



WRITING STYLE GUIDE



Revised June 2022

WELCOME!

The First 5 LA Writing Style Guide is provided to you as an important, helpful, and iterative work-in-progress reference tool to use when communicating on behalf of the agency for all internal and external audiences.

We are all communicators. And as such, we help to drive desirable impressions others have of who we are as an agency and the important nature of our work. As part of a quasi-government public entity, we fully embrace our responsibility of being good stewards of our mission tax-payer funds. As communicators, we are also asked to embrace how we can convey good stewardship in other ways. These include the cohesion of our work and the practices we follow to facilitate a clear understanding of that work.

Our goal is for this guide to provide references common to our shared work, and style standards that can deliver on the part we each play in maintaining the voice of First 5 LA. At the end of the guide, we offer additional resources to support your contributions to agency communications.

Thank you,

Office of Communications (OOC)

How to use and contribute to this Guide

While the tips we offer throughout this guide complement the OOC's Brand Ambassador training and Communications Playbook, you can begin using this guide in advance of other valuable trainings to begin better connecting with your audiences. This applies to everything from emails and everyday conversations, to blogs, white papers, presentations, brochures and job postings.

**Please review this document and reference it regularly
via this easy link to the OOC SharePoint site.**

Maintaining the Guide

Just as organizations continually evolve, so do guides such as this one. OOC takes the lead in this guide's maintenance, but we all share in keeping it up to date. If there is an internal change in preferred terminology, please let the Office of Communications know by emailing Anastasia Howard at ahoward@First5LA.org.

Please feel free to contact Anastasia with any questions or comments about the guide.

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OUR BRAND & VOICE

Brand

More than a name and logo, First 5 LA's brand represents our core mission, values and what we stand for as an agency. What you say and do builds our brand and reputation and serves as the foundation for building relationships with our key stakeholders.

Our brand is the consistent and cohesive expression of our core values and mission that defines our commitment to real and meaningful change for young children, prenatal to age 5.

We are all First 5 LA Brand Ambassadors because we:

- Talk about the agency with each other, parents, communities, grantees, partners and contractors.
- Share information with members of the community about our 2020-2028 Strategic Plan and our Pathway for Systems Change.
- Bring context to our North Star, Values, Investment Guidelines, and outcomes we seek for young children and family-centered systems.
- Talk about how our work nurtures the whole child and whole family, particularly those whose life trajectories are most stunted by systemic inequities.
- Tell our family and friends about what we do and how we work.

Voice

How we talk about First 5 LA can have as much of an impact as what we say. When we speak, we represent First 5 LA as a transparent agency, and our work as authentic and collaborative.

We are...

- **Optimistic** about the future for children prenatal to age 5 in L.A. County.
- **Dedicated** to the many policies and systems that work better for kids.
- **Authentic Collaborators** with like-minded organizations across the county.

So that when we speak, we are...

- **Upbeat** in our tone of voice – even on paper. This doesn't mean using exclamation points, but it does mean being positive.
- **Proud** of our work, but not arrogant; we've come a long way but there's much more to be done.
- **Respectful** of varying opinions and of those we serve. We embody our values.

Tone Matters. Our tone is...

- **Courageous** – proactively speak out and share our voice.
- **Confident** – demonstrate how you are a trusted resource to the L.A. community.

- **Collaborative** – share your admiration for our partners and those we serve; encourage consensus.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING STRONG CONTENT

The below tips will help you develop clear, concise and reader friendly content – an essential aspect of expressing the First 5 LA voice effectively.

Audience

Consider your primary audience’s level of knowledge about First 5 LA and your subject, their level of expertise, depth of interest, and grade reading level. Anticipate their questions. Balance what you want them to know with what they want to know.

Avoid jargon

Jargon or technical language may be appropriate when writing exclusively for specialized audiences, like policy makers, elected officials or even the finance team. However, it should be avoided when writing for a new or broad audience.

- If you must use jargon or technical language for a general consumer audience, explain the term in simple language; you may want to provide an example or an analogy. (e.g., if you use “family resilience,” you could explain that it is “a family’s ability to recover quickly from tough situations.”)

Clearly communicate to your audience the action you are seeking

Engagement? Advocacy? Systems change? State legislation or funding to change systems that exist to serve young children and families? Existing or desired partnerships at local and community levels?

A good way to challenge how well you will achieve your desired audience response is to ask yourself – Did I grab their attention early and quickly? Have you connected with a sense of urgency that communicates the first five years of life are critical to brain development and lifelong patterns of learning and behavior?

- Start with your bottom line. Help your readers quickly determine if they want to read further.
- Short sentences are easier to read. Aim for no more than 15 or 20 words per sentence.
- Rather than a long sentence with a series of three or more items, opt to use bullets.
- Shorter paragraphs are easier for readers to scan. A good estimate is four to five sentences; or 75 to 100 words. And yes, one sentence can still be a paragraph.

Concise

Use short sentences and paragraphs since they are easier to understand. Break long sentences and eliminate unnecessary words. (e.g., “It is very important that you give water to your children while they play outside in the park during the hot summer months” could be shortened to “Don’t forget to give kids lots of water, especially when they play outside in the hot summer months.”)

- Use hyperlinks that leverage elsewhere saved documents to lessen the load on your content. And avoid “click here” by using your content (term, phrase, title, report

name) to embed links. Stand-alone links are an exception and appropriate at the beginning or end of a section and when part of a links menu.

