



STRATEGIC PLAN

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA CHILDREN &
FAMILIES COMMISSION

08



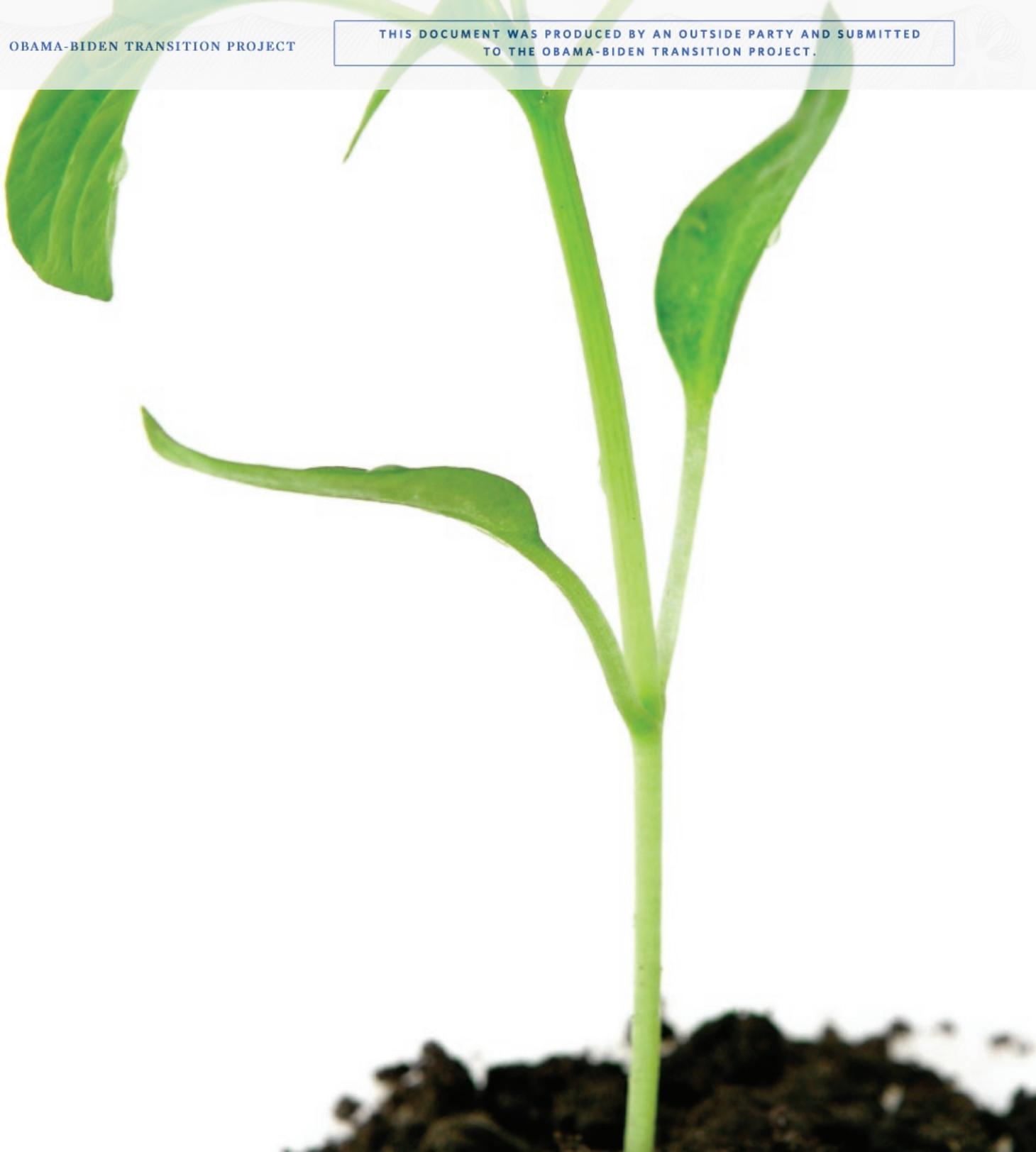




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FOCUS ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT

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INVEST IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

First 5 California represents an important part of our state's effort to nurture and protect our most precious resource—our children, our future. Working with First 5 County Commissions and our numerous partners, we touch the lives of millions of children and their families every year and we have made a positive difference. We can be proud of our accomplishments, but we must strive to create even more and varied opportunities for our children to prosper and thrive.

