

we are  
born  
learning  
*let's begin*



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STRATEGIC PLAN | 2015-2020  
**SUMMARY REPORT**

Improving the  
lives of children  
ages 0 through 5



# First 5 San Diego 2015-2020: Accomplishments and Call to Action



During 2015-2020, First 5 San Diego’s Strategic Plan called for a focus on multi-objective investments and initiatives that deliver services to meet those with the greatest need, implement systems change that improves service delivery and leverage partners’ investments to strengthen our collective impact and enhance sustainability.

This summary report highlights some of our biggest accomplishments during the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan period. As you read this report and see the many children and families that have benefited from First 5 San Diego services and the impact these services have had on their lives, we ask that you join us and take action. With tobacco tax revenue dropping, First 5 revenues across the state are declining. Moving forward First 5 San Diego will need funding partners from all sectors to step forward and work with us to advance our work, especially to prioritize services through a racial and equity lens.

Supervisor Nathan Fletcher  
First 5 San Diego Chair  
Chair, Board of Supervisors, San Diego County

## \$178 Million

During Fiscal Years (FYs) 2015-2020, First 5 San Diego invested over \$178M to provide comprehensive health, education and family strengthening services for young children and their families.

## 115,000 Children

First 5 San Diego provided intensive services to over 115,000 individual children in San Diego County and touched hundreds of thousands more through community events, information and referral services and educational media campaigns.

# we are born learning

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A child’s experiences during their first 5 years lay the **foundation for his or her future**

# HEALTH



It has been an honor to serve on the First 5 Commission for the past 14 years, where I have the opportunity to support the bold vision that all children will have an optimal start in life. It is my personal belief that education is the way out of poverty—that is my story. The First 5 Commission helps many children, 0-5 years of age, get their first start at ensuring a pathway out of poverty. That is my wish and dream for all children.

**Wilma J. Wooten, M.D., M.P.H.**  
First 5 San Diego Commissioner  
Health Officer and Director, Public Health Services

Approximately 90 percent of the brain develops by age five, making early childhood a critical stage for healthy development.<sup>1</sup> The experiences and environment a child is exposed to during those early years lays the foundation for the rest of their lives, including educational achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, and lifelong health.<sup>2,3</sup> Although research has shown that the highest return on investment is produced when high-quality comprehensive services are provided to children before age three, many children with developmental concerns do not receive their first developmental screening or intervention until they are school age.<sup>4,5</sup>

During FYs 2015-2020, First 5 San Diego provided developmental screenings to an average of 16,954 children per year and developmental treatment to an average of 6,163 children per year through Healthy Development Services, KidSTART, First 5 First Steps Home Visiting, Quality Preschool Initiative, Mi Escuelita Therapeutic Preschool, and Maternity Shelter Program.

Total Investment (FYs 2015-2020)  
**\$77,030,639**



HIGHLIGHTS

Developmental screenings for an average of 16,954 children per year

Developmental treatment for an average of 6,163 children per year

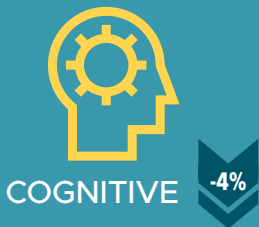
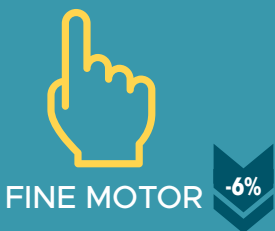
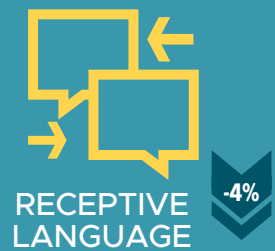
Additionally, with the understanding that social-emotional and behavioral delays can negatively impact a child’s ability to learn, communicate and interact with others.

**First 5 San Diego provided behavioral screenings to 11,519 children per year and behavioral treatment to 2,965 children per year.**

Treatment is often only accessible to children with the most severe needs, while those with mild or moderate delays are left untreated, leading to challenges later in life. First 5 San Diego has filled this gap in services by providing developmental and behavioral treatment for children with mild to moderate developmental concerns. High quality early intervention services to children with, or at risk for, developmental and behavioral delays can substantially impact their life trajectories.<sup>6</sup>

Children with mild to moderate delays receiving developmental and/or behavioral treatment through Healthy Development Services (HDS) are assessed both at the beginning (pre) and end (post) of treatment. On average, over the last five years, children entered developmental services between 22-29 months of age and stayed in services for approximately 4-5 months. During that time, their average percent delays at both timepoints showed a significant decline in all developmental domains, as shown below. This shift in their developmental trajectory, if continued at the same pace, would result in these children reaching their age-appropriate developmental level before they reached age 5, making them developmentally ready to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

Reduction in Average Percent Delay for Children in HDS with Mild to Moderate Developmental Concerns (2015-2020)



\*All domains are statistically significant; p<.05

ORAL HEALTH

The Oral Health Initiative (OHI) provides oral health services, care coordination and preventative education to children ages birth through five and pregnant women with the goal of improving oral health, promoting positive oral health practices and increasing provider capacity.

