February 12, 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.

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CALENDAR


Feb. 23, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: Controversies in Breastfeeding Support and Management with Jack Newman, MD, presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles at 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.


TELEMUNDO SERIES

Finding Quality Infant/Child Care Can Soothe New Parents' Nerves

Nearly three out of four parents in the U.S. place their young children in the care of others daily, so finding a quality child care provider can mean the difference between being racked with guilt, or having peace of mind. Whether it's home or center-based care, there are important questions that parents should ask before they decide to drop off their infant or young child.

This Wednesday on the 6 p.m. Channel 52 KVEA news, First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will show viewers a model home-based child care center, and share tips for how to determine the best setting and type of care for your child and family.

"For example, infants need to be held and watched constantly so you'll want to make sure your caregiver is an especially warm and nurturing person," said Monica Sieverding, a Tustin mother of three, who has provided child care in her home for more than a decade.

Seeing the need for comprehensive child care referral services, Sieverding launched www.ziggybug.com, a national online directory of 260,000 home and center-based child care facilities. She notes there is no substitute for an in-person evaluation, so she recommends parents make a list of providers in their area and make appointments to visit each one before choosing.

Whatever choices parents make, experts agree about the following "must haves":

- An open-door policy on parent visits
- Alternative arrangements for holidays, sickness, etc.
- Up-to-date licensing and safety inspections
- Agreement on discipline and child rearing practices
- Appropriate staff: child ratio (for birth-24 months, it's 3:1)

For information on how to select a child care provider, visit www.daycare.com/california.

March 30-April 1, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.: Seven Dimensions of Emotion, Third FPR-UCLA Interdisciplinary Conference at UCLA on integration of biological, clinical and cultural perspectives on fear, disgust, love, grief, anger, empathy, and hope. Register at www.thefpr.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.

Parents of Kindergarteners-to-be Reminded to Get Dental Checkups for Kids

Pain from untreated dental disease makes it difficult for children to eat, sleep, and learn, so a new California law requires children entering public school for the first time to have a dental checkup by May 31 of the first school year.

Dental decay is the most common chronic childhood disease—more common than asthma or obesity—affecting nearly two-thirds of California's children.

The American Dental Association recommends that children see a dentist no later than their first birthday, yet only three of five children have seen a dentist before kindergarten. By then, more than half of 6-8 year olds have tooth decay, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy People oral health update.

There is no financial or legal penalty, but families will need to explain why they couldn't get a checkup, such as not having dental insurance, according to the law.

February is National Children's Dental Health Month and focuses on providing oral health education to all children, regardless of their family's economic status. This month, volunteers and dental professionals with the San Gabriel Valley Dental Society are providing free oral health screenings to first-graders at various elementary schools, part of the "Give Kids a Smile" campaign.

For information on "Give Kids a Smile" and a list of other service providers, go to www.ada.org or www.cda.org.

Harvard Researchers Link Trans Fats To Higher Rates of Women's Infertility

Trans fats have been strongly linked to heart disease, and now new evidence suggests they also increase a woman's risk of infertility. This news comes at a time when the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors and officials in other municipalities are attempting to discourage the use of trans fats in restaurant kitchens.

In a recent study, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that women with ovulation-related fertility problems tended to eat more trans fats than fertile women. Trans fats, found in fried foods, packaged snacks, and commercial baked goods, are liquid oils that are put through a chemical process called hydrogenation to make them more solid and extend shelf life.
Obtaining just two percent of total calories from trans fat instead of healthier monounsaturated fats was associated with a doubled risk of infertility. In addition, each two percent increase in trans fat consumption as a replacement for carbohydrates brought a 73 percent greater risk of ovulation-related infertility, after adjusting for other known and suspected infertility risk factors.

For a woman eating 1,800 calories a day, two percent of energy intake in trans fats equals four grams, noted lead author Jorge E. Chavarro, MD. A large order of french fries, for example, can contain as much as eight grams of trans fat.

For more information, visit www.ajcn.org.

GRANTEE PROFILE
Hyde Park Ready for School Parents Learn How to Prepare Healthier Meals

Maria Elena-Flores always knew the importance of healthy eating. But with the demands of raising two children on a limited budget, she wasn't sure where to start.

That is, until she completed an eight-week nutrition and exercise class at Hyde Park Ready for School in South Los Angeles, a First 5 LA grantee.

Inglewood mother says she sees the difference in her 6-year-old daughter, 1-year-old son, and construction worker husband.

"We all have more energy and feel better," said Elena-Flores. "I learned how to shop for produce in season at a nearby farmer's market in Leimert Park, grow my own herbs, use soy milk, and avoid bad cholesterol."

She added that her family now drinks less soda and more water, while increasing daily fruit intake from one or two servings to three or four. "This is the basis of having a good life," she explained. "This is what I want for my kids."

Elena-Flores and the other participants observed cooking demonstrations and received shopping lists so they could recreate the recipes at home.

Program coordinator Deborah Hayes said she can tell that nutrition class graduates have taken their new knowledge to heart. "The chips are gone. Now there are fruits and vegetables, whole wheat bread, and healthy dishes like soy ceviche at our school potlucks," she noted.

For information, contact Hayes at (323) 753-4551.
Maritza Cabezas Advocates for Children's Oral Health & Education

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA's tagline, "Champions for Our Children."

Maritza Cabezas is a public health dentist with the Oral Health Program for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

She is involved with the county’s water fluoridation project and auditing community clinics to ensure that the care delivered meets community standards.

Cabezas has served on numerous committees and lectured throughout California on oral health awareness, especially for the minority and underserved populations.

Cabezas is the author of a highly-touted scientific paper on the pathophysiology, prevention, and treatment of early childhood caries.

She earned her dental degree from the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil. After two years of private practice, she was awarded a scholarship at the University of Michigan to obtain her masters’ degree in dental public health, and also completed a dental public health residency at UC San Francisco.

A founder of the Oral Health Section of the Southern California Public Health Association, she is past-president of the Southern California Public Health Association, the first dentist to be elected to this position.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Little Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

Which historical figure do you admire most?
Gandhi, who exemplified that there is nothing impossible for the human spirit when there is courage and persistence.

What is your favorite way to spend time with children in your life?
Listening to their thoughts, stories, and how they perceive the world.

What is the greatest challenge faced by children and families of LA County?
Lack of health knowledge on the part of their caregivers.

Which living person do you most admire?
Lance Armstrong, who showed that where there is will, there is a way.
Who was your favorite teacher?
Dr. Burt, my master's degree counselor, who was able to make me excel in ways I did not think I could.

What is your motto?
"In order to see the rainbow, you must first endure some rain."