proposal happened they indicated that they were not formally.”

- “We had a couple of partners to do health screening for hearing and for vision. And they did it the first year and it was wonderful, but then the funding was withdrawn for that...So that was the end of the relationship because they couldn’t afford to not be compensated for it.”
An additional site had planned to collaborate with a hospital partner's medical van service in order to provide health screenings for program clients; the relationship dissolved due to the closure of the hospital.

Selection of Individual Members

After identifying agencies to participate in their collaborative ventures, individual members within those partner agencies were identified to serve as ongoing points of contact as the partnerships developed. In most cases, the interview respondents described deliberately making initial contact with Executive Directors or similarly stationed individuals with the power to make decisions on behalf of their organizations.

- “I went to the...Director of [the agency providing home visitation]... She’s just a legend. And, you know, that’s the place to go, to start at the top. For [the]adult school I had a relationship with the Principal... so that also was a very natural place for me to go...I didn’t have the time to fool around...I couldn’t be starting at the bottom; I needed to start at the top.”

- “In the actual negotiations, we were primarily involved with the CEO’s or someone with the authority to make decisions.”

However, four of seven lead agencies that participated in the study described their efforts to involve all levels of partner agency staff in collaborative decision-making. For example, one Project Director solicited “three-level involvement” from partner agencies that included administration (e.g. the CEO or Executive Director), middle management, and the frontline staff. Each played a role in terms of making the initial commitment, providing direct identification of staff, and developing collaborative, interactive relationships, respectively.

In a final example in which a family resource center served as the lead agency, the evolution of staff involvement over the course of the grant was viewed with mixed feelings by various stakeholders involved in the collaborative. As part of a Leadership Committee, Executive Directors met bi-monthly throughout the
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

planning period and program start-up, engaging in discussions about the theoretical basis of the program and the development of the program curriculum. However, according to the lead agency’s Project Director, after start-up was complete the Executive Directors were less involved and meetings about day-to-day implementation shifted to the charge of Program Coordinators from the lead and partner agencies. Interestingly, during the partner agency interview an Executive Director voiced frustration about the transition, indicating that she felt the Leadership Committee was an important component of the collaborative and should have continued to receive funding after implementation was complete. She stated,

- "It was a big change since there was no money to stay. For my time to stay involved... So I think there was a shift and I’m not sure that that shift was in the best interest of the whole process... In the fourth year we’ve met only once.”

Communication

As evidenced by the Executive Directors’ comment above, roles and responsibilities for that particular partnership shifted over time. Leadership Meetings for Executive Directors were bi-monthly during planning, transitioned to monthly and then quarterly meetings during implementation, and resumed what was slated to be a more regular meeting schedule to discuss sustainability and institutionalization of the program during the final grant year. However, at the same time, front line staff, including teachers and Program Coordinators, met on a weekly basis to discuss the day-to-day functioning of the program and were in constant contact as they were housed in one central location. Two other programs took on similar meeting schedules, conducting weekly staff meetings to discuss daily functioning and client-specific issues, as well as holding quarterly Advisory Board or Council meetings to keep Executive-level members informed.

For other sites involved in the study, accommodating many stakeholders’ schedules made it difficult to meet regularly. As a result of these difficulties, meetings among collaborative members have waned or completely dissolved
for several partnerships; in some cases face-to-face contact has been replaced with newsletters or emails addressing specific program concerns.

- "We've gotten around [our difficulties scheduling meetings]...we put together a quarterly newsletter that goes out directly to all our collaboratives, making sure that they're informed of what's happening at each site, because we've tried to do meetings that were consistent, but with everybody scheduling [was really difficult]."

- "We tried to [schedule meetings with middle management] monthly and it is very difficult... We tend to meet once a year kind of as a check in...rather than 'let's talk about what each person is doing, and let's share.' Those meetings do not work very well. People are just too busy."

Other programs have replaced collaborative-wide meetings with subcommittee meetings, requesting attendance only of those agencies participating in particular projects or events.

- "[We have formed sub-committees] for projects and special events. So I will bring whoever has to do something that's relevant to that. And that works real well...when we meet it's because we're doing something."

- "No, there weren't group meetings with all of [the collaborative partners] because it was a one on one—not one on one exactly, but agency to agency. Figure out this piece."

Yet another Program Coordinator was unaware that scheduling meetings among collaborative partners was a useful mechanism to keep programs involving multiple agencies running smoothly.

- "We really don't have a formal system of meeting with our partners right now...I hadn't had a chance to really think about this before. How do we work with our partners and how do we meet with our partners?...We're kind of down and dirty on the basic stuff."
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

The variation in the communication processes described above is interesting given the emphasis in the literature on facilitating ongoing communication among collaborative partners. For example, according to Wilder (1992), communication, or “the channels used by collaborative partners to send and receive information, keep one another informed, and convey opinions to influence the group’s actions,” is the fourth of six contextual factors with the power to influence the success of a collaborative venture. In addition, Bergstrom (1995) also expressed that a “communication process must be established both within the collaborative and with the surrounding community" for the partnership to function effectively.

Leadership and Decision–making

In addition to holding regular meetings to keep lines of communication open, leadership and decision–making processes are also important mechanisms to facilitate the engagement of partner agencies and members. Gardner, Kloppenburg, and Gonzalez (2002) address essential elements that should be in place when developing a new collaborative, advocating for a shared decision–making governance structure in order to draw upon the talents of a variety of collaborative stakeholders. Similarly, Wilder (1992) emphasizes the importance of Process and Structure, or “the management, decision–making, and operational systems of a collaborative effort” that aid in collaborative functioning.

Several respondents described diffused leadership and decision–making processes.

- “I think [leadership] also needs to be shared...if I’m not around, can the two coordinators run the staff meeting? I’m a real big fan of that. And I have no problem saying ‘I don’t know’ or ‘I’d like to learn.’”

- “For example, we had an opportunity last year to apply for additional funding so I called a meeting for all of [the collaborative partners] to brainstorm... It was a great meeting. It was very dynamic. We put together a good proposal and submitted it that way...My own personal
philosophy is just because we’re the lead agency I think we function more as a collaborative partner as well.”

- “It’s been a great relationship because everybody really has respected the role of the other from the very get-go. And valued it and welcomed it and been respectful when we had concerns and brought them up in a way that was respectful...And guess what? We’re doing it better. And looking back and celebrating our own progress as that relationship has unfolded.”

However, two agencies interviewed during the study indicated that their partners are not involved in decision-making, but rather, Project Directors and Coordinators from the lead agencies take on sole responsibility for decision-making on behalf of the partnership. The Project Director from a third agency related that, while it is important to engage partners whenever possible, the lead agency is ultimately responsible for meeting expectations set forth by First 5 LA, and must ultimately make decisions related to fiscal and contractual issues.

- “Let me say that...because the lead agency is responsible fiscally... Then we certainly do have ultimate decision, and we do that as philanthropically as we can. When we bring folks to the table, where it’s possible for folks to make decisions about things, we allow that. We certainly will not let folks make decisions that are on the outside of contract compliance...we will address those issues, but we certainly will not compromise contract compliance for anything.”

Parent Involvement

In addition to emphasizing open communication and shared leadership, parent involvement was also discussed in the literature as a critical collaborative component, as well as an indicator of high-level collaborative development. As presented by Hodges, Hernandez, and Nesman (2003), “true collaboration” moves beyond the allocation of funds specifically for collaborative service delivery to be marked by family involvement in “decisions that shape services
for their own children and the involvement of families in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services in their community,” (pp. 298–301). Gardner, Kloppenburg, and Gonzalez (2002) also advocate for the inclusion of critical players/stakeholders from the surrounding community and emphasizing the importance of parent involvement as an essential element that should be in place when developing a collaborative. And finally, Kunesh and Farley (1993) advocate for a “profamily” system in which “Families have a major voice in setting goals and deciding what services they need to meet them,” (pp. 2–3).

