

FIRST 5 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT

May 27, 2026 (Approved June 24, 2026)

Current Commissioners Present

Leslie Mehigan (Vice Chair)	Community at Large
Michelle Auran	Medical Representative (AAP, Ch 2)
Penny Borenstein	SLO County Public Health Department
Patty Clarkson	Early Care and Education Planning Council
Joe Koski	SLO County Office of Education
Nancy Kuster	Department of Social Services
Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia	Community at Large
Alison Ventura	Community at Large

Current Commissioners Absent

Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Chair)	SLO County Board of Supervisors
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Staff Present

First 5 staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Maggie Payne
Commission Counsel: Craig Steele

Call to Order

Vice Chair Mehigan called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

ITEM 1 – Public Comment – Items not on the agenda

Commissioner Koski commented that he will need to leave early due to SLOCOE Employee Appreciation event.

Dr. Doug Major made public comment on Agenda Item 4 – recommended Commission support letter for AB 2756 (due to patient obligation spoke during Item 1). He thanked First 5 for their ongoing support. He summarized his strong support for AB 2756 (note – posted agenda document mis-typed legislation as AB 2576). The bill requires the Department of Health Care Services to track and publicly report performance metrics for MediCal vision services, with a specific focus on children. Dr. Major announced that AB 2756 has passed unopposed in the Assembly.

ITEM 2 (ACTION ITEM) - Consent Agenda

- a. Approve March 25, 2026 Minutes
- b. Q3 – FY 2025-26 Financials
- c. MAA Contract Amendment

Public Comment: None

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

ITEM 3 (ACTION ITEM) – Contract/Contract Amendment Approvals

Associate Director Jason Wells presented on this item. Staff recommendations for Commission approval include one *new* contract - with United Cerebral Palsy, and three contract amendments – with Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo County (CAPSLO), Mixteco Indigena Community Organizing Project (MICOP), and San Luis Obispo County Office of Education (SLOCOE).

UCP is the legal entity that serves as fiscal agent for First 5 Program Partner Parents Helping Parents. This midpoint in the current Strategic Plan period provides an appropriate opportunity to initiate a new contract with UCP as the signing organization (prior contracts have been directly with Parents Helping Parents). The new contract also includes a few minor adjustments to the scope of work and budget. First 5 Legal Counsel Craig Steele concurred that a direct contractual agreement with UCP is of benefit to the Commission given UCP's status as Parents Helping Parents' Fiscal Agent. Contract term would end June 30, 2028.

Mr. Wells went on to introduce the recommended Contract Amendments:

- CAPSLO (Building Connections)
- MICOP (Aprendiendo con Mama y Papa)
- SLOCOE (Ticket 2 Teach)

All of the above programs are in good standing, each meeting needs of children and families according to their scopes of work. Amended contract terms would end June 30, 2028.

Commissioner Mehigan asked how many families participate in the MICOP parent engagement classes. Silvano Vasquez, MICOP Associate Program Director, explained that the current cohort has 8 families, including approximately 12 children and their parents. The program has operated three cohorts to date.

Public Comment: MICOP Program Director Ana Huynh commented on the value of the program. People want to participate again. Mr. Vasquez emphasized how much families are enjoying the program.

First 5 Legal Counsel Craig Steele clarified that the Commission vote will be in two parts: First a vote on CAPSLO, MICOP and UCP; and second, a vote on SLOCOE. This is to accommodate Commissioner Koski's need to recuse himself from a vote on the SLOCOE Contract.

Commissioner Borenstein made a motion to approve the UCP contract, and contract amendments with CAPSLO and MICOP. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ventura and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Kuster made a motion to approve the SLOCOE contract amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ruvalcaba and passed 7:0. Commissioner Koski recused from the vote.

ITEM 4 – Approval of Support Letter for AB 2756

Note – Dr. Doug Major provided initial public comment on this item at the beginning of the agenda due to his patient schedule. The item was presented and voted on immediately prior to the Consent agenda

Mr. Wells provided background on AB 2756. Adds language to the Welfare and Institutions Code, requiring the State Department of Health Care Services to establish a comprehensive set of performance measures (utilization, wait times, provider capacity, and equity-based data by race, ethnicity, geography & age) to evaluate the utilization, access, and availability of vision services provided under Medi-Cal for both children and adults.

He explained that AB 2756 strengthens accountability within Medi-Cal's vision care services by establishing clear metrics and benchmarks to track access and utilization, enabling policymakers and DHCS to identify gaps and improve outcomes. It also supports timely identification and treatment of vision issues in young children.

