



January 28, 2021

INFORMATION ITEM

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA FAMILY BOOK DISTRIBUTION PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Strategic Plan Priority Area: Child Development and Family Functioning

Goal: All children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

First 5 California (F5CA) staff will update the Commission on the status of the California Family Book Distribution Partnership, which includes direct shipments of books and expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Program Description and Administration

To leverage and grow capacity and distribute books to more children and families across the state, F5CA is providing one-time funding to expand Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) and support an infusion of books to counties for distribution to California's high promise children.

Approximately \$1.5 million from an existing contract with Fraser Communications is being redirected to book distribution for vulnerable children and families in California. F5CA is administering this in a cost-effective and efficient way, resulting in a high-impact, low-investment program.

Program Goals and Progress

The California Family Book Distribution Partnership aims to increase the number of books in the homes of high promise children to support healthy child development. While ensuring children have access to books is always essential, this funding comes at a critical time. Amid a pandemic when many early learning and care programs are closed and stress among parents and children is heightened, it is more crucial than ever that children have access to books in their home, both from an early literacy and a caregiving perspective. During COVID-19, children and youth need to maintain regular age-appropriate connections to important adults in their lives. Activities such as reading, where parents and caregivers spend one-on-one, quality time with children, will help protect children from the harmful effects of this, and any future, crisis.

This program aligns with the goals of several other priorities and programs in the state. These include the Governor's Parent Agenda, the California Surgeon General's goal to reduce the achievement gap, and the proposed \$5 million one-time general fund allocation in FY 2021-22 to provide books to low-income children to improve child development and literacy. Additionally, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond has committed to partnering with F5CA on this effort. As part of the partnership, F5CA and the California Department of Education jointly created a bilingual tip sheet for families to be packaged with the books for distribution (see Attachment A). The tip sheet highlights the importance of early literacy and builds on the Talk. Read. Sing.[®] campaign.

The California Family Book Distribution Partnership is leveraging active book distribution programs and existing DPIL affiliates. It is estimated that nearly 400,000 books will be distributed to 132,000 high promise families. Counties with no direct book distribution programs were prioritized to receive books through this program first.

There are 47 counties participating in the California Family Book Distribution Partnership. Of those, 36 are receiving direct shipments of books and 11 are expanding DPIL. The first sets of books were shipped to counties in January 2021 by Supplybank.org. DPIL will ship additional sets of books in late winter/spring of 2021.

Counties receiving direct shipments of books: Alpine, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Imperial, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Mono, Monterey, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Riverside, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Shasta, Solano, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Tehama, Tulare, Ventura, and Yolo

Counties expanding DPIL: Amador, Del Norte, Inyo, Lake, Mariposa, Modoc, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tuolumne, and Yuba

Equity and representation

To embrace the diversity of California's families and communities, the book selections include six different bilingual titles, including 50,000 Potter the Otter books from First 5 Santa Clara, and titles that represent various cultures and ethnicities. Wordless picture books also have been added to the selection through a special wordless printing of the "Three Brainy Birds Spreading the Word" book from the Talk. Read. Sing.[®] campaign.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS COMMISSION DISCUSSION AND ACTION

Updates to the Commission on the status of book distribution were provided on September 4, 2020, and October 22, 2020.

In May 2020, the Commission approved redirection of \$1.48 million from an existing contract with Fraser Communications to book distribution.

In April 2020, the Commission engaged in a discussion around potential F5CA investment in a statewide book distribution program consistent with F5CA's mission.

In January 2020, the Commission was presented with examples of programs and organizations providing books and early literacy supports to young families. Presentations were given on four models used in several counties in California: Little by Little, DPIL, Raising a Reader, and Reach Out and Read.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

Approximately \$1.5 million in book and distribution costs will be funded through F5CA's current media contract with Fraser Communications.

ATTACHMENTS

A. "Read With Me: Tips for Reading With Your Child"