Monday Morning Report

June 12, 2006
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.

Don’t miss the next Monday Morning Report. If this was forwarded to you, sign up now!

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CALENDAR

June 17, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.: 2nd Annual Kindergarten Transition Symposium to feature Los Solecitos with educational workshops, giveaways, entertainment, and food. Presented by Pasitos, Tweedy Elementary School, 9724 Pinehurst Ave., South Gate 90280. Space is limited. To register, call Silvia Cervantes at (562) 806-5400 X173.

June 20, 8 a.m.-2 p.m.: Safely Surrendered Baby Law and Prevention of Infant Abandonment: Los Angeles County Hospital Training, presented by the Perinatal Advisory Council at St. Anne's Maternity Home, 155 N. Occidental Blvd., LA 90026. For information, contact Andrea Hoberman at (818) 788-6850 or ahowerman@paclac.org.

KTTV FOX 11 PREVIEW

Water Safety for Young Children Topic of Thursday’s "Good Beginnings" Segments

With summer just around the corner, First 5 LA will be highlighting the importance of water safety this Thursday and Friday on "Good Beginnings," a weekly KTTV Fox 11 news series on children’s health, safety, and early learning.

Experts say drowning is the number one cause of accidental-injury-related deaths in children 1- through 4-years-old, and 70 percent are in the care of one or both parents at the time of drowning.

"Infants and young children can be at risk for drowning in swimming pools, bathtubs, sinks, toilets, even five-gallon buckets that most people have around the house," said Bob Halal, aquatic director at the Lakewood YMCA, one of five LA County locations where First 5 LA funds an aquatic safety program for children 5 and under.

KTTV cameras caught up with a "Parent and Me" class at the Bellflower Aquatic Center, where children as young as 6 months are learning to be comfortable and safe in the pool.

Here are five tips for parents and caregivers for keeping kids safe around water:

1. Never leave infants or young children alone in a pool area or bathtub even for a second.
2. Keep the toilet lid down, and close and latch the bathroom door when not in use.
3. Be sure that all containers with liquids are emptied immediately after use.
4. Be sure that your pool has a minimum of a 5-foot-high fence enclosing it, that gates are self-closing and latching, and that the latch is inaccessible from the outside by young children.
5. Learn CPR -- it can be a lifesaver.

For information, visit www.first5la.org and to view last week’s "Good Beginnings" segment on nutrition and obesity prevention, visit www.fox11.com/stories/goodbeginnings.
California Voters Reject Proposition 82 but Universal Preschool Gains Momentum

Although California voters rejected Proposition 82 by a resounding 62 percent last Tuesday, analysts say a larger, national effort to boost access to universal preschool may be gaining momentum.

Had it passed, Proposition 82 would have raised $2.4 billion for universal preschool for all 4-year-olds in the state, making California the largest funder of universal preschool in the nation.

Meanwhile, pre[k] now, a national preschool advocacy organization, reports that 23 governors and the mayor of the District of Columbia this year proposed increased funding to expand and enhance their states' preschool programs.

Two years ago, First 5 LA committed $600 million over five years to fund universal preschool for all 4-year-olds in LA County, which is expected to have the nation's largest preschool program by 2014.

"Californians have been engaged in a statewide conversation about the power of preschool, and that has put preschool's benefits high on the public radar," said First 5 LA Executive Director Evelyn V. Martinez.

San Francisco and San Mateo counties and several other California communities are also expanding their universal preschool programs.

For more information on Los Angeles Universal Preschool, visit www.laup.net.

Child Psychiatrist Dan Siegel to Speak at Conference on Early Attachment

Renowned child psychiatrist and author Dan Siegel will speak June 21 at the Whittier Radisson Hotel on "The Importance of Early Attachment: Relationships and Resilience in the Development of the Brain."

Sponsored by a First 5 LA grantee, Intercommunity Child Guidance Center, the daylong conference is open to mental health professionals, physicians, nurses, social workers, teachers, parents, and others interested in child development.

According to a theory developed by Siegel, a healthy child is flexible, adaptive, coherent, energized, and stable. "It's critical for mental health professionals and anyone who cares for children to understand how children's relationships and brain development overlap," said Siegel.

Other topics to be discussed at the conference include lifelong effects of early attachments and the importance of focusing on the early stages of bonding.

To register (fee is $115), call Benny Garcia (562) 692-0383, x247 or visit www.intercommunity.org to download a registration form.
EVIE'S DESK
Fathers are Critical to Children's Early Development

With Father's Day coming up this Sunday, I want to acknowledge the critical role of fathers in their children's early health and development. Research shows that when fathers are involved, their children learn more, perform better in school, and exhibit healthier behavior.

