



FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN  
2015-2020



# FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020





## ▶ LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Community Members and Stakeholders:

First 5 San Diego presents the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan which builds on our success over the past four years in making an important difference in the lives of young children and their families in San Diego County.

Through our partnerships with parents, service providers, and the community at-large, we continue to make strategic investments, particularly for families with the greatest challenges. We have also seen great advances in changing the systems of care that create more lasting and meaningful impacts, and instituting more prevention-focused efforts that support stable and strong families. Specifically, we are proud of our leadership in:

- Creating high quality early learning environments in the San Diego region;
- Establishing and implementing screening standards in health, developmental, behavioral and dental programs;
- Increasing the number of children identified with special needs prior to kindergarten entry; and
- Building regional awareness and investment in early childhood mental health.

Now we must build upon these successes in the face of sharply declining revenues and more difficult investment choices in the next five years. The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan focuses on multi-objective investments and initiatives that deliver services and fill gaps in areas of greatest need, implements systems-change that improves service delivery, and leverages partners' investments to strengthen the collective impact and enhance sustainability. This approach offers the best opportunity to maximize our diminishing resources while improving the lives of young children and their families for generations.

On behalf of First 5 San Diego, I thank everyone who is a partner in making meaningful and lasting change for our youngest children through strategic, outcomes-focused, and fiscally-responsible actions.

KIMBERLY MEDEIROS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### First 5 Commission of San Diego

Supervisor Greg Cox, *Chair*

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### Technical and Professional Advisory Committee

Carol Skiljan, *Chair and Commission Representative*

Karma H. Bass, *MPH, FACHE*

Fred Becker

Nedra Bickel

Elizabeth Donahue-Maruchau

Jo Ann Leone

Maureen Muir

Lindsey Wade

Philip Ziring, *MD*

### The Project Team

#### **First 5 San Diego:**

Kimberly Medeiros, *Executive Director*

Gloria Corral-Terrazas, *Assistant Executive Director*

Naomi Chavez, *Community Engagement Manager*

Martin Cherry, *Operations Manager*

Lynn Eldred, *Evaluation Manager*

Amy Menolez, *Health Projects Manager*

Harold Randolph, *Data and Evaluation Coordinator*

Steven Smith, *Early Childhood Education  
Projects Manager*

Grace Young, *Contracting Manager*

#### **The Consultant Team:**

Carolyn Verheyen, *MIG, Inc.*

Andy Pendoley, *MIG, Inc.*

Nicole Bracy, *Harder+Company Community Research*

## Table of Contents

<b>1. SETTING THE CONTEXT</b>	<b>8</b>
Introduction	8
A Snapshot of San Diego County	10
The First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan	11
<b>2. FRAMING THE FUTURE</b>	<b>12</b>
The Strategic Plan Framework	13
Values, Vision, Mission and Core Functions	14
Strategic Goals	15
Objectives	17
Evaluation Logic Model	19
<b>3. FOCUSING FOR RESULTS</b>	<b>20</b>
Strategies	21
Strategic Plan Implementation	22
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>24</b>
A. Evaluation Framework	24
B. Strategic Plan Development	27

# 1: *setting the context*

## introduction

First 5 San Diego is the region's primary organization for promoting the health and well-being of children during their most critical years of development—from the prenatal stage through age 5. Our vision is that all children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.



First 5 San Diego was formed as a result of a California ballot initiative passed by California voters in 1998. Proposition 10 increased the tax on tobacco products to fund early childhood development programs and services. As part of this initiative, state law requires that each county adopt an adequate and complete county-specific strategic plan for the support and improvement of early childhood development within the county.

As of June 2014, First 5 San Diego has invested over \$496 million in programs and services to support early childhood health and development. Over the life of the previous 5-year strategic plan (2010-2015), First 5 San Diego achieved key successes including:

- **Significant gains in health insurance enrollment and retention among San Diego's youngest children.** Over 42,000

children ages 0 through 5 and 12,000 pregnant women enrolled in health insurance.

