



Executive Director Report – October 28, 2021

This report provides an update about primary work and key activities staff have engaged in since the July 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)

In August, F5CA and the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research executed a new contract for CHIS through June 2023. Similar to prior contracts, F5CA funding will support data collection with the Child Questionnaire, online data platforms available to the public (AskCHIS and AskCHIS Neighborhood Edition), a policy brief, and research memoranda. The upcoming survey data cycle will include new questions for adults on adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and paid family leave, adopted via survey topic workgroups that included input by F5CA staff.

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:

1. IMPACT 2020

Shared Services Alliance (SSA) Pilot for Early Learning and Care

On August 19, 2020, the F5CA Commission approved \$1.5 million in funding from IMPACT 2020 for the startup of SSA Networks to build capacity in early learning and care (ELC) settings by providing business and operational infrastructure support. On June 17, 2021, F5CA announced the release of the *SSA Pilot for ELC Request for Applications (RFA)* funding opportunity.

This funding opportunity was made 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.

F5CA received 14 complete applications in response to the RFA, and of those, 10 met the minimum requirements. Following a cross-agency (Changing Tides Family Services, Every Child California, California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, and the California Department of Social Services [CDSS]) review and scoring of the applications, seven received letters of intent to award. The seven applicants to receive the SSA network funds are Merced County Office of Education, First 5 San Luis Obispo, Yolo County Office of Education, First 5 Sonoma, First 5 Solano, First 5 Commission of San Diego, and Ventura County Office of Education. F5CA staff are currently working on execution of the contracts and anticipate the funds to be available this fall or early winter.

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.

The RFA can be found at

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PZCcyeUqqK9Sxhy39wK9HNkwBSMQCO2S/view?usp=sharing>.

2. Dual Language Learner (DLL) Pilot

Representatives from the 16 DLL Pilot counties have participated in monthly DLL communities of practice (CoP) since April 2021. The CoPs are a forum for counties to hear from DLL experts, learn from one another about implementation successes, offer feedback to help overcome challenges implementing DLL professional development, and integrate a focus on DLLs into their Quality Counts California efforts. Following the CoPs, a summary is shared with the public through Early Edge's monthly blog posts. Another outcome from each CoP is policy recommendations. In September, the 16 counties signed onto an advocacy letter sent to leaders at F5CA, CDSS, the California Department of Education (CDE), and the Commission on Teacher Credentialing recommending how the state could make serving DLLs a primary focus through funding and services. Highlights of the recommendations include:

- Prioritizing DLLs in every funding solicitation so applicants can more easily build local coalitions around this priority population
- Including translation and interpretation services, bilingual books, and family engagement liaison positions in new funding solicitations
- Including sufficient funding for evaluation and requiring evaluations that show impact for DLL populations
- Providing support and incentives for training in languages other than English
- Supporting institutions of higher education faculty to develop new courses to support effective DLL practices, embedding DLL principles in existing courses, and making coursework accessible to providers whose home language is other than English

In September, F5CA staff met with staff from DSS and CDE to update them about the DLL Pilot, expansion phase activities, and brainstorm ways the agencies could use the study findings to inform their work.

3. Foster Bridge Study

The Child Care Resource Center (CCRC) (www.ccrcca.org) continues data collection for the California Emergency Child Care Bridge Study (aka Foster Bridge Study) based on caregiver interviews, caregiver surveys, and administrator interviews. Key fields of inquiry include counties' challenges and successes with the program, changes made to the program, and how COVID-19 has affected the program. Additionally, CCRC is developing media to share information about the Foster Bridge Program. Staff shared first-year (2020) evaluation results with Commissioners in July. Evaluation data collection continues throughout this second year (2021). As background, 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 CDSS, the Bridge Program works to bridge the child welfare agency and early childhood education systems in each county across the state, and provides emergency child care vouchers, child care navigators, and trauma-informed care training and coaching to child care providers.

