

FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

December 4, 2024 (APPROVED January 22, 2025)

Current Commissioners Present

Penny Borenstein, MD (Chair)
Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Vice Chair)

SLO County Public Health Department
SLO County Board of Supervisors

Patty Clarkson, EdD
Leslie Mehigan
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, EdD
James Tedford, MD
Alison Ventura, PhD

Early Care & Ed Planning Council
Community at Large
Community at Large
Medical Representative (FAAP)
Community at Large

Commissioners Absent/Excused

James Brescia, EdD (Chair)
Nancy Kuster

SLO County Office of Education
SLO County Dept. of Social Services

Staff Present

First 5 Staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood, Maggie Payne
Commission Counsel: Daniel Cheung

Call to Order

Chair Borenstein called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

ITEM 1 – Commissioner Announcements and Updates

Commissioner Ventura announced that her department at Cal Poly is hiring a staff assistant.

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg commented on the recent CSAC Conference, which included a First 5 panel and also a child welfare panel. There is an issue regarding foster care legislation. Insurance is going up for foster care organizations due to an expensive civil claim that had a high award. She urged the Commission to stay informed on this issue.

ITEM 2 - Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

None

ITEM 3 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 23, 2024 minutes

Executive Director Wendy Wendt identified an error in the draft minutes and requested the following correction – On Item 6, Commissioner Clarkson had also recused on SLOCOE Ticket to Teach proposal approval (in addition to Commissioner Brescia). As such final vote was 7-0 (Brescia and Clarkson recused).

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with modifications. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mehigan and passed unanimously.

ITEM 4: Staff Reports

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Officer, provided an update on the following activities:

- First 5 is scheduled for a presentation to the Board of Supervisors at the February 25 meeting; this meeting will also include a resolution honoring February as Children’s Dental Health Month.
- Wendy Wendt was part of a panel at a recent Diversity Coalition “Fostering Understanding in Our Communities” event focused on Childhood Health Inequities.
- The First 5 Healthy Access Training Project has completed a workshop series on creating effective media content for community-based organizations that work with immigrant families.
- First 5 staff attended the Bridges to Resilience Conference in Santa Barbara - a well-attended, informative event.
- First 5 was a sponsor for the Central Coast Childbirth Network Expo in November. Around 1,500 people attended.
- Associate Director Jason Wells attended the Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition’s holiday dinner.

- First 5 CA's New Parent Kit program is on hold until a contract is solidified with a new shipping vendor. Local First 5 staff is hoping to receive a more concrete update by January 2025 on the future of this program.
- County Public Health is hiring a lactation consultant and a dietician for the WIC program.
- Cohort 2 of a Parent Leadership Institute coordinated through Center for Family Strengthening will launch in February 2025. The Application deadline (forms available through Parent Connection website) is January 15, 2025.
- First 5 social media is a good place to learn about many of the local holiday family-friendly happenings.

Commissioners requested a copy of Ms. Livengood's PowerPoint, are interested in keeping up on the events referenced. Staff will circulate and also post on the First 5 website page that includes agendas and attachments.

Ms. Wendt reported on the following:

- Immediately prior to this Commission meeting, Ms. Wendt joined colleagues from Must Charities and the Community Foundation SLO County on a "Meet the Funders" panel presentation for non-profit organizations that had received ARPA grants through the County of San Luis Obispo.
- IMPACT Legacy is now in its second year of a two-year contract, with First 5 SLO County serving as fiscal lead among three counties – SLO, Santa Barbara and Ventura. Ms. Wendt signed a Grant Award Notice (GAN) amendment with First 5 CA that details carryover funds in the Year 2 budget. This adjustment does not affect the total two-year contract amount.
- First 5 is has contributed funding toward a report on local immigrant communities conducted by Diringer and Associates. Other investors in the report include the Community Foundation, Must Charities, the Diversity Coalition of SLO County, and several County Supervisors. A final draft of the report is now under review, and is due for dissemination early in 2025.
- First 5 SLO County is preparing an application in response to the Uplift Coalition Catalyst Predevelopment RFP. The proposal is for \$225,000 over 18 months to launch a regionwide Child Care Coalition across the six Uplift counties – Ventura, Santa Barbara, SLO, Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Cruz.

