FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
June 24, 2026 (Approved September 23, 2026)

Current Commissioners Present

Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Chair)	SLO County Board of Supervisors
Michelle Auran, M.D.	Medical Representative
Penny Borenstein, M.D.	SLO County Public Health Department
Patty Clarkson, Ed.D	Early Care and Education Planning Council
Joe Koski, Ed.D	SLO County Office of Education
Nancy Kuster	Department of Social Services
Leslie Mehigan, MBA	(Vice Chair) Community at Large
Alison Ventura, Ph.D.	Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused

Erica Ruvalcaba, Ed.D	Community at Large

Staff Present

Commission staff: Wendy Wendt, Misty Livengood, Maggie Payne
Commission Counsel: Craig Steele

Call to Order

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM.

ITEM 1 –Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

None

ITEM 2 - Consent Agenda

a) Approve May 27, 2026 minutes
b) Accept Commissioner Auran Reappointment Nomination – Medical Representative
c) Approve Updated Agreement with Ventura County Office of Education for FY26-27 IMPACT Legacy Fiscal Lead Agency Activities

Public Comment:

Commissioner Kuster made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Borenstein and passed 7:1:1 (Commissioner Koski abstained on Item 2c).

ITEM 3 – PUBLIC HEARING re: Status of Staff Vacancies, Recruitment Retention Efforts

Legal Counsel Craig Steele presented on this item, which is in compliance with CA AB2561. The State Legislature enacted this legislation to ensure that public boards are informed about staff vacancies/recruitment/retention. First 5 SLO County does not have any vacancies or recruitment efforts in effect at this time.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 4 – Approve Nominating Committee Recommendations for At-Large Commissioners: Vivien Devaney-Frice and Beatriz Huizar

Executive Director Wendy Wendt and Commissioner Michelle Auran presented on this item. Two at-large Commissioners are terming out on July 20, 2026 – Erica Ruvalcaba and Alison Ventura. Commissioners Ruvalcaba and Auran formed an ad-hoc Nominating Committee to review with staff seven new at-large Commissioner applications and to advance a recommendation to the full Commission for two formal nominees to submit to the County Board of Supervisors for final approval at a meeting in early July.

The Committee recommends Vivien Devaney-Frice and Beatriz Huizar. Ms. Devaney-Frice is currently serving as the Executive Director at Camp Natoma, and also is a post-partum doula. She was born and raised in San Luis Obispo, and is a resident of Paso Robles. Ms. Huizar is an educator with San Luis Coastal Unified School District, having worked for nearly two decades as a classroom teacher in Hanford, CA. Most recently, she has been working as an English Language Specialist at Hawthorne Elementary School and also provides Spanish/English language translation support for District-level English Language Advisory Committee (DELAC) meetings. Over the summer, Ms. Huizar will transition to a District-level position overseeing K-12 English language specialists and programs.

Commission Chair Ortiz-Legg extended a warm welcome to both Commissioner-candidates. She asked them what inspired them to apply. Ms. Huizar responded that for the past 24 years she has worked with primary grades. She has long been aware – both as a professional and as a mother of three children – the importance of the early years in children's lives as a core foundation. Ms. Devaney-Frice commented that as a new mother of a now-toddler child, she felt the need for support and connection. She became a post-partum doula to help other parents, a role which has opened her eyes to the positive impact we can have on children 0-5 and their families.

Commissioner Mehigan asked if the candidates have been made aware of the time commitment involved in being a Commissioner. Both affirmed that they do and are available for the calendared meetings.

Commissioner Mehigan made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee's recommendations to formally nominate Vivien Devaney-Frice and Beatriz Huizar as At-Large Commissioners, subject to final approval by the County Board of Supervisors. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clarkson and passed unanimously.

ITEM 5 – Strategic Plan Update: Approve Long-Range Financial Plan

Executive Director Wendy Wendt introduced this item. The first reading of the long-range financial plan took place at the May Commission meeting. The draft presented for approval today has the following modifications since the May first reading:

- The projected Proposition 10 revenue has been updated to reflect a new set of Projections prepared by First 5 California and distributed to local First 5agencies on June 5, 2026.

- Evaluation allocation was increased a modest amount to include a percentage of budgeted Kit Program expenditures In addition, the annual evaluation amount was rounded up a modest amount to $40,000 per year for the final two years of the current Strategic Plan.

- A typo was removed from the May draft ($709 was erroneously included as an expenditure during the final year of the plan).

- Program-related administration as a percentage of total administrative costs was adjusted only once (in FY27-28) to reflect a more conservative estimate of personnel time allocated to program vs. administrative functions.

Public Comment: none

Commissioner Borenstein moved to approve the Long-Range Financial Plan Update. Motion seconded by Commissioner Ventura. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 6 – Approve FY 2026-27 Administrative Budget

Ms. Wendt introduced the final draft of the FY 2026-27 Administrative Budget. A first reading was conducted at the May 2026 Commission meeting.

Staff recommends a total administrative budget in the amount of $768,167 for FY 2026-27. This amount is included in the Commission's Long Range Financial Plan.

The only change to the Administrative budget draft from the May 27th First Read is a slight decrease in the budgeted office rent cost. Walter Brothers agreed to a 2% increase instead of a 3% increase for the coming year. The $343 in savings from this adjustment has been added to the Contingency line item.

Ms. Wendt reminded Commissioners that beginning in September 2026, Special Projects Coordinator Maggie Payne will have decreased hours (from 30 per week to 24 hours per week) due to the end of the Uplift Catalyst grant.

Commissioner Koski commended the staff for operating a lean organization while maximizing community impact.

