Apr 23, 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 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 CARIÑO Partnerships for Families and the Eastside Child Abuse Prevention Council. Call Elvia Torres or Angelica Romero at (626) 442-1400.

April 25, 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.ltscc.org.

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 email.

Infant/Family Mental Health Topic of First 5 LA/UCLA Fellowship Seminar

How can pediatricians, mental health providers, and early learning professionals help parents develop a nurturing relationship with infants in order to ensure healthy, self-regulating, resilient toddlers and preschoolers?

This was among the key subjects discussed at the Infant/Family Mental Health Seminar last week at First 5 LA, the first in a series to be presented by First 5 LA and the UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities.

The seminars are part of the First 5 LA Fellowship program, in which two UCLA graduate students have been funded to develop leading-edge projects relating to early health and learning in collaboration with First 5 LA and its partners and grantees.

Speaking on the expert panel on infant mental health were Marie Poulsen, professor of Pediatrics at USC; Michael Regalado, MD, director of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; Penny Knapp, MD, medical director at the California Department of Mental Health; and Cindy Oser, director of ZERO TO THREE, Western Office.

Also on the agenda were Neal Halfon, MD, director of UCLA's Center for Healthier Children, Families, and Communities, and Sam Chan, district chief of the Child, Youth, and Family Program Administration, LA County Department of Mental Health.

"We are learning more and more about the importance of infant/mother attachment-virtually from the moment of birth," said Dr. Regalado. "If we are to complete an accurate assessment of infant mental health, it's important that we discern the quality of social emotional transactions between an infant and the primary caregiver. It's not just counting how many blocks an infant can stack but whether he responds to parents' visual or verbal cues that will tell us if this child is developing appropriately."

About two dozen representatives of First 5 LA grantees and partner organizations participated in the session. The next seminar is on "Transforming Well Child Care" on June 6.

For information on future seminars, contact the UCLA fellowship faculty mentor Shirley Russ at shirlyruss@aol.com or (310) 794-2541.
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, 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 28, 10 a.m.- noon: 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.

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 11, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: "Family Engagement Strategies" workshop on engagement interventions for mental health and child welfare professionals at the California Endowment Center, 1000 N. Alameda, LA 90012. $40 fee until May 1, CEs, breakfast and lunch included. Sponsored by Children's Institute, Inc. Contact Amber Rardin at (213) 252-6572 or ARardin@childrensinstitute.org or visit www.childrensinstitute.org.

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.

May 19, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.: Child Care Resource Center's Annabelle's Play Day at Los Angeles Valley College, 5800 Fulton Ave., Valley Glen 91401. Free family event with games, music, face painting, dancing, etc. Call (818) 256-1035 or visit www.ccrla.org.

May 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Natural Laws of Breastfeeding: New Paradigms and Teaching Tools presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles, Northridge Hospital Medical Center, 18300 Roscoe Blvd., Northridge. Call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

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.

TELEFONOS SERIES
Urban Legend Centers on Maternity Salad That Induces Labor in Pregnant Women

For more than a decade, a tiny, quiet pizzeria in Studio City has been the center of an urban legend. "The Salad," from the regular menu at Caiote Café has developed an avid following among expecting mothers, who come to munch on the assorted greens with a balsamic vinaigrette dressing when they are ready to go into labor.

"We heard it from our Lamaze coach, and my neighbor down the street, who has eaten here both times before she delivered her babies, swears by it," said Joanne, a Van Nuys mother-to-be who stopped by recently with her husband.

This Wednesday, First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will investigate this urban legend, which has spawned dozens of news articles, TV reports, and volumes of "fan mail" from parents who have sent in baby photos and testimonials over the years. This segment, to air on the 6 p.m. news on KVEA-Channel 52, will be the final installment of "Primeros Pasos," the weekly series on pregnancy and infant development.

"I never dreamed it would take off like this-the salad has really taken on a life of its own," said Ed LaDou, the café owner and chef who created "The Salad." As the original pizza chef for Wolfgang Puck's Spago Restaurant in Beverly Hills, LaDou is considered the "father of California Pizza," having been honored by the Smithsonian Institution as a national treasure.

"I didn't set out to create a salad with any special powers," he said. "But who am I to argue with hundreds of women who say it's helped them?"

For information about "The Salad," visit www.caiotepizzacafe.com. For information about pregnancy, parenting, and child care issues, call toll-free (888) FIRST5LA.

Experts Share Tips for Helping Young Children Deal With Trauma

Many people were affected by the horrific shootings last week at Virginia Tech. It's important to keep in mind that even our youngest children can be affected by such events.

Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers are tuned into the feelings and reactions of the adults around them. When adults are anxious or sad, children sense it, according to Cindy Oser, director of ZERO TO THREE's Western Office, a nonprofit organization that partners with First 5 LA to support the development of infants and toddlers.