Since its creation in 1998, First 5 California launched innovative programs and services designed to help children succeed, such as the Kit for New Parents, School Readiness, Health Access, and Power of Preschool. Our next challenge, however, is to develop a more holistic, integrated system of early care and education that extends beyond First 5 California and County Commissions—a system that is greater than the sum of its parts. This system I envision not only connects children to services but connects services to each other to ensure we prioritize children's needs. The success of each and every child is directly tied to our willingness to put their needs first as a state and as a society by bringing our collective resources together.

The promise of First 5 California is to continue to invest in services and programs that directly benefit children and families and to advocate for a sustainable early childhood system for future generations. Indeed, we must be the voice of all of California's children and place them at the center of all that we do. To guide this effort, I am pleased to share with you First 5 California's new Strategic Plan, our roadmap to the future.

This plan reflects the thoughtful contributions and energy of many individuals, organizations and stakeholders that share a common vision that we can all embrace. By working together we can ensure that all children in California enter school ready to achieve their greatest potential. In order to accomplish our goal, we are guided by our mission, which is to be recognized as California's unequivocal voice for children 0 to 5.

On behalf of First 5 California, we offer the First 5 California Strategic Plan as a roadmap to build on past successes and pave the way to greater future opportunities for California's children 0 to 5 and their families.

Kris Perry

Executive Director, First 5 California



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First 5 California management and staff would like to thank our Commissioners for providing valuable input to the development of this First 5 California Strategic Plan. Your ongoing support and leadership are essential for our future.

Hector Ramirez, Chair

David Kears, Vice Chair

Donald Attore

Carla Dartis

Maria Minon, M.D.

Molly Munger

Eleni Tsakopoulos-Kounalakis

S. Kimberly Belshé, Ex Officio Member

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

David Long, Ex Officio Member

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION



INTRODUCTION

Almost ten years ago, voters made our state's youngest children a priority when they approved Proposition 10 and established the First 5 California Children and Families Commission. As a result of their vision, California's children are better prepared to enter school. They have greater access to health care, preschool, early screening and assessment and families receive desperately needed services contributing to greater family self-sufficiency.

With the implementation of the California Children and Families Act, the entrepreneurial stage began, resulting in a sustained period of intense creativity. More recently, however, First 5 California has reached a new stage in its evolution—maturity. With maturity comes the need to establish and maintain greater accountability for program outcomes and a more formal mechanism for managing programs in an increasingly complex environment with mounting demands for declining revenues. At this stage, decisions must be made based on defined goals, sound research and strong leadership.

First 5 California continues its dedication to improving the lives of California's youngest children and their families through a collaborative network of services. First 5 California programs specifically address school readiness, special needs, physical and oral health, and smoking cessation. These services to children and their families are the foundation upon which we are building an integrated, holistic system that connects children to services and service providers to each other. Ultimately, these connections can result in an easily navigable system that enhances the development of all children in California.

California's children are our top priority and the First 5 California Strategic Plan reflects the strengths, challenges and diversity of our state. This Strategic Plan, adopted by the State Commission on September 29, 2007, serves as a roadmap for the future and will guide the development of First 5 California's unique role in identifying and meeting the needs of children 0 to 5. Further, this Strategic Plan reinforces the Vision, establishes a definitive, challenging Mission and identifies a broad set of Goals, Strategies and Objectives for the future.



This plan was developed through a dynamic process eliciting information from commissioners, executive leadership, management, staff, and key stakeholders. The intent was to ensure a clear understanding of differing viewpoints, and if applicable, seek consensus and identify opportunities.

Using a structured protocol, 54 external stakeholders were interviewed. The stakeholders included past and current Commissioners, county executive directors, First 5 Association of California leadership, educators (0-5, K-12, higher education), government officials, nonprofit executives, contractors, and advocates. Additionally, we conducted nine focus groups, one for the executive directors in each of the six county regions; First 5 California staff; First 5 California executive managers; and a state and county evaluation workgroup.

