

EARLY CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PRIORITY / SCHOOL READINESS

R15: Increase participation in quality early care and education

R16: Increase caregiver use of developmentally appropriate practices

R17: Increase schools' readiness for children

Results

R15: Increase participation in quality early care and education

"The availability of high quality early care and education is essential. Maximizing participation in quality early care and education programs has a profoundly positive impact on both child development and school readiness. The Commission recognizes that quality early care and education programs provide young children with essential social and academic skills that are critical for later success."¹

R16: Increase caregiver use of developmentally appropriate practices

"This result focuses on the Commission's desire to pursue and fund programs that address the 'whole child', instead of being narrowly focused on a single developmental domain (i.e. 'learning'), and emphasizes the importance of providing ongoing support for parents and professional development opportunities for caregivers."²

R17: Increase schools' readiness for children

"Schools must be prepared to provide the highest quality care and education to the children of Sacramento County. The Commission recognizes that readiness must address the diverse characteristics of multi-cultural, multi-lingual, varying learning styles, and social-emotional differences of children from a variety of backgrounds. The Commission further recognizes that education includes helping children discover their strengths in order to advantage their educational process."³

(NOTE: Since the Commission recognizes there are many aspects that contribute to school success, and shares similar goals with high quality School Readiness programs, most of the results in the Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2014/15 Implementation Plan are also integrated and/or included in the Early Care & Development/School Readiness Implementation Plan.)

Community Assessment

California births peaked in the early 1990s and then steadily declined until 2000 when they reversed the pattern and began to steadily rise. Births in Sacramento County reached a high of 22,110 in 2007 and are projected to remain at or slightly above this level each year through Fiscal Year 2014/15. These demographics sustain the current need for early care and education programs and impact kindergarten enrollment.⁴

¹ Source: First 5 Sacramento Commission, 2009 Strategic Plan Update For Fiscal Years 2010-2015

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ State of California, Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit.(2008, October) *Birth Projections for California State and Counties 1980-2017*.Sacramento, CA. 2008.

While enrollment in public elementary schools has remained fairly consistent during the past five years, enrollment in Sacramento County schools is expected to steadily increase through the fall of 2020. Projected kindergarten enrollment is expected to rise from 18,499 in 2008 to 20,307 in 2015—an increase of more than 9% within a seven year timeframe.⁵

A lower percentage of children ages 3 and 4 in Sacramento County are enrolled in preschool (35%) than in the state (42%), while every other county in the Sacramento Metropolitan Region exceeds the state preschool enrollment rate: El Dorado County (61%); Placer County (60%), Sutter/Yuba (43%) and Yolo (50%).⁶

Early childhood is a critical time for children’s cognitive, social, emotional, language, and physical development. While parents are a child’s first teacher and provide an essential foundation for future learning, quality preschools offer all children opportunities to develop important skills and understandings that contribute to school success.

Children who attend quality preschool programs are—as a result of early screenings and/or early intervention—less likely to be placed in expensive special education programs or to be retained. Children who participate in quality preschool programs are also more likely to exhibit positive behaviors in the classroom, score better on standardized math and reading tests, graduate from high school and continue their education.⁷

When every child enters kindergarten prepared to learn, the entire K-12 system benefits as a result of having to commit fewer resources to either special education or remedial education.

First 5 uses the Academic Performance Index (API) as the criteria to designate ‘high priority’ School Readiness communities, with schools scoring in deciles 1-3 identified as those with the highest level of need for services.

The API is the cornerstone of California’s Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999 (PSAA). The purpose of the API is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools, as compared to schools of same type with similar demographic characteristics and socio-economic composition. Schools are ranked in ten categories of equal size, called deciles, from one (lowest) to ten (highest).⁸

- In August 2001, forty-eight (48) schools in eight (8) Sacramento County school districts were identified as ‘high priority’ (scoring in deciles 1-3 on the 2000 API), with twenty-six (26) schools from 7 out of 8 eligible school districts who elected to participate in the first cycle of School Readiness state-match program funding.

⁵ State of California, Department of Finance, Demographic Research Unit (2008, October). *California Public K-12 Graded Enrollment and High School Graduate Projections by County*. Sacramento, CA.2008.