During FYs 2015-2020, OHI provided screenings, exams and treatment to both children and pregnant women.

On average each year, OHI provided the following:

Screenings for 20,033 children

Screenings for 4,726 pregnant women

Dental treatment for 13,474 children

Dental treatment for 2,502 pregnant women

Dental exams for 15,277 children

Dental exams for 3,490 pregnant women



First 5 San Diego’s goal is to ensure that all children in San Diego County enter kindergarten ready to learn

# LEARNING



It is great to be a part of an organization that sets its strategic goals, and the steps to reach those goals, on paper. Having such a plan, with a network of local stakeholders, helps the whole community get behind these goals and take the words from the paper into real world action that benefits children, families and the child care community. And through this process, we glean lessons learned to create new opportunities to move the needle in our next five-year strategic plan. In the area of early learning investments, I have seen the results of the investments in early learning first-hand. Across the county we have seen progress with children participating in First 5 San Diego programs demonstrating improvement in developmental domains and early identification and treatment of developmental delays. And in First 5 San Diego funded classrooms, we achieved sustained high ratings as measured by classroom quality assessments.

**Rick Richardson, MA, MMAS, MS**  
First 5 San Diego Commissioner  
President and CEO of Child Development Associates

High-quality preschool programs have been shown to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for children at kindergarten entry, and can improve children’s likelihood of attending college, entering the workforce, and avoiding justice system involvement later in life.<sup>7,8</sup> During FYs 2015-2020, First 5 San Diego invested in increasing children’s access to high-quality early learning environments, enhancing the quality of preschool classrooms, and supporting the professional development of early childhood education (ECE) staff.

Total Investment (FYs 2015-2020)  
**\$67,151,589**



**HIGHLIGHTS**  
In FYs 2015-2020 a total of 294 early learning and care sites provided high-quality early learning through the Quality Preschool Initiative and Mi Escuelita Therapeutic Preschool

**Because of First 5 San Diego, an average of 13,208 children per year received high-quality early education in San Diego County.**

First 5 San Diego also supported targeted coaching and professional development opportunities for Quality Preschool Initiative (QPI) teachers and administrators to ensure they were using best practices and had the tools they need to support the children in their care. During FYs 2015-2020, an average of 1,418 teachers and site directors annually received support to develop customized professional development plans, access robust and systematic coaching, and participate in professional development workshops and teaching communities.



90% of brain development occurs during the first five years of life

# FAMILY



It has been an honor to serve as a Commissioner for more than 16 years. I have had the opportunity to witness the evolution of amazing work from providers and staff. First 5 San Diego and its many community partners has had the opportunity to support our children and their families, making a difference in their lives and their futures. Looking forward, I will continue to support our efforts in providing education, prevention and intervention services to children and families so that children in San Diego can be healthy, educated, and safe. Our work to ensure families have economic stability, regular medical care, and hope for a secure future is vitally important and I look forward to continuing this amazing work with our partners and stakeholders.

**Sandy McBrayer**  
First 5 San Diego Commissioner  
CEO The Children’s Initiative

First 5 First Steps (F5FS) home visiting program provided countywide home visitation services to specific high-risk target populations including pregnant and parenting teens, military, refugee/immigrant, and low-income families using the Healthy Families America (HFA) evidence-based model.

Between FYs 2015-2020, F5FS served 1,070 families and provided 45,159 home visits. F5FS home visitors begin supporting families prenatally and continue through the child’s third birthday. Home visitors ensure that mothers are connected to prenatal care, provide breastfeeding support and resources, and support mothers in developing a strong connection with their baby.

Total Investment (FYs 2015-2020)  
**\$25,484,109**



**HIGHLIGHTS**  
Between FYs 2015-2020, F5FS served 1,070 families and provided 45,159 home visits



Between FYs 2015-2020, both the percentage of F5FS babies born prematurely and the percentage of babies born with low birth weight decreased by 3%. During the same time period, the percentage of mothers who were breastfeeding their babies at 6 months of age increased by 5%. Home visitors continue to support families until the child is three years old, ensuring that families have a strong support system and are connected to community resources.



First 5 San Diego providers educate families on the importance of talking, reading and singing to their children to maximize brain growth during the early years of life. Between FYs 2015-2020, the percentage of parents and caregivers who reported reading to their child three or more days per week increased 9%.



