

**FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY  
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION**

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES (APPROVED May 25, 2016)  
March 23, 2016**

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson	SLO County Board of Supervisors
James Brescia	SLO County Office of Education
Lee Collins	Department of Social Services
James Forester, DDS	Medical Representative (Central Coast Dental Society)
Janet Murphy	Community at Large
Tracy Schiro	Children's Services Network
Melinda Sokolowski	Child Care Planning Council
Bob Watt	Community at Large

**Commissioners Absent/Excused --**

Penny Borenstein, M.D.    SLO County Public Health Department

**Staff Present**

First 5 staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood  
Commission Evaluator: Tom Keifer  
Commission Counsel: Ray Biering

**Call to Order**

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

**ITEM 1 –Chair Comments**

- Chair Gibson invited legal counsel Ray Biering to introduce Natalie Lackey, associate at Adamski Moroski Madden Cumberland & Green. Ms. Lackey has been assigned to assist Mr. Biering with First 5 business, replacing Jeff Minnery.
- The chair reminded Commissioners to RSVP for the Hands-on Heroes dinner on April 19, 2016.

**ITEM 2 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda**

None

### ITEM 3 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements

- Commissioner Schiro updated the Commission on a Children’s Services Network discussion related to services and gaps for children in the county. It was agreed at the January CSN meeting for each member agency to summarize services/programs supporting children and to begin consideration of a gap analysis. This “Children’s Share” discussion will be on the CSN agenda Wednesday April 6<sup>th</sup>.

### ITEM 4 - Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the January 27, 2016 Minutes
2. Approval of update to Staff Sick Leave Policy
3. Approval of one-year contract extension with Crosby Company for Audit Services
4. Approval of contract amendment with Lucia Mar Unified School District, Oceano School Readiness
5. Receipt and Approval of First 5 CA Annual Report FY 14-15 as required by the Children and Families First Act

*Public Comment: None*

Chair Gibson commented that Item 4e. is a Public Hearing item. Mr. Biering confirmed that the Public Hearing requirement is satisfied on the Consent Agenda.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Watt and passed unanimously.

### ITEM 5 – Director’s Report

Executive Director Wendy Wendt provided updates on state and local First 5 activities.

QRIS/IMPACT: F5 California has issued an Intent to Award announcement for IMPACT funds, with all 58 county First 5’s participating in the 5-year program. F5 SLO County is designated for a \$1,558,958 allocation in Implementation Funds and has already signed a Letter of Agreement for \$322,554 in Base Layer Funds. IMPACT SLO will in part fund contracts with CAP SLO and SLOCOE to provide professional development, coaching, assessment, incentives, and public awareness related to quality in early childhood education settings. In addition to local IMPACT work, First 5 SLO County will be participating in a regional IMPACT HUB with Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Ventura County is the lead agency for HUB work, which will focus on regional coordination, shared professional development and technical assistance, and support of CA-QRIS implementation.

Chair Gibson commented that the QRIS/IMPACT project is complex and has risen up quickly. He urged Commissioners and staff to maintain clarity on First 5’s role. Ms. Wendt clarified that with respect to the IMPACT grant, First 5 SLO County will focus on its fiscal agent function and public awareness champion. SLO County QRIS Administrator Raechelle Bowlay-Sutton from

SLO County Child Care Planning Council will be invited to the June 2016 Commission meeting to provide an overview/update on all QRIS activities, including IMPACT and grants through the CA Department of Education (CA CSPP Block Grant, Infant-Toddler Block Grant).

First 5 Association Advocacy: Program Officer Jason Wells will represent First 5 SLO County at an upcoming F5 Advocacy Day in Sacramento, April 5, 2016. The First 5 Association has recently released its 2016 Policy Agenda. Key areas include Family Strengthening, Early Identification and Intervention, Oral Health, Quality Early Learning, and System Sustainability and Reach.

Early Learning Water Cooler Conference: Ms. Wendt attended this event in Sacramento which is hosted by the Advancement Project. Salient themes addressed at this year's conference included Brain Development, Poverty, Resilience and Community Partnerships. A panel was also convened to respond to Governor Brown's budget proposal for Early Education Block Grants.

Local Partnerships: First 5 staff are actively cultivating new partnerships with the Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition and the SLO Chamber of Commerce.

*Public Comment*

Teresa Scott, Community Relations Program Manager, CENCAL Health asked First 5 to publicize the July 2016 start of MediCal coverage for undocumented children.