⁶ Children Now. (2007). *California County Data Book*. Retrieved October 2008, from http://publications.childrennow.org/publications/invest/cdb07/databook_2007.cfm

⁷ Karoly, L.A. et al. *Prepared to Learn: The Nature and Quality of Early Care and Education for Preschool Age Children* (2008) RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, CA

⁸ California Department of Education, Academic Accountability Unit, API Reference Guide (2007)

(Rio Linda—with 5 schools—was eligible to participate in Cycle 1 funding, but didn't apply and opted instead to wait for another round of state-match funding that never materialized.)

- 2007 API scores identified fifty-seven (57) schools in eleven (11) Sacramento County school districts 'high priority' (scoring in deciles 1-3 on the 2007 API). The data confirmed the high need in Rio Linda (5 schools) and identified 5 additional 'high priority schools' in 3 districts that were not receiving School Readiness funding (Galt, Natomas, and River Delta) to consider for School Readiness expansion.
- A comparison of 2001 and 2007 API scores by Commission staff also indicates that First 5 programs are having an impact, as API scores have improved in 14 out of 29 (48%) of the elementary schools in Sacramento County receiving First 5 state-match School Readiness funding during Cycle 1 (Fiscal Years 2002/03 – 2006/07).
- A study released in January 2009 by the First 5 California Association indicates that API scores have risen faster in schools receiving First 5 School Readiness funds than in those not participating in the program. In the Greater Sacramento Region, API scores in schools receiving First 5 School Readiness Funds witnessed a growth rate of 14% while those not participating in the state-match School Readiness program saw a growth rate of less than 10%.⁹
- The First 5 California Association's 2009 report also shows that California's increased access to preschool for 3-4 year olds surpasses the national average by almost 7% since the passage of Proposition 10. California saw access to preschool increase 18% between 2000-2005, whereas nationally preschool capacity increased at a rate closer to 11%.¹⁰

In order to sustain the relatively short-term child and family benefits of these programs over-time, however, School Readiness programs within identified school communities need to continue to provide services and be fully integrated within the community. First 5, therefore, has made a commitment to existing School Readiness communities and plans to continue funding programs throughout the funding cycle during Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2014/15.

In addition to the above-mentioned state and regional reports, a local needs assessment update was conducted in the spring 2007 as part of the planning and application for Cycle 2 state-match School Readiness funding. Each of the seven school districts that received Cycle 1 state-match School Readiness funding was involved—along with Rio Linda who was preparing to merge with other school districts to become Twin Rivers. Each district used three or more of the following processes to conduct a school-level needs assessment: (1) parent focus groups

⁹ First 5 Association. (2009, January). *Notable Changes Since Passage of Prop 10*. Retrieved February 9, 2009, from <http://f5ac.org/item.asp?id=3932>

¹⁰ Ibid.

and interviews; (2) interviews with kindergarten teachers; (3) interviews with preschool teachers and/or child care providers; (4) interviews with school principals. Focus groups reflected the cultural and ethnic diversity within the community, and were composed primarily of parents with children enrolled in First 5 funded School Readiness programs and/or activities. A standardized needs assessment protocol was developed to interview principals, kindergarten teachers, preschool teachers, and or child care providers from participating schools. The needs assessment at the local level was enhanced through interviews with other key stakeholders, including School Readiness Coordinators from the seven funded “maintenance of effort” districts, representatives from community based organizations, and Commission staff. A final step in the needs assessment process was to tie the results to priorities set forth in First 5 Sacramento’s Strategic Plan.

The 2008 School Readiness needs assessment identified the following continuing needs for school readiness services.