When SR program staff were queried about parent involvement, respondents were divided in terms of their efforts to include parents in meetings and decision-making. For example, one Project Director felt that gathering information from parents during the needs assessment was a sufficient level of participation during program development. Others expressed that parents were too busy to attend collaborative meetings, or indicated that the issues discussed among executive members are not relevant to parents.

- “Certainly we’ve had their input during development. Not sitting at the table. We had the results of our surveys...We knew what we needed to do.”

- “Well...you can’t have them when there’s a lot of, the parents are really busy. But when we have an event... they’re there... They come in and they’ll tell you their story, of how [the program has] changed their life."

- “We didn’t have a way of engaging the parents in the level of discussion that we were having [during the planning phase] so that they could feel a part of our group and a part of the decision-making process...because our main talk was around philosophy...it was a philosophy of how we were going to run our program.”

Despite the lack of parent involvement described above, two sites have placed a high level of importance on including parents in leadership and decision-making and have demonstrated great success in the arena of parent involvement. One Project Director emphasized the agency’s efforts to involve
parents in every part of programming. Parents are invited to monthly Advisory Board meetings where programming decisions are made, as well as annual retreats. In order to facilitate their attendance, parents are provided with a variety of assistance such as bus tokens and child care, and all meetings are translated into Spanish for those attendees who do not speak English. In addition, a case manager is currently working to develop a parent advisory group modeled after the PTA.

Another agency instituted a “Parent Leadership Cadre” to facilitate parent involvement, initially selecting parents based on the leadership qualities they demonstrated in the community.

- “We wanted to identify parents who were very vocal and said, ‘We like what we see getting off the ground, we want to participate.’ And those were the ones that we said, ‘Okay. Those would be great to be leaders.’ So once they saw what our goal was and our vision, they bought into the vision.”

To facilitate their participation, the program staff took time to work with parents and talk about how the collaborative comes together, how it functions, the way decisions are made, and why the role of parents is important. In addition to garnering their feedback about the school readiness program, the parent group was also viewed as an opportunity to train parents about how service systems function.

- “The whole process of them getting together [for parent meetings] is actually training in learning about the issues, in learning about speaking, how the function works, how the district works, how the services work. As a whole, the parent [group] itself is really about training. We don’t call it training, but that’s really what it’s about.”

Most notably, it appears that the program’s success at involving parents in the collaborative has stemmed from staffs’ attitudes toward parents, viewing them as powerful and capable of engaging in a high level of discussion about themselves and their communities. According to the Program Coordinator,
"Parents have the abilities and the qualities and everything inside of them to be able to do these things. So once you change the mindset that ‘I can,’ makes all the difference in the world. And so that’s why the program is successful is because parents are saying, ‘I can do it. I see the light. I see that this can happen.’” This attitude is in alignment with Kunesh and Farley’s (1993) “profamily” system, which “assumes [that] every family has strengths.”

At another site, although parents have not been involved in decision-making for the collaborative, which is entirely handled by the lead agency staff, monthly parent meetings are used to educate parents about their “political power” in the community. This may be a useful transitional process for parents on their way to a higher level of collaborative involvement.

- “It’s not like we have parents that are coming from some of the other professions where they really understand even at a basic level how these systems work... you’re trying to get them to understand the system and how politically powerful they are and to really access that power, but sometimes you have to start from really, really basic things.”

According to the examples above, it is possible to involve parents in all levels of collaborative decision-making. In order to do so parents may need added support to attend meetings such as transportation assistance and childcare, as well as to learn how to voice their opinions in a public forum. It is also important that program staff believe in parents’ abilities to contribute to collaborative processes.

Outcomes Assessment among Collaborative Partnerships

Outcomes assessment is important for any social service agency. Collaborative ventures designed to serve children and families are no different; agencies working together to produce social change must also work together to measure shared outcomes. Bergstrom et al. (1995) argue that, “data must be collected which establishes benchmarks for future impact and outcome analysis. Evaluation efforts are essential to monitor progress toward goals and objectives and to make modifications where necessary.” Kunesh and Farley (1993) also
emphasized that collaborative partnerships should be “outcomes-oriented,” and that “Performance [should be] measured by improved outcomes for children and families, not by the number and kind of services delivered (pp. 2–3). And finally, according to Gardner’s four levels of collaborative development (2002), the most highly-developed collaboratives (e.g. level four) are marked by “outcomes-based funding mechanisms and integrated data systems.”

When queried about data collection processes designed to meet the reporting needs of the SR Initiative, five of seven agencies interviewed reported that the lead agency is in primary contact with the program-level evaluator responsible for the collection and analysis of all data for the collaborative.

- “[Our agency] collects all the data. Our data collector conducts interviews with all of our clients. She also is the one who is the holder of all the referrals and tracks the referrals.”

- “We have a wonderful system in which we are able to select data from every activity that we do. And we have in–house data collectors that actually come out and weekly collect data from every single service that we provide and class that we hold... that’s all entered into giant databases that are run by our evaluation department.”

Agencies also related that evaluation findings are largely shared with collaborative partners through written reports and meetings.

- “We meet formally about [evaluation findings] quite a bit, especially the desired results. We do cross training with them with their teachers... and they receive a report.”

- “[Our evaluator] provides the data feedback session with slides; that was a part of our last leadership meeting. A copy of the report is also sent to [our partners].”

The decision made by many lead agencies to manage data collection is not surprising given the difficulties that often arise when attempting to bring the
data collection and reporting processes of different organizations together for a shared purpose. One Program Coordinator described the challenges she experienced as she attempted to collect client-level data from collaborative partners.

- “The agencies all have funding from other places that require them to report things in these other ways... and then to ask them to really undo or redo a corporate structure that has been set up to meet these other funding requirements becomes a bit of a challenge, especially when those other requirements are the long-term sustained way that they have done business.”

When asked if there was a central place where data on the services a particular family receives from every organization involved in the collaborative (such as to gain an understanding of the influence of intensity of services), the Program Coordinator stated that to do so would be “cumbersome and complicated” as clients sometimes go directly to partner agencies making it difficult to track every service they receive.

Similar challenges have occurred as related to documenting interagency referrals. While many agencies described data collection activities designed to measure language, literacy, or social development outcomes, when asked if referrals were tracked across agencies or the outcomes of referrals were compiled, several interview respondents indicated that their tracking of referral data is limited by confidentiality and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance.

- “If we referred them, we track whether they went and whether they were satisfied. We don’t ask the providers what they do. Although we do have cross-referral releases that we do for all families, nevertheless, those referrals get heavily tested related to healthcare and so we really don’t try to get back because of the confidentiality problem.”

- “At the school site there are certain legal parameters as far as how much we can centralize information... we might have information on how many
families were referred and how many families are seen but we don’t collect specific information about who it is because that kind of gets into the privacy issue part of it.”

As a result of confidentiality laws, grantees have limited their tracking of referrals to address the number of clients referred to partner agencies and their clients’ satisfaction with the services they received. None of the programs under study had compiled referral data across collaborative partners to assess the shared outcomes of their efforts in this area.