Staff recommends that the Commission support the bill, and authorize staff to submit a formal letter to the bill author, Assemblymember Patrick Ahrens.

Commissioner Borenstein inquired if AB 2756 is a bill focused on a change in services, or in data collection requirements. Mr. Wells clarified that it is focused on data.

Commissioner Ruvalcaba made a motion to approve a Commission support letter for AB 2756. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Clarkson and passed unanimously.

ITEM 5 – Annual Strategic Plan Review – Long Range Financial Plan First Read

Ms. Wendt presented this item. She reminded Commissioners that the Long Range Financial Plan presents a picture of anticipated revenues and expenditures to the conclusion of the current Strategic Plan plus one additional strategic planning period. She urged Commissioners to study the Plan, to ask clarifying questions if needed in the next month, and

to fully review and be prepared to take action to approve the Plan at the June 24, 2026, meeting.

Commission Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Borenstein asked for clarification on the relationship between birthrate and Proposition 10 revenues, specifically declining birthrates.

Commissioner Mehigan asked if changes to federal flavor ban restrictions on vape products might affect Proposition 10 revenues. Answer – not sure.

Ms. Wendt reiterated the importance of exploring other revenue sources, and learning from successful models in other county First 5s. She also highlighted potential opportunities for local First 5s to play fiscal stewardship roles within emerging state funding structures (e.g. BHSA funds for prevention to be managed by the California Department of Public Health).

Commissioner Ventura pointed out a typo on the spreadsheet (\$709 listed on an outlying year as an expenditure). She also asked for clarification why evaluation spending increases in the outlying years despite program funding decreasing. Ms. Wendt promised to look into the calculations and return to the June Commission meeting with an update and/or corrected figures.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 6 – FY2026-27 Draft Administrative Budget First Read

Ms. Wendt reminded Commissioners that the Administrative Budget is directly built from the Long Range Financial Plan. This presentation offers a “first read” of the proposed FY26-27 Administrative Budget. It includes 3.6 staff positions. The three full-time positions are at the top step and are due for a 3% increase. The .6 position will move from Step 2 to Step 3. Several individual line items are expected to increase in the coming year, notably external auditor fees, legal services, and rent. Staff are proposing increasing training and registration by a modest amount to allow for participation in professional growth opportunities.

A final Administrative Budget will be presented to the Commission for approval at the June 24, 2026, meeting.

Commissioner Borenstein asked why the Evaluator expense is not included in the Administrative Budget. Ms. Wendt explained that Evaluation is considered a program expense, and is categorized within the Program Expenditures budget, separate from the Administrative Budget.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 7 – Staff Reports

Outreach and Communications Coordinator Misty Livengood provided updates on the following activities:

- The 2026 Pediatric Town Hall was held at Embassy Suites on April 29, 2026 (Maggie Payne presented more details as described below)
- All four First 5 SLO County staff took part in 2026 Advocacy Day on April 14. They joined colleagues from adjacent First 5s in visits with staff in state legislator offices – Assemblymember Addis, Senator Laird, Senator Limon, Assemblymember Hart.
- April Month of the Child events were spread throughout the calendar and county, and First 5 was an active promoter.
- First 5 Funded Partners meeting was held on April 9, 2026, at the South County Department of Social Services/SAFE office.
- The spring Help Me Grow Network Meeting was held May 20, 2026, at the County Office of Education.
- The Help Me Grow Team at CAPSLO is highly active, increasing family supports, and carrying out a variety of outreach activities.
- The First 5 Sponsorships program is going strong. A recent example is support for local representation at the Latina Action Day in Sacramento. Seasonal sponsorships for summer family-friendly events throughout the county are also being lined up.
- Commissioner Ventura was the featured “Ed Talk” speaker at a webinar hosted by First 5 Santa Barbara on her research on screen time and parent/child bonding.
- Parent Connection/Education programs continue despite shifting funding

Special Projects Coordinator Maggie Payne provided the following updates:

- The Pediatric Town Hall was well-attended (nearly 150 people) and received high praise. A Local Resource Fair drew nearly 30 organizations and provided an ideal context for cross-networking. Keynote speakers included CA Surgeon General Dr. Diana Ramos, American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter 2 President Dr. Melissa Ruiz, and CA Medical Association President Dr. Rene Bravo. A Community Voices panel discussed a hypothetical case scenario of a family in the perinatal life stage and the local supports available.
- The Uplift Child Care Coalition is in its culminating four months of funded work. A Showcase event is being planned for summer; two regional projects are in motion – 1) development of a Central Coast Child Care Manifesto, and 2) launch of a Central Coast Child Care Facilities Action Network.