- **Increases in the number of children and pregnant women receiving oral health care.** Over 97,000 children and 16,000 pregnant women received screenings for oral health services, with the majority receiving treatment.
- **Increases in the number of developmental screenings and treatment.** Over 49,000 children received screenings for developmental delays, and more than 20,000 children with developmental concerns received treatment.
- **Improvements in early childhood education enrollment and quality.** Over 29,700 children enrolled in quality preschool. Nearly 90% of participating preschool classrooms achieved a top quality ranking.

- **Increases in positive parenting practices and knowledge among participants in parenting classes.** Over 90% of parents who received services learned how to advocate for their child, understand their child's needs, and help their child learn and develop (in FY 2012-13).
- **Increases in community capacity to sustain healthy social relationships and support to families and children.** In support of *Live Well San Diego*, the "Good Start" campaign achieved more than 57.6 million impressions and leveraged over 230% in matched media. Similarly, 81,895 families with children ages 0 through 5 engaged in First 5 San Diego-sponsored events and conferences with interactive and educational exhibits.

## A Snapshot of San Diego County

San Diego County is one of the largest and most diverse regions in California, and its youngest children are a clear reflection of this diversity. The county includes 18 cities, 17 unincorporated communities, and is home to over 3 million people. By 2050 San Diego County will have an estimated population of over 4.5 million.

Approximately 255,000 of San Diego County residents are between the ages of 0 and 5, and this population is expected to grow in the years to come. Approximately 41 percent of the county's children between the ages of 0 and 5 are of Hispanic or Latino descent. While already a culturally and racially diverse region, the representation across cultural and racial groups will continue to grow as San

Diego County is home to a large immigrant and refugee population with children whose families come from all over the world.

First 5 San Diego builds upon the various resources that exist to serve children ages 0 through 5 and their families throughout the county, including community clinics and hospitals, state and federally funded early education programs, Public Health, Child Welfare Services, the San Diego Regional Center, the libraries and community-based organizations.

The priority needs of young children and families in San Diego County, the strengths and assets among existing resources, and the gaps in service delivery are addressed in the Key Findings: Needs Assessment Report, Appendix C, which is available upon request under separate cover.

## The First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan

The First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap to focus our investments over the next five years toward achieving key results that best promote early childhood development in San Diego County. The plan guides funding decisions at a strategic level and establishes a framework to assist us in measuring progress towards meeting our goals and holding us accountable in the work that we do. The plan establishes the Evaluation Framework and aligns with the Financial Spending Plan, and together these documents specify a detailed strategy for how we will target our investments and the type of outcomes we seek to achieve.



# 2

## *two: framing the future*

The Strategic Plan framework on the following page provides an overview of the content and organization of the Strategic Plan. The First 5 San Diego values, vision, mission, and core functions serve as the foundation for the plan goals and objectives which, in turn, lay the groundwork for both the development and implementation of strategic initiatives, projects, programs and services.





FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO

# strategic plan framework 2015-2020

Values .....



Vision .....

All children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.

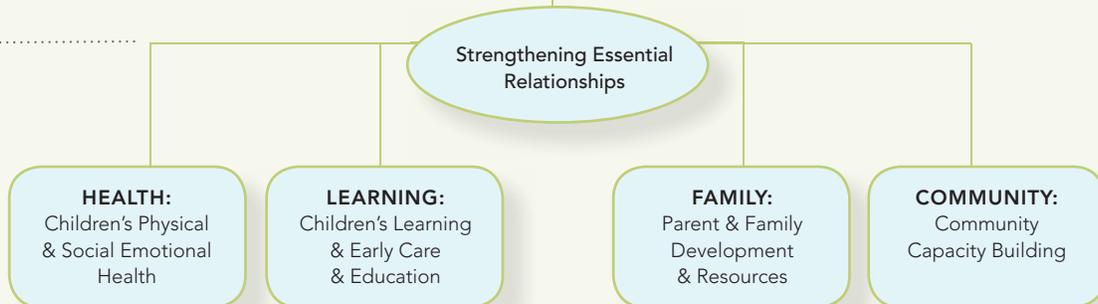
Mission .....

First 5 San Diego leads the San Diego community in promoting the vital importance of the first 5 years of life to the well-being of children, families and society.

Core Functions .....