Outcomes for Children and Families

Despite the challenges described above, interview participants shared a variety of positive outcomes for children and families served by their programs. Anecdotal descriptions highlight parents’ appreciation for the services provided to them, as well as demonstrating learning about how to better prepare their children for school. One Program Coordinator discussed how little some clients knew about health and other issues prior to participating in the Initiative, and described changes she observed in her adult clients’ behavior as a result of attending parent education classes. A representative list of anecdotal descriptions of program outcomes is displayed below.

- “When we see that families are happy and smiling and healthy we know that our services are impacting these families... We get the information from the parents telling us how it’s worked for them.”

- “Parents have said things like, ‘I never knew that before, I never knew you should talk to your child, I never knew,’ there were a lot of [those types of comments].”

- “When we had our very first end of year celebration it was on a very hot Saturday and we were coming down here early to try to set things up and here come in all of these parents, grandparents... And parents started to talk about [the program] and I knew we were doing good work. But the parents’ testimonials and their own feeling good and expressing what
they got out of this program did literally bring tears to my eyes and made me pretty humble about the difference that is being made.”

Other interview respondents described teachers’ and principals’ reactions to the program.

- “The teachers and the principals are telling us how happy they are because now they have more families involved and more kids that are ready.”

- “From the teachers’ perspective...Sometimes they can perceive a difference between a child that’s been to pre–K versus not. They’re ready to do the cutting. They understand how to stay in the lines...kids with pre–K exposure, at least half of them know what to do when the teacher asks them to line up. So there are things like that, the teachers’ perception, we do hear from them that they do see a difference in a child who’s been exposed to a pre–K classroom or not.”

In addition to anecdotal data about the effects of collaboratively–based school readiness programs on children and families, each grantee also has evaluation activities in place to quantitatively measure change over time. Interview respondents indicated that program clients have demonstrated marked improvements using pre–/post– methodology including the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), Ages and Stages (ASQ), Teacher Rated Observation of Language and Literacy (TROLL), and parent surveys, among others.

- “We’re able to document that parents, in fact, are doing more with their children. They believe their children are doing better. We have some follow–up on our doing better in kindergarten. By parent survey, at least, we’ve improved access to early care and education. And basically, the services have done something besides them being happier and working together. We actually have outcomes.”
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- “We certainly use the desired results... and we’re absolutely seeing results there. And then the parents, certainly the parent surveys... in all of these surveys, they always talk about what they have learned... they always talk about the fact that they learn English better and that they learn how to be more patient. And they learn how to talk to their kids.”

- “We have data to prove we have more children that are attending school and are in childcare. And that parents and children are learning what things are, the developmental processes for each age group.”

Successes

After describing how their efforts had influenced the lives of children and families, interview participants were invited to share program successes. One Project Director indicated that the lead agency had been praised for uniting community organizations for the first time and explained that collaborative partners were appreciative of the opportunity to work together under a shared grant rather than competing for funding. Another individual responded similarly, lauding collaborative members’ willingness to share ideas and resources.

- “We have been very complimented by the fact that we have been able to bring collaborators to the table that have never talked before.”

- “I would say that we tremendously respect each other. We each value what the other has to bring to the table... I think we’re able to share ideas and resources.”

Others were proud of the shared vision they had developed with their partners, a key characteristic of successful collaborations according to Bergstrom at al. (1995) and Gardner, Kloppenburg, and Gonzalez (2002). Another Program Coordinator explained that collaborative staff members were able to view clients in a more holistic way as a result of their joint efforts, describing in her own words a system similar to Kunesh and Farley’s “profamily” system (2003) which “meets the needs of whole families, not just individuals.”
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- "I'd say the successes are actually everyone working together and everyone having the same vision. That is what has been successful."

- "I think the fact that we are working together, and that there is a shared goal. I think that affects all of the agencies, and how they see the client or the family that they are serving. Not just from one perspective, but it broadens the perspective of the various agencies...So that the preschool teacher doesn't just see the child, but has a better understanding of the family that goes with the child."

And finally, several study participants related that their clients had become more trusting of the social service system, finding it easier to access a variety of services through one central location, as well as gaining a willingness to utilize services offered through the lead agency's collaborative partners.

- "We're dealing with trust issues... Because a lot of times what happens is the families isolate themselves, they don't want to go to this place, they don't want to go to that place. Maybe they heard something negative, who knows? But once they start working with us and they're already part of [our program]... then through the relationship they have with us, they will dismiss whatever they felt, if there was anything, and just go with it."

- "They've been saying this is the first time they've felt like it was easy for [them] to get the variety of services [they] needed... Usually when they first come in... they will come in for just a limited kind of thing, just testing the waters, and as they become more involved, it then becomes a secondary home to them, and they trust the staff... and then they start to open to all of their other needs."

- "We have a family that is in the home visitation program and this family built trust with the home visitor. And through that we know that they need help with different issues. So we connect them to the Case Manager. And the Case Manager connects this family to other services..."
It’s not only one organization—we cannot provide all the services. So it’s the collaboration that makes the family really—improves their life.”

Challenges

After being queried about their successes, each interview also included an opportunity for program staff to describe challenges they had experienced over the course of their programs. In addition to the challenges addressed above such as staff turnover, data collection, and scheduling collaborative–wide meetings, responses suggested that challenges were highly varied across the partnerships under study. One project has found the services provided by its evaluator to be unsatisfactory; the evaluator has not been hands–on and has not incorporated the program’s philosophy into the evaluation design.

- “I would not go with a large evaluator again. I think that’s been a huge challenge. Huge.”

Another Project Director discussed difficulties accomplishing one of the tasks set forth in the program’s work scope. The program staff was able to work around the challenge by using technology.

- “[The work scope] was written that the teachers and the family daycare providers would do cross talking. Coordinating their schedules has been a nightmare...So this last time we decided that we would...have them crosstalk by way of video.”
Joint supervision of home visitation staff hired by a collaborative partner was also discussed.

- "Who was going to supervise them? To what extent they were going to be supervised by whom? I think we had to learn the rules that [our partner agency] lived by. And they had to learn the rules that we live by in this particular situation...we learned what the commonalities were and what the differences were and how we work with the differences in the two agencies."

And finally, working with immigrant communities has also presented a challenge.

- "We have such an immigrant community here...They have their multi-generational families with astounding problems that just are never-ending. You'll run into a woman who's 30 years old and she's already a grandmother and then three years later her grandkid shows up at the pre-K and so it's very, very tricky."

However, despite the challenges described during the interviews, each agency demonstrated a passion for serving children and families and expressed a desire to continue with the programs they had implemented.

**Sustainability**

At the time that the interviews were carried out, the SR programs were embarking upon their final year of First 5 LA funding, making sustainability a timely topic of discussion. Interview respondents described a mix of sustainability efforts, including attending workshops, seeking additional grant funds, as well as pursuing more long-term funding sources such as Universal Preschool and Title I. Concerns were also expressed, such as funding opportunities requiring "matching" funds contributed by the grantee, or a dearth of funds sufficient to continue the programs at their current level of service provision.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- "We have an opportunity to be part of kind of a training group that takes you through five or six workshops and in that you can develop a sustainability plan and then you can present the plan to various funders."

- "We've applied to three different grants and have obtained one. And hope to transition with Universal Preschool. We're currently seeking some different funding... But again, you know, it has to be something that will be feasible... you can't apply for them without having all these strings attached. You know, 50% matching, which is something we don't have."

- "I think [First 5 is] very unrealistic about the amount of [long-term] funding that's available, truly available, to sustain these efforts... At the same time, you can marshal support from the private sector, but they are becoming more and more driven like the public sector... they also have their own set of priorities, and for most of the ongoing funding streams, those resources are not readily available."