- Keep it crisp by using strong verbs instead of noun phrases (e.g., from *is able to* to *can*; from *afford an opportunity to* allow.)
- Avoid redundancies (e.g., from 9:30 a.m. in the morning to 9:30 a.m.; from *completely destroyed to* destroyed.)

Consistent

- If you must use **acronyms**, always spell out in first reference with the acronym referenced parenthetically. For example, Office of Communications (OOC).
- **Consistent terminology** (e.g., do not use “Covered California” in some instances and “Covered CA” in others.)
- **Consistent abbreviations** (e.g., Los Angeles County Department of Health Services is often abbreviated after the first reference to LADHS, DHS or L.A. County DHS. While they are all correct, choose one abbreviation and use it throughout your document.)
- **Consistent punctuation** (e.g., If you use a period at the end of a full-sentence bullet, ensure you do so throughout the document. If your bulleted content is not a full sentence, do not use periods.) If your bulleted information is one continuous thought, separate each bullet by a semicolon, end the second to the last bullet with “and,” and the final bullet with a period:
 - The guide covers resource content;
 - helpful writing tips;
 - editorial styles practiced at First 5 LA; and
 - Preferred Spanish terms and phrases.
- **Consistent fonts** – First 5 LA’s brand guidelines dictate that we use Gotham Book and Gotham Bold. Capriola is occasionally used. HOWEVER, because our brand fonts are generally unavailable on PCs, please use Arial 11 pt. (regular and bold).

Formal vs. Informal

Content and audience will help you decide on the formality of your writing.

- Once First 5 LA is identified as the actor in your message, “we” is acceptable thereafter. However, if another actor in the message is introduced, “we” can be misleading.
- Contractions are barometers for informality. (e.g., Formal: *The First 5 LA office will not be open on Christmas Day.* Informal: *First 5 LA’s office won’t be open on Christmas Day.*)
- Avoid taking informality too far. Colloquial words or expressions can be interpreted as slang.

- Bureaucratic words and phrases can cause some readers to disengage. Choose wisely (e.g., *aforementioned* vs. *as mentioned*; *at the present time* vs. *now*; *due to the fact that* vs. *because*).

Voice and content build reader engagement

The audience reaction you are seeking helps you choose between active and passive voice. You want to keep your readers engaged and complicated sentences can work against you.

- Active voice is strong, clear, concise, conversational and the cornerstone of writing principles. The subject of the verb is performing the action. “The boy threw the ball.”
- Passive voice is often reserved for descriptive, subtle and less direct content. Here, the subject is the recipient of the verb’s action. “The ball was thrown by the boy.”

To increase engagement between you, First 5 LA and your audience, know about their needs, what drives their interests, what they ask about, and what influences their decisions. Does your message address their concerns? Stay focused on your core message rather than going broad and offering thin layers of detail.

A GUIDE TO FIRST 5 LA TERMS & STYLE

First 5 LA Follows Associated Press Style

Please note that First 5 LA adheres to the *Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing on Media Law* (usually called the *AP Stylebook*); a style and usage guide for grammar and punctuation used by news media globally.

First published in 1953, the AP Stylebook is widely used as a writing and editing reference in newsrooms, classrooms and corporate offices worldwide. It provides fundamental guidelines for spelling, language, punctuation, usage and journalistic style. It is the definitive resource for journalists.

When in doubt, please contact First 5 LA's Office of Communications for AP Style guidance. In addition to the AP Stylebook's guidance, First 5 LA's most frequently searched styles can be found on the following pages of this Writing Style Guide.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Terms, Styles & Glossary

Toward development of a comprehensive glossary of diversity, equity and inclusion terms that support the growth of our agency's culture and the content we develop for all audiences, First 5 LA has begun development of, and will continue to expand on, resources to support your writing efforts.

- **African American** – Do not hyphenate. Can also use Black. (Capitalize "Black" in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, conveying an essential and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, including those in the African diaspora and within Africa. The lowercase black is a color, not a person.)
- **ally** – Someone who supports a group other than one's own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
- **anti-racism** – A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas. Practicing antiracism requires constantly identifying, challenging, and upending existing racist policies to replace them with antiracist policies that foster equity between racial groups
- **Asian American** – Asian and Asian American may be used interchangeably. When referring to specific groups within the Asian community, please be specific (e.g., Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, etc.). Do not hyphenate.
- **Asian American Pacific Islander** – a term sometimes used in the United States to include both Asian Americans and Pacific Islands Americans.
- **bias** – Is an inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned. Biases are unreasonably negative feelings, preferences, or opinions about a social group. It is grounded in stereotypes and prejudices.
- **BIPoC** – An acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous and People of Color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.

