March 19, 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

March 21, 8-11 a.m.: Quality of Life in Los Angeles/ 2007 State of the County Report at the Westin Bonaventure, 404 S. Figueroa Street, LA 90071. To register, please visit www.unitedwayla.org or call (213) 630-2301.

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/conference2007/.

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.

March 30-April 1, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.: Certified Infant Massage Instructor Training at The Heart Touch Project, 3400 Airport Ave. #42, Santa Monica 90405. Registration is $650. Contact Jennifer at (310) 391-2558 x5 or jennifer@hearttouch.org.

Baby Futures Summit Opens Dialogue on Investing By Funders & Businesses

More than 70 philanthropic and business leaders from across Los Angeles County joined forces in an historic Baby Futures Summit earlier this month at the California Endowment’s Center for Healthy Communities in downtown LA. The half-day event, co-sponsored by First 5 LA, convened a select group of leaders and a panel of experts to explore how the science of child development and value of early investment align to lay the groundwork for healthier children and families in our community.

"Though a child's brain takes years to develop completely, never again will it develop with the speed and capacity of the years from prenatal to three," said Richard Atlas, founder of The Atlas Family Foundation, another summit co-sponsor.

"Giving all children a great start in life means beginning with a healthy pregnancy and continuing with services and supports in the first three years and beyond," he added.

Featured speakers included Dr. Daniel Siegel, an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at the UCLA School of Medicine and faculty member of the Center for Culture, Brain, and Development; Alicia Lieberman, a professor of psychology and vice chair for academic affairs at the UC San Francisco; and Rob Grunewald, associate economist at the Federal Reserve Bank in Minneapolis.

Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez spoke about First 5 LA’s $125 million investment in the Prenatal Through Three area, which seeks collaborations with business, civic, and community leaders to create “family-friendly” neighborhoods.

Other co-sponsors were the California Endowment and the Carl and Roberta Deutsch Foundation.

For information, visit www.babyfutures.org.

High-Risk Pregnancies Up, But So is Outlook for Healthy Deliveries

High-risk pregnancies are on the rise in the United States, with more women in their 40s having babies, and an increasing number of women being diagnosed with diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.
Yet, experts say that the number of women able to successfully have children in spite of age and health conditions is also growing. Births to women 35 and older are soaring. In 2005, there were 104,644 births in the United States to women ages 40 through 44, and 6,546 to women 45 and older.

Obesity, another catalyst for risky pregnancies, rose from nine percent in 1990 to almost 22 percent in 2005 among women ages 18 to 44. Multiple births, often the result of infertility treatment, make up three percent of births, up from about two percent in 1980.

To reduce the number of low-birth weight and premature births in LA County, First 5 LA has launched a three-year $15 million Healthy Births Initiative. For information on the initiative, visit www.labestbabies.org.

Mother's Milk Linked to Better Eyesight in Children, Study Says

There’s new evidence from the United Kingdom that children who were breastfed as infants may have better eyesight than their formula-fed counterparts. According to a recent study in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, a higher concentration of the fatty acid DHA in breast milk than in formula could explain why.

The study followed 78 breastfed and 184 formula-fed children from birth to age 4 and 6. In the first six months of life, the infants were separated into three groups: one receiving only breast milk, a second receiving formula with a DHA supplement, and a third receiving formula without the supplement.

Tests showed that breastfed children were significantly more likely to have greater stereoscopic (three dimensional) vision than children in either formula-fed group.

The proportion of American mothers who begin breastfeeding has increased by almost 70 percent in the last X years, but a study by the infant formula industry found that only 31 percent are still doing so the time the baby is six months old.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends one full year of breastfeeding as optimal. For information about study, click here.
As the lead agency for the Antelope Valley Partnership for Families program, Children's Bureau is part of a groundbreaking county-wide effort funded by First 5 LA to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The Children's Bureau page on Myspace.com uses popular music and colorful graphics to convey messages about avoiding drug and alcohol abuse and other issues that impact pregnancy and parenting.

It's estimated that 68 percent of teenagers in the United States access Myspace.com on a regular basis.

"The idea is to be visible in the Myspace community and offer ways young people can access help and support," said Karen Christy, evaluation coordinator for the Partnership for Families project, which works, in part, with expectant teen mothers.

The Children's Bureau's Antelope Valley branch serves more than 1,000 low-income children and parents each year.

For information, visit www.myspace.com\avpff.