- Funding services and activities to achieve desired results
- Advocating for policy change at local and state levels
- Acting as a catalyst and leader for coordinating, integrating and leveraging existing resources
- Building community and organizational capacity to support families

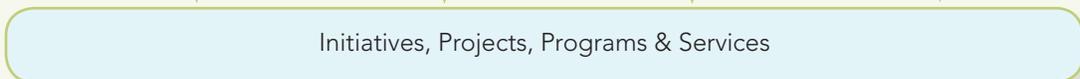
Strategic Goals .....



Objectives .....



Strategies .....





## Values, Vision, Mission and Core Functions

The values, vision, mission and core functions of First 5 San Diego are the foundational elements. Adopted in 2009 through in-depth stakeholder involvement, they serve as the starting point for action and investment at the regional and community levels. At the most basic level, these statements articulate how First 5 San Diego approaches the work and what it strives to accomplish through its efforts.

### Values

In all that it does, First 5 San Diego holds to these values:

- **Children:** We honor and celebrate children and every child.
- **Parents:** We support the role of parents as the child's first and best teachers.

- **Communities:** We believe strong communities help create healthy children and families.
- **Inclusion:** We embrace and serve the diversity of San Diego's communities.
- **Partnership:** We collaborate to create a seamless system of care and support for children and families.
- **Results:** We are committed to achieving real and sustainable results, demonstrating accountability and attaining measurable outcomes.

### Vision

The ultimate goal of First 5 San Diego's work is that **all children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.**

### Mission

First 5 San Diego leads the San Diego community in promoting the vital importance of the first 5 years of life to the well-being of children, families and society.

### Core Functions

First 5 San Diego conducts its mission through these core functions:

- **Funding services and activities to achieve** desired results
- **Advocating for policy change** at local and state levels
- **Acting as a catalyst and leader** for coordinating, integrating and leveraging existing resources
- **Building community and organizational capacity** to support families and integrate with *Live Well San Diego* – the County’s 10-year plan to achieve the vision for healthy, safe and thriving communities.

### Strategic Goals

All First 5 San Diego decisions and investments are framed according to four strategic goal areas: Health, Learning, Family and Community. The goal areas are closely interrelated and are not intended to represent exclusive categories. They express our key priorities to

address the complexity and breadth of local needs.

First 5 San Diego has also adopted an overarching goal that emphasizes the profound influence of relationships on a child’s healthy development and long-term outcomes in all life domains. These relationships shape all efforts to promote early childhood health and development.

### Overarching Goal

**Strengthen the relationships essential for the healthy development of young children.** These relationships are embedded in health, learning, family and community settings or environments.

### Health

**Promote each child’s healthy physical, social and emotional development.** Early childhood health and development includes



the physical, behavioral and social emotional. The well-being of primary caregivers has a direct impact on a young child's health; as such, addressing maternal health and family stress issues is also an important part of improving the health of San Diego's youngest children.

### **Learning**

**Support each child's development of communication, problem-solving, physical, social emotional and behavioral abilities, building on their natural readiness to learn.**

Quality early care and education plays an integral role in a child's cognitive development, and thus in preparing children to succeed in school and later in life. In addition, early learning is known to have a significant impact on a broad range of social and economic outcomes throughout the course of a person's life.

### **Family**

**Strengthen each family's ability to provide nurturing, safe and stable environments.**

Parents are a child's first and best teachers. Families shape the environment in which a child begins his or her life and thus they require the knowledge, tools and resources to nurture and support their children, particularly in their earliest years of development. In addition to meeting the child's basic needs, families play an important role in early learning. Predictors of a student's achievement in school include the extent to which families create a home environment in which learning is valued, communicate positive and balanced expectations for their children's achievement and become involved in their child's schools and formal education. Stable and nurturing family routines also provide a key foundation for social emotional stability.

## Community

**Build each community's capacity to sustain healthy social relationships and support families and children.** Broad, systems-level change is vital to the long-term viability of programs and to organizations that promote and support early childhood development. Aligning existing systems will create a more efficient, customer-focused network where continuity of care and quality of service are the priority. Advocating for policy change and funding, and educating the public helps strengthen the community to better support and promote health and learning in the first five years of life.

