April 2, 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

April 13, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Child-Parent Psychotherapy professional development training presented by Early Intervention Training Institute of the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic at the Center for Healthy Communities, 1000 N. Alameda St., LA 90012. CEUs available. $80 fee includes breakfast and lunch. Contact Barbara Stroud at (323) 373-2400 x3204 or EItraining@lacgc.org.

April 14, 10 a.m.-noon: Kindergarten Summit sponsored by Community Voices of Los Angeles at Mt. St. Mary’s College, 10 Chester Place, LA 90007. For parents on transitioning children into the K-12 public school system. Free child care available. Contact Christine Giron at (323) 421-2602 or cgiron@crystalstairs.org.

April 14, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Family Fun Fair for Month of the Young Child at Westside Children’s Center, 12120 Wagner St., Culver City 90230. Call Jenny Marshall at (310) 846-4100 x6120.

First 5 LA & L.A. Care Health Plan Award $2.1 Million in Oral Health Grants
In response to the high prevalence of oral diseases, especially among children in Los Angeles County, First 5 LA and L.A. Care Health Plan are partnering to award $2.1 million in grants to 16 clinics for free and low-cost dental services for low-income children and adults.

In the current grant cycle, L.A. Care is contributing $1.5 million and First 5 LA is contributing nearly $682,000. The recent awards bring L.A. Care’s total investment in the Oral Health Initiative to $6.3 million since 2003.

"When First 5 LA allocated $10 million last fall to enhance programs and policies that address oral health and nutrition for young children and their families in Los Angeles County, we had partnerships such as this one with L.A. Care in mind," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez.

"We plan to leverage First 5 LA funds over the next three years toward expanding and enhancing existing successful programs in order to increase direct access to services, raise public awareness, and drive policy and advocacy."

According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, oral diseases are the most prevalent and untreated health problems among children nationally—four times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever.

Children in California are worse off, experiencing twice the prevalence of oral diseases compared to the national average. The LA County Department of Health Services reports that oral diseases, as an epidemic, is the largest unmet health care need in the county, and the LA Unified School District notes that it is the leading cause of classroom absenteeism.

For information, click here.

TELEMUNDO SERIES
Umbilical Cord Blood Banking
A Controversial Decision For Parents
Expecting parents are faced with many important decisions before their baby is born. Along with whether to breastfeed and which pediatrician to choose, they may be considering the controversial question of whether to bank their baby’s umbilical cord blood.

A stem cell technician prepares umbilical cord blood for storage.
April 14, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.: South Los Angeles Children's Health Fair, organized by Immunize LA Kids, the South LA Health Projects WIC Nutrition Program, and Los Angeles City Councilmember Jan Perry at the Mount Moriah Missionary Baptist Church, 4269 S. Figueroa St., LA 90037. Call Irene Health at (323) 757-7244.

April 14 & 15, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Peaceful Touch®, a Healthy Touch Curriculum for Children: Two-Day Workshop for teachers, health professionals, and parents at The Heart Touch Project, 3400 Airport Ave. #42, Santa Monica 90405. Registration is $200. Call (310) 391-2558 or visit www.peacefultouch.net.

April 16, 8:30 a.m.-noon: Infusing Mental Health Services Into Early Education Programs: Community Examples & Strategies at the Center for Healthy Communities, 1000 N. Alameda St., LA 90012. $25 registration & $15 continuing education fee. Visit www.uscucedd.org or call (213)383-5992.

April 18, 1-3 p.m.: Infant Mental Health: Addressing Families' Needs panel discussion presented by First 5 LA Fellowship Program at First 5 LA, 750 N. Alameda St., LA 90012. Free and includes lunch. RSVP by April 13 by contacting marcellishannon@mednet.ucla.edu.

April 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Community Resource Fair, Celebrating 15 years of the Latino Family Preservation Program, sponsored by the LA County Department of Children and Family Services at Our Lady of Soledad Church, 4561 E. Cesar Chavez Ave., LA 90022. Call (323) 881-1437.

April 21, noon-4 p.m.: 7th Annual Raising Readers: A Literacy Festival sponsored by Connections for Children at Santa Monica Clock Tower Quad, 1900 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica 90405. Call Catherine Griffin (310) 452-3325 ext. 237.

April 21, 9 a.m.-noon: Building Better Futures for Our Children Conference for Teachers sponsored by Cerritos College Child Development Department, Club Center at Cerritos College Health and Sciences Building HS 102, 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk 90650.

April 24, 5-7:30 p.m. : Protecting Our Children From Sexual Abuse; a Parent/Caregiver Workshop at SPIRITT Family Services, 2000 South Tyler Ave., South El Monte 91733. A professional panel will speak in Spanish and English to parents/caregivers. Sponsored by CARÍÑO Partnerships for Families and the Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council. Call Elvia Torres or Angelica Romero at (626) 442-1400.

This Wednesday, First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles take viewers to a local cord blood bank, as part of the weekly series on pregnancy and infant development, "Primeros Pasos." The segment will air on the 6 p.m. local Spanish newscast on KVEA, Channel 52.

Normally, a newborn's umbilical cord blood is discarded at the hospital, but these stem cells can be used in transplants to treat a variety of pediatric disorders, including leukemia, sickle cell disease, and metabolic disorders.

At a few selected hospitals that cooperate with public cord banks in California, families may opt to have their baby's umbilical cord blood stored without charge, but that blood may be used for others who need it at any time.

