Data on Half a Million Low-Income Families Now Available with a Mouse Click

For the first time, detailed data on more than half a million low-income families in Los Angeles County are available at the click of a mouse. A new data platform is being launched today at www.healthycity.org, through a research partnership between First 5 LA and PHFE-WIC, a federally-funded supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children.

The launch represents the largest and most comprehensive data set ever compiled and available free to the public on this population, and is considered a national model for other municipalities.

The website gives any internet user easy access to an interactive mapping platform that geographically pinpoints where needs may be unmet. "With this new data source, families, local communities, policymakers, city planners, service providers, and researchers can better plan for the local needs of families," said Shannon Whaley, child development specialist at PHFE-WIC who is a member of the project team.

According to PHFE-WIC, 91 percent of all infants born to low-income mothers in LA County receive services at a PHFE-WIC Center.

The Healthy City Project seeks to improve the ability of low-income, underserved children, adolescents, and their families to access services and advocate for critical resources in their communities.

For information, contact the PHFE-WIC data team at datamining@phfewic.org.

TELEMUNDO PREVIEW
Safe Exercise During Pregnancy Helps Reduce Aches, Boost Mood

Doctors say exercise during pregnancy can boost mood, improve sleep, and reduce aches and pains. A safe workout routine can also prepare women for childbirth by strengthening muscles and building endurance, and makes it much easier to get back in shape after the baby is born.
March 2, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.: Infant/Toddler Development and Care Symposium at the Center for Healthy Communities, The California Endowment, 1000 N Alameda St., LA, CA 90012. Visit www.WestEd.org.


March 30, 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.: 3rd Annual Family Literacy & Health Parent Conference at the Carson Community Center. Register online by Jan. 19 at http://dsi.lacoe.edu/fsn/events.htm or call (562) 922-6560.


This Wednesday, on Channel 52-KVEA's 6 p.m. news, First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will take viewers to a prenatal exercise class at the Citrus Valley Health Care Partners in West Covina, where pregnant women receive free comprehensive perinatal education and support though the Healthy Births program, funded by First 5 LA.

"The ideal workout gets your heart pumping, keeps you limber, manages weight gain, and prepares your muscles for childbirth without causing too much physical stress for you or the baby," said Maria Lara, a bilingual health educator.

"Walking, swimming, low-impact aerobics, and yoga are among the best and safest exercises for pregnant women," she added.

The segment is part of a 24-part TV news series, "Primeros Pasos," about the pregnancy and infant development, produced and narrated by Telemundo LA anchorwoman Lucia Navarro.

For information about exercise during and after pregnancy, click here.

New National Report Confirms Preschool Attendance Can Close Learning Gap

Universal preschool is key to closing the achievement gap between poor and affluent students, according to a new report by the National Association of State Boards of Education.

The study, released last month, confirms earlier research that shows a correlation between future academic and life success with children's participation in high quality preschools.

To address the disparity in preschool availability throughout Los Angeles County, First 5 LA created Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP), which has set a goal of making preschool available to all 4-year-olds in the country by 2014.

LAUP has already facilitated 11,000 preschool spaces across the country with an emphasis in 34 zip codes where preschool slots were extremely limited, according to LAUP CEO Gary Mangiofico.

"We have widespread evidence that children who attend high quality preschools are better prepared to learn to read when they start kindergarten," said Mangiofico. "Universal preschool is an ethical responsibility because all children should have the same opportunities."

Last year, First 5 LA and LAUP convened a Preschool Research Advisory Committee, bringing together 20 of the nation's top research and evaluation authorities on early learning. This group, which met for the second time in mid-December, will present evidence-based recommendations to inform future planning, implementation and evaluation of universal preschool efforts in LA County.
EVIE'S DESK
Parents' New Year's Resolution:
Make 2007 Better for Children
A week into the new year, many of us have already broken our new year's resolutions. But that doesn't mean we have to wait until next year to try again. I want to remind parents that we can start each day anew, and recommit each morning to make that day better for our children.

Here are a few easy "new day's resolutions:" to consider:

- "I will wake my children with a smile on my face."
- "I will take the time to prepare a healthy meal for my family."
- "I will set aside 15 minutes to read to my children."
- "I will tell my children how much I love them."
- "I will model ways to care about others and the earth."

Caring for our children is our primary role as parents, but don't forget to care for yourself too. Make your time count for both you and your children in 2007.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

With 150,000 4-year-olds potentially impacted annually, local efforts are widely regarded as a barometer for other counties and states across the U.S.

For information about preschools in LA County, visit www.laup.net. To view the report, visit www.nasbe.org.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Shirley Russ Serves as Leader In Promoting Children's Health
Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA's tagline, "Champions for Our Children."

Shirley Russ, associate clinical professor of pediatrics at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, UCLA promotes children's health through her work with childhood hearing loss, infant hearing screening, and the role of culture and society on early CHILD development.

A graduate of Liverpool University Medical School, she completed postgraduate training in pediatrics in England and Australia before coming to Los Angeles to serve as medical director of Children's health, a school-linked program based at Cedars-Sinai.

She is currently involved in building a model system of developmental services in Orange County and in improving early detection of developmental challenges.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Bible.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
Leonardo Da Vinci, because he was so far ahead of his time.

What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child in your life?
Reading Harry Potter with my children, Casey, 7 and Kelly, 10.

What is your idea of a perfect world?
Where everyone feels they have enough resources and a positive purpose in life.

What is the greatest challenge faced by children and families in LA County?
Lack of time and attention for children-- the world is in a hurry and children can be left behind.

Which living person do you most admire?
J.K. Rowling, whose a wonderful imagination created the Harry Potter books.
Who was your favorite teacher?
Dr. Moran, my high school chemistry teacher, who made us believe we could achieve to a very high standard.

What is your motto?
"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."