- "We're talking about it all the time... We've already agreed that... this is a great program and we think it needs to continue. The challenge then becomes finding these kinds of dollars at the rate that it's currently funded, and how to go about doing that."

Several agencies had involved their collaborative partners in the discussions, but none of the agencies indicated that they had secured sufficient funding to continue providing a comparable level of services after the First 5 LA funding cycle concludes in 2008.

Policy

According to Gardner (2002), highly developed strategic alliances should move beyond a project focus and work to create new community governance structures and to decategorize funding, each of which requires participation in the public policy arena. However, when public policy was addressed among interview respondents, most indicated that they had not engaged in shared
efforts to influence policy, describing how member organizations or individuals were working independently, or were focused on service provision and had not allocated time or resources to public policy.

- "I have my agenda way beyond the collaborative so I'm involved in what's important to me... policy issues, program issues. So I wouldn't say as a collaborative that we've had a coming together around a policy issue that we were drawn to work on for the collaborative."

- "Frankly, it's something that we don't have a lot of time to do...We have to operate pretty lean. Most of our dollars go directly to services and we want it that way."

Still, three agencies interviewed did describe modest efforts to engage local and federal politicians.

- "What we have done is for our local politicians... when they have community meetings we give that information to our clients and ask them to go."

- "We look at local policy at the district-wide level. We are looking at the Department of Mental Health's efforts and the Early Childhood Education Division as a whole."

- "We went to the HIPPY [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters] conference in Washington, D.C. this past year... part of the activity was spent for the better part of the day on Capitol Hill, going to visit our legislators. And it turned out that we got into it so much it was a really, really real powerful thing to do. To go in and sit down and talk to either the actual person, the Congressperson, or their staff person, and talk to them about asking them to specifically consider funding different bills...And it was a great experience."

Despite these efforts, it is clear that most agencies involved in the study have not made public policy a priority.
CONCLUSIONS

In order to gain a clearer understanding of how organizations serving children and families work collaboratively, a series of interviews were conducted with lead and partner agency staff from seven First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative grantees. The interviews have served to demonstrate that organizations working collectively to assist some of the neediest clients in the county vary widely across a number of domains. Some collaborative partnerships were marked by multi-level staff involvement, regularly scheduled meetings, parent involvement, and shared leadership and decision-making, each of which has been cited in the literature as a means to foster functional, successful alliances. Other agencies were not engaged in a collaborative as described in the current literature, keeping service provision as the primary focus of their efforts and demonstrating subcontracting relationships rather than more developed collaborative partnerships. And finally, according to the interview data collected from lead and partner agency staff members, only a small portion of the sample has attempted to influence change in the areas of funding allocation or state or federal policy initiatives, activities highlighted in the literature as paramount to the advancement of the social service delivery system.

However, it is unclear as to whether the differences among the agencies’ structural and organizational processes have made a notable impact on the quality or quantity of services that children and families receive, as a detailed analysis of outcome data was not within the scope of the current, exploratory study. This report may serve as a useful contribution to the analysis of collaborative partnerships within the context of school readiness programming, but additional research will be essential to develop a more summative review of the characteristics of successful strategic alliances.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE EXPLORATION

1. Grantees embarking upon collaborative partnerships should be encouraged to consult the literature addressing collaborative functioning and spend time planning how to effectively implement processes such as data collection, staff involvement, meeting scheduling and formats, and decision-making processes prior to program implementation. This will ensure that all partners have a clear understanding of member roles and responsibilities, and that all agencies are kept well-informed of the functioning of the program and are able to contribute to evaluation and decision-making processes.

2. Organizations with experience forming interagency collaborations should be encouraged to discuss their experiences with others implementing similar programs or partnerships. By sharing knowledge and offering collegial support, collaborative members can draw upon others' expertise. It is recommended that funding agencies encourage communication among newly developing partnerships and more seasoned collaboratives by facilitating opportunities for meetings and events.

3. It is also recommended that funding agencies provide ongoing technical assistance in the area of collaborative functioning, requiring that grantees build evaluation activities into their programs that are designed specifically to measure collaborative development and functioning, as well as providing funding to compensate program staff and community stakeholders for their participation in meetings and retreats addressing collaborative partnerships. They may also wish to require the use of a valid and reliable instrument for collaborative assessment at timed intervals across the funding cycle.

4. Funding agencies should also provide clear expectations regarding the composition and measurable outcomes expected of collaborative partnerships. For example, a minimum number of partner agencies, the requirement of parent involvement in development and decision-making processes, regularly
scheduled and documented meetings among collaborative members, and the human and financial contributions of partner agencies should be explicitly outlined in requests for proposals.

5. And finally, research addressing interagency collaboration should be continued in order to gain a clearer understanding of the influence of collaborative partnerships on the quality and quantity of school readiness programming offered in Los Angeles County. By correlating variables such as decision-making and communication processes, the number and typology of collaborative partners, and parent and community stakeholder involvement with outcome indicators, it will be possible to identify key components of successful collaborative partnerships.
LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review to follow summarizes relevant research focused on interagency collaboration within the framework of school readiness. The majority of the articles reviewed were identified through a literature search of PsychInfo and ERIC published between 1996 and 2000. Selected articles were also provided by First 5 LA staff members with expertise in the realm of collaboration and school readiness.
HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

Service integration has existed in the U.S. for over a century, with roots in the settlement house movement of the late 1800s. The movement gave rise to many social policy initiatives developed to improve the conditions of the most excluded members of society, and made some of the first efforts at working collectively to identify problems and offer comprehensive services to families. Sixty years later, federal initiatives under the War on Poverty developed community decision-making capacity and offered multifaceted services. Finally, in the 1970s under Eliot Richardson and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the first major federal service integration initiatives began, aimed at greater coordination and accountability among institutions serving the same children and families.

These early initiatives were important stepping stones toward more efficient, accessible, and coordinated service delivery systems. However, most child-serving institutions continued to work in isolation until the 1980s when new federal efforts emerged. Joint planning among health, human service, and education agencies was encouraged, and joint planning was often a condition of federal funding. This federal emphasis on cross-system planning has served as the impetus for a number of state initiatives emphasizing collaboration among agencies serving children and families. From the mid-1980s to the present, private foundations have also been active in offering funding for interagency collaboration efforts (Bruner, Kunesh, & Knuth, 1992).

DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMEWORKS FOR COLLABORATIVES

Interagency collaborations represent the increasing effort of public and private agencies to restructure services to be more responsive to their clients. However, they vary greatly in terms of their development, and a number of frameworks have emerged to describe how collaborative partnerships form and grow over time.
In a seminal work by Kagen (1991), the author divides the development of collaborative relationships into three stages:

1) The beginning stage, when the collaboration is forming and making plans.
2) The growth stage, when plans are implemented in programs and policies.
3) The evaluation stage, when results are examined and decisions are made about whether or not to make changes.

Kagen chose to focus on the partnership-level development of collaboratives, while subsequent models expanded upon the framework, moving beyond the internal workings of a service integration effort to discuss the potential for collaboratives to influence both policy and funding mechanisms. The four-stage model of development put forth by Gardner (2002) emphasizes the development of collaborative partnerships beyond joint projects and shared grants to include:

1) Exchange of information/Getting to know you
2) Joint projects/Shared grants
3) Changing the rules/Redirection of funds
4) Change the system/Results-based funding

According to Gardner, most collaboratives cease to develop past level 2, or Joint projects/Shared grants, when agencies' shared efforts are focused on project development and service provision. The author proposes that highly developed strategic alliances should move beyond a project focus and work to create new community governance structures, outcomes-based funding mechanisms, integrated data systems, and to decategorize funding, among others. Ideally, as a collaborative venture moves through each stage over time, participating agencies become increasingly influential in the greater community, as well as further evolved internally, developing outcomes-based funding mechanisms and implementing systemic and ongoing individual and organizational development activities intended to strengthen and expand the partnership.

