June 19, 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 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. Contact Andrea Hoberman at (818) 788-6850 or ahoberman@paclac.org.

June 21, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.: Implementing Preschool for All: Research Implications for ECE Leaders, Directors & Teachers of Young Children, sponsored by the CDPI Education Fund, PreservationPark, 1233 Preservation Park Way, Oakland 94612. Early-bird registration by May 31 is $150 and late registration is $200. Call (415) 362-4880 or visit www.childlinkca.org.

June 21, 9 a.m.–6:30 p.m.: Importance of Early Attachment: Relationships and Resilience in the Development of the Brain, presented by the Intercommunity Child Guidance Center, Radisson Hotel Whittier, 7320 Greenleaf Ave., Whittier 90602. Call Benny Garcia at (562) 692-0383 or visit www.intercommunity.org.

KTTV FOX 11 PREVIEW

How Premature Babies Can "Catch Up" Topic of "Good Beginnings" Segment

When their baby was born at 22 weeks, weighing just 14 ounces, Lenice and James Coury, Jr. were grateful to the heroic efforts of Huntington Hospital's neonatal specialists who saved their daughter's life.

What they didn't count on after she was discharged four months after she was born, were the oxygen tanks, apnea monitors, special infant formulas, seven different medications, and the dozens of tests and assessments that little Samantha would have to endure over the next two years.

Today, at 2 ½, she is healthy and can count to 17, but weighs just 20 pounds and wears clothes for infants 6-9 months.

Thursday, the remarkable progress made by this toddler will be featured on “Good Beginnings,” a weekly KTTV Fox 11 news series on children’s health, safety, and early learning. Produced with First 5 LA, the segment will air on Good Day LA between 8 and 9 a.m. and again during the 10 p.m. news.

KTTV cameras also captured tender moments in the Pasadena hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, where tiny newborns, weighing as little as 1-2 pounds, are receiving round-the-clock care in state-of-the-art incubators, funded through a First 5 LA grant that provides continuous monitoring and assessments of premature children through age 4.

On Friday morning's Good Day LA show, Dr. Carolina Reyes, executive director of First 5 LA’s Best Babies Network, will discuss how preconception and prenatal care can reduce LA County’s premature and low-birthweight babies.

For information, visit www.first5la.org, and to view last week’s “Good Beginnings” segment on water safety, visit www.fox11.com/stories/goodbeginnings.
June 24, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.: Health and Wellness Fair, presented by Park Windsor Baptist Church at 1842 W. 108th Street, LA. Contact Dorothy Murray (323) 777-2263 or RubyReed-Knighton@email.msn.com

July 7 – July 10, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.: Hands on Health: Helping our Children Grow, presented by First 5 California and First 5 LA at the National Council de la Raza annual meeting at the LA Convention Center. Contact Alisha Rosas at arosas@rogerspr.com.

July 8, 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.: SummerSizzle, a free musical production for families with young children. Presented by First Steps Early Literacy Program at the Baldwin Hills Crenshaw Plaza, Sears Court, 3650 W. Martin Luther King Blvd., LA 90008. Call Dorothy Carter at (323) 294-0311.

August 19, 1 p.m.-6 p.m.: Family Day, presented by KCET-TV at 4401 Sunset Blvd., LA. Call (323) 953-5202.

EVIE’S DESK
First 5 LA to Fund Fellowships in Public Policy, Health, Education

First 5 LA is committed to creating a future throughout LA County where all young children are born healthy and raised in a nurturing environment so that they are ready to learn.

To develop new leaders to help make this vision a reality, First 5 LA is launching a one-year, full-time fellowship program for current or recent graduate students within the fields of social work, public health, public policy, business, education, and child development.

With an expected launch date this fall, the fellowship will provide experiential learning with access to top decision makers, professional development, and potential post-fellowship employment opportunities. Financial and technical support, as well as individualized mentoring and graduate coursework credit will also be available.

We are excited to be able to offer this opportunity to talented men and women who share our interest in developing groundbreaking and innovative research and projects to benefit young children and families.

We will soon be posting details at www.first5la.org and more information will follow in Monday Morning Report. Stay tuned!