Family Functioning

- Encourage parent involvement (including participation on advisory boards)
- Increase the number of families being served by school readiness activities
- Create opportunities to enhance knowledge of child development and parenting
- Continue to help provide in-depth services to families (e.g. case/care management, create home environment that prepares children for school)
- Provide family literacy activities
- Facilitate home-school transition activities
- Provide family outings, events and/or space for families (events, trips, community room)
- Provide opportunities for parents to connect with other parents in their neighborhood
- Facilitate activities that support family sufficiency, including adult education (e.g. ESL, GED, computer skills, and job/health fairs)

Child Development

- Provide emergent literacy experiences (e.g. concept of print, reading stories)
- Provide formal preschool learning environment opportunities (e.g. state preschool, Head Start, summer academy and other culturally-focused programs) that help children learn school behavior and routines
- Organize activities and environments to foster self-esteem, confidence and ability to learn
- Offer activities to promote communication and language development (e.g. talk about stories and/or family history, storytelling, turn-taking, listening skills, etc.)
- Provide leaning opportunities that are developmentally appropriate and promote mastery of one or more of the developmental domains (i.e. physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, approaches to learning, communication/language)
- Link children with special needs to services

Health

- Continue to provide nutrition and health information to families (e.g. fairs, workshops)
- Provide early intervention services to children with identified special needs
- Provide nutrition and health services to children and families
- Link families to medical insurance and health care services
- Help families access developmental screenings
- Link families to oral health services (specifically prevention)

Systems of Care

- Maintain collaboration between preschool and elementary school
- Remain connected with preschool referral interventions
- Organize kindergarten information and registration fairs
- Continue to support workforce development—especially in area of child development, the use of developmentally appropriate practices, behavior management, social / emotional development, language and communication, and brain development.
- Continue to support direct outreach efforts (including using family advocates). Focus on families where both parents work and cannot attend daytime SR activities
- Employ curriculum in preschool that's aligned with primary school

Newly Identified Needs for Cycle 2 - The needs assessment results revealed that while an array of school readiness services meeting the four result areas were in place within the county, not all of the needed services existed within each district. For example, some districts tended to have a disproportionate focus and amount of funding directed towards traditional child development / preschool programs for 3-5 year-olds, which often occurred at the expense of focus and funding for infant/toddler programs, or family functioning, health, or improved systems of care efforts.

While all districts identified their promising practices, few evidence-based practices existed. Most districts were able to provide anecdotal evidence of success, but no real outcome data. Similarly, it was revealed that inconsistencies existed among districts regarding scope and quality of services. While there were often consistent strategies in place across districts, models used were not comparable. For example, all districts provided some sort of family literacy activity, but program models varied from using a structured, evidence-based program, such as *Raising a Reader*, to more light-touch, home-grown family literacy efforts. The needs assessment also revealed an uneven use across districts of community resources and First 5 state/county-funded services (e.g. *Child Action, New Parent Kits, Public Libraries, Birth and Beyond*). Similarly, it was revealed that some districts were overly reliant on their own internal resources, and hesitant to partner with other agencies to provide programs and services.

Results of the 2008 School Readiness Needs assessment were incorporated into Cycle 2 (Fiscal Years 2008/09–2011/12) Countywide School Readiness application and program design that was approved for funding by the First 5 Sacramento Commission in April 2008 and by First 5 California in May, 2008. About the same time, as Cycle 2 School Readiness drew to a close, efforts to develop and administer a Community Assessment Survey for the 2009 Strategic Plan Update began (April 2008).

The 2008 Community Assessment Survey queried Sacramento County residents about the needs and priority issues of young children and family. The survey included 10 questions related to Health, 8 questions about Early Interventions (that included a wide variety of issues including parent education, counseling services for children, reducing drug and alcohol abuse, early care for children with disabilities, et al) 3 questions on Community (Social Capital), and 2 questions related to Early Education. The Importance that respondents placed on each of these result areas mirrored the survey design: Health scored highest in importance at 68%, Early Interventions scored 65%, Education scored 59% and Community scored 49%.

Survey results did, however, reinforced the Commission's holistic view of child development and the factors influencing children's readiness for school—by engaging the community in the prioritization of factors closest to the child and moving outward to prioritize and encompass issues related to the family, early care and education, and the neighborhood or community.

The Strategic Planning Workgroup met in early August, 2008 to discuss Early Care and Education and School Readiness, and to receive public input. The workgroup received information about updated Cycle 2 strategies, the anticipated benefits of using a standardized countywide approach, and the coordination and collaboration that would be required to be successful.