Rather than describe the ideal process of collaborative development, Hodges, Hernandez, and Nesman (2003) put forth a developmental framework for
collaboration intended for use by child-serving systems in order to internally, “assess their current stage of collaboration as well as to consider opportunities for building collaborative processes across child-serving agencies.” After collecting interview data from nine sites that were actively building collaborative processes into their service delivery systems, findings supported the hypothesis that collaboration is a developmental process that, “is built slowly and with considerable effort,” (p. 297). The developmental process emerged as follows:

Stage I: Individual Action

During Stage I, the focus of each agency is internal and there are no specific collaborative activities. However, participants have identified a critical need for change.

Stage II: One-on-One

Early on in collaborative development, a single individual is often responsible for initiation of the collaborative, approaching another child-serving agency. Initial contact often focuses on an issue with a particular child or family, but this contact can result in identification of potential partners or leaders who will advocate for development of the partnership.

Stage III: New Service Development

According to the author, “During this stage, participants described a shift away from agency-centered thinking about service delivery to a more child-centered approach to providing services,” (p. 300). Ideas are applied and the agencies move toward a formal collaborative structure.

Stage IV: Professional Collaboration
A professional collaboration includes collaborative activities at the agency, program, and service provider levels. Funding is allocated specifically for collaborative service delivery, and agency partners share a common vision and mission. However, study participants agreed that professional collaboration was not, in itself, sufficient.

Stage V: True Collaborations

Study participants unanimously agreed that involvement of family members as full partners is a critical component of a collaborative venture geared toward serving young children and families. True collaborations include the characteristics of professional collaboration, but also, “involve families on two levels: (a) the involvement of families in decisions that shape services for their own children and (b) the involvement of families in decisions that affect the planning and delivery of services in their community,” (pp. 298–301).

While Gardner argued that the final stage of collaborative development is marked by the expansion of the collaborative to influence governance, funding allocation, and policy, Hodges et al. found that agency staff identified family involvement as the primary indicator of a fully developed collaborative. Participants related that their partnerships had progressed from viewing family members as outsiders to involving families in a shared effort both at the individual and system levels. According to the authors, only when families are full partners in the service delivery process has true collaboration been achieved (p. 301).

DESIRABLE QUALITIES OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

While both Gardner and Hodges et al. describe collaborations in terms of a developmental process, others discuss internal and contextual factors that influence the success of collaborations. According to Wilder (1992), “Collaboration is not always effective. It is not always appropriate. Sometimes it might even result in greater costs than independent efforts...Thus,
understanding what makes it work becomes an important task to accomplish,” (p. 4). In order to determine the characteristics of successful collaboration, the Wilder Research Center compiled collaboration research and identified 20 factors that describe desirable qualities in an effective collaborative partnership. The factors fall within six categories:

1) **Environment**: Environmental characteristics consist of the geographic location and social context within which a collaborative group exists.

2) **Membership Characteristics**: Skills, attitudes, and opinions of the individuals in a collaborative group, as well as the culture and capacity of the organizations that form collaborative groups.

3) **Process and Structure**: The management, decision-making, and operational systems of a collaborative effort.

4) **Communication**: The channels used by collaborative partners to send and receive information, keep one another informed, and convey opinions to influence the group’s actions.

5) **Purpose**: The reasons for the development of a collaborative effort. The result or vision the collaborative group seeks, and the specific tasks or projects the collaborative group defines as necessary to accomplish. It is driven by a need, crisis, or opportunity.

6) **Resources**: Financial and human “input” necessary to develop and sustain a collaborative group (pp. 12–27).

Variations across contexts, staffing, resources, and community attitudes require that collaborative members consider each area in relation to the specific characteristics of their own efforts, as shortcomings within any of the above areas have the potential to undermine the utility of a service integration effort.
Bergstrom et al. (1995) produced a similar document designed to identify and then accomplish a set of ideal collaborative characteristics. According to the authors, when initiating a collaborative partnership, it is essential that all existing and potential members share the vision and purpose of the collaborative and that the process be driven by the vision rather than an observed problem. It is also critical that roles and expectations be clear in terms of tasks, responsibilities, and work plans that are geared toward the achievement of measurable outcomes.

Moving beyond the initiation of a collaborative partnership, the Framework is built upon four components: 1) grounding; 2) core foundation; 3) outcomes; and, 4) process and contextual factors. After ensuring that the collaboration is grounded in valuing and respecting the diversity of all members, the core represents a common understanding of the purpose of the collaboration and how it relates to the surrounding environment. Outcomes are desired “conditions” for the community that reflect success in working to reach the collaboration’s vision. Ideally, collaborative members determine the desired outcomes for the partnership during the initiation phase. Contextual and process factors represent elements that can either enhance or inhibit collaborations and ultimately the desired outcomes. The process and contextual factors identified by the authors are similar to those proposed by Wilder (1992). Process factors include:

1) **Understanding the Community**: Includes people, cultures, values, and habits, and provides the foundation for effective collaboration by allowing the practitioner to gain a sense of the vision the community has for itself and the underlying values of the citizenry.

2) **Community Development**: The process of mobilizing communities to address important issues and build upon the strengths of the community. Issues, goals, and objectives are explored and the collaboration begins the process of defining its vision, mission, values, principles, and outcomes. Efforts begin to build teamwork and mobilize resources.
3) **Leadership**: Effective leadership is necessary for a collaboration to be effective, and must include those who impact change within their community, group, and/or organization. Collaborative leaders must assure that appropriate members are included and that norms of operation are established that include protocol, conflict resolution, political and cultural sensitivity, structure, and roles and responsibilities.

4) **Communication**: Within the collaboration, norms of communication must be established which assure “language usage” which is acceptable and understandable to all members and a formal communication process must be established both within the collaborative and with the surrounding community.

5) **Research and Evaluation**: Data must be collected which establishes benchmarks for future impact and outcome analysis. Evaluation efforts are essential to monitor progress toward goals and objectives and to make modifications where necessary.

6) **Sustainability**: In order to achieve sustainability, systems must be put into place that provide sustained membership, resources, and strategic program planning.

Six contextual factors important to the success of collaborative ventures were also identified:

1) **Connectedness**: Linkages between individual, groups, and organizations.

2) **History of Working Together/Customs**: The community has a history of working cooperatively, solving problems, and trust.

3) **Political Climate**: The history and environment surrounding power and decision making. Widespread political support is important in
developing and sustaining collaborations, particularly for policy making and implementation of policy.

4) **Policies/Laws/Regulations**: Solving problems collaboratively means transforming and changing policies, laws, and regulations, and collaborations are more likely to succeed when supporting policies, laws, and regulations that are in place.

5) **Resources**: Includes environmental, in-kind, financial, and human capital.

6) **Catalysts**: The impetus to start the collaboration (pp. 11–14).

Both Wilder and Bergstrom et al. address the internal and external factors that influence the success of a collaborative partnership. Resources, communication, consideration for the surrounding community, and the ability to work within the political and social climate are underscored in both documents as key components to consider when developing or assessing a collaborative. These models can serve as useful tools, guiding partner agencies to accomplish their goals and achieve sustainability while remaining responsive to the surrounding community. As evidenced by similarities across the articles summarized above, community and family involvement, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective communication processes are common themes among effective and sustainable collaborative partnerships.