- **birthing people** – see pregnant people, pregnant persons.
- **Black** – Can also use African American (do not hyphenate). **Capitalize Black** in a racial, ethnic or cultural sense, conveying an essential and shared sense of history, identity and community among people who identify as Black, including those in **the African diaspora** and within Africa. Lowercase **black** is a color, not a person.
- **culture** – Is the values, beliefs, traditions, behavioral norms, linguistic expression, knowledge, memories, and collective identities that are shared by a group of people and give meaning to their social environments. Culture is learned and inherited behavior that distinguishes members of one group from another group. Culture is not static and can change over time.
- **cultural competence** – Is the ability to honor and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles, and behaviors of those receiving and providing services. Individuals practicing cultural competency have knowledge of the intersectionality of social identities and the multiple axes of oppression that people from different racial, ethnic, and other minoritized groups face. Individuals striving to develop cultural competence recognize that it is a dynamic, on-going process that requires a long-term commitment to learning.
- **disability** – Physical or mental impairment that affects a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- **discrimination** – The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favors one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion and other categories.
- **diversity** – Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives and values.
- **diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)** – is a term used to describe policies and programs that promote the representation and participation of different groups of individuals, including people of different ages, races and ethnicities, abilities and disabilities, genders, religions, cultures and sexual orientations.
- **equality** – The condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted the same access, rights, and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences. People who support equality believe that different circumstances and identities should not prescribe social disadvantage; therefore, equality is the elimination of this disadvantage.
- **equity** – The condition under which individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities, as the general population. Equity accounts for systematic inequalities, meaning the distribution of resources provides more for those who need it most. Conversely equality indicates uniformity where everything is evenly distributed among people.
- **gender** – Is separate from ‘sex,’ which is the biological classification of male or female based on physiological features. Gender is socially constructed roles, behavior, activities, and attributes what society considers “appropriate” for men and

- women. A person's gender may not necessarily correspond to their birth assigned sex or be limited to the gender binary (woman/man).
- **gender identity** – Distinct from the term “sexual orientation,” refers to a person's internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
 - **gender non-conforming** – An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.
 - **harassment** – The use of comments or actions that can be perceived as offensive, embarrassing, humiliating, demeaning and unwelcome.
 - **Hispanic** – See Latino.
 - **implicit bias or unconscious bias** – Bias that operates outside of the person's awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person's espoused beliefs and values.
 - **inclusion** – The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.
 - **indigenous** – in reference to original inhabitants of a place. When used as a noun, the “I” is capitalized.
 - **institutional racism** – Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices create different outcomes and opportunities for different groups based on racial discrimination.
 - **Latino** – The preferred term for a person from — or whose ancestors were from — a Spanish-speaking land or culture, or from Latin America. For groups of males or of mixed gender, use the plural Latinos. For groups of females, use the plural Latinas.
 - **LGBTQ+** – An inclusive term to mean all communities included in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, 2/two spirit, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual and ally. (The less commonly used acronym is LGBTTTQQIAA.)
 - **Native American or Indian** – Native American is the preferred usage.
 - **pregnant people, pregnant persons, birthing people** – each is an inclusive term that recognizes and acknowledges the lived experience of trans and nonbinary people.
 - **structural racism** – Is the normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics historical, cultural, institutional, and interpersonal that routinely advantage Whites while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. Structural racism encompasses the entire system of white domination, diffused and infused in all aspects of society including its history, culture, politics, economics and entire social fabric. Structural racism is more difficult to locate in a particular institution because it involves the reinforcing effects of multiple institutions and cultural norms, past and present, continually reproducing old and producing new forms of racism. Structural racism is the most profound and pervasive form of racism all other forms of racism emerge from structural racism.

- **unconscious bias or implicit bias** – Bias that operates outside of the person’s awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person’s espoused beliefs and values.
- **weathering** – refers to the way the constant stress of racism can lead to premature biological aging and worse health outcomes for Black people.
- **white** – used as a noun, white is not capitalized; according to the Associated Press to not encourage white supremacists and because white people in general have much less shared history and culture, and don’t have the experience of being discriminated against because of skin color.

When Referencing First 5 LA

Toward building style consistency when we refer to First 5 LA

- **Centers, Offices and Teams (use “&” not “and”)**
 - Centers:
 - Center for Child & Family Impact (CCFI)
 - Center Support Team
 - Communities Team
 - Early Care & Education Team
 - Family Supports Team
 - Health Systems Team
 - Center for Operational Excellence (COE)
 - Contract Administration & Purchasing Team
 - Finance Team
 - Human Resources & Talent Management Team
 - Workplace Management Team
 - Offices:
 - Executive Director’s Office (EDO)
 - Office of Communications (OOC)
 - Office of Data for Action (ODFA)
 - Office of Equity, Strategy & Learning (OESL)
 - Office of Government Affairs & Public Policy (OGAPP)
- **Colleague, employee, and team** are all preferred to “staff.”
- **First 5 LA or First 5 Los Angeles** – not First5LA, First 5 L.A., or First5L.A., (for internal informal: F5LA).
- **First 5 LA, the Children and Families Commission, the Board of Commissioners, the Commission, the Los Angeles County Children and Families First - Proposition 10 Commission:**
 - Use First 5 LA when referring to the agency. Use the Board of Commissioners or the Commission when referring to the collective board that oversees the funding allocations of First 5 LA. Only use the Los Angeles County Children and Families First - Proposition 10 Commission when required for legal purposes.
 - Alternative after first reference: agency

- **First 5 LA refers to itself as:** a leader of systems change, partner, advocate, convener, collaborator, catalyst, and communicator of child and family needs and strategies that make a difference in their lives.

General Terms & Styles

academic degrees – If mention of a degree is necessary to establish someone’s credentials, the preferred form is to avoid an abbreviation and use instead a phrase, such as: John Smith holds a doctorate in social work or Jane Doe has a bachelor’s degree in communications.

- Do not refer to any professional as “doctor” or “Dr.” unless that person is a medical doctor.
- Use abbreviations such as B.A., M.A., LL.D. and Ph.D. only when the need to identify many individuals by degree on first reference would make the preferred form cumbersome. Use these abbreviations only after a full name; never after just a last name.
- Use an apostrophe in bachelor’s degree, a master’s, etc. (“associate” degree is not plural).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) – Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).

addresses – Use the abbreviation Ave., St. and Blvd. only with a numbered address: 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. Spell them out and capitalize when part of a formal street name: Pennsylvania Avenue. All similar words (drive, road, etc.) are always spelled out. Always use figures for an address number: 9 Morningside Drive. Spell out and capitalize First through Ninth when used as street names; use figures with two letters for 10th and above: 7 Fifth Ave., 100 21st St.