The workgroup confirmed the need to continue funding School Readiness—as a necessary systemic change. Most of the conversation centered on expanding the scope of the Preschool Bridging Model strategy, incorporating children ages zero to three into school readiness, the importance of educating both parents and providers about child development and how to foster early learning, and the importance of identifying key assessment indicators for each strategy. The Workgroup also made recommendations to explore certain strategies if additional funding became available (subsidies for providers with high quality programs, and additional funds for children ages zero to three in School Readiness).

When it came to making recommendations on how to move forward without state-match funding, members of the workgroup seemed equally split between “across-the-board reductions” and “calculating costs and maintaining as many programs as possible.” There seemed to be consensus within the workgroup, however—with support from the public—about the importance of maintaining the infrastructure and continuing to fund both coordination and collaboration.

Target Population

First 5 Sacramento's School Readiness Programs provide programs and services for children ages zero to five and their families who reside within each of the identified forty (40) 'high priority' school communities.

Targeted schools and their surrounding communities are characterized by low API scores, higher than average levels of socio-economic need, low parent education levels, and high numbers of both English language learners and children identified with special needs.

All proposed services are designed and targeted to meet diverse needs and include services in multiple languages (e.g. Spanish, Hmong, Russian), bilingual and bicultural staff, innovative culturally –focused ECE programming and attention to special needs.

Background and Best and Promising Practices

The School Readiness Initiative enables County Commissions to deliver a comprehensive menu of services to thousands of children ages zero to five and their families, to improve the ability of families, schools, and communities to prepare young children to enter school ready and eager to learn. In addition to furthering the development of young children, high-quality school readiness programs are “a proven strategy for promoting both individual success and shared prosperity.”¹¹ Pre-K Now (2008, p.3) also found that “High quality programs reduce the need for costly remedial intervention programs, and—in the long term—reduce dropout rates and improve educational levels, thereby producing a more skilled workforce which raises earnings and increases tax revenues.”

School Readiness is a core investment for both First 5 Sacramento and First 5 California, and forms a framework for other investments. A primary function of the Initiative is to coordinate the effective delivery of quality services and supports for California's youngest children ages zero to five and their families. Several key elements form the foundation for this work: First 5 California's Principles on Equity, National Education Goals Panel's (NEGP) three-part definition of School Readiness, Five Essential and Coordinated Elements for School Readiness (as they align with Four Priority Result Areas) and First 5 Sacramento's Fiscal Year 2010/11 - 2014/15 Strategic Planning Priorities.

Each School Readiness program (or strategy), therefore, must:

- Incorporate all First 5 fundamentals including the First 5 California Principles on Equity that address cultural and linguistic issues evident in the community.
- Include a multi-faceted approach to school readiness incorporating the 5 Essential and Coordinated SR Elements as they align with the First 5 California Priority Result areas.

¹¹ Wat, A., & Doctors, J.V. (2008, November). *The Pre-K Pinch: Early Education and the Middle Class*. PreK Now, Washington, DC.

- Provide a renewed focus on implementing evidenced-based practices in a family-focused, strength-based program design.
- Demonstrate strong potential to achieve results for children and families.
- Align with First 5 Sacramento Commission's Strategic Hierarchy

First 5 California provided an Evidence-based Practices and Resources Chart¹² to assist with Cycle 2 School Readiness planning. The chart listed several examples of programs, practices and/or services (with source/contact information, technical assistance resources and potential partners) within each of the four School Readiness result areas. This tool was used throughout the Cycle 2 School Readiness planning process as a benchmark for programs, practices and/or services that could be used to address needs in Sacramento County. First 5 Sacramento's Countywide School Readiness Plan incorporates the use of programs/practices from the list and collaborates with several of the agencies listed. (i.e. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Early Childhood Program Standards & Accreditation Criteria, California Department of Education's Preschool Learning Foundations & Infant Toddler Foundations for Learning, Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS, ITERS, FDCRS) Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES), West Ed's Program for Infant Toddler Care (PITC) and Center for Prevention & Early Intervention, California Preschool Instructional Network (CPIN), Bright Futures, First 5 Evaluation Framework, Financial Management Guide (GFOA), California Education Code, and guidelines coming out of 2009-2010 efforts to develop an Early Learning Quality Improvement System (EL-QIS).