### CARE COORDINATION

Children served by First 5 San Diego programs HDS, KidSTART and OHI are likely to have multiple appointments and more than one service provider working to meet the child’s needs. Care Coordinators are critical partners for families in these situations, working hand-in-hand with them to make appointments, prioritize which services to start first, monitor progress and help families overcome barriers (e.g., arranging transportation) to completing a treatment plan.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

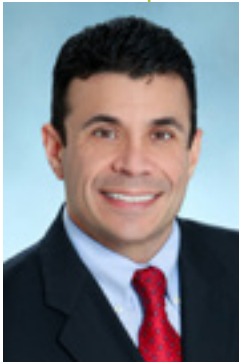
Between FY 2015-2020, on average, 12,479 children and 7,879 parents received care coordination services each year





First 5 San Diego is committed to supporting **healthy, vibrant communities** for children and their families

# COMMUNITY

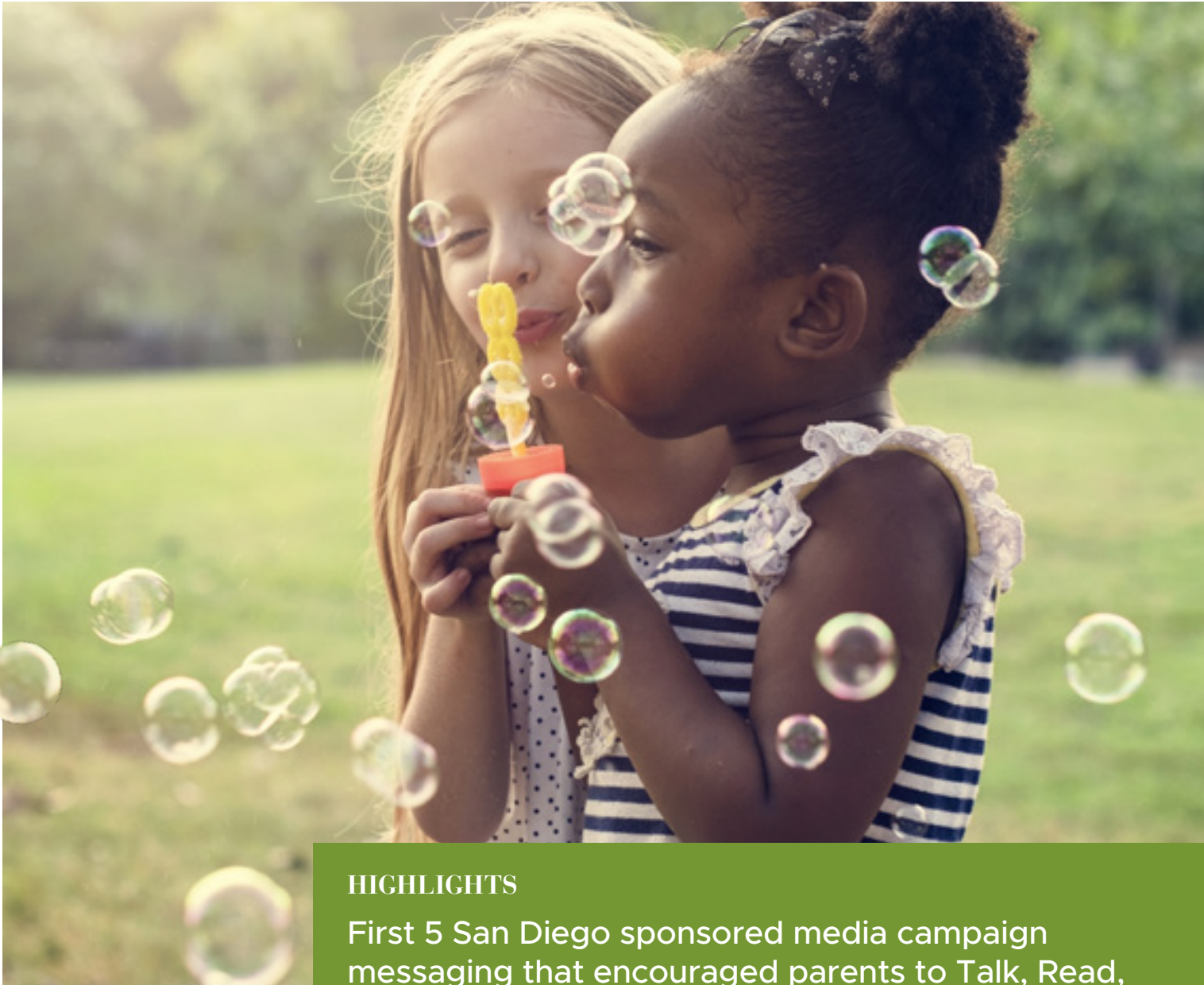


It has been an honor to serve as a First 5 San Diego Commissioner and to continue supporting its mission. Over the years, I have witnessed its powerful positive effect on the lives of our babies, pregnant women and their families. The work of the team and its partnering agencies has been amazing and life changing. As we celebrate the outcomes of this 5 year plan, our focus turns to new strategic priorities: integrated leadership, greater coordination among the systems of care, supporting resiliency in families and increased funding for future sustainability. I'm confident in the agency's future and honored to continue as a First 5 San Diego advocate.

