**The Kit for New Parents Proves its Effectiveness**

In the most recent evaluation study since its inception in 2001, the *Kit for New Parents*, First 5 California’s free comprehensive parent resource featuring a DVD, an ages-and-stages parent guide and other resources, once again achieved high marks.

A report of the three-year study was published in the latest issue of *The American Journal of Public Health*, and revealed that 94 percent of mothers who used the *Kit* said it was a helpful resource for providing important health and parenting information. For these mothers, using the *Kit* also translated into behavioral changes.

The study found that mothers who used the *Kit* were more likely to take additional steps to childproof their homes; read to their infants; be sure their babies receive consistent medical care; and practice safer bottle-feeding.

“We saw significant gains in parenting knowledge among English-speaking mothers who used the *Kit*, and that effect nearly doubled among Spanish-speaking moms,” said Dr. Linda Neuhauser, a professor at the School of Public Health at University of California, Berkeley and lead author of the study.

Nearly 2.5 million *Kits for New Parents* have been distributed at no cost to parents and caregivers throughout California. The *Kit* has led four other states -- Alabama, Arizona, Kentucky and Pennsylvania -- to adopt a similar program. To order a *Kit for New Parents* in English call (888) KIDS-025, and in Spanish call (800) 50-NIÑOS. To download a flyer about the *Kit* to give to families click here.

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**IBM’s KidSmart at Hyde Park: Moving towards a Computer Age**

As our world becomes more dependent on technology, organizations are looking for new ways to teach kids to be tech smart. Thanks to a recent grant given by technology giant IBM, First 5 LA-funded Hyde Park Ready for School will soon be well equipped to help its teachers and families become more comfortable with computers.

A recipient of an IBM KidSmart grant, Hyde Park will receive two fully integrated IBM computers modified for pre-school aged children. The computers are set in child-friendly furniture that is smooth-edged, colorful and at an appropriate height for small children.
October 12, 9:00am–4:00pm: "Not Enough Milk? Hot Topics, Cool Answers," presented by the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center, 1798 N. Garey Ave., Pomona 91767. For more information call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org.

October 12-November 16, 8:00am-4:30pm: "HEALTH CARE INTERPRETING: A Free Course for Bilingual Health Care Workers who Interpret for Patients," is presented by L.A. Care Health Plan at the Los Angeles County College of Nursing & Allied Health at LAC+USC Medical Center, 1237 N. Mission Rd., L.A. 90033. For information call Beverly Treumann at (213) 694-1250, ext. 4223.

October 13, 9:00am-1:00pm: "5th Annual Community Fair," is presented by Virgin Middle School at the Physical Education Field, 152 N. Vermont Avenue, L.A. 90004. For information contact Lilian Hernandez at (213) 368-2824.

October 25, 8:00am-5:30pm: "A New Beginning for Partnerships for Children & Families in Los Angeles County." This 12th annual conference, held at the LA Convention Center, is presented by the LA Country Superior Court and Cal State LA, and focuses on education, training, ideas and dialogue on issues concerning the welfare of children and their families. For registration, call the CSULA conference office at (323) 343-4832.

October 25, 6:30pm-8:30pm: "First Annual Manos Amigas/Helping Hands Celebration" honoring Latino youth and adults learning to read and write, and those who help them accomplish this goal, is being held at the Centro Latino for Literacy, at Crescent Arms, 1709 W. 8th Street, L.A. 90017. For information visit www.centrolatinoliteracy.org.

October 29, 8:30am-4:00pm: "Optimal Care for the Mother-Baby Dyad in the Face of Mood Disorders and Trauma," is being held at the Veterans Memorial Complex (Rotunda Room), 4117 Overland Avenue, Culver City 90230. This event is sponsored by Westside Infant-Family Network (WIN), Westside Children’s Center and the Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles. For information on how to register, please contact Quine Anderson at (310) 846-4100 x 6131 or by email at quinnea@winla.org.

November 1, 9:30am-4:30pm: "Assisting Mothers to Successful Baby-Led Latching," with Christina Smillie, MD and Kittie Frantz, RN presented by the Breastfeeding Taskforce of Greater Los Angeles at Cedars Sinai Medical Center, Harvey Morse Auditorium, South Tower Plaza Level, 8700 Beverly Blvd., L.A. 90048. For more information call Debbie Cowley at (213) 596-5776 or visit www.breastfeedla.org and go to upcoming seminars.

“We are so excited,” said Deborah Hayes, program coordinator at Hyde Park. “For those parents who don’t have access to computers, they can learn to be more comfortable with them as they watch their children use the KidSmart machines.”