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

Learning Exchange Highlights Grantees’ Impact on Communities They Serve

Maritza Rayos, a San Pedro single mom, first started going to the Wilmington Community Clinic for free checkups during her pregnancy. Today, her daughter, Jazmin, is 5 years old, and Rayos still goes regularly to the clinic - to take parenting classes and volunteer as a mentor to other parents.

"Maritza has become a parent leader who has not only recruited four of her neighbors to our classes, but also helped families build their own network of resources for questions about discipline, access to services, and even how to prepare children for college," said Susie Mendoza, a health educator at the clinic.

Mendoza was among more than 60 representatives of more than 40 community-based organizations funded by First 5 LA, who participated last Friday in the eighth and final Learning Exchange.

The day-long workshop provided grantees with opportunities to network and share success strategies.

Friday’s session focused on ways grantees are impacting their communities and how they’re working to sustain their programs beyond their current funding cycle.

With its five-year First 5 LA grant, the Wilmington Community Clinic is providing staff development and expanded education and services to pregnant and lactating women. The agency’s pediatrician has implemented a new screening tool for early identification of developmental delays in infants and toddlers.

"Most importantly, we’re empowering parents with the knowledge that they have certain rights and responsibilities when it comes to their children,” said Mendoza. "It's gratifying to see parents like Maritza advocating for themselves and their peers.”

For information about the clinic, call Mendoza at (310) 549-1123.

Paid Family Leave Law Enables New Parents to Bond with Children

Ruben Vidales, his partner of six years, Hector Leon, celebrated their first Father’s Day yesterday, with their two sons, Anthony, 1, and Andrew, 4.

Last August, after a one-year wait, the couple was approved by the LA County Department of Children’s and Family Services to foster-adopt the siblings.

Maritza Rayos shares success from Wilmington Community Clinic while First 5 LA Vice Chair Nancy Au looks on.
When the boys arrived in their new home, Vidales, a public affairs officer at First 5 LA, took advantage of California’s Paid Family Leave (PFL) Act, a two-year-old law that enables new parents to receive 55 percent of their full-time salary for up to 12 weeks to care for infants and family members who are ill.

"Adoption fulfills a dream for us," said Vidales. "Even though foster kids often have attachment issues when their environment changes, Andrew bonded right away. I can't believe how quickly both our sons, but especially Anthony, have grown. I encourage any parent who can afford it to take advantage of PFL."

PFL is funded by employee SDI contributions, and costs employers nothing. However, only 3 percent of eligible workers are taking advantage of the leave.

But as more people become aware of the law, PFL usage by fathers for infant care has increased from 17 percent to almost 19 percent in the past year.

Later this year First 5 California and the Paid Family Leave Collaborative, a network of legal and civil rights agencies, will roll out a statewide education campaign to increase public awareness of PFL.

For information, visit www.paidfamilyleave.org

CHAMPION PROFILE
Dr. Carolina Reyes Advocates for Better Health Care Access and Birth Outcomes

Dr. Carolina Reyes, executive director of LA Best Babies Network (created and funded by First 5 LA), is nationally recognized for her work to improve maternal health and birth outcomes.

She received the U.S. Agency for Health Research and Quality Director's Award for Group Performance for developing a health services research agenda on intimate partner violence.

Born into a family of eight children to third-generation farmworkers, Dr. Reyes earned her BA from Stanford University and her MD from Harvard University.

A member of the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Hall of Fame, Dr. Reyes is a visiting associate professor at USC’s Keck School of Medicine, Board certified in Obstetrics and Gynecology and Maternal-Fetal Medicine.

She and her husband, U.S. Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles), are raising three daughters.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck.

What makes you happy?
To see the smiling faces and sparkling eyes of energetic young kids, especially my girls.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
Cesar Chavez, who instilled pride in me and taught me not to accept injustice.
What is your idea of a perfect world?
A place where every child arrives with no less opportunity than another.

Which living person do you most admire?
My husband, Xavier, because he strives to balance family, values, and making a difference in this world.

Who was your favorite teacher?
Father Finian McGinn, who teaches self-esteem and belief in yourself.

What is your motto?
"Willing is not enough; we must do." - Goethe