Affordable Care Act – Shorthand for the formal title of the health care overhaul that President Barack Obama signed into law in 2010. Its full name is Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

ages – Always use figures. Only use “years” or “years old” if leaving it out would cause confusion: The girl is 15 is preferred over The girl is 15 years old. If the age is being used as an adjective, hyphens are required: The 15-year-old girl or The race is for 4-year-olds. • prenatal to age 5 – All First 5 LA communications must refer to our target demographic as “prenatal to age 5.” We are no longer using “0 to 5.”

a.m., p.m. – Lowercase, with periods.

and – Only use an ampersand (&) when it’s part of a proper title.

assemblymember – Capitalize only when used as a title before a name. Some assemblymembers prefer to be identified by their gender, such as Assemblywoman Suzette Martinez Valladares. As a courtesy, please check with the individual for their preference.

back-to-school – Hyphenate when used in front of a noun or verb.

baby-friendly hospitals – Capitalize when referring to the *Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative*.

Best Start – Capitalize and italicize. Best Start Regional and Local Networks on first reference, network with a lower case “n” on subsequent references. Describe as an “effort,” not a “program.” Name community when referring to specific – Best Start Metro LA or Best Start Panorama City and Neighbors.

In 2010, to strengthen public and community systems, advance and build on community experience, and expand influence and impact with data, First 5 LA established the Best Start initiative and investment to cultivate community partnerships in 14 geographic areas in Los Angeles County to catalyze the members in creating and sustaining positive outcomes for their community's children and families. In 2018, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved a five Regional Network Grantees (RNGs) structure for the 14 geographies to recognize and support regional and local networks as critical in developing, uplifting and sustaining systems changes.

birth rate

birthweight

blog

Board of Commissioners

breastfed

breastfeeding

breastfeeding-friendly hospitals

breastmilk

built environments

bullet lists – Capitalize the first letter in a bulleted item and use a period at the end if the item is a complete sentence. Be consistent in each grouping.

CalWORKs

Cal-Learn

capacity building

capitalization – Use capital letters only if it is a formal title immediately before a name (Executive Director Kim Belshé), a proper noun (John, America, General Electric) or a proper name (like a city, street, political party, agency or department, program or initiative).

cesarean section – C-section is acceptable on second reference.

child care – see First 5 LA's preferred term "early learning."

child rearing

commas

- Use to separate elements in a series, but not before the concluding conjunction (also known as the Oxford comma): The flag is red, white and blue.
- Use a comma before the concluding conjunction when the series is complex and leaving it out would cause confusion: The main points to consider are whether the athletes are skillful enough to compete, whether they have the stamina to endure the training, and whether they have the proper mental attitude.
- Use a comma before the concluding conjunction if an integral part of the series requires a conjunction itself: I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.

- Use a comma before introducing a direct quotation: Ruel said, “She spent six months in Argentina and came back speaking English with a Spanish accent.”
- Use a comma at the end of a quote when the attribution follows. The comma always goes inside the quote: “First 5 LA is concerned about the health, safety and education of young children,” said Kim Belshé, executive director of First 5 LA.

composition titles – Apply the guidelines listed here to book titles, briefs, research papers, article titles and white papers. The guidelines are as follows:

- Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. - Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding;
 - Children’s Elementary School Outcomes After Participating in Family Literacy Programs
- Capitalize an article — the, a, an — or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.
 - The First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative Evaluation.
- Translate a foreign title into English unless a work is generally known by its foreign name.
- When referring to a composition, italicize the names of all works except the Bible and books that are primarily catalogs of reference material. In addition to catalogs, this category includes almanacs, directories, dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, handbooks and similar publications. Also, do not italicize such software titles as WordPerfect or Windows.
 - Los Angeles Almanac
 - Collins American Dictionary

EXCEPTION: Using italics for book titles, etc. is not recommended in the AP Stylebook. This convention is specific for First 5 LA. Also, italics are used throughout this document to emphasize a demonstration.

copayment

councilmember – Capitalize only when used as a title before a name. As in assemblymember, some councilmembers prefer to be identified by their gender, such as Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez. As a courtesy, please check with the individual for their preference.

county – Lowercase unless part of a proper name: Los Angeles County.

countywide

dashes – A dash is not the same as a hyphen. Do not use hyphens when you should use dashes. Dashes are used in a sentence and hyphens are used to combine words. There are two types of dashes:

- *Em dash:* The em dash is the longer of the two dashes and covers the length of a Times New Roman capital M. In Microsoft Word, type two hyphens right next to each other [--]. You can also insert the em dash as a symbol. Always use spaces before and after an em dash. Em dashes are commonly used in a sentence to interrupt the flow and to tell the reader to get ready for some important or dramatic statement; it is also used to introduce extra material.