In April 2007, First 5 Sacramento embarked upon a structured process to develop a countywide school readiness plan to include more evidence-based or promising practices, standardize services delivered across all participating school districts, and develop a set of minimum requirements for participation and funding. The countywide plan also needed to effectively combine the seven (7) Cycle 1 'maintenance of effort' state-match funded districts with four (4) new locally funded 'expansion' districts, and define outcomes to enhance use of results-based accountability.

First 5 Sacramento's Countywide Cycle 2 School Readiness School Readiness proposal preserves the best of Cycle 1 funded programs, raises the bar on program quality, and expands to fill identified service gaps and needs. First 5 Sacramento identified a comprehensive set of fourteen required and seven optional SR services. **Improved Family Functioning** – School-based School Readiness programs are required to implement Family literacy programs, provide intensive parent support services and distribute Kits for New Parents.

During Fiscal Year 2009/10, funded School Readiness districts entered into partnership with local Family Resource Centers to strengthen parent education

¹² First 5 California School Readiness Request for Funding, *Evidence-based Practices and Resources Chart* (September 2007)

programs and work collaboratively to promote understanding about how to support early learning and school readiness.

Behavioral, alcohol, and other mental health services are optional, as is Adult Education - Parent Literacy. Most school districts already provide English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) classes through adult education.

Improved Child Development – Funded School Readiness Programs are required to provide developmentally appropriate programs for children ages zero to three that educate and involve parents, emphasize the importance of play, and provide opportunities to promote social interaction. They must also provide Kindergarten Transition services (summer camp, transition backpacks, and/or kindergarten classroom visits) to ease entry into elementary school. Training on child development and how to support early learning/school readiness will be provided to both providers and parents of children age zero to five.

While certainly a best practice, Preschool for 3 and 4-year-olds is not a required strategy in First 5 Sacramento's Countywide School Readiness program. There are a growing number of funding options available to schools for preschool, while the needs of children ages zero to three are typically overlooked—in spite of the critical foundation that these years provide for “school readiness”. (Even with this change to the requirements, it should be noted that a bulk of School Readiness funding is still being spent on Preschool for 3 and 4-year olds.) Culturally-focused ECE programming is another evidence-based practice that is not required, but offered by some funded programs.

Improved Health – School Readiness programs collaborate with Bright Futures to provide children ages 0-5 with comprehensive health and developmental screenings. In addition, School Readiness programs are required to disseminate information about immunizations, mandated oral health assessments (AB 1433), and continually screen and refer children receiving services for health insurance. Most importantly, they provide early intervention services for children with any type of developmental delays and/or potentially handicapping condition and provide resources and support to their families.

Improved Systems of Care – In order to effectively support children's success in school, school readiness programs need to build an infrastructure with the following key elements: (1) a minimum of two articulation meetings each year that involves Kindergarten teachers and Early Care Educators/Child Care providers. (2) culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach strategies; (3) partnerships with community-based organizations and groups to facilitate outreach and involvement; (4) programs that develop parent leaders; and (5) opportunities for diverse groups to participate equitably.

School Readiness programs must also (1) provide four opportunities each year for Early Care Educators and Child Care providers in the community to participate with

Kindergarten staff in professional development activities/training, (2) participate in the *Preschool Bridging Model* to improve collaboration and communication between private providers and public schools, and (3) to support child development and early learning through the use of developmentally appropriate strategies and more meaningful relationships with parents.

School Readiness Program personnel are actively engaged in all aspects of outreach, planning, support, and program monitoring/management. They meet monthly with First 5 School Readiness staff, and collaborate with other early care educators at both the district and county level. They are responsible for managing program budgets, they report regularly on contract compliance and program quality, and—because of their familiarity with ‘results-based accountability’—are more actively involved in evaluation than are other First 5 contractors. They administer parent surveys (pre/post), child assessments, and provide assistance with the provider survey.