**A CALL FOR COLLABORATION IN SCHOOL READINESS**

The risk factors facing young children and families in today’s society are both numerous and complex. When those risk factors are paired with a fragmented social service delivery system, children are increasingly likely to enter kindergarten ill-prepared for the social and academic demands of elementary education. Kunesh and Farley (1993) discuss a number of problems associated with service delivery among school readiness programs. Reviewing historical trends in service delivery, the authors state that, “Most services [were] crisis-oriented. The social welfare system divide[d] problems of children and families...
into rigid and distinct categories that fail[ed] to reflect the interrelated causes and solutions of the problems," (p. 1). The authors argue that fragmented service delivery focuses on the weaknesses of families rather than building on their strengths, making it difficult to access or find the assistance that they need. In response, the authors propose that the delivery of educational and human services should move toward a "profamily system" that is:

1) **Comprehensive**: A variety of opportunities and services respond to the full range of child and family needs.

2) **Preventative**: The bulk of resources are provided at the front end to prevent problems, rather than at the back end for more costly crisis-intervention and treatment services.

3) **Family-centered and family driven**: The system meets the needs of whole families, not just individuals, and assumes every family has strengths. Families have a major voice in setting goals and deciding what services they need to meet them. Service delivery features, such as hours and location, serve family needs, rather than institutional preferences.

4) **Integrated**: Separate services are connected by common intake, eligibility determination, and individual family service planning, so that each family's range of needs is addressed.

5) **Developmental**: Assessments and plans are responsive to families' changing needs.

6) **Flexible**: Frontline workers respond quickly to family needs and waivers are available to address or prevent emergencies.

7) **Sensitive to cultural, gender, and racial concerns**: Respect for differences is formalized in system-wide policy statements, carried out in staff development activities, and reflected in the diversity of governing boards and staff.
8) **Outcomes–oriented:** Performance is measured by improved outcomes for children and families, not by the number and kind of services delivered (pp. 2–3).

The author’s push for a “profamily” system is similar in many ways to the developmental model of collaboration put forth by Hernandez, and Nesman (2003) who argue that true collaboration takes place only when families are involved in the collaborative venture. Family involvement increases the likelihood that a collaborative will be responsive to the needs of families in the community it serves in addition to being strengths–based rather than crisis oriented. Similarly, the profamily systems model also runs parallel to the characteristics of successful collaborations proposed by Bergstrom et al. (1995) and Gardner et al. (2002) who emphasized the importance of including the surrounding community when developing a collaborative partnership.

Bruner, Kunesh, and Knuth (1992) also commented on the problems observed in the service delivery system. They state, “Interagency collaboration... provid[es] more flexible, comprehensive, and effective services to children and their families than [can] be provided without such collaboration. The end result is better outcomes for children and families,” (p. 7). They offer a list of essential elements of comprehensive service delivery that includes a wide array of services, responsiveness to the changing needs of children and families, continuity of services, a focus on the whole family, and an emphasis on improved outcomes for children and families, as well as strategies for engaging families and communities in a collaborative partnership.

By coordinating services rather than offering each in isolation, providers are able to offer comprehensive programming that is better able to meet the needs of their clients. According to Gardner, Kloppenburg, and Gonzalez (2002), “School Readiness is by definition about collaboration, since it involves new connections among schools, parents, childcare centers, and other providers who come in contact with young children,” (p. 1). Critical partners may include early care providers, parents, schools, community service providers, Healthy Start, faith–based organizations, and businesses. A balance of financial and
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

non-financial assets is imperative, and different issues arise according to the organizations and agencies that are involved (pp. 9–14). The authors also address essential elements that should be in place when developing a new collaborative, advocating for the inclusion of critical players/stakeholders from the surrounding community and emphasizing the importance of parent involvement, a shared vision, a shared decision-making governance structure, and data-driven processes. By including each of these elements, collaborative ventures are more likely to draw upon the talents of a variety of stakeholders and achieve successful outcomes over time (pp. 3–4).
APPENDIX 1: LITERATURE REVIEW REFERENCES


http://www.cyfernet.org/ on September 13, 2005.


First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

Kagen (1991) United we stand: Collaboration for childcare and early education services


Mattessich, P., Monsey, B.R., Wilder Research Center, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation


Education and Human Services Consortium (c/o IEL, 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, #310, Washington, DC 20036), 1991. ED 330 748.


Wilder Foundation. Wilder Research Center.


Collaboration in building partnerships between families and schools: The national
center for early development and learning’s kindergarten transition intervention.


The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Civitan International Research Center.
APPENDIX 2: LEAD AGENCY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Lead Agency Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and families in Los Angeles County, as well as to the evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative (SRI). We are interested in knowing more about the role of collaborative partnerships within school readiness programs, and we appreciate your willingness to participate in this case study project. The information that you provide today, as well as that provided by members of other collaborative partnerships funded by the School Readiness Initiative, will be used to develop a clearer understanding of how agencies work together to serve children 0–5 and their families in the County.

The interview to follow will cover a number of different issues related to the development and implementation of your collaborative in relation to the School Readiness program. Information gathered from this interview will be presented in such a way that program participants will not be identifiable in any report.

In addition, this case study project will not be used to evaluate the effectiveness of your School Readiness agency or your partnering agencies. Participation in this case study is voluntary and is not a requirement of your program. Your program can decline to participate in this interview at any time. The information shared will not be utilized to affect your program funding and/or to make judgments about future funding.

The case study will be used to identify successful processes, promising practices, and challenges that organizations face as they attempt collaborative ventures. The information can then provide a guide for future efforts to implement successful collaborative partnerships within the context of School Readiness.
I would like to record our conversation. The tape will ensure that I am able to capture the details of your comments. Is it alright with you if I begin recording?

Do you have any questions that I can answer before we begin? Okay, let's get started.

**Background**

1. Please describe the organizations involved in your collaborative: Small/large organization size, service types, role in the community, population served, etc. Who would you say are your primary partners and why? Are there any parties that should be participating that aren’t? Did any partners drop out along the way?

**Beginning Work**

2. Who initiated the collaborative? Have you developed an inventory of resources and programs already in the community that aim at your collaborative’s shared goals? How did you identify your partnering agency/agencies? Was/were the relationship(s) pre-existing? If yes, please describe the nature of your past collaborative efforts.

3. What criteria were used to first identify/select individual members? What roles do staff play in their own organizations (administration versus front-line staff)? Are parents/community members involved? If yes, please describe.

4. How did the collaborative determine what it was going to accomplish and how it would do so? How were key activities determined? Were there specific needs that were identified in the needs assessment that the collaborative has focused on? How were member roles and responsibilities defined?

5. How was the collaborative implemented? Please describe the development of your collaborative from startup to the present.

6. Have you carried out a resource inventory? By this, I am referring to an inventory of financial resources available to your collaborative, not limited to
grant funds, but also including sustainable funding sources such as from school districts, DCFS, Medi-Cal, or the 15 + funding streams for childcare.

**Day-to-Day Operations**

7. What does each agency contribute to the collaboration? What resources do collaborative members share? Examples include financial resources, materials, space, and staff. Is there any sharing of referrals or service provision? Approximately what percentage of services is provided by each partner?

8. How do you generally communicate with your partner(s)? Examples might include meetings, e-mail, conference calls, staff meetings, cross-agency task forces, and the use of a master calendar. Which have been most beneficial?

9. What leadership model/structure are you utilizing with this collaborative? Was an individual leader/convener identified to direct the partnership, or was leadership shared among key players from partnering agencies?