- Examples:
 - During the staff party, Adam took a sample of each kind of dish. The lasagna, the mole, the chicken, the flan — it all was to die for.
 - She read most of her students' papers — Teryn's, Susie's, Ben's and Carol's — on the plane.
- En *dash*: The en dash is used much less frequently and usually only to indicate a range of inclusive numbers. The en dash covers the length of a Times New Roman capital N. In Microsoft Word, you can type an en dash by pressing the dash on number pad (also known as a minus). Never use spaces before or after an en dash.
 - Examples:
 - There were 10–15 people at the party.
 - I will be in Napa Valley from January 11–20, in case you'd like to get together.

dates – In this format: Month Day, Year. Only abbreviate months when accompanied by a date, and only these months: Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec. If you're referring to a date in the future or the past, the year is not needed if it falls within 365 days:

- The next Commission meeting will be on Nov. 4.
- We expect to have the project completed by April 13, 2022.
- On July 27, the committee met.
- The program began on Sept. 15, 2022.

Note: Ordinal numbers, like 27th or 1st, are never used to refer to a date.

day care – see First 5 LA's preferred term "early learning."

early childhood education – see First 5 LA's preferred term "early learning."

early learning – First 5 LA's preferred term meaning more than preparation for primary school. It aims at the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing.

email – First 5 LA email addresses follow this form: JSchnauffer@First5LA.org (*not* JSchnauffer@first5LA.org).

e-newsletter

ensure – opt to instead use help with.

ethnicity – Preferred over using the word "race."

flyer – A pamphlet, handout or other piece of collateral material. Note: this word can also be spelled 'flier.'

gender – Preferred over using the word "sex."

government – Don't abbreviate.

government officials – On first reference, do not abbreviate their title. Include the full spelling of their title including the city, county, state or country they are elected by if it is not apparent in the initial body of the text; their full name; and when appropriate, have the first letter of their party affiliation, a hyphen and area represented (usually the field office) in parenthesis after their name. In all subsequent references they should be referred to by their last name.

- Assemblymember Jimmy Gomez (D-Los Angeles)

- Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti
- Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis

NOTE: Some titles are abbreviated before the name on the first reference: Gov., Lt. Gov., Rep. and Sen.

- Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens)
- U.S. Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Los Angeles)
- Gov. Gavin Newsom See also: president.

grantmaking

health care

high-risk – Hyphenate when used in front of a noun or verb. Can be used interchangeably with high-need or low-income.

home visiting or home visitors

hyphen – Hyphens are joiners. Use them to avoid ambiguity or to form a single idea from two or more words. Use of the hyphen is not standardized. It is optional in most cases, a matter of taste, judgment and style sense. But the fewer hyphens the better; use them only when not using them causes confusion. Never include spaces before or after a hyphen.

- Compound modifiers: When a compound modifier — two or more words that express a single concept — precedes a noun, use hyphens to link all the words in the compound except the adverb very and all adverbs that end in -ly: a first-quarter touchdown, a bluishgreen dress or a full-time job.
- Use with duplicated vowels, tripled consonants: – anti-intellectual – pre-empt – shell-like Indian – See Native American.

Internet

Invest in children – opt to use “prioritize children.”

kindergarten

Knowledge Management – KM on subsequent references.

Los Angeles – First reference must be spelled out. Abbreviation (L.A.) may be used for subsequent references. Note: For branding purposes we do not include periods after the L and the A in First 5 LA or Best Start LA.

Los Angeles County – First reference must be spelled out. L.A. County may be used in subsequent references.

Low Income – Is defined per federal guidelines as household incomes that are or below 100% of their poverty threshold. These households are considered “in poverty.” Household incomes that are below 50% of their poverty threshold are considered “severe” or “deep poverty.” Low income persons have less disposable income than others and may sometimes struggle to cover their basic needs. In addition, low income persons also face housing, food, transportation and health disparities.

Medi-Cal

nonprofit

numbers – Spell out all numbers below 10, unless part of a proper name: First 5 LA. Spell all numbers at the beginning of a sentence. Four million, billion, etc., use a numeral before the word: 5 million children, 18 billion hamsters. See also: ages and percent.

online

Outcome Areas

parenting – Refers to the act of parenting, an inclusive term for all adults involved, including aunts, uncles, and grandparents, among others.

percent – The Associated Press Stylebook (AP style) updated its commendations for using percent signs. Previously, AP used the word percent with numerals. Now, AP style uses the percent sign with numerals in formal content. The charity drive collected 33% more donations this year.

- Always use figures: 1%, 2.5% (use decimals, not fractions), 1%.
- For amounts less than 1%, precede the decimal with a zero: The cost of living rose 0.6%. Use “%” in listings.

perinatal, prenatal, postpartum – Perinatal is the preferred term in all instances unless referring specifically to the prenatal stage or the postpartum stage.

- Perinatal refers to the last three months of pregnancy and the first three months after a mother has given birth.
- Prenatal is before birth and postpartum refers to the first year after birth.

place-based approach

p.m., a.m. – Lowercase, with periods.

policy and systems change – opt instead for making things better for kids.

postpartum – See *perinatal, prenatal, postpartum*.

Pre-K – capitalized and hyphenated.

preschool

president – Capitalize president only as a formal title before one or more names: President Reagan, Presidents Ford and Carter. Lowercase in all other uses: He is running for president. In most cases, the first name of a current or former U.S. president is not necessary on first reference. Use first names to avoid confusion when necessary: President Andrew Johnson, President Lyndon Johnson.

prenatal – See *perinatal, prenatal, postpartum*.

Proposition 10 – Capitalize and don’t abbreviate. Same rule applies to all propositions.

quotations – Quotes are what was directly said by someone and should never be altered.