Case/care management is a service provided by some School Readiness programs, but not required due to the high costs associated with implementation. Other evidence-based practices that have either become institutionalized or supported by other funding streams were not mandated (Kindergarten Registration Fairs and Community Strengthening efforts that include newsletters and radio or television broadcasts on school readiness topics.)

School Readiness has been a core investment for both First 5 California and First 5 Sacramento. In recognition of the Commission’s commitment to the critical components of school readiness (child development, health, family functioning and systems change) and understanding that desired change of this magnitude requires time and collaboration, the following major strategies were designed to ensure that efforts in Sacramento County will continue to improve the quality of life for children ages 0-5 and enable them to enter school ready and eager to learn.

Implementation Strategies

Strategy #1: Support nine elementary school district’s participation in First 5 Sacramento’s Cycle 2 Countywide School Readiness Program and foster collaboration that improves program quality, service delivery and/or access to services.

The nine school districts include:

Elk Grove Unified; Folsom-Cordova Unified; Galt Joint Union; Natomas Unified; River Delta; Robla Elementary; Sacramento City Unified; San Juan Unified; and Twin Rivers Unified (comprised of Del Paso, North Sacramento and Rio Linda) School Districts.

Strategy #2: Expand the use of developmentally appropriate practices and/or evidence-based programs in early care and education programs throughout the County of Sacramento.

Programs funded under this strategy must:

- Align with school readiness, respond to unique challenges/issues in Sacramento County and/or address high priority result areas, and
- Support linkages between Cycle 2 School Readiness strategies and promote collaboration with and participation in other First 5 funded programs and community resources

The Cycle 2 Countywide School Readiness Program approved by the Commission in April 2008 identified specific programs to implement countywide in order to address multiple result areas:

- **Preschool Bridging** – expands preschool capacity, improves the quality of early care and education programs, links licensed providers with schools, better prepares schools for children, and facilitates K transition. Preschool Bridging addresses both Improved Child Development and Improved Systems of Care. (Sacramento County Office of Education is the lead agency responsible for implementation of Preschool Bridging.)
- **Bright Futures** – coordinates community resources and provides comprehensive screenings and assessments (vision, hearing, and dental, developmental) for children ages 0-5. Bright Futures addresses Improved Health and Improved Systems of Care. (Contractors involved with Bright Futures include, but are not limited to: Turning Point, Agency for Hearing, Indian Health Center, and Sacramento County Office of Education.)
- **Children’s Museums – Exhibits** – will expand the offering of developmentally appropriate programs in the arts and sciences to include toddlers through preschool age children in Sacramento County—either as individuals or as part of a family. These programs will encourage play and exploration and will be designed to provide meaningful ways for early learners to connect and engage with elements in the world around them. Museums/Exhibits will also provide resources for parents and other caregivers that support efforts to promote learning and healthy development of children.
- **Children’s Museums – Capital Projects** – new facilities, refurbishing, and/or adding to existing museum facilities for the purpose of providing museum programs that promote school readiness for children ages zero to five.

On August 3, 2009, the Commission voted to fund capital construction projects associated with Children’s Museums.

Other programs/workforce development topics may include, but not be limited to:

- Child Development (including Desired Results Developmental Profile-DRDP)
- Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Early Learning Quality Improvement System (EL-QIS)
- California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD) Early Care Educator Competencies and Infant/Toddler/Preschool Learning Foundations
- Environmental Rating Scales - Infant/Toddler (ITERS), Early Childhood (ECERS) and/or Family Childcare (FCERS)
- English Language Development and Acquisition
- Special Needs (early mental health, early identification and intervention, inclusion)
- CA Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
- Family Literacy
- Parent Engagement
- Quality Early Learning Environments
- Northern California Early Childhood Educators Conference (workshops and scholarships)
- Building Community Collaborative
- Leveraging Funds, Building Capacity and Sustainability

Strategy #3: Provide leadership and promote school readiness throughout the County by:

- Meeting regularly with School Readiness Coordinators and other key stakeholders with expertise in early care and education, special needs, early mental health, literacy, language acquisition, recreation, health and social services—in addition to parents of children age 0-5
- Working collaboratively with a wide variety of professional organizations to improve program quality, provide seamless delivery of high quality services to children ages 0-5 and their families, leverage available resources, and create meaningful systems change
- Coordination, sponsorship and/or hosting of regional and countywide School Readiness conferences/workshops to promote collaboration and/or expand capacity within the early care and education field