Public comment: None.

Commissioner Koski moved to approve the FY 2026-27 Administrative Budget; Commissioner Mehigan seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM 7 – Staff Reports

Outreach and Communications Coordinator Misty Livengood provided the following updates:

- First 5 Association is supporting several legislative bills, including AB 1996 (Child Poverty Bill), and AB2756 (strengthens MediCal Vision Services Act). Note that the First 5 San Luis Obispo County Commission had endorsed AB2756 in May 2026.
- The Board of Supervisors signed three proclamations at a recent meeting – 1) honoring Dr. Borenstein on her retirement from the County as Chief Health Officer/Public Health Director, 2) Immigrant Heritage Month, and 3) Pride Month.
- Associate Director Jason Wells attended a graduation event at MICOP for families who had participated in the most recent cohort of the First 5-funded parent engagement program – Aprendiendo con Mamá y Papá.
- South County Youth Coalition Learning Pods (a First 5 funded program) are wrapping up their June bilingual group.
- First 5 staff participated at the recent Nipomo Library Celebration Resource Fair
- Summer First 5 sponsorships include Atascadero Movies in the Park, SLO County Public Libraries Back to School Event at Cuesta College on August 1, and a SELPA Parent Institute on September 26.

Special Projects Coordinator Maggie Payne provided the following updates:

- The Uplift Child Care Coalition will be holding its final Showcase Event virtually on July 15. Project funding sunsets August 31, 2026. Ms. Payne highlighted Coalition accomplishments, notably creation of a "Shared Vision Statement," and launch of a six-county Child Care Facilities Action Network (CCFAN).

- Ms. Payne and Ms. Wendt have submitted a proposal to present at the the 2026 First 5 CA Summit on the topic: "Child Development Meets Economic Development – Aligning California Jobs First Initiative (CJF) with Early Learning Innovation." If selected, they will be joined on a panel with counterparts from the Orange County and Bay Area CJF Regions.

Commissioner Auran asked a clarifying question regarding the CCFAN and who would be best qualified to apply for the role of "Facilities Specialist." Answer – people with familiarity/experience in the child care field who are interested to gain skills/knowledge in land use policy that relates to child care.

Ms. Wendt provided the following updates:

- Anticipated changes coming for individuals with "unsatisfactory immigration status" (UIS), specifically a transition from MediCal Managed Care to Fee for Service. The First 5 Association signed on to a letter urging the state to consider an alternative proposal. Commission Ortiz-Legg underscored the complexity of the situation.

- The makeup of the Commission will be changing in September with the two new At-Large Commissioners joining (Ms. Devaney-Frice and Ms. Huizar), and a new health representative from the County. The latter position and person remain to be determined, pending new hires and a new organizational structure at the County. Ms. Wendt will consult with First 5 Legal Counsel Craig Steele on the optimal timing and approach.

- Ms. Wendt urged Commissioners to stay in touch over the summer. Staff will be busy with a variety of activities, including new Commission orientations, preparation for the annual audit, wrapping up Uplift, sharing information on summer family events, among other projects.

Public comment: None.

ITEM 8 – Presentation: How Parent Digital Media Use Shapes Early Parenting and Relationships: Findings from the Cal Poly Healthy Kids Lab

Commissioner Alison Ventura, who is a Cal Poly Professor and Director of the University's Center for Health Research, presented on her research related to parent-child attachment and screen time.

Commissioner Ventura started her presentation with a summary of the "serve-and-return" metaphor for communication between very young children and their caregivers. She then provided data on parental use of digital media while in the presence of children, including during feeding times. She acknowledged the realities of our current digital age, and called out key potential benefits for new parents – including protection from feelings of isolation, and access to round-the-clock health guidance. Her data collection through interviews and observations with caregiver participants and their infants also surfaced findings related to negative effects of "technoference" in parent-child engagement scenarios, notably missed opportunities to develop healthy serve-and-return communication.

Discussion ensued among Commissioners, staff, and members of the public.

Question: What is the difference between mom reading a book while breastfeeding vs. scrolling on the phone. Answer: Context helps. In general, significant distraction from serve-and-return communication can be problematic.

Question: How does digital use affect fathers? Answer: Dads are difficult to research in this space. It would be a great question to ask during developmental screenings.

Question: Do the findings indicate differences between breast and bottlefeeding? Answer: Some data shows that screen use is more common with breastfeeding moms.

Question: Are there studies on interventions that help change behaviors? Answer: Hopefully there will be more data available soon.

Comment: Helping families with digital literacy and increased awareness regarding serve-and-return communication will be helpful.

Comment: It is commendable to include in the research and findings recognition of the realities of the digital age and the potential benefits as well as potential negative impacts of screen use.

Public Comment: Incorporated into discussion above.

ITEM 9 – Commissioner Announcements

Ms. Wendt and Commissioners honored each of the three Commissioners leaving their roles after this meeting. Commissioners Ventura and Ruvalcaba have served since 2019, and Commissioner Borenstein since 2008.

Commissioner Ventura expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve in this way. She added that while service roles can be challenging, she has loved her time with First 5. She called out a highlight of attending an annual First 5 Association Advocacy Day in Sacramento.

Commissioner Borenstein concurred, has felt like First 5 Commission meetings are a bright spot in her schedule.

ITEM 10 -- Future Agenda Items

The September 23 meeting will include a presentation by Community Action Partnership on their First 5-funded Building Connections project based out of the Child Care Resource Connection.

The October 28 meeting will include another CAPSLO presentation on its First 5-funded Help Me Grow Centralized Access Point.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 11 – Meeting adjourned at 5:18 p.m.