- Usually, punctuation goes inside the quotation marks:
 - “I need some water,” Potter the Otter said.
 - Potter the Otter asked, “Can I have some water?”
- Punctuation goes outside the quotation marks if the quote is not a full sentence or is part of a larger sentence:
 - Gov. Jerry Brown told reporters he was only “taking a little bit” of First 5’s funding.
 - The Queen repeated “Off with her head!” again and again.

secondhand smoke

second reference – Refers to subsequent references to an organization, agency, program or person. Use the full name on the first reference and acronyms or last names on the second. Often, a generic word like the agency, the commission or the company is more appropriate on second reference, unless the full name needs to be repeated for clarity.

sex – Gender is the preferred term.

sing-along

Strategic Plan – capitalized when used as a proper noun.

systems change – is an outcome and a process for the emergence of a new pattern or organization or system structure.

task force

time – Always use figures. Do not repeat a.m. or p.m. in a range of time if not necessary:

- 3 a.m.
- 5–7 p.m.
- 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
- Noon–4 p.m.

titles – Capitalize a formal title before a name, but lower case after: Executive Director Kim Belshé, or Kim Belshé, executive director. Do not capitalize a job title if it is not a formal title (like nurse, astronaut, social worker). Do not use professional doctorates, such as Dr. or PhD, in First 5 LA staff titles.

toward (without the s)

Transitional Kindergarten – TK may be used on second reference. TK is a school grade that serves as a bridge between preschool and kindergarten.

underrepresented

underserved

Web

website – Reference websites with the www. Note: First 5 LA's website is www.First5LA.org.

well-being – hyphenate as part of a compound modifier.

white – in racial and ethnic terms white is lowercased according to AP style.

ACRONYMS

A

AB	Assembly Bill
ACR	Agreement Contract Request Form
AFDC	Aid to Families with Dependent Children
AIR	American Institute for Research Behavioral Sciences, Inc.
ARRA	American Reinvestment and Recovery Act
AAIM	African American Infant Mortality
AAPI	Asian American Pacific Islander

B

BFH	Baby Friendly Hospitals
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C

CAD	Contracts, Administration & Purchasing
CBAR	Community-Based Action Research
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDE	California Department of Education
CCF	California Community Foundation
CCFI	Center for Child & Family Impact
CCIS	Child Care Information Services
CCPHA	California Center for Public Health Advocacy
CCRC	Child Care Resource Center
COA	Council on Accreditation
COE	Center for Operational Excellence
COF	Council on Foundations
CPC	Children's Planning Council
CQI	Continuous Quality Improvement
CSSP	Center for the Study of Social Policy

D

DCFS	Department of Children and Family Services
DHS	Department of Health Services
DMH	Department of Mental Health
DPH	Department of Public Health
DPSS	Department of Public Social Services

E

ECE	Early Care and Education
ECERS	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
ECM	Early Childhood Matters or, Electronic Content Management
EDO	Executive Director's Office

F

F5LA	First 5 LA
FY	Fiscal Year

G

GA	Grant Agreement
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GEO	Grantmakers for Effective Organizations
GIH	Grantmakers in Health
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
H	
HHS	Health and Human Services
HIPPY	Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
HR&TM	Human Resources & Talent Management
I	
IF	Impact Framework
IGA	Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
IHOC	In-Home Outreach Counselors
ITERS	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
J	
JPCM	Joint Planning Committee Meeting
K	
KM	Knowledge Management
KRA	Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
L	
LABBN	Los Angeles Best Babies Network
LACOE	Los Angeles County Office of Education
LACOCC	Los Angeles County Office of Child Care
LACPE CHVC	Los Angeles County Perinatal Early Childhood Home Visitation Consortium
LAEP	Los Angeles Education Partnership
LAMB	Los Angeles Mommy and Baby Survey
LAUP	Los Angeles Universal Preschool (now "Child 360")
LAUSD	Los Angeles County Unified School District
LNC	Local Network Contractor
LOI	Letter of Intent, Letter of Invitation
LT	Leadership Team
M	
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
MCHA	Maternal Child Health Access
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRMIB	Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board
N	
NAC	Neighborhood Action Council
NFP	Nurse Family Partnership
NIH	National Institutes of Health
O	
ODFA	Office of Data for Action
OESL	Office of Equity, Strategy & Learning

OGAPP	Office of Government Affairs & Public Policy
OOC	Office of Communications
P	
PAT	Parents as Teachers
PEACH	Partnership in Education, Articulation and Collaboration in Higher Education
PHFE	Public Health Foundation Enterprises
PITC	The Program for Infant-Toddler Care
PLN	Para Los Niños
P-3	Prenatal through 3-years-old
P-5	Prenatal through 5-years-old
Q	
QA	Quality Assurance
QRIS	Quality Rating and Improvement Systems
QLA	Quality Start Los Angeles
R	
RACI	Responsible, Accountable, Consulted and Informed
RNG	Regional Network Grantee
R&R	Resource and Referral
RFA	Request for Application
RFF	Request for Funds
RFI	Request for Information
RFP	Request for Proposal
RFQ	Request for Qualifications
RNG	Regional Network Grantees
S	
SPR4	Strategic Plan Review, Reflect, Refine, Results
SAF	Signature Authorization Form
SB	Senate Bill
SBCC	South Bay Center for Community Development
SCG	Southern California Grantmakers
SCHIP	State Children's Health Insurance Program
SLT	Senior Leadership Team
SOW	Scope of Work
SPA	Service Planning Area
SPREE	State Policy and Research for Early Education
T	
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TCE	The California Endowment
U	
UEP	Urban Education Partnership (now called by former name: Los Angeles Education Partnership or LAEP)
W	
WB or WB!	Welcome Baby