This high involvement process was extended to Commission meetings, where during a six-month period the public contributed additional comments on the evolving plan. Several stakeholder groups provided written input regarding their priorities, thereby adding more valuable information to the process. The First 5 California executive leadership used this information to formulate the Vision, Mission, Goals, Strategies and subsequent Objectives contained in this document. Our plan is and will continue to be the foundation for informed decision-making, priority setting, financial planning, and long-term achievement.

The 2008 Strategic Plan builds upon a substantial foundation of partnership and innovation. Our shared purpose with California's 58 county commissions and other stakeholders presents tremendous creative opportunities to address the needs of children, build the structure for ongoing success, identify areas where focused work must occur, and raises the standard for programs and practices. It is through this Strategic Plan that First 5 California will achieve the goals and objectives established for children and families in California.

The First 5 California Strategic Plan defines our plan for healthy children who are eager to learn, grow and flourish for they are the future of California. Through the development of policies, programs and infrastructure, we will strive to fulfill our Mission and, "By 2012, be recognized as California's unequivocal voice for children 0 to 5 to ensure greater equity in their readiness for school."



VISION STATEMENT

All children
in California
enter school
ready to achieve
their greatest
potential.







GUIDING PRINCIPLES¹

CHILD CENTERED:

Focus all programs and activities on the needs of California's children.

FAMILY FOCUS:

Support families as children's primary caregivers and first teachers.

DIVERSITY:

Ensure that families from all of California's diverse populations connect to services needed to succeed.

PUBLIC SUPPORT:

Build a foundation of support for a comprehensive, integrated and holistic early childhood development system.

QUALITY STANDARDS:

Incorporate the highest quality, evidence-based standards when assessing program effectiveness.

PARTNERSHIPS AND LEVERAGING:

Promote collaboration with public and private partners, building on existing systems.

¹ *The Guiding Principles were developed in 2001 and amended August 2007 to maintain consistency with the First 5 California Strategic Plan. They serve as the value-based foundation for Commission decisions.*



MISSION STATEMENT

By 2012, be recognized as
California's unequivocal
voice for children 0 to 5
to ensure greater equity in
their readiness for school.







STRATEGIC GOALS

FOCUS ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT

GOAL NO.
OI

IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY AGENDA THAT ELEVATES THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN 0 TO 5

STRATEGY 1.1

Affiliations — Increase the number and depth of state and national partnerships and affiliations.

Objective 1.1.1 ————— JAN 2009

First 5 California will obtain at least 25 memberships and annually participate in state and national organizations that emphasize early childhood development.

Objective 1.1.2 ————— JAN 2009

First 5 California management team will seek advisory representation on three nationally affiliated groups or projects.

STRATEGY 1.2

Advocacy — Advocate in state and national arenas for the needs of children 0 to 5.

Objective 1.2.1 ————— JUNE 2009

The First 5 California management team will develop and implement a public advocacy plan to address the needs of children 0 to 5 and sustaining related programs.



Objective 1.2.2 ————— JAN 2009

Conduct post-program assessments; determine viability as a statewide program and advocate for statewide implementation.

Objective 1.2.3 ————— JAN 2009

First 5 California management team shall, at a minimum, convene biannual meetings with legislators and/or stakeholders to discuss issues related to children 0 to 5 and advance successful programs.

STRATEGY 1.3

Health Care — Facilitate and support health care coverage and quality care for all children 0 to 5.

Objective 1.3.1 ————— JAN 2009

Develop partnerships and, where feasible, legislative recommendations to sustain successful programs, such as early childhood screenings, access to services, and oral health care.

Objective 1.3.2 ————— JAN 2009

Partner with health care policy advocates to support quality health care for children 0 to 5, including, but not limited to, work force development, and health care systems reform.



STRATEGY 1.4

Early Care and Educational Development — Facilitate and support early care and educational development for all children 0 to 5.

Objective 1.4.1 ————— MARCH 2011

Establish or participate as a partner in a committee addressing systems change around California's higher education system related to developing the early childhood development workforce.

