

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**  
January 28, 2021 (Approved March 25, 2021)

**Current Commissioners Present**

Bruce Gibson (Chair)	SLO County Board of Supervisors
Penny Borenstein, M.D. (Vice Chair)	SLO County Public Health Department
James Brescia, Ed.D.	SLO County Office of Education
Devin Drake	Department of Social Services
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia	Community at Large
Alison Ventura, Ph.D.	Community at Large
Melinda Sokolowski	Child Care Planning Council
Bob Watt	Community at Large

**Current Commissioners Absent**

James Tedford, M.D.	Medical Representative (AAP, Ch 2)
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**Staff Present**

First 5 staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Sarah Montes Reinhart  
First 5 interns: Angela Spinelli, Andrea Uribe  
Commission Evaluator: Tom Keifer  
Commission Counsel: Natalie Frye-Laacke

**Call to Order**

Chair Gibson called the meeting to order at 11:32 AM.

**ITEM 1 – Chair Comments**

Chair Gibson announced that Commissioner Tedford would not be at the meeting. His wife recently passed away having contracted COVID. All Commissioners expressed deep sadness and condolences.

Chair Gibson introduced the two Cal Poly interns working at First 5 this quarter. Angela Spinelli is a senior child development major who also works at a local preschool. Andrea Uribe too is a senior child development major interested in working to help families find resources.

**ITEM 2 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates**

Commissioner Sokolowski commented that she has been contacted by Calaveras County First 5 because they are interested in learning from the success of SLO County's differential response model – a partnership between CAPSLO and DSS to address child abuse prevention

and intervention by providing parent education and family advocacy.

Commissioner Watt commented on the impressive work being accomplished by the Center for Family Strengthening to support local families during the pandemic. He sits on the board of CFSSLO.

Commissioner Borenstein expressed gratitude for the wisdom and cooperation of the Vaccine Task Force, which includes Commissioners Brescia and Ruvalcaba-Heredia as well as Child Care Planning Council Coordinator Raechelle Bowlay. Commissioner Brescia added that education and early childhood education/child care are in the same tier.

Chair Gibson is encouraged by the transparency and surge in mobilization around vaccine distribution. He next commented on the Dana Reserve housing development project slated for Nipomo. The design plans currently include a possible Cuesta campus, a possible high school, and a child care center.

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia announced that Day of the Child in Oceano will not be held this year in the traditional fashion, but there are plans for a drive through event, also likely in Paso Robles -- in April during the Month of the Child.

**ITEM 3 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda**

Raechelle Bowlay, Child Care Planning Council Coordinator, reminded Commissioners of April – Month of the Child & Child Abuse Prevention Month. Her organization is teaming with others – including First 5 – to offer up and/or advertise daily virtual activities, drive-by events, and goodies throughout the county.

**ITEM 4 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda**

- a. Approval of the December 3, 2020 Minutes
- b. Approval of FY20-21 Q2 Financial Report
- c. Confirm BOS Commissioner Appointment – Bruce Gibson (one-year term Jan-Dec 2021)
- d. Approve 2019-20 Audit Corrective Action Plan Update with Target Completion Dates

*Public Comment: None*

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

**ITEM 5 (ACTION ITEM) - Election of 2021 Officers: Chair and Vice Chair**

*Public Comment: None*

Commissioner Watt made a motion to approve 2021 Officers Bruce Gibson as Chair and Penny Borenstein as Vice Chair. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Drake and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Watt thanked them both for their leadership and dedication to this work, even in the midst of COVID.

Both Commissioners Gibson and Borenstein responded that they are fond of and committed to First 5, and happy to continue in their leadership roles.

### **ITEM 6 (ACTION ITEM) – Presentation/Approval: 2020 Outcome Evaluation**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced the item. Evaluation Consultant Tom Keifer presented an overview of evaluation results over the past four years – representing the culmination of the prior strategic planning period. He commended Mr. Keifer for the monumental task of completing the annual evaluation within the context of COVID.

Mr. Keifer touched on the following points:

- Reviewed the role of the local Commission to develop a strategic plan, allocate resources and evaluate effectiveness of investments.
- Reviewed Priority Areas of the 2016-20 Strategic Plan: Perinatal Readiness, Early Learning, Health and Development, Family Strengthening
- Reviewed evaluation focus – Advocacy Activities and Funded Programs
- Highlighted Advocacy – Hands on Heroes, Talk Read Sing, Help Me Grow, We Are the Care, COVID-19 Supports, Race/Equity/Diversity/Inclusion
- Reviewed Funded Program highlights in each priority area.