10. How does your collaborative make decisions? Consensus, voting, delegation? Were subcommittees employed? How are disagreements handled?

**Accomplishments and Challenges**

11. What, in your opinion, are some of the successes of your collaborative? (Increased efficiency, new service links, improved quality/quantity/diversity of services, accomplish more with fewer resources, benefit from diverse points of view, etc.)

12. What, in your opinion, are some of the challenges of your collaborative? (Too many meetings, unproductive meetings, dominating participants, too much of a challenging/time consuming process, etc.)

**Evaluation and Outcomes**

13. Are you tracking children/families across collaborative partners? Are you compiling data in one centralized place on all the services children/families receive from all of your collaborative partners?

14. Did the evaluation of your SR program include an evaluation component intended to specifically assess the effectiveness of your collaborative
partnership(s)? What have you learned so far? Were preliminary findings used to augment how partners interact or deliver services?

15. Has service data been shared among partners? How has/is data used to improve collaborative functioning? Please explain.

16. How do you think the collaborative has impacted services for children 0–5 (i.e. What *shared* outcomes are you measuring?)* What evidence do you have to support that? How is the impact measured?

17. How is your collaborative planning for sustainability? By sustainability, I am referring to the sustainability of the partnerships that we have discussed today, rather than the sustainability of your SR program. Please describe. Have you made any efforts to obtain long-term funding for your project so you will not need to rely on short-term grants?

**Influence on Policy**

18. Is any member of your collaborative involved in local policy? Are there any public policies changes that your collaborative has attempted to influence?
APPENDIX 3: PARTNER AGENCY INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Partner Agency Interview Guide

Introduction

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to children and families in Los Angeles County, as well as to the evaluation of the School Readiness Initiative (SRI). We are interested in knowing more about the role of collaborative partnerships within school readiness programs, and we appreciate your willingness to participate in this case study project. The information that you provide today, as well as that provided by members of other collaborative partnerships funded by the School Readiness Initiative, will be used to develop a clearer understanding of how agencies work together to serve children 0–5 and their families in the County.

The interview to follow will cover a number of different issues related to the development and implementation of your collaborative in relation to the School Readiness program. Information gathered from this interview will be presented in such a way that program participants will not be identifiable in any report.

In addition, this case study project will not be used to evaluate the effectiveness of your involvement with this School Readiness. Participation in this case study is voluntary and is not a requirement of your program. Your program can decline to participate in this interview at any time. The information shared will not be utilized to affect your program funding and/or to make judgments about future funding.

The case study will be used to identify successful processes, promising practices, and challenges that organizations face as they attempt collaborative ventures. The information can then provide a guide for future efforts to implement successful collaborative partnerships within the context of School Readiness.
I would like to record our conversation. The tape will ensure that I am able to capture the details of your comments. Is it alright with you if I begin recording?

Do you have any questions that I can answer before we begin? Okay, let’s get started.

**Beginning Work**

19. Who initiated the collaborative? Was/were the relationship(s) pre-existing? If yes, please describe the nature of your past collaborative efforts.
20. What staff from your organization are involved in the collaborative (i.e. administration versus front-line staff)? What role do they play? Have you invited parents/community members to be involved in the collaborative? If yes, please describe.
21. How did the collaborative determine what it was going to accomplish and how it would do so? How were key activities determined? Were there specific needs that were identified in the needs assessment that the collaborative has focused on? How were member roles and responsibilities defined?
22. How was the collaborative implemented? Please describe the development of your collaborative from startup to the present.

**Day-to-Day Operations**

23. How do you generally communicate with your partner(s)? Examples might include meetings, e-mail, conference calls, staff meetings, cross-agency task forces, and the use of a master calendar. Which have been most beneficial?
24. What leadership model/structure are you utilizing with this collaborative? Was an individual leader/convener identified to direct the partnership, or was leadership shared among key players from partnering agencies?
25. How does your collaborative make decisions? Consensus, voting, delegation? Were subcommittees employed? How are disagreements handled?

**Accomplishments and Challenges**
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

26. What, in your opinion, are some of the successes of your collaborative? (Increased efficiency, new service links, improved quality/quantity/diversity of services, accomplish more with fewer resources, benefit from diverse points of view, etc.)

27. What, in your opinion, are some of the challenges of your collaborative? (Too many meetings, unproductive meetings, dominating participants, too much of a challenging/time consuming process, etc.)

Evaluation and Outcomes

28. Did the evaluation of your SR program include an evaluation component intended to specifically assess the effectiveness of your collaborative partnership(s)? What have you learned so far? Were preliminary findings used to augment how partners interact or deliver services?

29. Has service data been shared among partners? How has/is data used to improve collaborative functioning? Please explain.

30. How do you think the collaborative has impacted services for children 0-5 (i.e. What shared outcomes are you measuring?)? What evidence do you have to support that? How is the impact measured?

31. How is your collaborative planning for sustainability? By sustainability, I am referring to the sustainability of the partnerships that we have discussed today, rather than the sustainability of your SR program. Please describe. Have you made any efforts to obtain long-term funding for your project so you will not need to rely on short-term grants?

Influence on Policy

32. Is your collaborative involved in local policy? Are there any public policies changes that your collaborative has attempted to influence?
Executive Summary

Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

This executive summary provides a synopsis of the “Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs” report which was submitted to First 5 LA on February 23, 2007. The summary will describe the purpose and methodology of the study as well as key findings and recommendations. Additional details may be found in the full report.

Overview

The purpose of this study was exploratory in nature. In order to better understand how First 5 LA’s School Readiness grantees work collaboratively to serve children 0-5 and their families, seven programs engaging in collaborative ventures were identified as voluntary participants. A review of current literature focused on interagency collaboration was conducted to inform the study design and questionnaire development, and summarizes relevant research focused on interagency collaboration within the framework of school readiness. Interviews with the lead agency and a partner agency were held for each of the seven participating programs. The full report includes site visit analysis that synthesizes findings from the interviews.

The literature review discusses several developmental frameworks for collaboratives. While one framework’s final stage of collaborative development is marked by the expansion of the collaborative to influence governance, funding allocation, and policy, another indicates that family involvement is the primary indicator of a fully developed collaborative. Still other researchers identify internal and external factors that influence collaborations. Resources, communication, consideration for the surrounding community, and the ability to work within the political and social climate are underscored by these researchers as key components to consider when developing or assessing a collaborative. These models can serve as useful tools, guiding partner agencies to accomplish their goals and achieve sustainability while remaining responsive to the surrounding community. As evidenced by similarities across the articles summarized in the full report, community and family involvement, clear roles and responsibilities, and effective communication processes are common themes among effective and sustainable collaborative partnerships.

When considering collaborations within school readiness programs we must look at the current state of educational and social service systems. The literature review indicated that many believe these systems are fragmented and further argue that fragmented service delivery focuses on the weaknesses of families rather than building on their strengths, making it difficult to access or find the assistance that they need. In response, these authors propose that the delivery of educational and human services should move toward a “profamily system” that is:
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- Comprehensive
- Preventative
- Family-centered and family driven
- Integrated
- Developmental
- Flexible
- Sensitive to cultural, gender, and racial concerns
- Outcomes-oriented

Family involvement increases the likelihood that a collaborative will be responsive to the needs of families in the community it serves in addition to being strengths-based rather than crisis oriented. Similarly, the profamily systems model also runs parallel to the characteristics of successful collaborations proposed by other frameworks which emphasize the importance of including the surrounding community when developing a collaborative partnership.

Methodology

Seven programs engaging in collaborative ventures were identified for participation in the study. While randomized sampling techniques were not possible given the voluntary nature of the study, efforts were made to include grantees that effectively represented the breadth of the total grantee population (n=42) according to a number of domains.