## Objectives

The objectives reflect First 5 San Diego's commitment to invest in programs and services that achieve measurable results. The objectives are quantifiable and measurable targets of real improvements in the lives of

San Diego's youngest children and in the comprehensiveness of the system of care. The following objectives provide concrete direction for our investments and a framework for monitoring progress.

1. Decrease the percentage of pregnant women and children ages 0 through 5 with **untreated dental disease**.
2. Decrease the percentage of children entering kindergarten with **undetected and/or untreated developmental, social emotional or behavioral delays or problems**.
3. Increase the percentage of children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in **quality early childhood education programs** in selected communities.



4. Increase the **use of positive parenting practices** to promote the healthy development of children ages 0 through 5.
5. Increase parents' and caregivers' **access to needed services** for their children.
6. Increase the **community's capacity to identify, treat and support** the needs of young children and pregnant women.

## Evaluation Logic Model

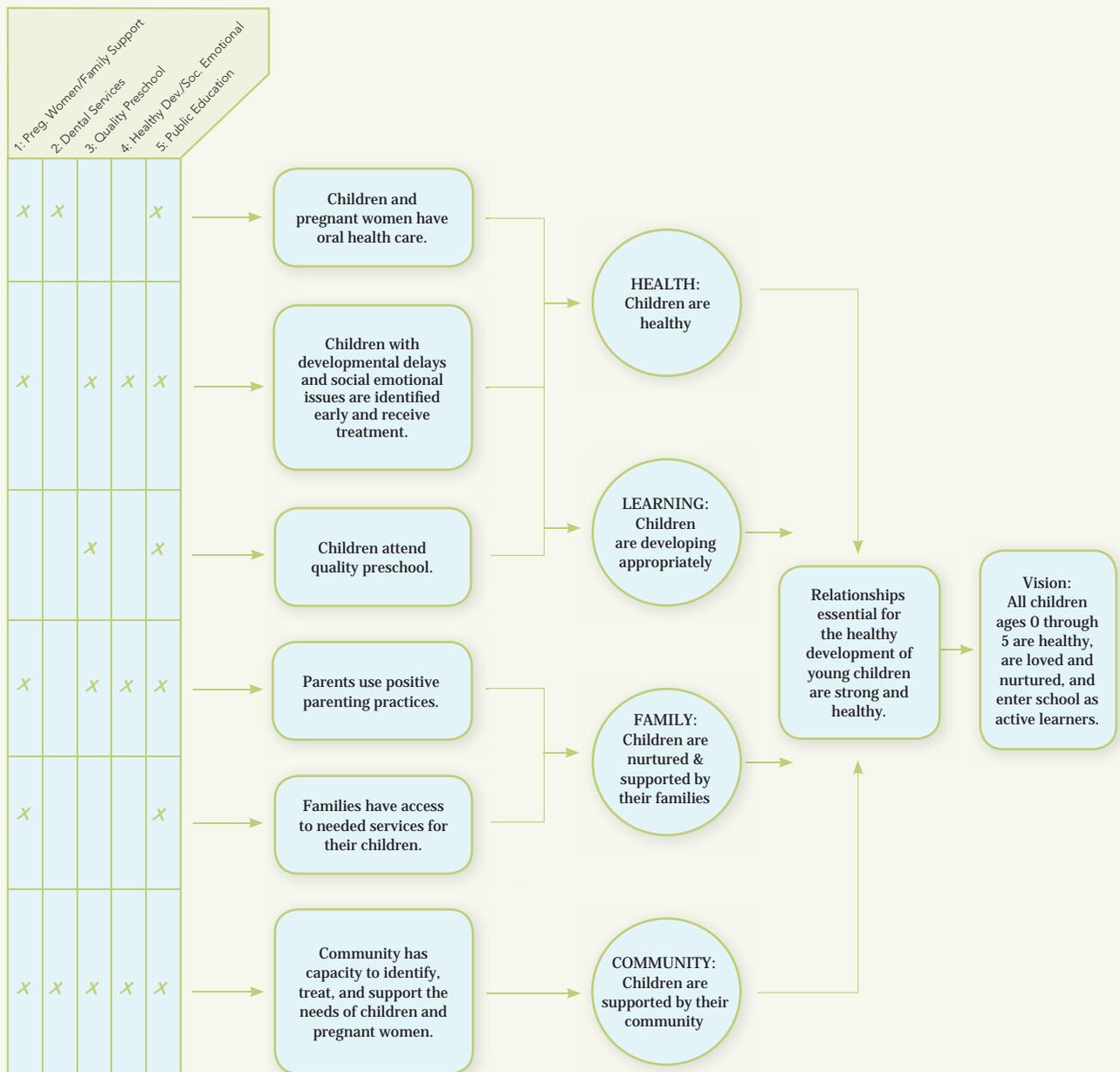
The Evaluation Logic Model on the following page depicts the flow from strategies to results. The wording of the goals and objectives has been translated into results statements for purposes of evaluation. The accompanying Evaluation Framework (Appendix A) identifies specific indicators and targets that will be regularly monitored to measure progress toward reaching these objectives.





FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO

# evaluation logic model



# 3

## three: *focusing for results*

The Strategic Plan must focus First 5 San Diego investments to maximize impact.

Strategies provide a level of detail, precision and concrete direction during a time of diminishing resources, increasing community need, and increasing expectations to demonstrate meaningful results. Details on the strategy development process are provided in Appendix B.



Adoption of this Strategic Plan occurs at a point in time when policy and legislative changes that might affect First 5 San Diego's work are on the horizon, including the inception of Covered California (our State's implementation of the Affordable Care Act). These efforts, and others known and not yet known, will likely impact the strategies that will be invested in year-by-year, so that funds are complementary, leveraged and directed to where they are most needed. In addition, wherever possible, First 5 San Diego will seize opportunities to continue to invest in improvements in larger systems of care and in more integrated coordination of service delivery.

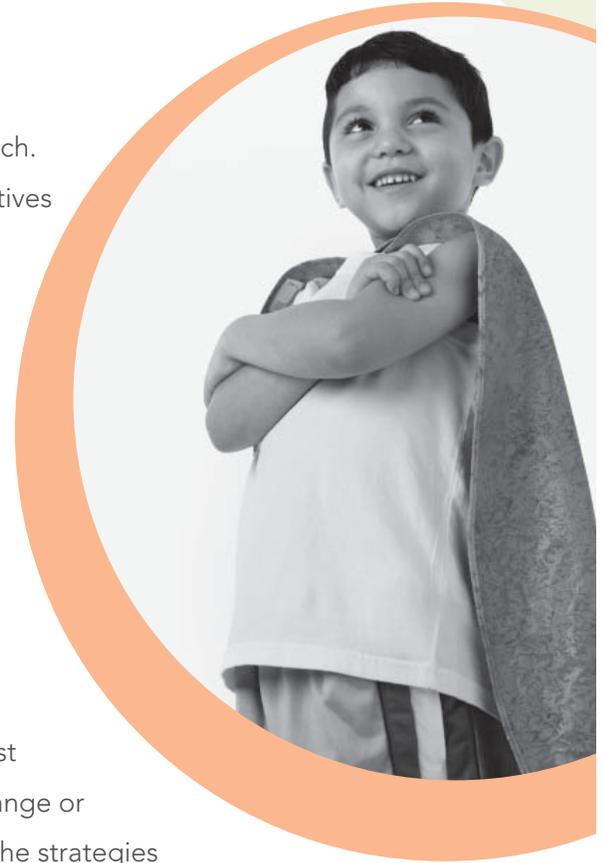
## Strategies

The strategies are designed to be impactful and multi-faceted. Importantly, they focus on meeting critical needs, particularly for high need/high risk populations, through

a direct service approach. Based on related initiatives and investments in the community, the strategies also represent real and significant partnering and leveraging opportunities for sustainability beyond our investment. Furthermore, the strategies promote best practices in system change or development. Finally, the strategies offer great potential in continuing to generate outcomes in the core areas of health, learning, family, and community, all while showing a strong return-on-investment through a focus on prevention.

