Monday Morning Report

December 4, 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.

TELEMUNDO PREVIEW
Spanish TV News Report to Highlight Dental Health During Pregnancy

Studies show that pregnant women with periodontal disease (a serious gum infection that destroys attachment fibers and supporting bone that hold teeth in the mouth) may be seven times more likely to have a baby born too early and too small. That’s because oral bacteria produces a labor-inducing chemical called prostaglandin.

To bring attention to the importance of prenatal oral health, First 5 LA and Telemundo Los Angeles will present a TV news feature this Wednesday on the weekly “Primeros Pasos” series on pregnancy and infant development.

Scheduled to air between 6 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. on KVEA, Channel 52, the video package will show pregnant women at a WIC Center at an oral health workshop and follow Telemundo anchorwoman Lucia Navarro to a dental exam by Glendale dentist, Beatriz Tobon.

“If you’re diagnosed with periodontal disease, your dentist may recommend a common non-surgical procedure called scaling and root planing, which cleans tooth and gum surfaces of plaque and tartar to eliminate bacterial toxins,” said Dr. Tobon.

Research suggests that scaling and root planing may reduce the risk of preterm births in pregnant women with periodontal disease. The procedure may also alleviate many of the uncomfortable symptoms associated with pregnancy gingivitis, such as swelling and tenderness of the gums.

According to the March of Dimes, premature births have soared to become the number one obstetric problem in the United States. Many premature babies come into the world with serious health problems, including life-long conditions, such as cerebral palsy, mental retardation, and blindness.

To learn more about periodontal disease during pregnancy, click here.
EVIE’S DESK

Tips for Parents to Ensure A Safe Holiday Season

With Christmas trees twinkling and candles aglow, our homes will soon be looking festive for the holidays. But all these lovely decorations can create safety hazards, especially for young children.

Here are some tips for ensuring that your home is safe for the little ones:

• On your tree, avoid hanging ornaments that are fragile or that have small detachable parts on the lower branches where young children can reach them.
• Place trees and other greenery away from fireplaces and radiators. Remember to water your tree regularly to prevent it from drying out, which could make it more likely to catch on fire.
• Keep burning candles out of children’s reach and keep matches and lighters locked away.
• Do not place lit candles near drapes or decorations. Blow out all candles before going to bed or when you are leaving the house.

This is a joyful time of year that should be spent with family and friends in the comfort of your home, safe and sound. For more tips on holiday fire safety, click here.

Evelyn V. Martinez
Executive Director
First 5 LA

Healthy Births Symposium Participants Share Wealth of Community Resources

About 130 representatives of more than 50 organizations shared a wealth of resources, strategies, and accomplishments to promote optimal health for mothers-to-be and their babies at LA Best Babies Network’s (LABBN) annual Partners Symposium November 15 in Los Angeles.

“It’s exciting to see such a wide range of perinatal caregivers and advocates—from nurses and physicians, to social workers, doulas, and promotoras (Spanish-speaking health promoters)—come together to share their enthusiasm for the important work of promoting health births,” said Dr. Carolina Reyes, executive director of LABBN.

LABBN was created by First 5 LA to serve as a strategic partner and the coordinating body for the $15 million Healthy Births Initiative. Its goal is to network health, education, and social service programs supporting pregnant women to help ensure healthy, full-term babies.

LABBN provides technical support to the four Best Babies Collaboratives, comprised of more than 50 organizations that promote maternal health in high-need areas of Los Angeles County.

For information about the Healthy Births Initiative, visit www.labestbabies.org.

Long Beach Families Receive Children’s Books at Literacy Event

The Long Beach Family Literacy Program of the Long Beach Unified School District, a First 5 LA grantee, celebrated National Family Literacy Month in November by hosting a community event featuring children’s authors and the presentation of children’s books to 30 Head Start families.

This was part of a giveaway of 50,000 children’s books to low-income families in the City of Long Beach, which was selected out of eight communities served by JetBlue Airways for its “Jet Back to School with Blue” promotion, a literacy campaign.

Long Beach was chosen after it received the most votes in a consumer contest that coincided with the year-long celebration of the 10th anniversary of Nickelodeon’s award-winning program, "Blues Clues."
In all, the literacy campaign aims to generate one million books for needy children across the country. For information about services for families, call the Long Beach Family Literacy Program at (562) 595-8893 x264.

CHAMPION PROFILE
Jose Ramos Directs Community Services for Children’s Bureau
Champion Profile features individuals who exemplify First 5 LA’s tagline, “Champions for Our Children.”

Jose A. Ramos Jr., is director of Community Services for Los Angeles County at Children’s Bureau of Southern California, a non-profit organization that provides child abuse prevention and treatment services to 12,000 children and their families annually.

Prior to joining the Children’s Bureau 11 years ago, he had worked in the child welfare field for several years.

A co-convener for Services Planning Area (SPA) 4-Metro and a member of the LA County Children’s Planning Council, Ramos also serves as adjunct professor at Springfield College in Inglewood.

Born in Ecuador, he immigrated to the United States at age 10 and has lived in California for 26 years. Ramos earned a master’s in social work from Cal State Long Beach.

Which book has most influenced your life?
The Shame of the Nation by Jonathan Kozol.

What makes you happy?
Taking a nap with either of my children.

Angry?
Rude people.

Which historical figure do you most admire?
Thomas Edison, for his persistence.

What is your favorite way to spend time with an important child in your life?
Looking up at the sky and seeing the clouds pass by.

Which living person do you most admire and why?
Michelle Ramos, a family member, for her constant ability to do what is right.