

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

**COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES**

September 28, 2022 (APPROVED OCTOBER 26, 2022)

**Current Commissioners Present**

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| James Brescia, Ed.D (Chair)         | SLO County Office of Education         |
| Penny Borenstein, M.D. (Vice-Chair) | SLO County Public Health Department    |
| Linda Belch                         | Department of Social Services          |
| Bruce Gibson                        | SLO County Board of Supervisors        |
| Erica Ruvalcaba-Heredia, Ed.D       | Community at Large                     |
| James Tedford, M.D.                 | Medical Representative (AAP Chapter 2) |
| Alison Ventura, Ph.D.               | Community at Large                     |
| Bob Watt                            | Community at Large                     |

**Commissioners Absent/Excused**

|                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Melinda Sokolowski | Child Care Planning Council |
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**Staff Present**

Commission staff: Wendy Wendt, Jason Wells, Misty Livengood  
Commission Counsel: Jeffery Minnery

**Call to Order**

Chair Brescia called the meeting to order at 3:03 PM.

**ITEM 1 – Commissioner Comments/Announcements**

Commissioner Borenstein announced that the Board of Supervisors has approved nearly \$6 million in ARPA funds to support 15 local organizations working on health improvement efforts.

Commissioner Gibson announced that a broadband internet signup event took place in San Miguel. 25 families signed up.

Commissioner Belch announced that the Transitional Age Youth program celebrated 10 years, and held a graduation at the Board of Supervisors. She also provided a brief update on the work of the Child Abuse Prevention Planning Team, of which First 5 Executive Director Wendy Wendt is part. The group's current effort is to develop a countywide child abuse prevention plan.

Commissioner Watt announced the pending merger of Center for Family Strengthening and the LINK.

Commissioner Ruvalcaba-Heredia announced that the Promotores Collaborative was one of the ARPA health funding recipients, and will be working to increase capacity as part of the project. They are recruiting additional promotores who are trilingual (English/Spanish/Mixteco).

Commissioner Tedford commented on recent press regarding pediatrician Dr. Rene Bravo's involvement with countywide work to address homelessness.

Commissioner Brescia announced that the Child Care Planning Council has distributed \$150,000 in ARPA funding to date, with more fund distribution to come. County Office of Education continues to work on seeding the Early Childhood Educator pipeline through the Ticket to Teach Apprenticeship program.

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

Chelsea Ruiz, new program manager with SLO County UndocuSupport (based at the Community Foundation San Luis Obispo County) introduced herself.

Raechelle Bowlay, Child Care Planning Council Coordinator, announced the upcoming Quality Counts Kickoff at the Children's Museum in San Luis Obispo on October 1. Among other activities, the Museum will be helping ECE providers design their own version of exhibits for use in their programs.

## **ITEM 3 - Consent Agenda**

- a) Approve June 22, 2022 minutes
- b) Approve Q4 FY21-22 Financial Report
- c) Approve 2023 Commission Meeting Calendar

*Public Comment: None*

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

## **ITEM 4 – Staff Updates**

Misty Livengood, Communications and Outreach Coordinator, updated the Commission on various projects and information regarding First 5 SLO County:

- The Family Friendly Workplaces Program held a SLO Chamber Insight Studio in June, which was well attended. A similar event is being planned in partnership with other Chambers, next in Atascadero.
- Hands-on Heroes @ Work awardees over the summer included The Central Coast Breastfeeding Coalition (August), iFixit (September), and Carmel & Naccasha (October).
- Various First 5 funded partners are holding an array of parent education and early childhood professional development events.

- Social media messaging has focused on Breastfeeding Awareness Month, Home Visiting, Paid Family Leave, Vision Month, and Hispanic Heritage Month.
- She encouraged Commissioners to send information on upcoming events, to be posted on social media and the Community Happenings page on the First 5 website.
- First 5 CA has rolled out a new media campaign – Dragon Song – themed on breathing techniques for emotional regulation in young children.
- First 5 staff will be attending a lecture by Nobel laureate economist James Heckman on October 7<sup>th</sup>. The event is being hosted by First 5 Monterey County.

Wendy Wendt provided updates on the following:

- Former First 5 Legal Counsel Ray Biering has passed away. Commissioners and staff expressed deep sadness at the news. A memorial service will be held October 7<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. at the Sea Pines Golf Course in Los Osos.
- There is new leadership at the state level: Jackie Wong is Executive Director at First 5 CA; Avo Makdessian has been hired as Executive Director of the First 5 Association.
- The First 5 Central Region (SLO, Kings, Kern, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Mariposa, Tulare) will be gathering on December 9 for a Race-Equity-Diversity-Inclusion shared learning workshop in Paso Robles. Commissioners are encouraged to attend.
- We are the Care is shifting its leadership from First 5 to the Planning Council. The Cross Sector Collaboration task force will shift to a quarterly advisory role connected to the SLO Chamber Family Friendly Workplaces Program. First 5, Planning Council and Child Care Resource Connection staff are teaming up to present a “Local Governments’ Role in Child Care” road map at various meetings, including the SLO City Human Relations Commission and Parks and Rec Commission, the monthly City Managers meeting, and other groups.
- Ms. Wendt reminded Commissioners of the many coalitions/work groups that First 5 staff sit on representing the needs of young children and families: SLO Health Counts Steering Committee, SLO Chamber Board, Cal Poly Economic Development Committee, Cuesta College Child Development and Family Studies Advisory Committee, SLO Botanical Garden Youth Programs Committee, Child Abuse Prevention Planning Team, Latino Health Coalition, Action for Healthy Communities, SLO County UndocuSupport, and others.
- The MHSA funding for the 3x3 Developmental Screening Partnership has formally sunsetted. Various follow-up work is emerging, including ongoing dialogue between CenCal Health and Community Health Centers of the Central Coast regarding maintaining/increasing county screening rates, and plans for a Pediatric Town Hall focused on family mental health in the context of early childhood.
- Over the summer, First 5 staff identified a math error within the CAPSLO COVID Basic Needs contract budget. Staff worked with counterparts at CAPSLO, and the error has been corrected. It does not affect the total contract amount, or the scope of work.

*Public Comment: none*

## **ITEM 5 – Approve First 5 Position Statement: Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue**

Associate Director Jason Wells introduced the item. He provided the following context: At the May 2022 Commission meeting, Commissioner Watt brought up the recent mass shooting in Uvalde TX, and he called for Commissioners to develop a formal a position on gun violence. Commission Counsel recommended agendizing this topic for at a future meeting. At the June Commission meeting, an ad hoc subcommittee formed (Commissioners Watt, Tedford, Sokolowski) to draft a Position Statement. Staff prepared background materials and met with the committee. The resulting document defines gun violence as a public health issue with particularly devastating effects on children.

Ms. Livengood commented that the Position Statement can be used as a runway to next steps. She added that it takes the Commission back to its strategic planning process, its mission, our mandate, and our local Children’s Bill of Rights. It keeps us tethered to our core principles. It is a good example of linking a position to our purpose as an organization.

Commissioner Watt added that a place to start is to share this document with colleagues in the pediatric and public health sectors. He found it surprising that most other First 5s are not more majorly outspoken on this issue.

Mr. Wells thought it was wise to have the Position Statement as a foundation, without identifying at this early stage *what* our actions will be.

Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Gibson lauded the public health emphasis in the statement. He urged continuing to build a solid policy platform on other issues as well. This Position Statement is a great example of First 5’s advocacy role.

Commissioner Belch underscored the link to trauma, and that this statement gives us an opportunity to build our trauma-sensitive system. Maybe First 5 and partners could spend some time looking at this locally.

Commissioner Watt inquired who the Commission might partner with on this.

Commissioner Gibson reiterated the idea of local pediatricians.

Commissioner Tedford commented that individual pediatricians/practices might be options, though as a community, local pediatricians do not have a mechanism for shared statement adoption.

Commissioner Tedford also offered a minor edit in the body of the document. Staff took note and will make the change.

Commissioner Ventura recommended taking a look at the Statement and any follow-up actions within the Commission’s new Theory of Change framework developed by the First 5 evaluation team.

*Public comment: Raechelle Bowlay, Child Care Planning Council Coordinator, thanked the Commission for addressing this important issue. Early childhood educators are going to be participating in an upcoming workshop on active-shooter training.*

Commissioner Tedford moved to approve the First 5 Position Statement on Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue. Commissioner Borenstein seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **ITEM 6 – Partner Presentation: Vision Screening**

Dr. Doug Major, Optometric Care Associates presenting on the First 5-funding Vision Screening program. This is one of the local Commission’s longest-standing investments, and has helped thousands of young children address vision challenges early in life, before reaching school age. He emphasized the core importance of good vision in early childhood development and learning, and described an array of challenges that stand in the way of streamlined support. One example is the limited staffing in school nurse programs in the county, particularly in high need areas (e.g. at Lillian Larsen Elementary School in San Miguel, there is no on-site nurse). Another obstacle is a clogged pipeline statewide for distribution of quality glasses, due to a sole-source contract with state prisons. He urged First 5 to speak out about the importance of vision screening and care as an integral early childhood development strategy (e.g. including vision metrics as part of CalAIM and within CA Department of Health Care Services).

Commissioner Tedford commended Dr. Major on the informative presentation. He asked for clarification: all kindergarteners require vision screening before they start school. How is the early childhood Vision Screening unique? Dr. Major responded that the pediatric vision screening is not catching a lot of the need. Commissioner Tedford pointed out that some pediatricians use a device called a Spot for more nuanced screening. Dr. Major agreed that this is a good tool, but still doesn’t catch some conditions. Dr. Major will follow up with Commissioner Tedford and would welcome a chance to engage with other pediatricians.

*Public Comment: None*

### **ITEM 7 – Future Agenda Items**

Commissioner Gibson asked when an update on ARPA child care funding will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. He recommended starting with a presentation by the Local Child Care Planning Council at an upcoming Commission meeting.

### **ITEM 8 – Adjournment**

4:26 p.m.