### 1. **Services for pregnant women and families that support healthy infant/toddler development**

- ▶ *Targeted home visitation for specific at-risk population.*



**2. Comprehensive dental services for children and pregnant women.**

- ▶ *Dental screening, treatment, care coordination and parent education focused on prevention.*

**3. Quality enhancement of preschool classrooms.**

- ▶ *Quality enhancement of preschool classrooms in targeted areas through parent involvement, intensive staff coaching, and screening and supporting children with special needs.*

**4. Early identification and treatment of developmental delays and social emotional issues.**

- ▶ *Regional networks that provide developmental checkups and services for development, speech and language and behavioral issues.*

**5. Public education about the importance of the first five years of life.**

- ▶ *Targeted efforts within each of the core strategies. Telephone and on-line information and*

*referral to connect families to services. Information to increase awareness, access and use of First 5 San Diego services. Broader community efforts to strengthen families and reduce the need for direct services.*

## **Strategic Plan Implementation**

The Strategic Plan provides concrete, high-level direction for First 5 San Diego by guiding the allocation of funds at the strategy level. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the Financial Spending Plan, which specifies a detailed investment and allocation strategy intended to advance Strategic Plan goals. Both documents are grounded in the following funding principles, which guide First 5 San Diego as it manages declining revenues:

- **Prioritization:** First 5 San Diego cannot meet all of the needs of the county's youngest children and their families. Funding must be directed to a few specific priorities.

- **Leveraging:** Funds must be optimized by supplementing, pooling or matching existing resources.
- **Responsibility:** First 5 San Diego funds present an opportunity to improve the lives of children ages 0 through 5, and the money must be spent wisely.
- **Accountability:** The funding process will be open and inclusive, and all financial reports will be public documents.
- **Low-cost or no-cost solutions:** First 5 San Diego will not only fund initiatives, but seek effective low-cost and no-cost solutions as well.
- **Adequate support:** Activities to achieve important outcomes may require extended funding periods and support.

- **Sustainability:** First 5 San Diego will fund initiatives that are strongly positioned to continue when our investment levels decline.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan will make a difference in the lives of children and families for many years to come. In a spirit of commitment, informed by research, rooted in accountability, and with a clear focus, First 5 San Diego dedicates itself to the youngest children of San Diego County and their families.



## appendix a: *evaluation framework*

Strategic Goal Area	Objectives	Indicators	Level of Measurement	Baseline	Target
Health	Obj 1: Decrease the percentage of pregnant women and children ages 0 through 5 with untreated dental disease.	Percentage of pregnant women, participating in First 5 San Diego programs, identified with dental disease who receive treatment.	Program	78%	82%
		Percentage of children participating in First 5 San Diego programs, identified with dental disease who receive treatment.	Program	81%	84%
		Percentage of children ages 1 through 5 who have had a dental screening in the past year	Community	83%	84%
Health, Learning	Obj. 2: Decrease the percentage of children entering kindergarten with undetected and/or untreated developmental, social emotional, or behavioral delays or problems.	Percentage of children ages 0 through 5 identified with a developmental, social emotional, or behavioral need who have received treatment.	Program	66%	70%
		Percentage of children ages 0 through 5 making gains after receiving treatment for developmental, social emotional or behavioral delays or problems.	Program	89%	90%
		Percentage of children with special needs who are identified before kindergarten entry.	Community	35%	38%

Strategic Goal Area	Objectives	Indicators	Level of Measurement	Baseline	Target
Learning	Obj. 3: Increase the percentage of children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in quality early childhood education (ECE) programs in selected communities.	Percentage of children participating in First 5 San Diego programs, who demonstrate improvement in 5 or more developmental domains while enrolled in preschool.	Program	97%	98%
		Percentage of children participating in inclusive First 5 San Diego early childhood education programs identified with special needs.	Program	9%	11%
		Percentage of First 5 San Diego funded early childhood programs with high ratings as measured by classroom quality assessment tool.	Program	89%	93%
Health, Learning, Family	Obj. 4: Increase the use of positive parenting practices to promote the healthy development of children ages 0 through 5.	Percentage of parents, participating in First 5 San Diego programs, who increase their knowledge of age-appropriate child development.	Program	78%	85%
		Percentage of parents and caregivers who read to their children 3 or more times per week.	Community	86%	93%
		Percentage of parents who receive First 5 San Diego funded services, including social emotional services and parent education, who read to their child 3 or more times a week.	Program	71%	93%