Nick Macchione, MS, MPH, FACHE  
First 5 San Diego Commissioner  
Director of the Health and Human Services Agency

Children and families who receive services through one of First 5 San Diego's funded programs often receive referrals to other First 5 San Diego providers or community agencies to help ensure that all their family's needs are addressed. **Between FYs 2015-2020, First 5 San Diego-funded programs made 63,561 of these health and social service referrals.**

Total Investment (FYs 2015-2020)  
**\$9,194,811**



## HIGHLIGHTS

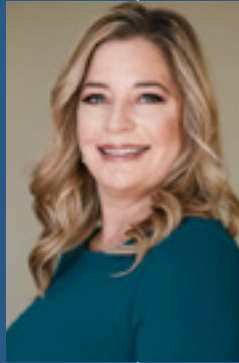
First 5 San Diego sponsored media campaign messaging that encouraged parents to Talk, Read, Sing to their children. Elements of the media campaign were seen more than 453 million times

First 5 San Diego also supports referrals for the broader San Diego community through 2-1-1 San Diego and the First 5 San Diego Warm Line (1-888-5 FIRST 5). By dialing either of these numbers, any family in San Diego County can be connected to health and social services near them. **Between FY 2015-2020, 2-1-1 San Diego made 157,139 referrals for families with children ages zero through five.**

The First 5 San Diego website [first5sandiego.org](https://first5sandiego.org) registered 137,077 new users and nearly 400,000 page views.



# CALL TO ACTION



At First 5 San Diego, we are proud that our services touched the lives of so many children and families between 2015-2020. We owe tremendous gratitude to our community partners who work passionately and tirelessly to reach families in need, provide better services and carry out our vision of ensuring that all children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.

As we move forward, we seek to broaden our partnerships and focus on our role as convener, expert leader and thought partner. Our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan sharpens our focus on supporting systems change efforts, developing a stronger network throughout our region, supporting greater connectedness among the systems of care, leveraging additional funding to sustain and bring our initiatives to scale, and advocating for policy changes that will support our children and families for years to come. We want to see more developmental and behavioral screenings happening in the community - in every pediatrician's office, every home visiting program, and every early learning and care setting. The earlier we can identify delays, the more likely our interventions will work. We also need to ensure that all children with mild to moderate needs can receive high-quality developmental and behavioral treatment no matter where in the county they live or whether their family can afford to pay for treatment. Moreover, we need to ensure that regardless of where a young child receives daily care, they are receiving a high quality early learning experience. We are calling for the partnership of the public, private and philanthropic sectors to accomplish these goals.

Finally, as a Commission, we have our own call to action to advance a race equity agenda. Racist policies have systematically disadvantaged children and families of color throughout our nation's history.<sup>9</sup> Coping with racism has been shown to have lifelong effects on learning, behavior, and physical and mental health of Black, Indigenous and other People of Color.<sup>10</sup> It is not sufficient for First 5 San Diego to be race-neutral in our approach to serving children and families; we must be proactively race-conscious, both aware of and seeking to change the systems that perpetuate inequities. During the FY2015-2020 strategic plan period, the percentage of Black children and families served by First 5 San Diego hovered around 4% each year. We must do better. As a Commission, we have an imperative to better understand the needs of Black children and families throughout San Diego County. And we need to partner with local organizations that have the trust of those communities and know how to reach them. We call for our county and community partners to join us in promoting race equity and hold one another accountable to centering San Diego's children and families of color in our collective policies and practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Alethea Arguilez".

ALETHEA ARGUILEZ, M.A.

FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FOOTNOTES

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4 Hunt, N. (2020). Identifying young children for early intervention in California. Policy Analysis for California Education.

5 Goode, S., Diefendorf, M., & Colgan, S. (2011). The importance of early intervention for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

6 Vaivada, T., Gaffey, M.F., & Bhutta, Z.A. (2017). Promoting early child development with interventions in health and nutrition: A systematic review. Pediatrics, 140(2). Doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-4308

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8 Campbell, F., Ramey, C. T., Pungello, E., Miller-Johnson, S., & Sparling, J. J. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. Applied developmental Science, 6(1), 42-57. DOI:10.1207/S1532480XADS0601\_05

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10 Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child. “How Racism can affect Child Development.”

# Improving the lives of children ages 0 through 5