Executive Director Wendy Wendt provided updates on the following:

- Staff is working with an ad hoc Commissioner Committee (Commissioners Auran and Ruvalcaba) to interview and select candidates for two At-Large Commissioner seats. Interviews are scheduled for the first week in June. Candidates will be presented to the Commission for formal nomination at the June 24 meeting.
- Commissioner Borenstein will be retiring this summer, and her seat will be vacant pending County reorganization and hiring of new leadership in County health positions.
- Potential changes to MediCal coverage for individuals with “Unsatisfactory Immigration Status” (UIS) are cause for concern. CenCal and partners in the Central Coast Health Coalition (including First 5 SLO County) have submitted a letter to the State expressing opposition to these changes.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 8 – Presentations – Early Childhood System Stabilization Grantees

Jason Wells introduced this agenda item. In June 2026, the First 5 SLO County Commission activated the Early Childhood System Stabilization Fund as a response to local, state and federal budget cuts and policy changes that threatened to negatively impact supports for young children and families. This new fund included a \$300,000 allocation in FY25-26, and which has been distributed via two mechanisms – a \$100,000 contribution to the Community Foundation Together for SLO County funding program, and \$150,000 assigned through a First 5-administered grant process. The latter yielded nine grantees, two of which presented updates on their activities – including those directly supported through the First 5 grant.

SLO FOOD BANK – Molly Kern, SLO Food Bank CEO, shared a presentation which outlined the reach of her organization to support families and children, and the challenges recent changes in funding and policies have posed. 31% of local households do not earn enough money to cover monthly expenses. 49% of the county’s children qualify for free or reduced lunch. As much as 21% of the county’s children are food insecure. 50,000 people each month are accessing food bank resources (up 50% from 2021). And yet in the most recent year, the Food Bank lost over \$1 million in federal funding. She expressed gratitude to this community and partners like First 5 for providing support during a difficult time.

Ms. Kern went on to give a brief summary of programs directly serving children, including 14 monthly children’s farmers markets, 70+ partner agencies that distribute food to their clients (e.g. MICOP, LINK), and a summer breakfast bags program during school break (6,500 bags distributed).

Commission Questions:

- Are children’s farmers markets public? No – They are set up in partnership with local child-serving programs, including schools.

- Is there capacity to grow children's farmers markets? Not so much – there is a waiting list
- Does the Food Bank offer nutrition education? Less now; federal funding was cut for SNAP-ED

SLO WOMENADE -- Elaine Stewart, SLO Womenade Executive Director, provided some history. Her mother founded the original all-volunteer organization. After a period of dormancy in recent years, Ms. Stewart reinvigorated it in 2025. The group works with "referring agents" – (e.g. teachers, med professionals, Food Bank, Hearst Cancer Resource Center, etc.) to identify individuals in need of basic aid. Payments are made not to the individuals, but instead directly to pay for the needed goods or services (e.g. car repair, utility bill). The First 5 grant funds can be directly attributed to addressing basic needs of families with small children.

Womenade funds do not go to support fines and fees, or pets. People cannot self-refer.

There are parallel organizations in other parts of the county. Neighbor-ade in Paso Robles, Los Osos Cares on the coast.

Public Comment: None.

ITEM 9: Future Agenda Items

Ms. Wendt reminded the Commission that the June meeting is important. It includes action items to approve the annual Financial Plan Update and Administrative Budget, and approval of two At-Large Commissioner positions.

Commissioner Ventura will be presenting at the June Commission meeting on her research related to screen time and parent-child bonding.

Public Comment: None

ITEM 10: Commissioner Announcements

Commissioner Borenstein announced that the County Public Health Department is doing a summer safety campaign, touching on the following topics:

- Caution on use of sunscreen on babies 6 months or younger
- Babies out of the sun
- Hats when necessary
- Pools/lake safety
- Bike Helmets
- Safety with E-Bikes
- Kids in Heated Cars

Commissioner Ruvalcaba commented on the value of participation in the annual Latina Action Day. A total of 12 people participated from San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

The group focused on advocating to expand college access, support small business interpreter services, and preserve MediCal coverage for vulnerable populations.

ITEM 11: Adjournment

5:12 PM