

First 5 Commission of San Diego Technical and Professional Advisory Committee

May 23, 2011

Quality Preschool Initiative

TPAC will receive an update regarding the development of the Quality Preschool Initiative, information on best practices in preschool and key features of quality preschool. Additionally TPAC will be asked to provide feedback and recommendations regarding key components to be considered for the First 5 San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative.

First 5 Efforts in the Development of the Quality Preschool Initiative

At the March 21, 2011 meeting TPAC was provided an overview of First 5 San Diego's investment to date in quality preschool. The summary information included:

- The Importance of Quality Early Education
- California's Efforts to Improve Early Childhood Education
- History of Quality Preschool in San Diego County
- A Summary of the First 5 San Diego's Five-Year Preschool for All (PFA) Demonstration Project
- Next Steps in the Development of a Quality Preschool Initiative

A timeline of key activities and milestones to support the development of the Quality Preschool Initiative was also provided at the March 21, 2011 meeting. (See Attachment 1)

During the last few months, Commission staff has been working with Susan Muenchow, a national expert in the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Quality Preschool in activities supporting the development of the Quality Preschool Initiative. On May 11th, Ms. Muenchow facilitated a community meeting to describe elements of quality care and background of the local PFA Demonstration Project and elicit community input on the following seven questions:

- 1) What has been the primary contribution of Quality Preschool (and, specifically PFA) in the targeted communities across San Diego?
- 2) What are the top three attributes/components of a Quality Preschool program?
- 3) What parent education services do parents want?
- 4) How can providers do a better job of following up with appropriate services for children when issues are identified in universal screening?
- 5) Which is more important – to ensure the quality of the First 5-supported preschool initiative or to reexamine and possibly expand the number of children served?
- 6) Some school districts across the state are contributing federal Title 1 funds to expand or improve preschool services. What's happening in San Diego County? Are there other opportunities for communities to contribute facilities or matching funds for the Quality Preschool Initiative?
- 7) In light of funding reductions that were approved by the Commission on May 9th and other information that has been discussed at this meeting, what recommendations would you give the First 5 Commission to improve the implementation of the Quality Preschool Initiative?

Additionally Ms. Muenchow has conducted research on best ECE practices on a national level and has facilitated stakeholder interviews with other First 5 counties in California, who are participating in the First 5 California 'Power of Preschool' program, to obtain information on successful practices challenges in providing quality preschool service across the state. Ms. Muenchow will present additional background information regarding quality preschool and provide preliminary information today on her findings, based on her activities to date. She will also identify several focused questions for further discussion so that TPAC may provide feedback and recommendations and assist staff in the development of this important initiative.