



## Executive Director Report – July 22, 2021

This report provides an update about primary work and key activities staff have engaged in since the April 2021 Commission Meeting framed by the Strategic Priority Areas (SPAs). It includes relevant highlights, rather than a summary of all staff work.

### Priority Area I: CHILD HEALTH

*GOAL: All children thrive by achieving optimal health prenatal through age 5.*

Over the past three months, First 5 California (F5CA) has contributed to a vision of a future in which all young children have access to the full spectrum of health care services, receive timely developmental screenings, and are referred to appropriate developmental services when services are necessary through the following investments and activities:

#### 1. California Health Interview Survey (CHIS)

Researchers from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) and the Public Health Institute researchers finalized the CHIS policy brief, *Development Screening Among Children Ages 1–5 in California*. The brief is a deliverable under the current contract with UCLA and was released in June on the UCLA CHPR website:

<http://healthpolicy.ucla.edu/publications/search/pages/detail.aspx?PubID=2159>.

For the period of 2007 through 2018, the brief documents a significant increase in screening and in parents being asked about developmental concerns by health care providers or other professionals. The brief also analyzed the prevalence of screenings across demographic characteristics, and found differences by household income, insurance type, and parental education, as well as race and ethnicity.

Parents in higher income households and those with employment-based insurance, a usual source of medical care, higher educational levels, spoke only English at home, and identified race/ethnicity as non-Hispanic White were more likely to report their children received developmental screenings and were asked about developmental concerns. By contrast, low rates of screening were found for families with Medi-Cal insurance, without a usual source of medical care, income less than 300% of federal poverty level, educational attainment of a high school diploma or less, reported race/ethnicity as Hispanic or African American, and have dual language learner children in the home. Parents identifying as Asian also reported

less frequently being asked about developmental concerns. The brief concludes with support for universal developmental surveillance and screening as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

## **2. Emergency Supplies Program**

In May 2021, F5CA executed a second contract with SupplyBank.org to provide emergency supplies across the state to children and families who have been negatively and financially impacted by COVID-19. Based on feedback from county commissions and the change in social distancing guidelines from the Governor's Office, F5CA is moving forward with two rounds of distributions over the course of July and August that include adult face masks, disposable gloves, disinfectant cleaner, diapers, and baby wipes.

As directed by the Commission, supplies will be distributed using Healthy Places Index (HPI) data to help determine greatest need in local communities. In consultation with the Chair of the Commission, supply allocation methodology was also adjusted to include county births as a complement to county HPI quartile scores. Staff will provide a status update at the October Commission meeting to present results from this latest emergency supply investment.

## **Priority Area II: Child Development**

*GOAL: All Children birth through age 5 have high-quality, nurturing environments that ensure their learning readiness.*

Over the past three months, F5CA staff has continued working with state agency partners, counties, and policy leaders to support the development and sustainment of a well-trained and sufficiently prepared workforce, striving to ensure young children have access to high-quality early learning settings that prepare them to enter school well-prepared and able to succeed through the following investments and activities:

### **2. IMPACT 2020**

#### *a. Regional Coordination and Training and Technical Assistance Hubs (Hubs)*

The Hub Request for Applications for IMPACT 2020 funding was released on April 5, 2021. Regional Hubs support local consortia by providing them specialized support and technical assistance, collectively or individually as needed, to create economies of scale. Eight First 5 county commissions and two county offices of education were approved as lead agencies. Three new agencies will be Hub leads for the final two years of IMPACT 2020: First 5 Napa County (Region 1), First 5 Riverside (Region 9), and San Diego County Office of Education (Region 10).

With this new cycle of Hub funding, there is an increased focus on equity and the crucial role Hubs play in creating an equitable quality improvement system for early learning and care settings. Each Hub is charged with advancing equity to help make QCC a system that promotes inclusivity and racial justice. Regional

Hub leads have also expressed an interest in increased cross-regional collaboration, so F5CA will begin holding quarterly meetings in August. Topics will be developed by the participants, with an emphasis on resource sharing.

