October 8, 2007
To submit comments or items (3 weeks in advance) for this e-newsletter, please contact Katie Kurutz, public affairs officer, First 5 LA at kkurutz@first5la.org or (213) 492-5902.

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CALENDAR

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 Virgil 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," is presented by the LA County Superior Court and Cal State LA. The event, held at the L.A. Convention Center, will feature information, training, ideas, and dialogue regarding issues that concern the welfare of children and their families. For registration call (323) 343-4832.

Three Family Literacy Programs Celebrate Exemplary Status

First 5 LA grantees always strive for improvement, and the Family Literacy Support Network (FLSN), a technical assistance provider for our Family Literacy grantees, has formalized this process by engaging three grantees in an Exemplary Validated Program (EVP) pilot process. The three Exemplary Validated Programs - Hawthorne School District, Mothers' Club Family Learning Program, and Rowland Unified School District - will be honored at a reception this Thursday at First 5 LA.

The three programs were invited in 2006 to undergo a process of identifying standards of excellence for a family literacy program. The model, designed by FLSN, asked each grantee to establish a team of staff, administration, and parents to prepare an evidence-based portfolio.

They then worked with a panel of experts in identifying key qualities of a high performing family literacy program, using the portfolios as a guide. As part of the evaluation panel, FLSN invited two nationally recognized experts in the field of family literacy, Chris Dwyer of RMC Research Corporation based in Portsmouth, NH and Barbara VanHorn of the Goodling Institute at Pennsylvania State University.

"The EVP pilot has the potential to describe promising practices that promote school readiness outcomes for replication across L.A. County," said Darline Robles, Superintendent of the Los Angeles County Office of Education, home of the FLSN.

According to the expert panel, there is a dire need to provide a more in-depth account of what comprises promising practices for family literacy programs so that successful practices can be replicated in other communities.

To learn more about the EVP process join us on October 11th, from 4pm-6pm; or contact Liz Guerra at (562) 922-8781 or Guerra_liz@lacoe.edu.

Policy Brief on the Importance of Early Developmental Screening

As the nation's child development experts work on ways to identify and address children's developmental and behavioral problems as early as possible, First 5 LA has partnered locally with UCLA's Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities in an Early Developmental Screening and Intervention (EDSI) partnership to help effect change in the field.
EDSI has recently released its first policy brief outlining new opportunities that could strengthen early screening and intervention efforts by experts in the medical field and early childhood educators. The brief, called "Policy Scan: Desired Results and Achieving Improvement in a System of Early Identification and Intervention in L.A. County," reviews the influence of policy on the early identification and intervention process, describes how medical experts and educators can assist with this process, and provides recommendations for leveraging current efforts to support improvement at the state and local levels.

It also gives examples of strategies in the areas of vision and engagement, leadership and collaboration, measures of desired outcomes, and methods to promote continuous learning for leaders and direct service providers. The brief shows that despite the challenges, this is an exciting time to pursue systematic change.

To access the brief go to www.first5la.org.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Kindergartener Noah Ogata Helps Homeless with Project Star
This week the Monday Morning Report will celebrate a child who is a champion for adults.

Noah Ogata, a Kindergartener at Lumbini Child Development Center in Downtown L.A., is proving it's never too early to give back to the community. Noah is the founder and director of Project Star, a support program focused on collecting and distributing blankets for the homeless in L.A. With help from his family, he is collecting blankets from any willing donor, and will soon distribute them to those in need on L.A.'s streets and in shelters.

Since his mother started driving him to Lumbini two years ago, Noah, has traveled past throngs of homeless men and women daily while on his way to school. It wasn't long before the five-year-old became concerned about the people that he saw sleeping on the streets with no shelter or blankets. Wanting to help, he thought that giving blankets could be a first step.

His grandmother, a retired elementary school teacher, encouraged him to make a flier asking for blanket donations from friends and family so that he may give them to the homeless. With help from his mother, Wendy Tamaki-Ogata, a counselor with the Homeless Education and Teen Parent Program through LAUSD, Project Star fliers have been circulating around the early education community.

Since its inception a few weeks ago, Project Star has received 25 blankets, but his mother anticipates that Noah will gather quite a few more once folks have enough time to identify blankets they are willing to donate. Click here to download a copy of the Noah's flier.

What is your favorite book?
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

What makes you happy?
Lots and lots of kisses, and when my parents are with me.
President Bush last week vetoed compromise legislation that would have reauthorized and expanded the State Children’s Health Insurance Program, which he called a step toward “government-run health care for every American.” SCHIP currently provides health insurance to 6.6 million children throughout the country and more than 800,000 in our own state. Since 1997, the popular program has reduced California’s number of uninsured children by a third.

The bipartisan bill would have allowed an additional 4 million kids into the program by increasing the federal cigarette tax by 61 cents. In its place, the president proposed an option that many believe could prevent more than one million children from receiving the proper health care that they need and deserve.

On its face, Bush’s veto of the bill seems to be a clash of ideologies - mostly whether the government should extend healthcare benefits to more uninsured children from poor families - or if that responsibility should be left up to the private sector. The president said signing SCHIP would have brought us one step closer to socialized medicine. I disagree. I believe that signing this bill would have brought us one step closer to fulfilling our responsibility as a country that cares for its children, its indigent population, and for the struggling working poor and middle class.

Within the next few weeks, the House of Representatives is expected to vote on whether to override the President’s veto. To achieve this, 25 representatives must change their votes. As champions of our children, First 5 LA urges our country’s leadership to support SCHIP, and in so doing ensure that our children get the health care coverage that they need and deserve.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

What makes you sad?
When my parents are not with me.

What makes people sad?
People get sad because they don't have kids. They don't have anyone to live with!

What is your favorite thing to do with your family?
Project Star - getting blankets for people that don't have blankets. And going to the Aquarium (of the Pacific) to see the sharks, stingrays, and birds.

What will you be for Halloween? Why?
The Red Power Ranger because he fights bad guys and then people are safer.