First 5 LA Gives Mom's Free Instruction Manual in Spanish

First 5 LA has joined with First 5 California to launch and updated Spanish version of the Kit for New Parents, a free comprehensive parenting resource that includes everything from practical advice on prenatal care to information on a child's first years. The free parenting resource, valued at $75, launched in English last month and is now available in Spanish as well.

"Babies don't come with an instruction manual. If they did, it would look like the Kit for New Parents," said Evelyn V. Martinez, Executive Director of First 5 LA. "It's a resource filled with all the advice and useful tips a new parent needs"

Parents and caregivers can order the new Spanish Kit by calling (800) 50-NIÑOS. (800) KIDS-025 to order it in English. First 5 LA is also partnering with county-wide hospitals, clinics, county agencies, school districts and many others in distributing the Kit across L.A. County.

A key component of the Kit is an educational DVD with parenting advice from prominent child development experts and celebrities, such as talk show host Cristina Saralegui, actors Rob Reiner, Phylicia Rashad, Jamie Lee Curtis, Andy Garcia, and singer Gloria Estefan.

Asian language versions of the updated Kit will be released later this year.

First 5 LA launched its groundbreaking parent education campaign in 2004 to provide important information on a child’s health and development to parents and caregivers. Over 500,000 Kits for New Parents have been distributed at no cost to parents and caregivers throughout LA County since the program's inception.

Birthing Project Matches Women to Reduce Preterm Birth

If you've ever been pregnant, you know the importance of having a reliable support system. Having someone help you through the stress of pregnancy can be crucial for the health of mother and child.
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) 788-6850 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

May 19, 11:00am-2:00pm: Health Fair provided by Children’s Bureau and Alexandria School, at Alexandria Elementary School, 4211 Oakwood Ave., Los Angeles CA 90004. Free health screenings and snacks. For more information contact Children’s Bureau at (323) 644-3900.

May 25, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: The Natural Laws of Breastfeeding: New Paradigms and Teaching Tools with Nancy Mohrbacher 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 and go to Upcoming Seminars for registration.

June 1, 9:00am-12:00pm or 1:00pm-4:00pm: "How Does It Feel: A First Hand Experience of a Sensory Processing Disorder" by Nancy Kislak, M.A., OTR and Joni Schumacher, M.S., CCC. sponsored by the Infant Development Association of California, South Chapter, at Braille Institute, 741 N. Vermont Ave. Los Angeles CA 90029, $50 IDA, $75 non-IDA members. To register call (916) 453-8801 or visit www.idaofcal.org

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 aschustz@wested.org. Open solely to California higher education faculty teaching courses in early childhood development and care.

June 7, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.: PAC/LAC Annual Conference - Quality of Life for Families: 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.

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 25, 9:00am - 4:00pm: Depression and the Breastfeeding Woman presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles at San Gabriel Valley Medical Center’s Community Health and Education Center, 261 Junipero Serra Dr., San Gabriel, CA. For more information call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org and go to Upcoming Seminars for registration.

But because not all women have that special someone, organizations like the Pasadena Birthing Project step in. A local chapter of Birthing Project USA, the Pasadena project was founded in 1994 to support local pregnant women, specifically in the African American community, which has the highest rate of preterm births compared to other groups.

Utilizing the black community’s wise woman or "big mamma" concept, the Project paired trained volunteer mentors called "sister friends" with pregnant women of any age to provide a cross section of personal and professional assistance, including health care education, social service referral and advocacy.

"Sister friends are like extended family members with a special toolkit of important knowledge," says Wenonah Valentine, executive director of the local Pasadena chapter. Valentine trains each "sister friend" in health literacy, community leadership, and active engagement.

Susie Dixon, a sister friend with the Project since 1997 has mentored three women. "I loved these girls like they were my family," says Dixon, now Godmother to her last mentee's set of twins. Dixon, 62 and a small business owner, helped her first mentee cope with an abusive relationship with her babies’ father and helped her last through a series of medical complications, including the babies' low birth weight.

The numbers speak to the need for such support. In L.A. County, almost 15 percent of African American babies are preterm - three percent more than the average. Moreover, "the rate of preterm births among this community is two to three times higher than the national statistic," says Dr. Jack Turman, Jr. founder of the Center for Premature Infant Health and Development at the USC Keck School of Medicine.

Valentine has partnered with Dr. Turman to be sure that all mentors have up-to-date knowledge on how to help their mentee's avoid preterm birth.

The Birthing Project is currently enhancing and expanding the project through a three-tiered, Sister Friend Leadership training academy and hopes to extend its reach into the City of L.A. The First 5 LA-funded Hyde Park School Readiness Center will be bringing the Project to their community soon.

To learn more about Birthing Project USA visit www.birthingprojectusa.com or call Wenonah Valentine at (323) 732-1350.

GRANTEE PROFILE
First in a series highlighting the Healthy Births Initiative, Best Babies Collaboratives.

