



COMMUNITY PROFILE



Fast Facts

# First 5 LA

### ORIGIN

First 5 LA was created in 1998 to invest LA County’s allocation of funds from California’s voter approved Proposition 10 tobacco tax. Since then, First 5 LA has invested more than \$1.2 billion in efforts aimed at providing the best start for children from prenatal to age 5 and their families.

### GOALS

To ensure all children in LA County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life, First 5 LA’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan directs the Commission’s work focus on the following four priority outcome areas, as defined below:

- **Families:** Increased family protective factors. Work with parents and caregivers so that they have the skills, knowledge and access to resources they need to support their child’s development.
- **Communities:** Increased community capacity to support and promote the safety, healthy development and well-being of children prenatal to age 5 and their families. Support a community’s ability to foster safe, healthy, engaged neighborhoods that help children and their families thrive.
- **Early Care and Education (ECE) Systems:** Increased access to high-quality early care and education. Increased access to affordable, quality child care and preschool.
- **Health-Related Systems:** Improved capacity of health, mental health and substance abuse services systems to meet the needs of children prenatal to age 5 and their families. Improve how health-related systems coordinate and deliver care to young children and their families in LA County.

### KEY STRATEGIES

- **Public Policy and Advocacy:** Increase public investments of funds dedicated toward young children and improve policies that affect those investments.
- **Research and Development:** Promote the widespread use of proven best practices that are grounded in research and real-life application.
- **Service Delivery System Improvement:** Increase the quality, effectiveness and coordination of how services are accessed and provided.
- **Provider Training:** Build the knowledge and skills of the people providing support and services to parents and children.
- **Community Capacity Building:** Help individuals and groups that live and work in neighborhoods and communities take greater ownership and responsibility for the children and families who live within them by fostering safe, healthy and vibrant communities.
- **Communications:** Educate the public about the importance of investing in young children and families.

#### LEAD AGENCY

First 5 LA

#### MISSION

First 5 LA, in partnership with others, strengthens families, communities, and systems of services and supports so all children in LA County enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life.

#### INITIATIVE BUDGET

\$161.5 million (FY 2016-2017)

#### START DATE

1998

#### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Los Angeles County

#### KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 9,974,203 (2014 ACS)	Percent of Newborns at Low Birth Weight 7% (2013, CA Dept. of Health)
Population Under 5 668,272 (2014 ACS)	Percent of Children in Food-Insecure Households 22.8% (2014, Feeding America)
Percent of Children in Poverty 26% (2014 ACS)	

#### CONTACT

Christina Altmayer, Vice President of Programs  
 ☎ (213) 482-7829  
 ✉ [caltmayer@first5la.org](mailto:caltmayer@first5la.org)  
 🌐 [www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org)



## INNOVATION OF NOTE

Welcome Baby is a free, voluntary program funded by First 5 LA that supports pregnant women and new moms through the journey of pregnancy and early parenthood.

Pregnant women and new moms who participate in Welcome Baby are paired with a personal Parent Coach who provides them with information and support during pregnancy and following birth so that they can create safe, nurturing environments for their child to grow. They discuss topics ranging from bonding and attachment, to breastfeeding, to home safety, helping participants feel more confident and comfortable in their role as moms. If needed, a parent coach can also provide referrals to community resources that help families receive health care coverage or other supportive services.

The program is available at no cost to LA County families who deliver or plan to deliver at one of 13 participating Welcome Baby hospitals, regardless of income status.

### + EARLY CHILDHOOD-LINC

An initiative of the Center for the Study of Social Policy, **Early Childhood-LINC** (Learning and Innovation Network for Communities) is developed by and for communities. Our mission is to support families and improve results for young children in communities across the country with a focus on accelerating the development of effective, integrated, local early childhood systems.

## MEASURES OF PROGRESS

### APPROACH

As part of its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, First 5 LA created four theories of change, one for each of its four outcome areas: Families, Communities, Health and Early Childhood Education. These theories of change are used to understand how our work fits together and how the outcomes of individual projects outcomes can build on each other to achieve First 5 LA's ultimate long-term outcome: children enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. The next step is for the intermediate outcomes in First 5 LA's theories of change to be operationalized into indicators that can be monitored over time, illustrating concrete evidence of our overall progress.

First 5 LA also commissions initiative-level evaluations to discover lessons learned, implementation progress and outcomes. These evaluations are tailored to the particular activities and goals of that initiative.

### INDICATORS

Some recent evaluation findings are listed below:

- Welcome Baby is a light-touch home visiting program. Three years after the program began, Welcome Baby participants, compared to non-recipients, reported:
  - Lower parental stress
  - Higher levels of maternal responsiveness
  - Participating children had greater communication skills, social competence and engagement and attention
- A key strategy of First 5 LA's *Best Start* work is to convene a diversity of stakeholders, including parent residents, and work together towards a common vision. In our *Best Start* Partnerships:
  - 63 percent of the participants are parents, 56 percent are community residents, and 34 percent are service providers
  - 44 percent had been engaged in the partnership at least one year
  - 74 percent reported they'd seen people come together in the community to address a specific issue as a result of the partnership, and 60 percent felt everyone had an equal say in the partnership's direction

## STRUCTURE & LEADERSHIP

The First 5 LA Board of Commissioners is comprised of 17 members. The nine voting members are appointed by each of the LA County supervisors and the LA County departments of Children and Family Services, Public Health and Mental Health. The Chairman of the LA County Board of Supervisors also serves as Chairman of the First 5 LA Commission. The Board also includes representatives from other educational, children and families organizations throughout the county.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

First 5 LA has several investments which build parent leadership throughout the county, including our anchor investment *Best Start*. *Best Start* is a place-based effort located in 14 communities that provides skills-building and leadership training as well as a platform for parents to envision and decide how to create the best possible community for children prenatal to 5 and their families. Additionally, we are investing in a local adaptation of two national parent engagement models, Abriendo Puertas and Project DULCE. Abriendo Puertas is the nation's first evidence-based comprehensive training program developed by and for Latino parents with children ages 0-5. Project DULCE is a clinical intervention focused on the Strengthening Families and Protective Factors approach which focuses on the value of parent engagement and is designed to address infant/family risks and needs at the earliest possible stage.

## FINANCING

First 5 LA is funded through the Proposition 10 Tobacco Tax, 80 percent of which is distributed to the County Commissions based on their proportion of statewide births. The LA County share of tobacco tax revenue, projected to be roughly \$80.8 million in FY 2015-16 and \$77.4 million in FY 2016-17, is anticipated to continue declining in future years due to declining tobacco revenues based on the most recent estimate from the State Department of Finance (DOF) as updated on June 2, 2015.