**ITEM 6 – Outreach and Communications Report**

Outreach and Communications Officer Misty Livengood updated the Commission on various projects and information regarding First 5 SLO County.

KSBY has begun airing a Month of the Child spot (through end of April).

Month of the Child events are in the final stages of planning – April 5 Advocacy Day in Sacramento (April 5), Board of Supervisors Proclamation (April 5), Wear Blue Day for Child Abuse Prevention Awareness (April 8), Children's Day in the Plaza (April 9), Hands on Heroes (April 19) and other children's events

The local Talk.Read.Sing campaign is up and running – Bus ads, movie ads, billboard due to mount in early May, Blues Baseball sponsorship and Foul Ball Night (July 9, 2016), outreach materials.

Congratulations to First 5 partner Lisa Fraser, Executive Director, honored as one of the county's 2016 Women of Distinction.

*Public Comment:* None

**ITEM 7 – Strategic Plan 2016-20: Update on Commissioner Work Groups (Advocacy/Sustainability), Review Plan Draft Outline**

Wendy Wendt presented a summary of four Commissioner workgroups that met during February and March to discuss advocacy and sustainability strategies in the context of each Priority Area within the new draft Strategic Plan: Family Strengthening, Health and Development, Early Learning, and Perinatal Readiness. Below are “first/biggest priorities” in each area as articulated by the work groups:

Perinatal Readiness: Maternal Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Early Prenatal Care

Family Strengthening: Anti-poverty initiatives, family-friendly workplace, link with other advocacy organizations’ efforts (e.g. Center for Family Strengthening)

Child Health: Oral Health, Developmental Screening/Referral

Early Learning: System alignment on quality work, Build Capacity (in partnership with business, schools), Focus first on two School Readiness Regions – Oceano, Paso Robles

Commissioner Murphy added a comment on climate change as an overarching advocacy theme for consideration. She recently attended a meeting of the Citizens Climate Lobby (San Luis Obispo Chapter) to listen to a UNICEF talk on the links between climate change and children’s wellbeing. Commissioner Gibson mentioned a complementary public awareness campaign – Outside-in-SLO overseen by Kathleen Karle at the SLO County Public Health Department. He emphasized that First 5 needs to choose advocacy messages that are impactful and clear.

Commissioners offered the following supplemental comments:

**FAMILY STRENGTHENING**

- It is important to focus on one message
- Affordable housing/homelessness are critical issues affecting families’ basic needs. Commissioner Schiro referenced the “hierarchy of needs” concept. “Getting and keeping a job is easier if you have a roof over your head.”
- Commissioner Forester urged not to stop with housing as the only advocacy issue to take on. Commissioner Schiro stressed that any advocacy effort focused on mitigating family poverty is valuable.

**HEALTH**

- Commissioner Collins commented on the importance of access to mental health supports for parents of young children. He pointed out that a new appraisal tool launched in September 2015 at DSS has produced data supporting this need. 75% of applicants for Cal Works have indicated a mental health issue, and less than 20% are

getting help. “That gap feeds our child welfare system. Untreated mental health issues lead to child abuse, entry into Child Welfare Services.”

#### EARLY LEARNING

- Commissioner Forester suggested a summit/forum on early childhood education.
- Commissioner Sokolowski proposed bringing parents to the table on any early learning advocacy work
- Commissioner Gibson reminded that First 5 needs to be more than a convener; we should be a leader.
- Program Officer Wells pointed out that the QRIS system is in large part meant to be focused on educating the community on the importance of quality.
- Commissioner Forester summarized that First 5’s work in this area follows two parallel paths: 1) calibrate providers; 2) educate parents.

Summary discussion focused on whether to pick one or multiple advocacy priorities for the coming year. Commissioner Schiro pointed out that we can use different conduits for advocacy at different intensity levels and cover more ground and not limit ourselves to one issue. For example, we could add position statements to our website, and attend/make public comment at events. Commissioner Gibson challenged staff and Commissioners: What issue do we believe would warrant a public presentation to leadership groups (e.g. Board of Supervisors)? What would warrant sending a delegation to Sacramento?

Commissioner Collins inquired whether/how new tobacco legislation that increases the minimum age will affect First 5 revenue. Ms. Wendt responded that this is inevitable, will bring guidance information pending from the First 5 Association to the May meeting.