Discussion:

Commissioner Watt expressed appreciation for Mr. Keifer's work, noting that the measured impacts are very reinforcing.

Commissioner Brescia commented on the importance of an evaluative look at our work.

Chair Gibson acknowledged that these are challenging times and is looking forward to a return to normalcy in our work in the future.

Public Comment:

Lisa Fraser, Executive Director at the Center for Family Strengthening, commented that families who return multiple times to access family advocacy supports are accessing stability and support. "We see that as a strength."

Commissioner Sokolowski made a motion to approve the 2020 Evaluation Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ventura and passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 7: Commissioner Updates: COVID and Beyond**

This item allowed time for Commissioners to share reflections on challenges and progress related to the COVID year.

Commissioner Watt described how proud he is of the young people weathering this year, especially by women like his daughters who are empowered to take action.

Commissioner Ventura announced that new federal dietary guidelines are coming out that include the birth-24 month population. This is historic progress, and also includes more cohesive recommendations for pregnant women. This is a great tool for our education and evaluation efforts.

Commissioner Brescia spotlighted the Ticket to Teach Apprenticeship program; there are 25 people currently enrolled.

Commissioner Gibson commented on this year's societal pressures, is skeptical of the on-the-ground reality of "We are all in this together" sentiments. Issues round racial justice/equity and COVID, child care....There are so many issues to tackle all at once. He agreed with Commissioner Watt that he takes comfort in witnessing the potential and hope embedded in the up-and-coming generation.

Commissioner Sokolowski expressed awe at the community's ability to step up in a time of crisis, and the level of volunteerism that has risen up. She hopes that this pattern continues over the long term. Much of CAPSLO became a storage/distribution locale as an emergency response center.

Commissioner Drake spoke of the need to act quickly and nimbly to protect both clients and employees. One of his employees recently passed away, and the severity of the pandemic really hit home. He commented that racial equity concerns were raised at work, and a diversity group has been established to help the agency open up conversations and positive change.

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia has witnessed community members' compassion to mobilize and make a difference. She praised the tireless efforts of the Promotores team, particularly on vaccine outreach and education. She highlighted the creation and rapid development/deployment of the SLO County UndocuSupport fund. She feels like people who had been working in silos are now working together.

Commissioner Borenstein thanked everyone for contributing to this "moment of positivity." This is not easy work. Today's conversation is helping her focus on the good. She is walking away from this meeting grateful and somewhat rejuvenated.

Chair Gibson echoed Commissioner Borenstein's sentiments.

Public Comment: None.

## **ITEM 8: Staff Reports**

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Officer, updated Commissioners on the following topics:

- COVID Federal Relief funding
- We Are the Care Kickoff Event
- Family Friendly Workplace Toolkit media road show
- Hands on Heroes 2021: CHC's Brooke Griffiths (January), CAPSLO's Maddie Torrey (February)
- Economic Vitality Corporation child care supply drive update
- First 5 Partners – variety of online parent engagement activities, distributions in February
- Messaging on COVID, CA EITC, First 5 Advocacy Day upcoming April 27, Children's Dental Health Month in February

Wendy Wendt, Executive Director added the following updates:

- Overview of Governor's budget
- Role as Central Regional Rep on the First 5 Association Policy/Advocacy Committee
- Update on UndocuSupport – donations, families served, new status as a Field of Interest Fund at the Community Foundation SLO County
- Help Me Grow (this update was shared with Sarah Reinhart) – First 5 continues to serve as the Organizing Entity, hosting quarterly steering committee meetings (next on February 18), ramping up dialogue with CenCal, updating pediatric directory (thanks to Cal Poly intern Angela for her assistance on this effort)
- 3 by 3 project – highly successful, higher than expected number of screenings between Bravo Pediatrics and CHC
- ACES Aware Initiative – First 5, Center for Family Strengthening and CenCal staff are involved in this tricity initiative (with Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties). A June convening is being planned.
- State Surgeon General Nadine Burke Harris named as incoming Chair of First 5 California.
- First 5 has been funding programs for 20 years as of 2021!

## **ITEM 9 -- Adjourn**

**1:28 p.m.**