Objective 1.4.2 ————— JAN 2009

Participate as a partner in a statewide effort to increase quality, access and/or availability of early care and education, such as preschool, infant/toddler care, or school readiness programs.

STRATEGY 1.5

Family Self-Sufficiency — Facilitate and support policies and programs that promote family self-sufficiency.

Objective 1.5.1 ————— SEPT 2011

Issue a report on the relationship between First 5-funded programs and family self-sufficiency including, if appropriate, program and policy implications.

Objective 1.5.2 ————— JAN 2009

Include family self-sufficiency information in First 5-funded programs.





INVEST IN PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

GOAL NO.
02

ESTABLISH A DISTINCTIVE SET OF
SUSTAINABLE HEALTH AND EDUCATION
PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN 0 TO 5

STRATEGY 2.1

Signature Programs — Support two to three signature programs focused on specific needs.

Objective 2.1.1 ————— JUNE 2008

Convene a First 5 California legacy programs assessment workgroup to develop criteria for assessing the ongoing viability of programs implemented prior to January 1, 2008.

Objective 2.1.2 ————— MARCH 2009

Convene a First 5 California legacy programs assessment workgroup to develop criteria for improving the programs implemented prior to January 1, 2008.

STRATEGY 2.2

Seed Innovative Pilot Programs — Invest in demonstration projects promoting systemic change.

Objective 2.2.1 ————— JUNE 2010

Research and recommend innovative pilot projects such as increasing quality preschool spaces, Children's Zones, Educare sites and school-based health centers.

Objective 2.2.2 ————— JAN 2011

Develop implementation models for viable pilot programs.



STRATEGY 2.3

Program Support Portfolio — Develop and implement a financial model for maximizing the effectiveness of First 5 California's investments.

Objective 2.3.1 ————— MARCH 2009

Annually obtain Commission approval for the three-year allocation of funds and maintenance of an investment reserve.

Objective 2.3.2 ————— MARCH 2009

Establish an annual budget allocation item on the Commission agenda.

STRATEGY 2.4

Program Sustainability — Include a comprehensive sustainability plan in First 5 California programs.

Objective 2.4.1 ————— MARCH 2008

Establish a comprehensive sustainability plan which includes a cost-benefit analysis for every program, pilot project or demonstration site.

Objective 2.4.2 ————— JAN 2008

First 5-funded programs must contain a sustainability plan with benchmarks to maintain the program beyond the funding cycle.

Objective 2.4.3 ————— JUNE 2008

Include an evaluation component as a condition of accepting First 5 California funding.

**BROADEN PUBLIC AWARENESS**GOAL NO.
03BUILD RECOGNITION AND GENERATE
SUPPORT FOR THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN
0 TO 5**STRATEGY 3.1**

Targeted Media — Educate Californians about the healthy development of children and the importance of the first five years using a broad range of media strategies.

Objective 3.1.1 ————— **SEPT 2008**

Develop and implement a comprehensive, three-year media plan.

Objective 3.1.2 ————— **SEPT 2008**

Develop and implement a comprehensive, grassroots public education campaign.

STRATEGY 3.2

Informational Networks — Share information and messages with California's diverse populations through partnerships.

Objective 3.2.1 ————— **JUNE 2010**

Identify hard to reach populations and appropriate partnerships for sharing information on the healthy development of children 0 to 5.

Objective 3.2.2 ————— **MARCH 2009**

Establish partnerships with at least two public agencies with similar goals, linking First 5 California's name and/or program with their name for increased effectiveness.



Objective 3.2.3 ————— MARCH 2009

Enlist the support of at least two additional partners to increase education about the health benefits of smoking cessation.

Objective 3.2.4 ————— MARCH 2009

Enlist the support of at least two partners to increase parent education.

STRATEGY 3.3

Organizational Profile — Through alliances and partnerships, increase First 5 California's organizational profile.

Objective 3.3.1 ————— JAN 2009

Present First 5 California projects at two or more national events annually.

Objective 3.3.2 ————— JAN 2011

Reach 70 to 75 percent of the media market through a partnership with public television.