*b. Shared Services Alliance Pilot for Early Learning and Care*

On June 17, 2021, F5CA announced the release of the *Shared Services Alliance (SSA) Pilot for Early Learning and Care (ELC) Request for Applications (RFA)* funding opportunity. On August 19, 2020, the F5CA Commission approved \$1,500,000 from IMPACT 2020 for the startup of SSA Networks to build capacity in ELC settings by providing business and operational infrastructure support.

These SSA Networks will leverage regional partnerships to streamline local operations, such as billing, enrollment, fund management, and reporting that will allow for increased service capacity within the network.

This funding opportunity is available to Local Public Entities to support private licensed ELC providers and tribal settings, with priority given to Family Child Care homes and other small and underserved settings.

The deadline for applications is July 30, 2021. The RFA, including application instructions, can be found at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PZCcyeUqqK9Sxhy39wK9HNkwBSMQCO2S/view?usp=sharing>. Questions regarding the RFA and application can be directed to Kristin Torres via email at [ktorres@ccfc.ca.gov](mailto:ktorres@ccfc.ca.gov).

### **3. Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot**

Three new publications were released in May and June, highlighting findings from the DLL pilot study, and were emailed to commissioners. These include: [Approaches to supporting Dual Language Learners in California's Early Learning and Care Programs \(May 2021\)](#), [Quick Facts: How Early Learning and Care Programs Identify DLLs \(May 2021\)](#), and [Math Skills Among Spanish-Speaking DLLs: Implications for Assessment \(June 2021\)](#). To date, AIR has published seven briefs and reports, which are available on the DLL Study website at [californiadllstudy.org](http://californiadllstudy.org).

Representatives from the 16 DLL Pilot counties began participating in monthly DLL communities of practice (CoP) launched April 29. During this launch meeting, counties prioritized common questions and interests within two key areas: (1) educator engagement, preparation, and DLL professional development, and (2) improving systems of support for DLLs (systems change), including Quality Counts California (QCC), the English Learner Roadmap, and P-3 alignment efforts. On May 19, participants discussed strengths and challenges implementing effective, culturally and linguistically responsive family engagement and identification of DLLs (see related article at <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/framework-dual-language-learner-identification> and findings from the DLL Pilot Study at <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/First-5-DLL-Pilot-Study-Quick-Facts-Identifying->

[Dual-Language-Learners-May-2021.pdf](#)). During the meeting, participants heard about effective practices through Fresno's Language Learning Project. On June 16, participants discussed recommendations in the New America Blog Post (<https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/dll-data-gaps-3/>) and how local QCC efforts are addressing the seven recommendations to ensure quality rating system addresses the needs of young DLLs.

On June 24, F5CA convened policy leaders to discuss findings from the DLL Pilot, discussed how the Pilot can inform DLL-specific policy and master plan recommendations, and identify other ongoing opportunities for leverage.

#### **4. Foster Bridge Study**

The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) ([www.ccrcca.org](http://www.ccrcca.org)) completed the first year evaluation of the California Emergency Child Care Bridge Study (aka Foster Bridge Study), partially funded by F5CA. The first year report, *Strengthening California's Emergency Child Care Bridge*, evaluates the successes and challenges families and county staff faced during implementation of the Foster Bridge program throughout the state. In 2017, the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program for Foster Children (Bridge Program) was created to provide kinship caregivers or other caregivers emergency child care. Overseen by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the Bridge Program works to bridge the child welfare agency and early childhood education systems in each county across the state, and provide emergency child care vouchers, child care navigators, and trauma-informed care (TIC) training and coaching to child care providers. As of October 2020, there were 20,737 children under the age of 5 within California's foster care system.

CCRC developed nine research questions to guide the evaluation of the Bridge Program and, with assistance from CDSS, selected 12 counties across California to participate in the evaluation. During Year 1 (2020), CCRC conducted key informant interviews with child welfare and resource and referral administrators, child care navigators, and TIC coaches/trainers. CCRC also conducted key informant interviews with caregivers and child care providers, and distributed a survey to caregivers and providers.