Most parents who want to guarantee that their child's blood is reserved for use by their own family members must rely on privately-owned and operated for-profit banks, which charge several hundred dollars initially, plus an annual maintenance fee for storage.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, "Families may be vulnerable to emotional marketing at the time of birth of a child and may look to their physicians for advice. No accurate estimates exist of the likelihood of children to need their own stored cells. The range of available estimates is from 1:1,000 to 1:200,000. Empirical evidence that children will need their own cord blood for future use is lacking."

For information, click here.

Parents--Not Schools-- Putting Children at Risk for Obesity, Says New Study

The nation's schools - long criticized for unhealthy lunches and cuts to physical education programs - may actually be doing a better job than parents of keeping children in shape.

A new study found that kindergarteners and first graders gained more weight over the summer than during the school year. The study doesn't reveal what's behind the out-of-school weight gain, but the researchers speculate it's because the summer months lack the structure of the school year.

"Trying to improve the quality of school lunches and getting the soda machines out of schools are still good approaches. But clearly the source of children's obesity problems lies outside of the school," said Doug Downey, an Ohio State University sociologist who co-authored the study.

Earlier studies have indicated that children with above-average body mass index (BMI) are at increased risk for adult obesity.

About 17 percent of U.S. youngsters are considered overweight or at risk for being overweight. That number is as high as 40-50 percent among low-income children in urban settings.

For more information, visit www.aihp.org.
April 26, 6:30-9:30 p.m.: "The Science of Sake" - sake and food tasting benefit for Little Tokyo Service Center at the California Science Center Exposition Park, 700 State Dr., LA 90037. $40 pre-sale, $45 at the door, $75 VIP pre-sale only. Call (213) 473-1608 or visit www.ltsc.org.

April 27, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.-- Protecting Our Children From Sexual Abuse seminar at SPIRITT Family Services, 2000 South Tyler Ave., South El Monte 91733. Presented by the FBI, LA County Sheriffs and Project Sisters. Sponsored by CARIÑO Partnerships for Families and the Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council. Call Elvia Torres or Angelica Romero at (626) 442-1400.

April 27, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Gardening and Health/Nutrition Day for Month of the Young Child at Westside Children's Center, 12120 Wagner St., Culver City 90230. Call Jenny Marshall at (310) 846-4100 x6120.

April 27, 4:30-6 p.m.: Children's Hands on Health Fair at Cerritos College Health and Sciences Building - HS 102, 11110 Alondra Blvd., Norwalk 90650.

April 27, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Before, Between, & Beyond Pregnancy, a community dialogue presented by Building Bridges to Optimum Health at the California Science Center, 700 State Dr., LA 90037. Contact: (323) 292-2002 or healthyafricanamericanfamilies@yahoo.com.

May 5, 9-11:50 a.m.: Children's Nature Institute’s Wonder Mobile visits the Early Education Center in Canoga Park. Explore the world of animals and insects. Contact "The Village" Ready for School Center at (818) 716-1376 or thevillagerfs@lausd.net.

May 19, 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m.: 4th Annual Community Resource Fair, at Rowen Avenue Elementary School 600 S. Rowen Ave., Los Angeles 90023. Call Mari Flores (323) 261-7191.

June 7, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: PAC/LAC Annual Conference - Quality of Life for Families XI: Improving the Outcomes of Pregnancy at the Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel and Convention Center, 2500 Hollywood Way, Burbank 91505. Visit www.paclac.org or contact (818) 788-6850 or info@paclac.org.


Uninsured Children More Likely To Die Than Those with Insurance

Hospitalized children who lack health insurance are twice as likely to die from their injuries as those with insurance, a new study reports.

Uninsured children also are less likely to get expensive treatment or rehabilitation and are discharged earlier, according to the study by the health care advocacy group Families USA.

"The clear implication is that when kids get sick or hurt, insurance matters," said Ron Pollack, Families USA executive director.

The report was sent in early March to congressional committees that are considering ways to help cover the nation's 47 million uninsured people, including nine million children. A federal-state program created in 1997 that has insured more than 6 million children is up for renewal this year.

First 5 LA's Healthy Kids Insurance is a free to low-cost health, dental and vision insurance program for children ages 5 and younger who live in Los Angeles County and whose families meet income eligibility requirements.

For information on the report, click here.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Childbirth Educator Cordelia Hanna-Cheruiyot Guides Mothers

Cordelia Hanna-Cheruiyot is a community service representative for the Pasadena Public Health Department Black Infant Health Program, where she provides health education to low-income women.

Since 1990, she has been teaching pregnant women and their partners in her home-based childbirth classes. She is also a breastfeeding educator and counselor, certified birth assistant, and assistant midwife.

Hanna-Cheruiyot earned a BA in theatre and dance from Indiana University-Bloomington in 1986. She is currently pursuing a masters in public health at Loma Linda University.

Which book has most influenced your life?
House of Spirits by Isabelle Allende.

What makes you angry?
The inhumanity and injustices that women and children suffer throughout the world.

*Which historical figure do you most admire?*
Isadora Duncan, the mother of American modern dance.

*What is the greatest challenge faced by children and families of LA County?*
Finding affordable housing and a living wage.

*Which living person do you most admire?*
Sister Helen Prejean for her work against the death penalty.

*What is your motto?*
"There for the grace of God go I."