The research questions developed to drive the interviews with lead and partner agencies are included in the full report. The questions follow the areas of inquiry listed below and emphasize the exploratory nature of the study.

- Development of Collaborative
- Collaborative Membership
- Internal Processes
- Evaluation and Outcomes
- Sustainability
- Broader Impacts

The study sample consisted of four community-based organizations and three school district programs. The mean number of collaborative partners was eleven, and the range was four to nineteen. Twenty-five different partner typologies were documented with an even larger number of different services provided by the partners. Needless to say, the sample varies widely across a number of domains.

Findings

Program Planning, Collaborative Partners, Loss of Partners, and Selection of Members
- Most interview respondents cited the findings of their needs assessments as the driving force of their program design.
- Grantees sought out organizations that could provide the services needed to fill the gaps after the needs assessment process.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- The most commonly cited reason behind approaching agencies for inclusion in the SRI programs was a previous collaborative relationship.
- A small portion of the lead agencies reported the loss of partners during implementation, due to: partners' loss of funding and the amount of time which lapsed between identifying the partner, submitting the proposal, and receiving SRI funds.
- After agencies were identified as collaborative partners, individuals within those agencies were also identified to be the key points of contact.
- Most of the study respondents reported a deliberate effort to make initial contact with the Executive Directors of the agencies, although four of the seven lead agencies also reported efforts to involve all levels of partner agency staff.
- Leadership from the Executive Directors was an important component of the collaborative and should continue after implementation.

Communication
- The communications strategies among grantees included: advisory meetings, staff meetings, subcommittee meetings, newsletters, and emails.
- The variation in the communication processes described above is interesting given the emphasis in the literature on facilitating ongoing communication among collaborative partners.

Leadership and Decision-Making
- Again, there is variability among the grantees in terms of their leadership and decision making processes.
- Several sites reported diffused models where leadership is shared.
- Others view meeting First 5's contractual and budgetary expectations to be the responsibility of the lead agency, placing responsibility for decision-making with the lead agency.

Parent Involvement
- Respondents were divided in terms of their efforts to include parents in meetings and decision-making.
- Despite some sites' lack of continuous parent involvement in the collaborative, others place a high level of importance on including parents in leadership and decision-making processes.
- These sites include parents in advisory board meetings where program decisions are made, and they credit this success to their ability to support parents with transportation assistance, childcare, and Spanish translation.
- One program in the sample credited their success at involving parents in the collaborative based on their staffs' attitudes toward parents, viewing them as powerful and capable of engaging in a high level of discussion about themselves and their communities.

Outcomes Assessment among Collaborative Partnerships
- Five of seven agencies interviewed reported that the lead agency is in primary contact with the program-level evaluator responsible for the collection and analysis of all data for the collaborative.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- Evaluation findings are largely shared with collaborative partners through written reports and meetings.
- A common challenge many of the grantees reported was tracking referrals across agencies and the outcomes of the referral due to confidentiality and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) compliance.
- None of the programs under study had compiled referral data across collaborative partners to assess the shared outcomes of their efforts in this area.

Outcomes for Children and Families
- Study participants shared a variety of positive outcomes for children and families served by their programs. Both anecdotal descriptions and quantitatively measured assessments indicate positive outcomes for children and families.
- Interview respondents indicated that program clients have demonstrated marked improvements using pre-/post- methodology including the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP), Ages and Stages (ASQ), Teacher Rated Observation of Language and Literacy (TROLL), and parent surveys, among others.

Successes
- Praise for uniting community organizations for the first time, and the collaborative partners were appreciative of the opportunity to work together under a shared grant rather than competing for funding.
- Others were proud of the shared vision they had developed with their partners, a key characteristic of successful collaborations according to the literature.
- Collaborative staff members were able to view clients in a more holistic way as a result of their joint efforts, describing a system similar to the “profamily” system discussed in the literature review which “meets the needs of whole families, not just individuals.”
- And finally, several study participants related that their clients had become more trusting of the social service system, finding it easier to access a variety of services through one central location, as well as gaining a willingness to utilize services offered through the lead agency’s collaborative partners.

Challenges
- Several challenges such as staff turnover, data collection, and communication have already been discussed through other areas of the study.
- Additional challenges included working with an external evaluator, accomplishing activities in the scope of work, joint supervision, and working with immigrant communities.

Sustainability
- Efforts to sustain programs included attending workshops, seeking additional grant funds, as well as pursuing larger and long-term funding sources such as Title I and Universal Preschool.
- Several respondents were also concerned with the requirement of funding agencies for matching funds and their ability to continue their programs at their current level of service provision.
First 5 LA: Collaboration in the Context of School Readiness Programs

- Several agencies had involved their collaborative partners in the discussions, but none of the agencies indicated that they had secured sufficient funding to continue providing a comparable level of services after the First 5 LA funding cycle concludes in 2008.

Policy
- Most respondents indicated that they had not engaged in shared efforts to influence policy, describing how member organizations or individuals were working independently, or were focused on service provision and had not allocated time or resources to public policy.
- Three of the seven agencies interviewed described modest advocacy efforts at the local and federal levels.

Conclusions
In order to gain a clearer understanding of how organizations serving children and families work collaboratively, a series of interviews were conducted with lead and partner agency staff from seven First 5 LA School Readiness Initiative grantees. The interviews have served to demonstrate that organizations working collectively to assist some of the neediest clients in the county vary widely across a number of domains. Some collaborative partnerships were marked by multi-level staff involvement, regularly scheduled meetings, parent involvement, and shared leadership and decision-making, each of which has been cited in the literature as a means to foster functional, successful alliances. Other agencies were not engaged in a collaborative as described in the current literature, keeping service provision as the primary focus of their efforts and demonstrating subcontracting relationships rather than more developed collaborative partnerships. And finally, according to the interview data collected from .ead and partner agency staff members, only a small portion of the sample has attempted to influence change in the areas of funding allocation or state or federal policy initiatives, activities highlighted in the literature as paramount to the advancement of the social service delivery system.

However, it is unclear as to whether the differences among the agencies’ structural and organizational processes have made a notable impact on the quality or quantity of services that children and families receive, as a detailed analysis of outcome data was not within the scope of the current, exploratory study. This report may serve as a useful contribution to the analysis of collaborative partnerships within the context of school readiness programming, but additional research will be essential to develop a more summative review of the characteristics of successful strategic alliances.

Recommendations
1. Grantees embarking upon collaborative partnerships should be encouraged to consult the literature addressing collaborative functioning and spend time planning how to effectively implement processes such as data collection, staff involvement, meeting scheduling and formats, and decision-making processes prior to program implementation.

2. A collaboration learning community should be fostered where organizations with successful collaboration strategies and lessons learned can share their experiences with others.
3. Funding agencies ought to provide technical assistance in the area of collaborative functioning, require grantees to incorporate measures to evaluate their collaboratives into their evaluation plans, and finally, compensate program staff and community stakeholders for their participation in collaborative planning and operational activities.

4. Funding agencies should also provide clear expectations regarding the composition and measurable outcomes expected of collaborative partnerships.

5. And finally, research addressing interagency collaboration should be continued in order to gain a clearer understanding of the influence of collaborative partnerships on the quality and quantity of school readiness programming offered in Los Angeles County. By correlating variables such as decision-making and communication processes, the number and typology of collaborative partners, and parent and community stakeholder involvement with outcome indicators, it will be possible to identify key components of successful collaborative partnerships.
Item 9

Public Comment