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, has completed data collection for the Home Visiting Workforce Study and drafted policy recommendations for a statewide infrastructure to support workforce stability and competency. Over the past month, Child Trends staff have been sharing highlights of their findings and recommendations with agency and policy leaders to ensure the final recommendations, including implementation suggestions, are feasible within California's context. Final recommendations will be delivered by December 2021. Recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing awareness of home visiting as a profession
- Increasing home visitors' access to trainings on diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as supporting the mental health and well-being of the workforce
- Adopting a core set of cross-model home visiting competencies for home visitors and supervisors
- Promoting cross-service coordination for systems integration through shared training, integrating the home visiting workforce into the career lattice and workforce registry, and other opportunities

In addition, over the past several months, counties participating in the Home Visiting Coordination work continued receiving technical assistance from experts from the Home Visiting Applied Research Collaborative (HARC) to strengthen partnerships with other home visiting programs and family-serving agencies in order to serve more families who could benefit from home visiting services. On October 12, 2021, F5CA hosted a listening session for counties to share their successes, challenges, and recommendations. Counties expressed their gratitude for coordination funding, which has helped most counties staff a position dedicated to this work. As a result, several counties shared how this has enabled them to develop relationships with a broader array of home visiting service providers or health plans, for example. However, other counties conveyed less positive experiences, attributing challenges to lack of motivation, inability to share data, or distrust and competitiveness among agencies. The pandemic and wildfires in parts of the state led some counties to temporarily refocus their efforts to ensure families received necessary emergency services. HARC and F5CA are working together on policy recommendations based on what is learned from counties receiving coordination funding.

2. Kick It California (a.k.a. California Smokers' Helpline)

The California Smokers' Helpline officially rebranded itself as Kick It California, effective September 1, 2021. The rebranding effort includes a new logo, website, phone numbers, and social media accounts. Since 1992, the Helpline has been a leading source of tobacco cessation services. However, to meet emerging trends, it

was necessary to evolve the brand beyond a focus on cigarettes and phone services and convey its inclusion of vaping and smokeless tobacco products with innovative methods for reaching clients. Rebranding is designed to meet the needs of all Californians. Visit the [brand toolkit](#) to read more about the brand story and promotional assets.

State Legislative Update

With the bill-signing deadline on October 10, the 2021 legislative season is over. 2021 was an active year for policies impacting young children and families. F5CA took positions and submitted formal letters of support on 38 pieces of legislation and monitored 106 bills in the 2021 regular session. Attachments A-1 and A-2 identify the status of each of those bills at the end of year one of the two-year legislative cycle. Highlighted below are the final outcomes for 11 bills of interest to F5CA. Attachment A-3 outlines progress made this year on 2021–22 Children’s Policy Agenda goals.

Resilient Families and Communities

- **AB 41 (Wood): Broadband Infrastructure Deployment** – This bill uses the “dig once” methodology and requires Caltrans, as part of projects that are located in priority areas, to install broadband conduit capable of supporting fiber optic communication cables.
Governor Action: Chaptered
- **AB 123 (Gonzalez): Paid Family Leave: Weekly Benefit Amount** – This bill would have phased in increased wage replacement rates for all eight weeks of paid family leave and the first 12 weeks of State Disability Insurance, so that by January 2025, workers paid less than 70 percent of the state average weekly wage would receive 90 percent of their pay, with higher wage workers receiving 70 percent of their regular income, up to a cap.
Governor Action: Vetoed
- **AB 537 (Quirk): Communications: Wireless Telecommunications and Broadband Facilities** – This bill aligns California law with current federal law regarding the approval of wireless telecommunications applications and provides additional clarity that will allow applicants to deploy communications technology. It ensures that all local jurisdictions in California approve or deny these important projects within federal timeline requirements and utilize permitting best practices.
Governor Action: Chaptered
- **AB 1357 (Cervantes): Perinatal Services: Maternal Mental Health** – This bill would have required the Department of Public Health to develop and maintain on its internet website a referral network of community-based mental health providers and support services addressing postpartum depression, prenatal delivery and postpartum care, neonatal and infant care services, and support groups to improve access to postpartum depression, screening referrals, treatment, and support

services in medically underserved areas.

Governor Action: Vetoed

- **SB 65 (Skinner): Maternal Care and Services** – This bill reimagines maternal health in order to improve perinatal outcomes, close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity, and improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes.

Governor Action: Chaptered

Child Health

- **SB 428 (Hurtado): Health Care Coverage: Adverse Childhood Experiences Screenings** – This bill requires health care service plans and health insurance policies that provide coverage for pediatric services and preventive care to include coverage for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screenings.

Governor Action: Chaptered

- **SB 682 (Rubio): Childhood Chronic Health Conditions: Racial Disparities** – This bill would have required the California Health and Human Services Agency to convene an advisory group to develop and implement a plan that establishes targets to reduce racial disparities in chronic conditions affecting children by at least 50 percent by the year 2030.

