August 14, 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.

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CALENDAR

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

August 19, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.: Obesity Awareness Family Health Fair and Soccer Tournament at MacArthur Park, 2230 W. 6th St, LA 90057 sponsored by State Assembly Speaker Fabian Nunez. Call David Meza at (213) 620-6319

August 19 & 20, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Health and Fitness Expo at the LA Convention Center, 1201 S. Figueroa St., LA 90015. Free health screenings, entertainment, and cooking demonstrations. Call (603) 929-7494.

August 25, 6 p.m.-10 p.m.: Worship Experience at Bethel AME Church, 7900 S. Western Ave., LA 90047 sponsored by KKBTFM The Beat. Contact Jackie Paddock at (323) 692-5425 or paddock@radio-one.com.

August 26, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.: Saturday in the Park, presented by Country Club Park Neighborhood Association at 3400 12th St, LA 90019. Contact Amy Vukovich at (323) 707-7284 or avoook@comcast.net.

KTTV FOX 11 PREVIEW

Learning from Everyday Routines Can Be Part of Kindergarten-Readiness

Due to continuous TV news coverage of the terrorist threat on airliners last Thursday morning, the First 5 LA and KTTV Fox 11 "Good Beginnings" segments on kindergarten readiness was postponed until this week.

The segments, which will air Thursday 8-9 a.m. and Friday 8-9 a.m., feature ways that parents can help their young children learn using everyday routines, such as doing laundry.

"Sorting socks can be an opportunity to teach about colors, shapes, and counting," said Linda Schwartz, an LAUSD early learning expert. "Going up and down stairs can also be a counting exercise and naming letters in street signs can help familiarize children with letters."

This segment will feature children in the Kindergarten Academy at LAUSD's Queen Anne Place Ready for School Center in West LA, where both preschoolers and parents are preparing for school success.

"Parents are their children's first and best teachers," said Schwartz. "I advise parents to read daily with their children, play interactively, and talk to them about their surroundings."

Schwartz will also emphasize the importance of starting good exercise habits early to avoid obesity and develop gross motor skills.

For other tips and more about this segment and the series, visit www.first5la.org.

First 5 LA and Fox 11 are interested in hearing from viewers who have feedback on the "Good Beginnings" series or suggestions on future segments. Please email jrios@myfoxla.com or vhao@first5la.org.

California Hospitals Earn Poor Grades On WIC Breastfeeding Report Cards

Although more than 80 percent of new mothers enter California hospitals planning to breastfeed, only 43 percent of these women leave the hospital breastfeeding exclusively, according to a study released recently by the California WIC Association and the UC Davis Human Lactation Center.
August 27, 12 p.m.-5 p.m.: Viva La Raza the Mega Concert and Educational Fair at Queen Mary Park in Long Beach, sponsored by KLAX La Raza. Contact Leslie Moguel at (310) 229-3294 or lmoguel@sbslosangeles.com.

EVIE’S DESK
Time for Immunizations During Back to School Next Month
August is a good time to make sure your children’s immunizations are updated in time for day care or school this fall.

Immunizations keep young children healthy by helping their bodies recognize and fight off dangerous diseases.

Because of immunizations, diseases such as polio, meningitis and measles are rare today.

I encourage all parents to follow the California Department of Health Services’ recommended immunization guidelines.

These include vaccinations, starting at two months of age, prevent DTP, hepatitis B, polio, influenza, measles, mumps, rubella, and chicken pox.

Families with children 5 or under who are not already covered by health insurance may be eligible for free or low-cost health, dental, and vision care through First 5 LA’s Healthy Kids program. For information, call (888) FIRST5LA.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

“Some hospitals lack staff that is trained to give mothers the help they need to get started, and many have practices such as separating mothers from their babies, delaying the first breastfeeding, and giving formula to every infant, even when mothers have told the hospital they want to exclusively breastfeed,” said Karen Peters, executive director of the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles.

In LA County, only one hospital, Glendale Memorial Medical Center, has earned the "baby-friendly” designation for encouraging and supporting exclusive breastfeeding. Six other local hospitals were listed among the worst performing hospitals in the state for their rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

The report, "Reducing Obesity from the Start: California Hospitals Must Increase Exclusive Breastfeeding Rates," advocates for exclusively breastfeeding of babies beginning within hours after birth to promote growth and a healthy immune system.