WIC
WFD

Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program
Workforce Development

Z
ZTT

ZERO TO THREE

PREFERRED SPANISH TERMS & PHRASES

ENGLISH	SPANISH
Accountable	Rendir Cuentas
Achievement	Logro/ Realización/ Obtención
Activities	Actividades
African American	Afroamericano (one word, not capitalized unless it is the first word in a sentence)
Approach	Método
Asian	Asiático
Asian American	Asiáticoamericano
Assessment	Diagnóstico
Asset mapping	Localización de atractivos
Because community matters	Porque la comunidad es importante
<i>Best Start</i>	Best Start (should not be translated)
<i>Best Start Academy</i>	Academia Best Start
<i>Best Start Academy 1: Parents as Leaders</i>	Academia Best Start I: Madres y Padres como Líderes (if introducing name in new material, Spanish translation should be in parentheses following English name, which should be italicized)
<i>Best Start Academy 3: The Plan</i>	Academia Best Start 3: El Plan
<i>Best Start</i>	Marco de Trabajo Formando Familias Más Fuertes de Best Start
Building Stronger Families Framework	
<i>Best Start</i> Community meeting	Reunión comunitaria de Best Start
<i>Best Start</i> Community partnership	Asociación comunitaria Best Start
<i>Best Start</i> Community plan	Plan comunitario de Best Start
<i>Best Start</i> Framework	Marco de Trabajo de Best Start, estructura
<i>Best Start</i> Best Start goals	Las metas de Best Start:
Children are born healthy	Que las niños y los niños nazcan sanos
Children maintain healthy weight	Que las niños y los niños mantengan un peso saludable
Children are safe from abuse and neglect	Que las niños y los niños estén protegidos del abuso y la negligencia
Children are ready for kindergarten	Que los niños estén listos para el kinder
<i>Best Start</i> values	Los valores de Best Start
Parent focus	Enfoque en las madres y los padres

Community support	Apoyo comunitario
Accountability	Rendición de cuentas
Flexibility	Flexibilidad
Advocacy	Abogacía
Bringing out the best in our children by bringing out the best in our communities	Oteniendo lo mejor de nuestros niños al traer lo mejor de nuestras comunidades
Building the partnership	Construyendo la asociación
Capacity builder	Capacitador
Catchment Area	Área de Alcance
Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP)	Centro para el Estudio de la Política Social (CSSP)
Chair/ Co-chair	Presidente/ Co-presidente
Charter	Estatutos
Childcare providers	Proveedores de cuidado infantil
Childhood	Niñez
Civic engagement	Alcance cívico
Collaborative partners	Aliados colaboradores
Collaborative partners allocations	Asignación para aliados colaboradores
Commission/ Commissioners	Comisionada/o
Communications Task Force (CTF)	Comité de Comunicaciones (CTF)
Communications Task Force Co-Chair	Co-Presidente del Comité de Comunicaciones
Community Advisory Council	Consejo Asesor Comunitario
Community assessment	(Proceso) de evaluación de recursos comunitarios o evaluación de recursos de la comunidad
Community Based Action Research (CBAR)	Investigación Participativa de Acción Comunitaria (CBAR)
Community based organizations (CBO's)	Organización de base comunitaria
Community boundaries	Límites geográficos de la comunidad
Community capacity building	Fortalecimiento de capacitación comunitaria
Community capacity building plan	Plan de fortalecimiento de capacitación comunitaria
Community Guidance Body (CGB)	Mesa Directiva (CGB)
Community meetings	Reuniones comunitarias
Community networks	Redes comunitarias
Community plan	Plan comunitario

Community resource mobilization	Movilización de recursos comunitarios
Community timeline	Calendario de actividades en la comunidad o agenda de las actividades de la comunidad
Community visioning	Visión de la comunidad
Community-based organization	Organización comunitaria u organización comunitaria de base
Community-driven effort	Esfuerzo guiado por la comunidad
Contractor liaison	Coordinador de contratistas
Coordinator Coordinador	Core Result Resultado concreto
County	Condado
Data	Datos
Data-informed	Informado por datos Deadline Plazo de tiempo
Decision-making process	El proceso para la toma de decisiones
Developmental evaluation	Evaluador de desarrollo
Direct services	Servicios directos
Dissemination (materials)	Diseminación (de volantes/ panfletos)
Dissemination (message/information)	Difusión (de mensaje/ información)
Diversity, equity and inclusion	Diversidad, equidad e inclusion
Early childhood	Infancia temprana
Early Childhood Education (ECE)	Educación Preescolar Infantil
Early years	Los primeros años
Empowerment	Apropiación
Engaging	Involucrado
Evaluation	Evaluación
Evaluator	Evaluador
Executive co-Chairs	Co-presidentes ejecutivos
Executive Committee Body (ECB)	Comité Ejecutivo (ECB)
Facilitator	Facilitador
Facilitator/ Community facilitator	Facilitador comunitario
Faith-based organizations	Organizaciones de fe/ organizaciones espirituales
Family engagement program	Programa de participación
familiar Family strengthening	Fortalecimiento de la familia
Finance chair	Presidente de finanzas
First 5 LA	First 5 LA (should not be translated)
First Step grant	Subvención Primera Etapa

