Monday Morning Report

February 5, 2007

To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Vivien Hao, public affairs officer, First 5 LA at vhao@first5la.org or (213) 482-7563.

Subscribe  Past Issues  Forward

IN THIS ISSUE

Preparing for Birth

Children's Advocacy Forum

Anti-Obesity Efforts

Children of Addicts

CALENDAR

Feb. 9, Deadline to apply for Early Developmental Screening and Intervention Initiative (EDSI) Collaborative for pediatric/family medicine providers & ECE professionals. March 23 & 24 at Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels, Los Angeles. Contact edsi@ucla.edu or Thomas Rice at (310) 794-0907.

Feb. 13, 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.: 15th Street Family Literacy of Harbor Community Adult School Grand Re-Opening and Classroom Dedication at 15th Street Elementary School Auditorium, 1527 S. Mesa Street, San Pedro 90731. Contact (310) 995-3125 or lct8394@lausd.k12.ca.us.


TELEMUNDO PREVIEW

Labor Preparation Classes Can Help Ease Pain and Trauma of Childbirth

To ease the pain and trauma of childbirth, many women are learning relaxation and breathing techniques in childbirth education classes around Los Angeles County.

First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will take viewers to one of the few childbirth classes taught entirely in Spanish this Wednesday on the 6 p.m. news on KVEA-Channel 52, during the weekly "Primeros Pasos" series on pregnancy and infant development.

Offered free of charge to Medi-Cal patients at the Citrus Valley Health Care Partners' Healthy Babies program in West Covina, the class provides tips and practical skills for easing labor.

More than a dozen mothers-to-be learn how to save energy for the stronger, harder labor to come. "The goal is to increase relaxation and oxygen to both mother and baby," said Lily Monclova, a bilingual health educator.

“We also show women various positions that take advantage of gravity to help speed up the birthing process. Laboring mothers often find that as contractions get stronger, using specific breathing techniques help too,” she added.

While the classes provide an opportunity to practice skills and learn what to expect, Monclova noted that an additional benefit is to meet other pregnant women to create mutual support groups before and after birth.

"Because many of our clients are immigrants who don't have extended family here in this country, we're helping them build a peer support network that will benefit them for months and years to come," she said.

For information about maternal health programs, call Monclova at (626) 851-2629.
Feb. 23, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Controversies in Breastfeeding Support and Management with Jack Newman, MD, FRCP presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, Van Dyke Auditorium, 2801 Atlantic Ave., Long Beach. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

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, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Foundations of Infant Feeding: Application to Breastfeeding Practice, Exploring the Suck/Swallow/Breathe Triad presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital, 12401 Washington Blvd., Whittier. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org

First 5 LA and LAUP Host Local Children and Family Advocacy Forum

Evelyn V. Martinez of First 5 LA and Gary Mangiofico of LAUP at the children's advocacy forum.

With about 50 invited participants, the forum provided an opportunity to dialogue about how community and elected leaders can better work together to solve the vexing problems faced by California families today.

"At First 5 LA, we are committed to ensuring that every child in LA County gets the best possible start in life - and we know from extensive research that this must start even before birth, with the health and welfare of the pregnant woman," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez. "That's why, to date, First 5 LA has committed more than $800 million to fund programs serving pregnant women, children and families.

First 5 LA created LAUP to make voluntary, high-quality preschool available to every 4-year-old in LA County.

"Study after study concludes that high-quality preschool aids in the academic and emotional development of young children, provides opportunities for economic growth, has the power to transform communities, and is a worthwhile public investment," said LAUP CEO Gary Mangiofico.

Featured at the forum was Michael Petit, author of the online book, Homeland Insecurity: America’s Children at Risk. Drawing from official federal data, Homeland Insecurity shows the challenges families face in raising healthy children-and the failure of current government policy to meet these challenges. To download the book, click here.

California Earns "A" for Obesity Public Policy and Education Shifts

First 5 LA and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) collaborated last Thursday with elected officials to host a children and family advocacy forum on key issues such as children's health insurance, child poverty, and universal preschool.

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California was one of only six states to earn an “A” on the Childhood Obesity Report Card issued recently by the University of Baltimore Obesity Initiative, which annually evaluates each state’s quantifiable efforts to make public policy shifts to address the growing childhood problem.
The Obesity Initiative's latest report card gives six states—California, Illinois, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Tennessee—an "A" for their legislative and public policy work in the past year to control obesity in children. The California law banning junk food sales in schools went into effect last year, and major public education campaigns by organizations such as First 5 California and First 5 LA are also being credited with helping the state earn high marks for its efforts to address the growing problem of childhood obesity.

Recent studies show that one in three children in California is overweight or at risk of being overweight. Overall, Californians are ranked 36th in the nation in terms of obesity prevalence. Nationally, obesity is estimated to be costing Americans $130 billion annually in direct medical costs.

First 5 LA's public education campaign last fall featured 30-second ads in English, Spanish, Korean, and Chinese in selected print and broadcast media. The "They do everything you do," campaign encouraged parents to model healthy nutrition and oral health for their children.

First 5 California last year to launch a state-wide campaign, featuring a cutting-edge series of English and Spanish-language television ads aimed at parents of young children. First 5 California continues its campaign this year with radio, TV, print, bus, and billboard components.

Also, nearly 95,000 children and parents across the state have participated in First 5 California's "Hands-on-Health" mobile outreach van, a fun, interactive exhibit that provides families with tips on healthy eating and exercising.

For information about the state-by-state report card, visit www.ubalt.edu/experts/obesity/.

GRANTEE PROFILE
SHIELDS Offers Help and Hope To Children of Drug Addiction

When 4-year-old Bobby started preschool, he would often disrupt the teacher and push and hit the other children.

But at home, he was careful not to disturb his mother, whose seven-year addiction to methamphetamines meant she was often out late at night, bills were rarely paid, and food was scarce.

Seven out of ten children like Bobby, whose parent or parents have a history of substance abuse, exhibit behavior problems in school or child care settings, and four out of ten are diagnosed with mental health issues such as depression or unexplained fears.

These alarming statistics are the driving force behind the work of SHIELDS for Families, Inc., a south Los Angeles-based First 5 LA grantee. SHIELDS serves 30 infants and young children through Genesis, a day treatment program for substance abusing pregnant and parenting women and their children.
SHIELDS was formed in 1987 in response to the high incidence of infants born at Martin Luther King Hospital who were prenatally exposed to drugs and, as a result, often exhibited symptoms such as tremors, excessive crying, attention deficit disorder and behavioral problems.

"Each child enrolled in Genesis has an individual assessment plan for 18 months," said Charlene Smith, child development director. "Some of the children exhibit developmental delays, so they need specific intervention, while others simply need behavior modification."

Meanwhile, the mothers are participating in substance abuse recovery and parenting classes. Help with housing, food, employment, and other social services are also offered.

For information, visit www.shieldsforfamilies.org.