*appendix a: evaluation framework*

Strategic Goal Area	Objectives	Indicators	Level of Measurement	Baseline	Target
Health, Learning, Family (cont.)	Obj. 4: (cont.)	Percentage of parents receiving First 5 San Diego services with the knowledge and capacity to advocate for their child's needs.	Program	94%	95%
		Percentage of families engaged in care coordination who know how to access community services.	Program	83%	90%
Family	Obj. 5: Increase parents' and caregivers' access to needed services for their children.	Number of referrals made by First 5 San Diego funded programs for families of children ages 0 through 5.	Program	69,488	3% increase annually
		Amount leveraged by the First 5 San Diego and its contractors.	Program	26%	30%
Community	Obj. 6: Increase the community's capacity to identify, treat, and support the needs of children and pregnant women.	Successful referrals between First 5 San Diego funded services.	Program	8,128	3% increase annually

## **Building on Success**

In 2009, First 5 San Diego conducted an extensive and collaborative process to develop the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and work to narrow its scope. First 5 San Diego engaged parents and service providers, Commissioners, staff, the Technical and Professional Advisory Committee (TPAC), and the Strategic Planning Team to develop the plan.

At that time, the Strategic Plan underwent a comprehensive redesign. The plan provided First 5 San Diego with a new strategic framework that sharpened the focus on critical needs and outcomes linked to evaluation. In the face of declining revenues, the plan served as a clear and comprehensive roadmap for decision-making. Additionally, the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan was acknowledged as a model First 5 strategic plan in California.

With a comprehensive and proven framework in place, Commissioners directed staff to maintain the

strategic framework and narrow its scope in the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. A concise and thorough planning process narrowed the strategies, objectives and indicators.

## **Overview of the Planning Process**

First 5 San Diego hired MIG, Inc., to reprise its role as strategic planning consultant, and to work closely with the Project Team to conduct the plan development process.

The Project Team reviewed MIG's high level analysis of First 5 San Diego's progress and accomplishments over the past five years, and collaborated in developing recommendations for the plan. TPAC reviewed the recommendations at three key points, providing feedback and direction.

The planning process had two phases; it began in October 2013 and took place over a ten-month period:

- Phase I: Project Initiation and Data Analysis (October 2013)
- Phase II: Strategic Plan Development and Adoption (June 2014)

During Phase I, MIG analyzed and reported to the Project Team relevant documents, data analysis of First 5 San Diego accomplishments, the current context of young children in the county, and opportunities for further focusing the plan. During Phase II, the Project Team evaluated opportunities for honing the strategies, objectives and indicators to better reflect the projected revenue declines through 2020. This resulted in a draft 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

## Refinement Process for Strategies and Objectives

To further focus the plan strategies and objectives, the Project Team applied the same set of screening criteria used to develop the strategies in 2009, with slight refinements, to strengthen the focusing effect as noted below:

### **“To what extent does/is the strategy or objective...”**

1. Represent an evidence-based or promising practice?
2. Represent a strategic effort that:
  - a. Leverages other efforts and/or allows for financial partners;
  - b. Builds on existing internal and external strengths and resources;
  - c. Is responsive to critical gaps;
  - d. Demonstrates measurable results; and
  - e. Demonstrates a high value return on investment?

3. Demonstrate results within 5 years?
4. Build on successful prior investments by First 5 San Diego?
5. Sustainable beyond First 5 San Diego initial investment?
6. Not duplicative of other strategies/objectives?
7. Within First 5 San Diego's control?
8. Uniquely positioned as a First 5 San Diego initiative?

## **Finalization and Approval of the Strategic Plan**

At three key points in the planning process, MIG presented draft components of the plan to TPAC and received their feedback. MIG and the Project Team then finalized a draft 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for Commission approval.



2750 Womble Road, Suite 201  
San Diego, CA 92106

[www.first5sandiego.org](http://www.first5sandiego.org)



800 Hearst Avenue  
Berkeley, CA 94710

[www.migcom.com](http://www.migcom.com)