First Step grants launch	Primera Etapa – lanzamiento de subvención de fondos
First Step grants planning	Primera Etapa – planeación de subvención de fondos
Focus group	Grupo de enfoque
Foundation	Fundación
Free	Gratuito (for stakeholders and formal documents); gratis (for parents/ informal documents)
Funding process	Proceso de distribución de fondos Goals Metas
Governance	Gobernancia
Grants	Subvenciones, fondos
Guiding Principles	Principios Orientadores
Healthcare providers	Proveedores de salud
Home visitation	Visitas domiciliarias
Icebreaker	Actividad de introducción
Implementation	Implementación
Implementation timeline	Implementación del calendario de eventos o “cronograma”
Inclusive	Inclusivo
Indicators	Indicadores
Infrastructure	Infraestructura
Kindergarten	Kínder o jardín infantil
Leadership structure	Estructura de liderazgo
Leads	Dirige
Learning By Doing	Haciendo y Aprendiendo
Learning team	Equipo de aprendizaje
Leverage	Unir esfuerzos/ recursos
Logic model	Modelo lógico
Long-term goals	Metas a largo plazo
Los Angeles	Los Ángeles
Membership and Community Resources Task Force (M&CRTF)	Comité de Membresía y Recursos Comunitarios
Membership liaison	Coordinador de membresía
Metro LA Community Partnership	Asociación Comunitaria
Metro LA Milestones	Etapas (although hitos is the proper/ formal translation, etapas is better understood by our target demographic)

Neighborhood champions	Campeones del Vecindario
Neighborhood Leadership Group	Grupo Comunitario de Líderes
Nonprofit organization	Organización sin fines de lucro u organización no lucrativa
Non-profit organizations	Organizaciones no lucrativas/ organización sin fines de lucro
Objective	Objetivo
Organizational capacity	Capacidad organizativa
Organizational structure	Estructura orgánica
Outreach	Enlace/ Alcance
Overarching role	Función de gran alcance
Pacific Islander	De las islas del Pacífico (samoano, si es de Samoa o de Oceanía si es de otro archipiélago)
Paid Partners Allocations	Asignación de Pagos a Aliados
Parent coach	Consejero(a) materno(a) o consejero(a) paterno(a) o consejero(a) familiar, dependiendo a quien se está asesorando
Parent delegates/ delegation	Los representantes de los padres y madres/ la representación de los padres y las madres
Parent leaders	Madres y padres líderes
Parent priorities	Prioridades de madres y padres
Parent Task Force	Comité de Madres y Padres
Parent Task Force Co-Chairs	Co-presidentes del Comité de Madres y Padres
Parents as leaders	Madres y padres como líderes
Partners	Aliados
Partnership	Alianza/ Colaborativa
Partnership assessment	Diagnóstico de la colaborativa
Partnership development	Desarrollo de la asociación
Performance measures	Medidas de desempeño
Place matters	El lugar es importante
Place-based activity projects	Proyectos de transformación
Place-based investment strategy	Estrategia de inversión en lugares específicos: vecindarios o comunidades
Pregnant women	Mujeres embarazadas (NOT just embarazadas)
Process	Proceso
Program officer	Oficial de programa
Protective factors	Factores protectores

Resilient	Tenaz (padres tenaces)
Resource	Recurso
Result	Resultado
Results based accountability	Rendir cuentas basado en resultados
Roles	Función/ papeles
RSVP (by...)	Confirme su asistencia (antes del...)
Scope of work	Área de trabajo
Seat at the table	Lugar en la mesa
Senior Program Officer	Oficial de Programa con Señoría
Set a date in the calendar	Fijar una reunión en el calendario
Short-term goals	Metas a corto plazo
Sign-up	Inscríbase
Skills	Habilidades/ herramientas/ capacidades
Social capital	Capital social/ recursos sociales
Special Services for Groups (SSG)	Servicios Especiales para Grupos (SSG)
Stakeholder	Miembro de la comunidad (residente, representante de agencia/ organización, político, iglesia, escuela, negocio, etc.)
Steps to your baby's best start	Pasos para el mejor inicio de su bebé
Story behind the data	Historia detrás de los datos
Strategies	Estrategias
Strength-based	Con base en los puntos fuertes, basado en las fortalezas
Strengthen	Fortalecer
Strengths	Puntos fuertes
Survey	Encuesta
Sustainability	Sostenibilidad
Target population	Grupo específico
Task Force	Grupo de trabajo/comité
Timeline and timeframe	Línea de tiempo/ cronograma
Toolkit	Equipo de herramientas
Tools	Herramientas
Training and Technical Assistance Task Force (T&TATF)	Comité de Capacitación y Asistencia Técnica (T&TATF)
Training and Technical Assistance Task Force (T&TATF) Chair	Presidente del Comité de Capacitación y Asistencia Técnica (T&TATF)

Transition	Transición
Vice-chair	Vice-presidente
Vision statement	Visión
Website	Sitio de Internet, portal de Internet o sitio web
Welcome Baby	Welcome Baby (should not be translated)
White/ Caucasian	Blanco, anglo o anglosajón
Work plan	Plan de trabajo
Workgroup	Grupo de trabajo
Worksheet	Hoja de trabajo
Workshop	Taller
You	All forms of “you” should be translated as “usted” instead of the informal “tú”, unless a Best Start partnership group wishes to communicate to their community with “tú”

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

For information on the following, please contact Samantha Estrella, administrative assistant in the Office of Communications:

- Website
 - www.First5LA.org (Main)

- Social Media Channels
 - Twitter
 - Facebook ((20+) First 5 LA | Facebook)
 - Instagram
 - Youtube (First5LA - YouTube)