Partner agencies and key stakeholders may include but are not limited to:

Sacramento County Office of Education, California Preschool Instructional Network--CPIN, First 5 California, County Commissions in the Greater Sacramento Region, California Community Colleges and University systems, WestEd, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Child Development Policy Institute (CDPI), Children's Collaborium, Zero to Three, KVIE Public Television, Head Start, Preschool California, CA Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, et al.

Strategy #4: Serve as the central repository and distributor of information about School Readiness within Sacramento County.

Activities include:

- Maintain and refine the First 5 Sacramento’s website and School Readiness information in the Resource Library. Resources will include information and activities to support healthy growth and development of children ages 0-5 and will be targeted at parents/caregivers and early care educators/stakeholders.
- Distribute research, professional development opportunities, and materials/activities that support school readiness to parents/caregivers and early care educators/stakeholders in Sacramento County
- Implementation of countywide projects that address specific School Readiness needs within the community (e.g. family literacy, kindergarten transition, special needs, child development—including health and nutrition, social-emotional wellness, language and learning -- program quality improvement and indicators, learning foundations, brain development, parenting skills, et al).

Projects may include but are not limited to:

- Developing a comprehensive School Readiness Communications Plan
- Producing a Kindergarten Transition Video
- Developing a brochure or video to help parents understand “How to Identify High Quality Early Learning/Early Care and Education Programs”
- Reprints: “You Hold the Key” brochures (activities that support early learning) for providers and parents in four languages
- Reprints: “Literacy/Family Activities Calendar”
- Monthly radio broadcasts/messages about school readiness
- Monthly articles in local community newsletters
- Purchase and distribution of books, guides, materials, and/or research related to evidence-based best practices (i.e. Muttigrees curriculum from Yale, Zero to Three brochures and materials; National Association for the Education of Young Children materials, Brookes Educational Publishing materials, Kaplan Learning materials and supplies, Lakeshore Learning materials, and Scholastic Books, et al.)

Funding Process

A local non-competitive process will be used to extend funding for entities currently participating in First 5 Sacramento’s Countywide School Readiness program through Fiscal Years 2012/13 – 2014/15. An updated Request for Funding (RFF) application will be released in fall 2011 to targeted School Readiness program participants that include: Elk Grove, Folsom Cordova, Galt, Natomas, River Delta, Robla, Sacramento City, San Juan, Twin Rivers, and the Sacramento County Office of Education. Contracts must be in good standing to be considered for an extension, and proposals that are revised to meet established First 5 Sacramento’s Fiscal Years 2012/13 – 2014/15 countywide program quality criteria and refined to address updated community needs assessment data, program quality improvements,

performance outcomes and/or issues related to cost effectiveness will be extended an additional three (3) years. Refined school readiness program implementation and amended contracts will be slated to begin on July 1, 2012 and end on June 30, 2015.

The funding strategy for countywide implementation of developmentally appropriate practices and/or evidence-based programs with a strong potential for achieving positive outcomes in Strategy 2 (Preschool Bridging, Bright Futures, and Children's Museums/Exhibits and Capital Projects) will be a combination of RFA's and contracts with agencies and/or professionals best qualified to implement evidence-based programs and/or and deliver program services countywide.

Proposed Funding Allocation

The proposed funding allocation for School Readiness during the five year funding cycle is \$34,697,471.

The Commission's decision to extend the local funding cycle to five years (5) provides an opportunity to extend its commitment to School Readiness programs in all nine school districts for an additional three years (Fiscal Years 2012/13 – 2014/15). Given that First 5 California has provided no assurances relative to future state-match funding opportunities, the Commission would bear full responsibility for all School Readiness program expenses, activities, and successes during the last three years of this Strategic Planning funding Cycle.