Based on Year 1 evaluation findings, the following recommendations were made among Bridge administrators and child care providers:

- Extend the length of the Bridge voucher and have it follow the child after reunification or adoption

- Provide more statewide guidelines and create a data system consistent across all counties
- Dedicate efforts to outreach and recruit Bridge child care providers to participate in TIC training and coaching
- Trainings should include a breakdown of material by child's age and should offer different skill levels
- Trainings should be provided in Spanish

The evaluation is still on-going and in its final year of data collection and analysis. In Year 2, CCRC will conduct another iteration of interviews with Bridge administrators and staff in the 12 counties from Year 1, but will further study the counties' challenges and successes with the program, inquire about changes made to the program, and investigate how COVID-19 has affected the program.

## **5. California Family Book Distribution Partnership**

All 36 counties that requested direct book delivery (from Supply Bank and Dollywood Foundation purchase) have received their book bundles. Over 320,000 books are in the hands of counties to be distributed to high promise families in California.

Outreach to Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL) expansion counties has begun. The expansion funds will enroll 18,957 new children and sustain enrollment for two years for the 12 counties that selected DPIL expansion.

To wrap up this effort, F5CA will conduct a follow-up survey on the distribution process. Information may include a number of questions around messaging and outreach, distribution timeline and population served, expanded partnerships, and lessons learned.

## **6. Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA)**

All of the FY 2021–24 SPCFA grants have been executed. The 21 counties have been working with Child Trends (F5CA's evaluation technical assistance contractor) to explore how to evaluate the impact of their role as convener and systems change agent on child outcomes and family well-being. Twenty of the twenty-one SPCFA grantees have submitted a summary regarding their initial thinking. Child Trends also has been interviewing SPCFA grantees about how F5CA can support administrative efficiencies (pooled services) and has provided recommendations for F5CA's consideration.

## **Priority Area III: Family Functioning**

*GOAL: All families have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support their children's optimal development.*

Over the past three months, F5CA has progressed in its efforts to ensure all families have equitable access to information, resources, services, and programs designed to optimize their children’s learning, health, and overall well-being through the following programs and activities:

## **1. Home Visiting**

Child Trends, contractor for the Home Visiting Workforce Study, is using the results from the statewide survey of home visitors and supervisors (released March 2021, available at [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/F5CARport\\_ChildTrends\\_March2021-1.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/F5CARport_ChildTrends_March2021-1.pdf)) to guide the next phase of work, which involved developing recommendations for a statewide infrastructure to support workforce competency. In May, Child Trends convened the study’s Core Advisory Group, comprised of representatives from state and local departments of public health and social services and First 5 commissions, to *lay the groundwork for developing final policy recommendations that will contribute to a coordinated infrastructure for home visiting*. The policy recommendations will be delivered in late fall 2021.

In addition, over the past several months, counties participating in the Home Visiting Coordination (HVC) work continued receiving technical assistance (TA) from experts from the Home Visiting Applied Research Collaborative (HARC) to develop and implement plans to forge and strengthen partnerships with other home visiting programs and family-serving agencies, gather data about the needs of families who may benefit from home visiting but are not already being served, and reach or update agreements that improve coordination and service delivery across home visiting programs and with other family support services. They launched a Coordination Learning Network for counties to share experiences and learn from one another. The HVC TA Phase will continue through June 2022.

## **2. Smokers’ Helpline**

The California Smokers’ Helpline contract for FY 2021–24 has been executed, ensuring the Helpline is able to continue without a lapse in services. The new contract expands the relevance of tobacco cessation services to the target population by including the customization of their text and chat programs to address the unique characteristics of the F5CA target audience. They also have updated their outreach and promotion of services to more heavily rely on digital marketing and/or advertising campaigns. The Helpline will work with small population counties on the promotion of Helpline services and will coordinate cobranding of materials and resources.

The Smokers’ Helpline is in the process of rebranding. Starting September 1, 2021, the Helpline will operate as “Kick It California.” The new brand will have a new logo, website, phone numbers, and social media accounts, replacing the Smokers’ Helpline properties. In September, the current Helpline websites and phone numbers will be routed to the new websites and phone numbers.

Over the past year, the Helpline gathered qualitative and quantitative feedback from their funding agencies, tobacco control advocates, and 1,200 people who smoke and vape. They wanted to ensure they were meeting the needs of all Californians who seek help to quit and believe this new brand does just that. The Helpline has created a [brand toolkit](#) for their partners to read more about their brand story, and download their logo, colors, and promotional assets, to enable promotion of Kick It California when they launch in September.