"Young children absorb the grief, tension and anxiety around them. They don't know what to make of these emotions or the images that stream out at them from the radio, television, and newspapers."
June 16, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.: American Diabetes Association’s Diabetes Expo at the Long Beach Convention Center 300 East Ocean Blvd., Long Beach 90802. Free health screenings, entertainment and more. Visit www.diabetes.org/losangelesexpo.

June 6-8: Infant/Toddler Training Institute for Higher Education Faculty: California’s Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines and Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations at the Ayres Hotel in Hawthorne, CA. Fellowships available. Contact Amy Schustz at (415) 289-2303 or aschust@wested.org. Open solely to California higher education faculty teaching courses in early childhood development and care.

EVIE’S DESK

Strengthening Families is Key to Child Abuse Prevention

During National Child Abuse Prevention Month in April, let’s renew our commitment to end child abuse by strengthening families and educating parents and caregivers.

First 5 LA

continues its investment in preventing child abuse and maltreatment with its five-year, $50 million Partnership For Families Initiative, a ground-breaking county-wide effort to stabilize families and provide needed resources and assistance for families in crisis.

We are proud that we and our partner agencies have already served more than 500 families—helping parents make their lives more stable and educating them with parenting skills, so that they and their children do not become statistics.

Yet, each year, about 160,000 instances of child abuse are reported in LA County, where abuse and neglect are the leading causes of child death.

At First 5 LA, we pledge to continue to work closely with the Department of Family Services and the many community organizations as well as the county’s Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect that are doing so much to address the issue.

One way that parents and other caregivers can help young children cope with difficult times is to maintain as normal a routine as possible. “Consistency provides a sense of comfort and security to everyone—parents and children,” said Oser.

For more tips on helping young children deal with trauma, visit www.ZEROTOTHREE.org.

Stay-at-Home Dads on the Rise Nationally, But Numbers Still Small

The number of stay-at-home dads among two-parent households has risen three-fold since 1996, according to a report based on current U.S. Census figures from 2002.

Although there were record 159,000 children with stay-at-home dads nationwide, that figure is small next to the 11 million children with stay-at-home moms. However, some researchers peg the number of "Mr. Moms" as closer to two million, pointing to the growth of support groups, play groups, blogs, and products tailored to the needs of fathers as primary caregivers.

There's even an annual convention for stay-at-home dads, where men exchange ideas, recipes, and tips for child rearing. Experts attribute the increase in men abandoning the briefcase for a diaper bag to the number of women in today's workforce earning more than their male partners.

Growing acceptance of men as primary caregivers, as well as increased prevalence of flexible work schedules and telecommuting may also be factors in the rise of stay-at-home dads.

For more information, visit www.fathersnetwork.org and www.slowlane.com.

Early Diagnosis of Autism in Young Children Encouraged through Radio Spots

To mark National Autism Awareness Month, First 5 California last week distributed statewide a radio news release on the importance of early screenings for special needs.

The 60-second, news-style, broadcast-ready spots were fed via satellite to more than 300 English-language and Spanish-language radio channels (such as morning news/talk stations).

The English-language version includes a sound bite from Dr. Louis Vismara, a First 5 California commissioner, expressing how vital it is to provide young children with early screenings. Commission Chair Hector Ramirez is spokesperson on this topic for the Spanish-language version.

Autism is a spectrum disorder that can be characterized by tantrums, lack of speech or repeating words, avoidance of eye contact, and numerous other symptoms, which are different for each person diagnosed.
Early development specialists are now able to diagnose autism in the first 5 years of a child's life, and numerous studies have shown that early intervention is the key to managing the symptoms.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism is the fastest-growing developmental disability in the U.S., increasing in the 90's by 172 percent, compared to a 13 percent growth of the population in general.

Today, one in 150 children born will have a diagnosis of autism, which affects about 1.5 million Americans, with associated medical costs of more than $90 billion annually.

To hear the announcement, click here. For more information, call toll-free (800) KIDS-025.

Cancer Protection May Be Provided to Women Breastfeeding After Age 25

Breastfeeding may offer broad protection against breast cancer that extends to women who delay having children, according to a study released last week by USC's School of Medicine at the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research in Los Angeles.

Previous studies have shown that women who give birth before age 25 and breastfeed their infants are less likely to be diagnosed later with certain types of breast cancers. Meanwhile studies have also shown that delayed childbirth can be associated with a higher risk of breast cancer.

But the new study provides evidence that breastfeeding seems to lower the risk of developing breast cancer in women even when they give birth after age 25.

"As more women choose to delay pregnancy until after 25, it is important to note that breastfeeding provides protection against both estrogen and progesterone receptor positive and negative tumors," Dr. Giske Ursin, associate professor of preventive medicine at USC and the study's lead author.

Researchers analyzed data for women aged 55 and older -- including 995 invasive breast cancer patients -- and found that breastfeeding appears to have a protective effect regardless of the age when they first gave birth.

The study was funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and by the National Cancer Institute.