The computers will be strategically placed in the highest traffic areas for parents and children at the center. One will be placed in their ‘drop-in reading’ room — a designated children’s books area where parents are encouraged to read aloud to their children. Now parents will also be encouraged to interact on the computer with their children. The other computer will be in the child care room and will have a structured curriculum for the teachers and children to use.

To learn more about the KidSmart computer program go to www.kidsmartearlylearning.org. To learn more about IBM’s community grant opportunities go to www.ibm.com/ibm/ibmgives.

PARTNERSHIP PROFILE

Metamorphosis: Transforming the Ties that Bind

With more than 2,000 languages other than English spoken by more than half of L.A. County’s residents, and almost as many cultural groups and subgroups, communicating, even with your colleagues and neighbors, can sometimes be difficult. And as the County saw during the civil unrest in 1992, language and cultural barriers can create tensions, and tensions can escalate into violence.

To address this behavior, USC’s Annenberg School of Communications Professor Sandra Ball-Rokeach launched an effort to research, document and hopefully improve L.A.’s explicit and not-so-explicit communication systems. She founded the extended research project “Metamorphosis: Transforming the Ties that Bind” in 1998 to begin exploring the ways in which residents, activists and policymakers are attempting to construct a feeling of community through old and new communication strategies.

Using a unique approach to communications research, the project’s team of faculty and graduate students chose 10 ethnically diverse residential areas in L.A. County to study how unique ethnic make-up can shape communication strategies. The project team calls the variety of strategies “storytelling.”

“Metamorphosis is about enabling families to solve everyday problems by accessing an active network of local media, community organizations and residents,” said Ball-Rokeach. "By creating stories together about what could be done to make their community a better place for families and children, they are more likely to invest time in making those stories a reality."

First 5 LA partnered with the Metamorphosis project in 2002 to discover the best methods to use when messaging families of young children. Together we have jointly produced two research briefs, What Media Do People Connect With To Understand What Is Going On In Thier Community? and The Challenge of Reaching Out to LA County Latinos. Both can both be accessed on our website www.first5la.org.

To learn more about "Metamorphosis: Transforming the Ties that Bind" go to www.metamorph.org.
November 14-16, 2007: "Infant/Toddler Training Institute for Higher Education Faculty: California’s Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Program Guidelines and Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations" is being held at the Ayres Hotel in Hawthorne. Fellowships will be provided to all participants and will cover tuition, materials, hotel accommodations (double-occupancy), and most meals. For information call Amy Schustz at (415) 289-2303 or at aschust@wested.org to receive an application form. Please note that the institute is open solely to California higher education faculty teaching courses in early childhood development and care.

EVIE’S DESK
Now’s time to cure `sicko’ health system
The following opinion article was featured in the Los Angeles Daily News and La Opinion on Sept. 20, 2007, and later in other local newspapers.

In Michael Moore's "Sicko," a father whose toddler is hearing-impaired in both ears complains that his family medical-insurance provider will only pay for an implanted hearing device in one of the girl’s ears because the mechanism is considered "experimental." How can the device be experimental for one ear, the father asks, but not the other? Why deny coverage for a device that is all the more critical because his little girl is learning to talk?

"She has to hear from both sides of her head," the father complains.

When it comes to the debate over universal health care coverage, it’s time for public officials to hear stories like these - and for both sides of the political divide to listen closely to them.

Even families with insurance, like the father whose deaf daughter was at a critical stage in language development and could have greatly benefited from two hearing aids, are not getting the coverage they need and deserve. Imagine what it’s like for families with no coverage. Actually, it doesn't take much imagination because those families are all around us.

To read more click here. To download the pdf click here.

To access the full La Opinion article in Spanish click here. To download the pdf in Spanish click here.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

POLICY PICK

Pre-Kindergarten Programs Benefit from AB 194 Added Funding

Last week the state Legislature passed AB 194, a bill that would restore to the state budget Governor Schwarzenegger’s blue penciled items. Of special interest to child advocacy groups is the reinstatement of $5 million that would fund full-day care for children in state-run Pre-Kindergarten and Family Literacy (PKFL) programs. The programs were created last year with the passage of AB 172.

This funding would further complement an initial $50 million investment in pre-Kindergarten, also established last year as part of the governor’s three-year, $150 million proposed expansion of pre-K.

More importantly, the $5 million in funding has moved from a one-time only fund to an annual source of funding for pre-K. Expansion of these programs and services helps ensure that California children are ready for kindergarten. As champions of children, it is First 5 LA’s hope that the governor will approve this legislation within the next few weeks.