Collaborative Gives New Meaning to "Family"

Two years ago, Rafaela Gomez-Carabajal came to the United States from Mexico to be with her husband, Martin Carabajal. While adjusting to her new home in Long Beach, she got a surprise - she found out she was pregnant. Unsure what to do, and far from her natural family, Rafaela found support with the First 5 LA-funded Long Beach-Wilmington Best Babies Collaborative.
June 25-29, 2007: "SUMMER 2007 'A Head Start on Science' Workshop" for preschool Teachers & Administrators. The Head Start on Science Project at CSULB is a full-week hands-on training. For registration form and fees click here, or contact Head Start on Science, (562)985-4802 or email SCI4KIDS@CSULB.EDU.

EVIE'S DESK

Mother's Day

I would like to wish all mother's a heartfelt, if belated, Happy Mother's Day. As a mom myself, I appreciate this holiday that recognizes the unique role a mother plays in a child's life.

Mother's Day in the United States was started, not surprisingly, by a woman. In 1870, Julia Ward Howe called other women to unite against the Civil War. After it was adopted by many states, Mother's Day was eventually declared a national holiday by President Woodrow Wilson in 1914. Wilson set it aside as a day for American citizens to show the flag in honor of those mothers whose sons had died in war.

Mother's Day soon was adopted as a commercial holiday and is now known simply as a time to honor those strong women who gave us our lives.

Variations of Mother's Day are celebrated all over the world. In some cases it's simply called "Women's Day." But almost all nations use the day to celebrate motherhood. So to the mothers around the world, Día Feliz de las Madres, Jour Heureux de Mères, 愉快的母亲节 and Happy Mothers Day!

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

A system of six agencies, the collaborative worked together to help prepare Rafaela for childbirth through case management, nutrition classes, Lamaze and more. They also supplied her with baby clothes and a crib. "They were like my family," Rafaela said. "I would not have known what to do if it were not for these women."

What she was not ready for was the premature birth of her child and a surgery that left newborn Martin Jr. in the hospital for a month. But again, with help from her case manager, Mary Robinson, a Public Health Nurse with the Long Beach Health Department, Rafaela had the confidence to follow doctor's orders and successfully care for her child through his recovery. The baby is now at home and Rafaela, ecstatic about her new journey as a mother, continues to welcome visits from her case manager.

As part of the Healthy Births Initiative, the Long Beach-Wilmington BBC supports over 300 women like Rafaela in the community. Through case management and a smooth service referral system, the BBC is making an impact. Participating agencies - Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, The Children's Clinic & Sweet Success, Families in Good Health, St. Mary Medical Center, Wilmington Community Clinic, St. Mary Medical Center Mary Hilton Family, Latino Diabetes Prevention and Management Program, and the Long Beach Health Department - all have on-site case managers, each with a particular strength. Specialties range from social worker, to public health nurse, to breastfeeding educator.

Upon intake, clients are referred to the agency that best suits their needs. For example, Rafaela was considered "high risk" on intake, so she was referred to the Health Department because the case manager there was a Public Health nurse. Also, each program follows a different model. Families in Good Health uses a consistent and structured curriculum with clients, whereas Wilmington Community Clinic sees clients on an as-needed basis. Clients in all programs are contacted at least once a month and can receive services for up to three years.

For more information about the Long Beach Best Babies Collaborative visit labestbabies.net or click here.

CHAMPION PROFILE

Dr. Eddie Fiszer
Inspires Student Character

Dr. Eddie Fiszer is the founding principal of NEW Academy Canoga Park, an elementary charter school started in 2005 which emphasizes art, science, and physical fitness. The publicly funded charter school is guided by core values that encourage positive character development in children.

Prior to founding the NEW Academy, Dr. Fiszer served as a teacher and English language development specialist in the Burbank Unified School District, and a principal at Pinetree Community School in Santa Clarita.
Dr. Fiszer has also authored three books and maintains two websites. His first book *How Teachers Learn Best: an Ongoing Professional Development Model*, describes effective staff development techniques, including a teacher collaborative model. His other two books are compilations of inspirational quotes, which he uses to motivate his students by announcing them daily on the schools sound system.

He received a BA from UCLA, a multiple-subject teaching credential from California State University, Northridge, and a Master of Science degree in education administration from Pepperdine University. He then returned to UCLA for a doctorate through the Educational Leadership Program.

To visit Dr Fiszer’s websites at go to www.responsiveparent.com and www.dailypositives.com.

**What makes you happy?**
Making a difference.

**Angry?**
I get angry when people mistreat others.

**What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child or children in your life?**
I love reading and discussing inspirational quotes with children.

**What is your idea of a perfect world?**
A world where everyone is responsible for individual choices.

**What is the greatest challenge the children and families of LA County face today?**
To never give up on their dreams and aspirations, regardless of circumstances or obstacles.

**Who was your favorite teacher and why?**
Jerry DeBono brought Shakespeare and other great literature to life at Cleveland High School.

**What is your motto?**
Doing extra makes a difference.

**Please note, in last weeks Monday Morning Report article on Oral Health, it was stated that First 5 LA and L.A. Care have funded six grantees to administer services. The actual number is sixteen grantees.**