Commissioner Questions/Comments on Ms. Wendt's update:

- Commissioner Ortiz-Legg requested a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on ARPA accomplishments related to the child care investment.
- Commissioner Mehigan inquired whether the immigration report will be presented at a Commission meeting or in other community settings. Answer – Yes, though the timing is not yet determined. Commissioner Ortiz-Legg commented that this topic is important to the entire local community and economy.

Special Projects Coordinator, Maggie Payne, provided additional detail on the Uplift application:

- Child Care is identified as a key “Economic Mobility” strategy in Uplift’s report and Notice of Funding Opportunity
- First 5 SLO County has been asked by partner organizations across the Uplift region to submit an application to launch a 6-county child care coalition. During the open application period, First 5 SLO County has already hosted two convenings with child care innovators across the region.
- Local entities who are submitting letters of commitment to share in shaping the work include the Community Foundation, Early Care and Education Planning Council, Child Care Resource Connection and the SLO Chamber of Commerce.
- The application deadline is December 13, 2024. Intent to award announcements are anticipated at the end of January 2025. Funding expected to extend from spring 2025 through August 2026.
- A total of 17 applications regionwide are focused on child care in some capacity (out of a total of nearly 200). Cal Poly and the SLO Chamber are among those submitting their own applications in addition to partnership on the First 5 application.

Commissioner Comments/Questions on Ms. Payne’s update :

- Commissioner Ventura inquired if funding is for mobilizing the Commission. Answer: Yes – the application describes a combination of documentation of best practices, joint advocacy and policy development, and identification of opportunities for scalability and replication region-wide.
- Commissioner Ortiz-Legg commented that getting together across counties to talk is a benefit.
- Commissioner Mehigan asked if there will be additional funding past the initial 18 months. Answer: There is possibly going to be an “implementation” phase following this “predevelopment” phase. Not guaranteed though.

- Commissioner Ventura asked what the budget includes. Answer: Mostly staffing (including consultants for facilitation, documentation and public relations training), also travel and incentives for community member participation in Coalition work.
- Commissioner Clarkson commented on the value of having a regional coalition to share in this work. It is also a big step that child care is now widely recognized as an important economic development strategy. Commissioner Ortiz-Legg concurred and added that equity is a key aspect of this work as well.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 5: Contract Approvals

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced this item. He reviewed the process leading up to today's contract approvals, starting with the release of the RFP in summer 2024. Contracts are 18 months with potential for additional 24 additional months of funding through an amendment process.

Contract Recommendation #1: Mixteco Indígena Community Organizing Project (MICOP) Parent/Child Engagement Groups in North County. \$400,000. 2-3 cohorts per year, 8-10 families in each cohort.

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg asked if there will be an assessment at the 18-month mark to determine continuing funding. Mr. Wells responded that this and all programs are monitored over time. Any challenges or issues will be identified and addressed well in advance.

Commissioner Mehigan inquired if families can begin participating in groups during their prenatal period. MICOP staffer responded that their team already works closely with pregnant parents when they are working to enroll in MediCal – it is theoretically possible to invite participation for prenatal parents, though the program model as proposed is specifically for parents with their young children.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg made a motion to approve the contract with MICOP. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mehigan and passed unanimously.

Contract Recommendation #2: SLO County Office of Education (SLOCOE) Ticket to Teach Enhancement. \$300,000. Strengthening of program features, including apprentice recruitment and leadership training for ECE professionals.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ortiz-Legg made a motion to approve the contract with SLOCOE. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ventura and passed unanimously 6-0-1 (Clarkson recused).

