

WHY WE CARE

We have a critical window of time – prenatal to age 5 – to build the foundations every child needs to prepare for success in school and life. Research shows it is during this time that a child’s brain develops most rapidly. In fact, 90 percent of their brain is developed by age 5.

One of the most compounding and damaging factors in a child’s development is the effect of trauma and toxic stress including racism, where the experiences often result in children facing lifelong physical, behavioral and emotional challenges. However, research shows that intervening as early as possible can buffer the impact of trauma on brain development. To identify and respond appropriately to a child who has been exposed to trauma, it is critical to ensure child and family serving systems are equipped with the knowledge and skills to provide innovative and culturally appropriate trauma informed approaches.

By achieving results for children and families that children are safe from abuse, neglect, and other trauma, we are contributing to our north star that by 2028 all children in L.A. County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

Trauma

The effects of a single event, a series of events and/or ongoing circumstances that are experienced or perceived as physically or emotionally harmful and/or life threatening

SYSTEMS CHANGE EFFORTS

By identifying and supporting best practices around trauma-informed approaches we will implement diverse approaches that improve the service delivery system for children prenatal to age 5 and their families. Project highlights include:

• Practice Change

- ACEs Aware – ACEs Aware is an initiative launched by the California Department of Health Care Services and the Office of the California Surgeon General with the goal to reduce adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) by half in one generation. First 5 LA will conduct provider engagement activities to promote the ACEs Aware initiative among the Medi-Cal provider community in L.A. County.
- City of Long Beach – Supported the Department of Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to build upon existing efforts and momentum to strengthen a cross-system, citywide trauma and resiliency-informed approach. The City of Long Beach facilitated paradigm shifts within DHHS and Library Services, collaborated with other community-level initiatives, and documented organizational culture change and lessons learned for future replication in 2018-2020.
- Home for Good – In partnership with United Way of Greater Los Angeles, First 5 LA supports activities to infuse and coordinate a trauma-informed approach with HFG community-driven initiative to end homelessness.
- Strong Healthy And Resilient Kids – The SHARK Program within the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services addresses the needs of children and youth who are affected by developmental and behavioral challenges as well as toxic stress. First 5 LA supports establishing and rolling out data collection workflow and management; and developing referral pathways that include community connections.

• Policy Change

- Cohesive advocacy strategy to educate policymakers on state and federal screening requirements; and support state and federal policy to strengthen language on screening services (e.g., bills related to the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program, developmental screening incentive payments, trauma screening incentive payments, maternal depression screening, etc.).

• Will Building

- Trauma-Informed Pooled Fund – In partnership with other funders, First 5 LA launched a countywide effort around trauma and resiliency informed systems change in 2016. Since then, First 5 LA and the other funding partners have continued to support the advancement of trauma informed systems change in L.A. County by contributing to a pooled fund. A workgroup of foundations, community-based organizations and county departments convened for nearly a year to provide recommendations on priorities and approaches that resulted in a July 2017 report on [Emerging Lessons and Potential Strategies from the Los Angeles County Trauma and Resiliency-Informed Systems Change Initiative](#).

CALL TO ACTION

- You are often the first line of defense. Screening early leads to more successful long-term outcomes.
- Contribute to the pooled fund to support efforts to embed trauma and resiliency informed care in child and family serving systems.

To learn more, contact:

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