Governor Action: Vetoed

Early Learning

- **AB 865 (Quirk-Silva): Childcare Services: Alternative Payment Programs: Direct Deposits: Reserve Funds** – This bill would have allowed family child care providers and centers to be reimbursed based on a family's maximum certified hours of need and not based on attendance, and authorize the greater use of electronic communications to best support the needs of families.

Governor Action: Vetoed

- **AB 1363 (Rivas): Preschool: Dual Language Learners** – This bill establishes a standard process for California State Preschool providers to identify the Dual Language Learners they enroll and serve, and require providers to report key information about them.

Governor Action: Chaptered

- **SB 393 (Hurtado): Migrant Childcare and Development Programs** – This bill aligns the funding stream for the Migrant Childcare Alternative Payment program with other voucher-based child care programs to help support the needs of migrant workers in times of a declared state of emergency and allow them to receive their fair share of emergency funding.

Governor Action: Chaptered

Revenue and Governance

- **SB 395 (Caballero): Excise Tax: Electronic Cigarettes: Heath Careers Opportunity Grant Program: Small and Rural Hospital Relief Program** – This bill creates parity between the sale of vape products and traditional tobacco products to promote smoking cessation and fund prevention programs across early childhood, public health, and health care.
Governor Action: Chaptered

Federal Policy Update

F5CA Federal Advocacy Request for Proposals

F5CA has issued a Notice of Intent to Award to DC law and lobbying firm Clark Hill for federal advocacy support on behalf of F5CA and the entire First 5 Network. The Clark Hill team working on this contract is led by Leticia Mederos, their Senior Managing Director of Government Affairs, who has over two decades of experience working on federal early childhood issues and represents several national partners, including the National Women’s Law Center, Zero to Three, CLASP, and the National Diaper Bank. Staff expect to have a contract in place by November 1, although, given the important proposals being negotiated in Washington, the team at Clark Hill has already begun looping staff into conversations and providing guidance on First 5 engagement and advocacy.

Budget Reconciliation

It is likely that the Build Back Better Reconciliation bill will be slimmed down from \$3.5 trillion to somewhere between \$2 trillion and \$2.3 trillion. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework (BIF) awaits action in the House and is linked to Reconciliation. By the end of October, there will be increased pressure to delink both packages if there is no deal on a framework and top line funding level for Reconciliation. However, Congressional aides believe that a deal is imminent and should be announced by the week of October 18. Currently, the discussion among House and Senate leadership and the White House is whether to do fewer things well or maintain all initiatives as passed by the House Budget Committee at lower funding levels. Champions like Senator Patty Murray are fighting hard to maintain the \$450 billion that was passed in September by the House Education and Labor Committee for child care and preschool. However, if the package is funded at the \$2 trillion level, it is possible a cut of \$100 billion will be seen in this area.

Appropriations

For the last month, the speculation in the media and in Washington has focused almost exclusively on the BIF and the Budget Reconciliation legislation. And in the run up to Columbus/Indigenous People’s Day, there was also intense focus on the federal debt limit, which has been pushed off by action of the House to early December. What has received far less attention is the regular appropriations process, which takes up roughly

25 percent of the President's proposed \$6 trillion budget. The President's budget seeks an increase of \$118 billion in discretionary spending, \$106 billion for non-defense programs, and just \$12 billion for defense. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Budget Resolution passed by Congress proposes the discretionary spending for FY 2022 largely along the lines of what the President has requested, with an overall topline of \$1.522 trillion, an 8.4 percent increase over FY 2021, and the allocation between defense and non-defense assumed to be as proposed in the budget. Lack of final action on spending bills caused the House and Senate to pass a nine-week Continuing Resolution (CR) through December 3.

With the debt ceiling expiring at roughly the same time as the CR, negotiations will start to take shape in November, with a possible further CR taking us until closer to Christmas. While the chance for a full year CR is still quite high, if Congressional Leadership can get the White House involved in the near term, there is some reason for optimism. However, the political environment is so volatile, it is not clear today what the path to a deal looks like. The pieces are there, but their alignment will take some real finesse and external pressure to get all sides to compromise. Senate Appropriations Chair Pat Leahy will begin to release bills that will show the promise of what might be possible if such a deal were to happen and to stake out the base from which he and his colleagues hope to negotiate. It sets the stage for a tense period of uncertainty, compounded by the \$3+ trillion riding on the outcome of the BIF and Reconciliation combination that will require some hard decisions by Congressional Democrats over the next few weeks.

Attachments

A-1. Executive Summary and Detailed Report of Legislative Bills of Interest

A-2. Legislative Bills of Interest

A-3. 2021–22 Children's Policy Agenda Progress Report