Here are five tried and true tips for fathers to support their children's success:

1) Highlight your caring by paying attention to small things and magnify them so your child feels empowered. "I really like how you put the napkins around the dinner table. Thank you for your help."

2) Let your children know their opinion matters by engaging them in problem-solving. "OK, you want to go to a friend's birthday party, but it's at the same time as your practice. What can we do about this?"

3) Anticipate situations that may be trigger points for problems and discuss them beforehand to clarify what consequences will be assigned to specific attitudes and behaviors.

4) Keep consequences simple and appropriate. Give your children a "parachute" whenever possible. "You need to go to your room for 10 minutes. After that, I would like to talk about how you can handle your anger differently next time."

5) Have an agreed upon discipline plan with anyone who is co-parenting or providing care for your child.

To all fathers, I want to wish you a wonderful Father's Day.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

Learning Exchange to Showcase Success of Community-Developed Programs

"Telling our stories, remembering our achievements" is the theme of the eighth and final Community-Developed Initiatives Learning Exchange, set for this Friday at the Center for Healthier Communities at the California Endowment in downtown LA.

Hundreds of representatives of more than 40 grantees have participated in earlier learning exchanges over the past three years. Organized by the initiative evaluator, Semics, the exchanges are intended to provide networking opportunities that will enable community-based organizations serving young children and families to coordinate resources and create synergies.

"This final learning exchange will showcase successes and allow us to celebrate the results our grantees have achieved with the $80 million investment First 5 LA has made in programs developed by these organizations," said First 5 LA research analyst Amanda Bueno.

"Our grantees have made a difference in their communities in many ways," said Bueno. "They are building playgrounds for kids, training child care providers, increasing parental involvement, preparing children with special needs for school, and supporting nursing mothers. What these programs have in common is their responsiveness to direct community needs, she added."

For information, contact Bueno at abueno@first5la.org or (213) 482-5990.

GRANTEE PROFILE
Teens and Toddlers Program Boosts Relationship Skills and Self-Esteem

Last year, Ana Rodriguez, a sophomore at Phoenix Continuation High School in West LA, was hardly speaking to her parents and doing poorly in school.

But after completing a 15-week elective course, Teens and Toddlers, offered by Children: Our Ultimate Investment, a First 5 LA grantee, she has brought up her grades, improved her relationship with her parents, and set a goal of becoming a midwife.

"She has blossomed," said Joe Groschadl, a teacher/advisor in the program, designed to build teens' self-esteem, improve their relationship skills, and reduce teen pregnancy. He credits the change in participants like Rodriguez to the interaction that they have as volunteer helpers at a neighboring child-care center.

"Working with the mentally delayed kids makes me feel softer inside," said Rodriguez. "It makes me want to be a better person."

Founded in 1978 by Laura Huxley, wife of philosopher/writer Aldous Huxley, the program has been offered in five California high schools and throughout England.
Although birth rates for 15- to 19-year-olds have dropped over 33 percent since 1994, the U.S. still has the highest teen birth rates among industrialized countries.

The twice-weekly classes are taught by mental health professionals, who cover topics such as child-care skills, anger management, and self-reflection.

For information, call Karen Pfeiffer, director of administration, at (323) 461-8248 or visit www.childrenourinvestment.org.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Psychologist Hershel Swinger Works to Stem Domestic Violence, Substance Abuse

Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline: “Champions for Our Children.”

Hershel Swinger, a clinical psychologist and the senior vice president emeritus at Children’s Institute Inc. (CII), has been developing programs to stem domestic violence and substance abuse for more than 30 years.

He is a nationally recognized trainer and expert on the cultural aspects of family and community violence, and drug abuse.

Each year, CII serves more than 10,000 children and families who have been affected by violence--through treatment, prevention, early care and education, and community services programs.

Swinger is also a professor of counselor education at Cal State LA and is founder and project director for Project Fatherhood, which encourages men to become more active in raising their children.

He holds a PhD from USC, and an MA and BA from Cal State LA.

What book has most influenced your life?
Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

What kind of music/art moves you and why?
Impressionist and abstract art by Alberto Giacometti and Synthia St. James.

What is your favorite way to spend a Sunday afternoon?
Freshwater fishing with my family.

Which living person do you most admire?
Father Gregory Boyle, who has truly learned how to give and who loves the people who our society considers unlovable.

Who was your favorite teacher?
Ms. Clark, my fourth grade teacher, who told me that I could be successful at whatever I wanted to do.

What is your motto?
"All you can do is all you can do."