Research also demonstrates that breastfeeding can greatly benefit the health of the mother by reducing diabetes and obesity.

For more information on the report, visit www.breastfeedla.org.

Quality Child Care and Preschool Threatened by Low Salaries, Turnover
A looming crisis in child care is threatening California, according to a study released last week by First 5 California, UC Berkeley, and the California Child Care Resource and Referral Network.

The study was based on telephone surveys of 130,000 providers and teachers who work in 37,000 licensed homes and 8,700 centers across the state. Their responses confirmed earlier evidence that low salaries, high turnover, and an aging workforce of child care providers and preschool teachers will result in inadequate services for families with children under 5 years old, who are expected to increase by 15 percent this decade.

Statewide, First 5 California has committed $150 million to provide incentives, continuing education, and professional development for providers and teachers.

To address the issue in LA County, First 5 LA is investing $15 million in a new workforce development initiative, to begin early next year. The initiative includes a career development pilot in high schools and efforts to work with colleges and universities, as well as community partners to increase the quality of child care providers and teachers, while increasing compensation for and retention of the workforce.

In LA County, a shortfall of 3,000 child care spaces is anticipated at a time when half of children 5 and under have parents who work outside the home. Only one in three preschool teachers has an associate’s degree or higher and only six percent of assistant preschool teachers have such qualifications.
One in five preschool teachers in LA County is over 50 years old and will be retiring in the next ten years or less. Average salaries for child care providers and preschool teachers range from $16,000-25,000 annually, compared to an average of $44,000-47,000 for K-12 teachers.

First 5 LA has also committed $600 million over five years to provide preschool to all 4-year-olds in LA County, regardless of income through Los Angeles Universal Preschool.

For information about the statewide study, visit www.iir.berkeley.edu/csccce.

New Poll Shows California Voters Are Concerned About Children’s Insurance

Nearly nine out of ten California voters are "somewhat" or "very concerned" about the number of children without health insurance, according to a new Field Research poll sponsored by the California Health Care Foundation.

The poll, conducted last month, also found that 56 percent favored a statewide plan to provide every child with health insurance, regardless of immigration status.

In another Field Poll, released earlier this month, 63 percent of likely voters said they would vote "yes" on Proposition 86, the Tobacco Tax Act, which would levy a tax of $2.60 per pack of cigarettes to fund health insurance for California children and other health-related needs.

The tax would raise an estimated $2.1 billion annually to fund children’s health insurance as well as hospital emergency care services, nursing education, community clinics, emergency physicians, prostate cancer treatment, disease research, and tobacco prevention and cessation services.

The Yes on Proposition 86 Campaign includes the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, California Hospital Association, California Primary Care Association, Children Now, PICO California, and The Children’s Partnership. First 5 LA has not yet taken a position on the initiative.

For more information, click here.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Carolyn Graham Gives Parents and Kids a Helping Hand with Magazines & Directories

Carolyn Graham is editor of L.A. Parent magazine, which has provided key information to help enrich the lives of parents and kids for 25 years.

She also oversees L.A. Parent's ancillary publications, including b.a.b.y. magazine for expectant and new parents, the biannual Education Directory, the Best of L.A.Parent readers' choice awards issue and the Family Phone Book.
Graham earned a BA in journalism from New Mexico State University, and has two children, Kate, 6, and Jack, 2.

Which book has most influenced your life?  
The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein.

What makes you happy?  
The sound of my kids running through the house on a Sunday morning.

What makes you angry?  
The sound of my kids running through the house on a Sunday morning... when I'm trying to sleep in.

Which historical figure do you most admire?  
Anne Frank who reminds us of child-like tenacity and strength that we often forget as adults.

What is your idea of a perfect world?  
Where we’re free from war and other global problems, laundry does itself, and cheesecake has zero calories.

What is the greatest challenge faced by LA County children and families?  
Our public education system, with its inequities, exodus to private schools, and challenges among the immigrant population.

What is your motto?  
"Success is not measured by what you have accomplished, but by the opposition you have encountered, and the courage with which you have maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds." -- Orison Swett Marden (1850-1924, founder of Success Magazine)