First 5 Commission of San Diego

October 20, 2026

Executive Director Report

Updates Since Last Report

Health

- ***Healthy Development Services (HDS)***

    - First 5 staff continue their work on the Integrated Prevention and Early Intervention Services procurement (IPEI), that will integrate HDS, DSEP and KidSTART. This partnership will help secure critical integrated prevention and early intervention services for children ages 0 to 5 years with developmental and behavioral health needs.
    - The IPEI RFP is being reviewed by the Department of Purchasing and Contracting and should be posted in the coming weeks. This RFP has been a collaborative effort between F5SD and CFWB staff.

- ***Healthy Development Services (HDS) Countywide Coordinator: American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3)***

    - AAP-CA3 HDS Project Director and Executive Director continue to participate on the Children's First San Diego Advisory Board to support efforts related to the San Diego County Health and Safety Act.
    - AAP-CA3 staff engaged in providing analysis, feedback and recommendations on the Youth Optimal Care Pathways (OCP) Framework, the Behavioral Health Services Act Integrated Plan (BHSA-IP) for the Strategic Behavioral Health Initiative.

Family

- ***First 5 First Steps (F5FS) Countywide Coordinator: American Academy of Pediatrics – Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3)***
    - AAP-CA3 participated in the 2026 First 5 California Summit, Their Futures First, held August 31–September 2, 2026, in Anaheim, California. AAP-CA3 highlighted their work with First 5 First Steps targeted home visiting, while also providing information on Healthy Development Services (HDS). The AAP-CA3 booth received substantial interest from attendees, particularly regarding home visiting training opportunities and HDS, a program unique to San Diego County. Representatives from other home visiting programs expressed particular interest in the depression screening tools used by First 5 First Steps and training resources for the ASQ-3 and ASQ:SE-2.

    - AAP-CA3 submitted their annual report titled, "First 5 First Steps, A Year in Retrospect: Accomplishments, Challenges, & Opportunities in FY 25-26" to the Commission (See **Item 7-2).**

- ***First 5 First Steps (F5FS)***

    - The CalWORKs Home Visiting Program allocation was augmented per the All-County Fiscal Letter issued on July 15, 2026 (See **Item 7-3**). The allocation increased by $784,453 for a new total of $4,843,465. All 5 home visiting contracts, including countywide coordination, are to be increased.
    - Joint Model implementation is delayed to early 2027.

First 5 Commission of San Diego

October 20, 2026

Learning

- ***Learn Well Initiative (LWI)***
  - ***Early Years Conference***

    On April 16 and 17, the Learn Well team at the San Diego County Office of Education (SDCOE) will host the 24th Annual Early Years Conference. This event brings together early learning and care professionals with a shared goal: to thoughtfully reimagine and strengthen the ways in which we support young children and the educators and caregivers who serve them in an increasingly complex and evolving landscape.

    Grounded in developmentally appropriate practice and whole-child principles, the conference will highlight evidence-based strategies that enhance learning, promote resilience, and foster a strong sense of belonging in early childhood settings. Workshops will address key areas of practice, including trauma-informed care, inclusive classroom environments, culturally and linguistically responsive approaches, play-based learning, and early childhood mental health.

    While the conference is open to the public, it is primarily attended by early learning and care programs participating in the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative (SDQPI), reflecting its strong focus on quality improvement and capacity building across the region's early childhood system.

  - ***Program Evaluation Report: Leading with Confidence: QRIS participation and site leaders' confidence, well-being, and quality improvement Report***

    Using five years of evaluation data of the San Diego Quality Preschool Initiative, WestEd wrote the manuscript, "Leading with Confidence: QRIS Participation and Site Leaders' Confidence, Well-Being, and Quality Improvement," which has been published in June's *Early Childhood Research Quarterly.*

    This study examines how participation in a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) may support site leaders' confidence, well-being, and quality improvement efforts. To address an important gap in existing literature, the study includes the experiences of ECE leaders across settings, including home-based family child care (FCC) and family, friend, and neighbor (FFN) providers who are often overlooked in research and policy. QRIS supports examined in this study include an individualized coaching model, professional development, monetary stipends, and incentives for learning materials. Data includes site leader survey data, coach survey data, and interview data from 10 case study sites. Findings suggest improvements in site leaders' confidence, perceptions of stress, and site-level classroom quality in the context of QRIS participation, with qualitative themes illuminating the role of workplace relationships in supporting leaders' well-being. Together, these findings suggest that QRIS may serve as a promising mechanism for supporting program quality and the well-being of the diverse leaders who drive it. Building the capacity of ECE leaders is thus central to improving workplace climate, as leaders play a critical role in supporting their teams and promoting positive environments for children in their care (See **Item 7-4).**

Community

- ***Community Outreach and Engagement Events***

  First 5 San Diego is proud to have sponsored or participated in the following **24** community outreach event(s):

  - April 18, 2026 KBPS Be My Neighbor Day **(Sponsored)**
  - April 18, 2026 Annual Arbor/Eart Day Community Resource Fair **(Participated)**
  - April 19, 2026 Starry Cinema & Resource Fair **(Participated)**
  - April 30, 2026 CAPM Resource Fair **(Participated)**