ENHANCE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

GOAL NO.
04

ASSESS THE VALUE OF PROGRAMS
FOR CHILDREN

STRATEGY 4.1

Data System — Create a comprehensive data system that supports decision-making.

Objective 4.1.1 ————— JAN 2009

Secure an information technology vendor to build a comprehensive data system to integrate First 5 data.

Objective 4.1.2 ————— JAN 2011

Establish a training program for staff, First 5 California partners and national researchers on the First 5 California data system.

STRATEGY 4.2

Special Studies — Conduct special studies to identify best practices and assess the value of programs for children 0 to 5.

Objective 4.2.1 ————— JAN 2010

Identify culturally appropriate best practices for assessing the needs of children 0 to 5.

Objective 4.2.2 ————— JAN 2010

Identify culturally appropriate best practices for impacting the needs of children 0 to 5.





Objective 4.2.3 ————— JAN 2011

Initiate a longitudinal study of First 5 California-funded programs to evaluate the impact of those programs on the well-being of children.

STRATEGY 4.3

Center for Results — Establish a system for prioritizing and managing research and evaluation projects, and communicating results.

Objective 4.3.1 ————— SEPT 2009

Formally establish the Center for Results, including the Center's priorities and research plan, management structure, external oversight committees, and operating practices.

Objective 4.3.2 ————— SEPT 2009

Establish a process for gathering and disseminating information on best practices and research studies.

Objective 4.3.3 ————— SEPT 2008

Issue a report annually that includes trends, program outcomes and policy recommendations.



STRENGTHEN ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS

GOAL NO.

OSPROVIDE QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE
SERVICES TO OUR PARTNERS

STRATEGY 5.1

Workforce Recruitment and Development — Recruit and develop a sound and progressive workforce through training, planning and mentoring.

Objective 5.1.1 ————— JUNE 2010

Develop and implement a broad-based recruitment process that promotes diversity within the organization.

Objective 5.1.2 ————— MARCH 2010

Establish a new employee orientation program.

Objective 5.1.3 ————— JUNE 2009

Establish a formal performance management system.

STRATEGY 5.2

Fiscal Soundness — Establish fiscal practices to ensure accountability and maintenance of programs.

Objective 5.2.1 ————— JUNE 2008

Develop an integrated data base to provide accurate reporting of revenues and expenditures.

Objective 5.2.2 ————— JUNE 2008

Develop a set of fiscal data reports to monitor financial solvency and informed decision-making.



STRATEGY 5.3

Contracting Reliability — Utilize technology, training and best practices to ensure accurate monitoring and timely development of contract procedures and systems.

Objective 5.3.1 ————— **JAN 2008**

Develop a Contract Procedures Manual.

Objective 5.3.2 ————— **JUNE 2009**

Establish standardized language, along with scope of work and budget templates for all First 5 California agreements.

Objective 5.3.3 ————— **SEPT 2008**

Develop and implement a comprehensive data base/tracking system for all contracts.

STRATEGY 5.4

Information Technology — Develop and integrate information technology solutions and Web-based applications to support system operations.

Objective 5.4.1 ————— **SEPT 2008**

Develop a plan to address the technology needs of First 5 California.

Objective 5.4.2 ————— **JAN 2009**

Develop an Intranet for First 5 California.



STRATEGY 5.5

Organizational Alignment — Evaluate and align internal and external functions and structure to ensure accomplishment of the strategic objectives.

Objective 5.5.1 ————— JUNE 2008

Reconfigure the organization to meet the requirements of the strategic plan, including staffing and governance.

Objective 5.5.2 ————— JAN 2011

Identify and document systems and identify process improvements to remain accountable to stakeholders.





RECOGNITION

A special thank you is extended to all former First 5 California Commissioners, First 5 California staff, County Commission staff and Commissioners, the First 5 Association of California, and the numerous stakeholders and partners who participated in this process and who gave their time and expertise to make this First 5 California Strategic Plan our roadmap for the future of California's children.

First 5 California appreciates the guidance, direction and development work provided by:

Dr. Alan Glassman, Director
Management & Organization Development Center
California State University, Northridge







 **FIRST 5**
CALIFORNIA