This amount includes two years (Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2011/12) of previously approved Cycle 2 School Readiness funding (approximately \$13.5 million) that:

- Includes approximately 50% of the funding (\$7,550,893) required for districts to participate in the state-match School Readiness Initiative during Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2011/12: Elk Grove, Folsom-Cordova, Robla, Sacramento City, San Juan, and Twin Rivers (who receives the portion of funds previously allocated to schools in the Del Paso and North Sacramento communities)
- Includes almost 100% of the funding (\$5,954,380) required to expand school readiness into targeted high needs districts and to implement the Preschool Bridging Model throughout the County during Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2011/12: Galt, Natomas, River Delta, Twin Rivers (who receives a portion of its funding for schools located in the Rio Linda community) and the Sacramento County Office of Education (PBM).
- Was built on the assumption that state-match School Readiness funding and Coordination funds would continue provide revenue through the end of Cycle 2 (June 30, 2012). Two years of state-match revenue would amount to \$2,845,210 which could be used to offset program expenses during Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2011/12.

The proposed funding allocation for School Readiness during the Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2014/15 funding cycle would (1) extend First 5 Sacramento's existing

Countywide School Readiness program for three additional years (Fiscal Years 2011/12 – 2014/15), (2) integrate and expand the use of evidence-based programs that demonstrate a strong potential to achieve results for children and families throughout the County of Sacramento (e.g. Preschool Bridging, Bright Futures, Children’s Museums/Exhibits and Capital Projects, training on child development for parents and practitioners), (3) maintain the standards and minimum requirements embedded within First 5 Sacramento’s countywide approach, (4) allow First 5 Sacramento lead role to continue as both an advocate for children ages zero to five and school readiness, and (5) align all School Readiness program activities with First 5 Sacramento’s Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2014/15 Strategic Planning/Funding Cycle.

In addition to the identified strategies, this allocation includes funding for existing 1.5 FTE School Readiness Program Planner positions who share in responsibility for providing oversight of nine (9) elementary district School Readiness programs, coordinating and promoting countywide use of developmentally appropriate practices and/or evidence-based programs, offering technical assistance, leading the design of School Readiness program improvement strategies, and improving communication to promote school readiness. It also includes funding for one (1) FTE Program Specialist to assist with coordination of School Readiness activities and/or conferences/workshops; assist with program/contract monitoring, provide articulation and coordination between School Readiness and other Commission funded programs (Bright Futures, for example), and to work collaboratively with other members of the School Readiness team to improve communication and promote school readiness.

The distribution of School Readiness program funds is detailed in the Implementation Summary that follows.

Funding Timeframe

Funding for the implementation of School Readiness during Fiscal Years 2010/11 – 2011/12 was approved by the Commission in April 2008 as part of the Cycle 2 (Fiscal Years 2008/09 – 2009/10) Countywide School Readiness request for state-match funding application process.

A Request for Application (RFA) process will be established under the leadership of the First 5 Sacramento Commission for the countywide implementation of specific practices and/or evidence-based programs that address high priority result areas, respond to unique challenges in Sacramento County, link School Readiness strategies, and promote collaboration.

RFP/A’s for museums programming and capital construction projects will be released the summer of 2010. Recommendations for funding will be made to the Commission in fall 2010, and contracts will be executed by January 1, 2011.

School Readiness planning efforts for Fiscal Years 2012/13 – 2014/2015 will begin in the fall of 2010 and will include input from a broad-base of Sacramento county stakeholders in addition to School Readiness staff from targeted school districts.

(Stakeholders may include, but not be limited to, representatives from: Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE), Child Action Resource and Referral Agency, Quality Child Care Collaborative, Local Planning Council, Department of Health and Human Services, Child Abuse Prevention Council Family Resource Centers, Mental Health Services Act – Prevention and Early Intervention, community-based organizations, and/or community colleges / universities, Requests for Funding (RFF) will be released to school districts comprised of high-need and traditionally underserved populations during the summer of 2011. Recommendations for funding school readiness programs and services will be made to the Commission in fall 2011, and contracts will be executed by July 1, 2012.

Implementation Plan Summary Chart

A chart is provided on the next page that summarizes timelines, key strategies, outcomes, indicators, fiscal resources and identifies who is responsible for implementation of the plan.