Contract Recommendation #3: Community Action Partnership of SLO County (CAPSLO) – Child Care Resource Connection Building Connections Program. \$350,000. Professional development in social emotional supports for child care providers serving infants and toddlers.

Commissioner Borenstein asked how this project is connected to IMPACT. Answer – while not connected specifically, it is aligned, augments existing offerings covered through IMPACT and other professional development funds.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia made a motion to approve the contract with CAPSLO. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ortiz-Legg and passed unanimously.

ITEM 6: First 5 Annual Evaluation Report

First 5 Evaluation Team Lead Becca Carsel introduced this item. The evaluation report this year offers a high-level assessment of the FY23-24 year. The fundamental question asked was “How have First 5 efforts contributed or not to advancing First 5 goals from the prior strategic plan.” Next year’s evaluation will align with the recently ratified Strategic Plan (2024-28). The evaluation team is currently working with staff on indicators that align with established objectives in the Plan.

Evaluation team member Laura Keene summarized highlights of the report. She reminded that the Theory of Change serves as lens for the evaluation findings.

Sample of Direct Funding Findings:

- Over 6,150 encounters, a 14% increase from the prior year
- Strong partnerships were a top success factor identified by funded programs
- Staffing remaining a significant challenge

Sample of Network Building/Advocacy

- Sustained work of UndocuSupport
- Help Me Grow Steering Committee task teams
- Engagement with Association Advocacy Day
- Monitoring of state and federal bills and legislation related to child care

The report also included a highlight on First 5 funded programs that fill health care gaps, including vision/dental/developmental screenings. These initiatives focus on low-income families; additional advocacy efforts by First 5 pursue policy change to close gaps.

A second highlight showcased First 5’s attention on child care as an economic development strategy, including summaries of staff and partner engagement with the Uplift Coalition,

tracking of ARPA investments in child care, and continued investment in the Family-Friendly Workplaces Program.

Public Comment: None

Commissioner Mehigan made a motion to accept the Annual Evaluation Report. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clarkson and passed unanimously.

ITEM 7: Employee Handbook/Personnel Policy Update

Ms. Wendt presented on this item. The original First 5 SLO County Employee Handbook was developed in 2008 when First 5 SLO County staff moved from being employees of the County of San Luis Obispo to being employees of the First 5 Commission. In the intervening years up to now, 7 amendments to the Handbook have been ratified, to keep pace with specific elements of current law and office values. In the late fall of 2024, staff and First 5 legal counsel conducted a comprehensive review of the Handbook in its entirety. A draft update is nearly complete, and has been modeled after the recently updated Handbook at the Integrated Waste Management Authority.

Staff and Counsel seek additional input and editing support from an ad hoc committee of at least two Commissioners to review the full draft prior to submission for Commission review and approval at the January 22, 2025 Commission meeting.

Commissioners Mehigan and Ventura volunteered to serve on this committee.

Legal Counsel Daniel Cheung emphasized that the Handbook is a reflection of both laws and organizational values, and is important to keep up to date.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 8: Brown Act/Conflicts Refresher

Legal Counsel Daniel Cheung presented on this topic. He spoke of the “why” of Brown Act conditions – to ensure the transparency of public agencies’ work and decision making. The voters placed value on the funding source dedicated to First 5, and have placed trust in the agency charged with managing these resources.

He provided a review of the Open and Public Meetings Act, both for regular and virtual meetings. He reminded of the limited option afforded by AB2449 for up to two meetings per year when a Commissioner – with advance notice – can attend and vote at meetings virtually for “just cause” (e.g. illness, childcare, unavoidable business travel, medical emergency). Note that while a Commissioner in this situation may vote on board business, their presence does not count toward a quorum.

Mr. Cheung also provided a summary of conflicts of interest and ethics obligations, including the required annual submission of Form 700 forms through the County, and every-other year completion of ethics training.

Commissioners asked clarifying questions.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 9: Future Agenda Items

None highlighted.

ITEM 10: Adjourn

5:13 p.m.