#### *Public Comment:*

Teresa Scott, CenCal Health Community Relations Program Manager, inquired whether anyone has looked at what SLO County benefits might be derived from the newly adopted MediCal 2020 Waiver. [Note: Possibilities include the “Whole Person Care” pilot, the “Health Home” pilot, and the “Dental Transformation Initiative” pilot.

Commissioner Forester commented that the Oral Health Coalition is working on the latter of these three opportunities.

#### **ITEM 8 – Strategic Plan 2016-20: Contract Budget Negotiations Update**

Program Officer Jason Wells provided an overall summary on the budget process with programs slated for continued funding. He highlighted several pending changes to current practice:

- BABES Contract – Public Health will transition from a current subcontract with French Hospital for lactation consultation to an internal staffing model that uses IBCLC-certified personnel at Public Health. This approach will allow the Public Health Department to expand service to more families without increasing the budget.

- Parents Helping Parents will need to decrease some hours to meet their budget within the level-funded constraints.
- First 5 Preschools and the Extended Day programs will institute – nominal parent fees and SLOCOE contributions to help make level funding possible.
- Post-Partum Depression Support will be expanding to a broader perinatal/maternal mental health approach.
- Lucia Mar Unified School District has requested an amount above the Commission-approved level funding. This is due to an increase in personnel costs. Mr. Wells requested direction from the Commission on how to handle this overage request. If Lucia Mar does not find internal funds, what are the options? Decrease services? Deny the contract? Commissioners were in agreement that Lucia Mar must cover the remaining funds and maintain the program at its current level of service in order to be awarded the contract.

The Lucia Mar scenario prompted a follow-up discussion regarding community/partner contributions to First 5-funded programs. How to address different organizations with differing capacities to raise additional funds? Commissioners emphasized the importance of establishing relationships and public awareness building between First 5 and partner agency decision makers, e.g. school boards.

*Public Comment:* None

### **ITEM 9 -- Special Presentation: Father Involvement in Early Childhood Contexts**

Commissioner Sokolowski presented on her past and current work on father involvement projects in her position at Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County. She underscored the importance of this issue: 1 in 3 children in America are growing up without a father, and 4 out of 5 Americans feel the most important problem for children relates to the lack of a father figure.

Ms. Sokolowski summarized a prior project, Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) , a longitudinal Study conducted in five counties. Outcomes of the intervention included:

- Couple relationship maintained
- Fathers more involved
- Decrease in parenting stress for fathers
- Decrease in anxiety for moms
- Less social withdrawal for kids
- Increase in income
- Substance abuse went down
- Decrease in violence
- Authoritarian, harsh parenting decreased

The current project, PAPÁS of the Central Coast, continues the work of SFI with funding from the Office of Family Assistance and with CAPSLO partners in Santa Cruz County.

Ms. Sokolowski concluded with some suggested ways that agencies including First 5 can help support father involvement, including

- Showcasing or investing in supportive services that reinforce the message
- Advancing targeted projects like the ones she summarized above.
- Blend into community outreach/education – father-friendly initiatives; father awards, etc.
- Incorporate father-friendly images into public education and outreach materials

Concrete examples of First 5 agencies' work on father involvement include:

- The Fathers Corps is a collaboration between First 5 Alameda County, Alameda County Public Health Department, and Alameda County Social Services. The Fathers Corps is a county-wide team of male service providers trained to help strengthen families by fostering constructive engagement of fathers in the care and upbringing of their children.
- 2014 Countywide Needs Assessment – re: fathers, hosted by First 5 San Mateo County
- 8<sup>th</sup> annual Fatherhood Solutions Conference-First 5 LA
- First 5 Centers and home visiting programs in Contra Costa County offer father's groups and support, information, and fun activities
- Weekly blog- FIRST 5 Santa Clara County: The Importance Of Fathers In The Lives Of Children
- Esta en Ti – Fatherhood Initiative - First 5 Fresno
- Dad and Me Parent Support Groups within a Family Resource Center, - First 5 Amador

Commissioner Watt asked if only couples are involved in the current study. Commissioner Sokolowski clarified that couples and singles are eligible, and also teens.

Commissioner Gibson expressed an interest in showcasing this issue and the SFI study for the Board of Supervisors.

Commissioner Collins commented that Kathryn Edin has done a lot of work in this area, especially related to systems that separate men from their families.

Commissioner Watt expressed concern related to inequity for fathers in the context of divorce. Commissioner Sokolowski concurred and commented that fathers' rights and the courts is an ongoing challenge.

*Public Comment*

None

## **ITEM 10 – Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.