- May 1, 2026 Talls & Smalls **(Sponsored)**
- May 8, 2026 A Baby Prom Resource Fair **(Participated)**
- May 9, 2026 Strong Starts State Wide Day of Action **(Participated)**
- May 16, 2026 I love My Park Day **(Participated)**
- June 5, 2026 Talls & Smalls **(Sponsored)**
- June 13, 2026 Summer Kick Off Family Day **(Sponsored)**
- June 27, 2026 Mass Creativity Day **(Sponsored)**
- July 9, 2026 Parks After Dark **(Participated)**
- July 17, 2026 All Inclusive Day of Play **(Sponsored)**
- July 25, 2026 Day of Play **(Sponsored)**
- August 1, 2026 Annual Backpack Give Away and Resource Fair **(Participated)**
- August 8, 2026 Breakfast & Backpacks School Supply Giveaway **(Participated)**
- August 22, 2026 KPBS San Diego Book Festival **(Sponsored)**
- August 31-September 2, 2026 First 5 California Summit **(Participated)**
- September 26, 2026 Talk Read Sing Day **(Participated**)
- October 2, 2026 We Can't Wait Annual Early Childhood Mental Health Conference **(Sponsored)**
- October 2, 2026, Fall Carnival on Camp Pendleton **(Sponsored)**
- October 8, 2026 Music and Story Time **(Sponsored)**
- **October 17, 2026, NICU Grad Reunion (Sponsored)**
- October 18, 2026 Waterfront Park Pumpkin Patch **(Sponsored)**
- On Going Toddler Time **(Sponsored)**
- On Going Rx for Art + Play (**Sponsored)**

- ***Kit for New Parents (KIT)***
  - First 5 California is pleased to announce a new online ordering portal for individual and bulk orders of the Kit for New Parents. The portal can also be accessed through the F5CA English language parent site: Kit for New Parents | First 5 California and through the F5CA Spanish language parent site: Kit para los nuevos padres | First 5 California and the F5CA state site

Administration

- ***Finance Committee***
  - On October 13, 2026, the Finance Committee convened to review and approve the annual financial audit.

- ***Administrative Updates***
  - First 5 San Diego along with HHSA Child and Family Well-being Department (CFWB) received a 2026 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACO) for its collaboration on bringing the First 5 Warmline in house to CFWB last year. (**See Item 7-5**)

  - ED Arguilez participated in a panel discussion regarding the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood Plus (MCCYN+) program.

  - ED Arguilez has begun discussions with HHSA Executive office regarding the DPC Internal Service Fund (ISF) charge that is estimated at .79% per contract that is managed by DPC.

  - ED Arguilez continues to co-lead the home visiting steering committee in support of the new joint model with public health nurses.

- ***Data and Evaluation***
  - Harder + Company presented at the First 5 California Summit on Ripple Effects Mapping (REM). REM is an interactive evaluation and learning tool that uses a visual mapping process to identify and document the multi-layered impacts of services. This process was completed for HDS and First Steps to use existing qualitative data intentionally and have a unique perspective of how these programs operate and impact children, caregivers and

providers. The REM maps supports evaluation framework updates and has been used to share the impact of our work.
- First 5 Staff worked with Harder + Company on developing the Strategic Plan Evaluation Framework for Fiscal Years 2025-2030.

- ***First 5 Advocacy & Networking / Professional Development***

  - First 5 Association Executive Director, Avo Makdessian published an online editorial titled Californias Early Childhood System Needs a Rethink where he shares the importance of utilizing the existing local infrastructure of the First 5 network. He highlights the importance of not building a new infrastructure from scratch to deliver state policy, services, and programs at a local level. (**See Item 7-6**). This article also highlights the Choose Children policy platform that elevates these priorities (**See Item 7-7):**
    - Protect and build on recent investments
    - Strengthening families' economic security
    - Expand access to early care and education
    - Improve system coordination
    - Center equity in maternal and child health
    - Ensure continuous health care coverage

  - ED Arguilez has been in communication with various supporters of the SD Health and Safety Act – known as Measure B. Through the April 2026 Commission approval to support endorsing the ballot measure, F5SD may be listed as an endorsee in materials that are disseminated by partners, including but not limited to, the Children First Collective, San Diego Foundation and the Local Child Care & Development Planning Council. F5SD may also share information in its regularly scheduled communications. F5SD may not be engaged in direct lobbying nor promoting campaign materials.

  - ED Arguilez continues to engage with CFWB on the ongoing FFPSA claiming. The CARES claiming system is still pending activation. When the CARES system is operational it will result in an up to 50% reimbursement of Prop 10 funds allocated to FFSPA Eligible services through the home visiting services.

  - ED Arguilez continues participation as a thought partner with the San Diego Children First Collective (CFC) and supporting the mission to *make quality, affordable child care available to every working family that wants and needs it, as well as to ensure that providers and child care workers are compensated, supported, and respected as the professional educators that they are.*

  - ED Arguilez continues to be a thought partner on the San Diego Health and Safety Act – Measure B. There are numerous community outreach efforts to educate the public on childcare and children's health and safety issues. It outlines nearly $93M allocated to three key categories: *funding for childcare providers; childcare vouchers for families; and early childhood mental/behavioral developmental supports.* See **Item 7-8** for an updated projection on revenue for this effort.

  - ED Arguilez, Commissioner Alvarez and First 5 program staff attended the First 5 CA Summit in Anaheim, CA August 31 – September 2. This year's conference theme was *Their Futures First*, reflects a core belief that guides our collective work statewide: *affordability* and *equity* must be central to giving every child a strong start. The Summit served as a forum for learning, collaboration, and inspiration across four focus areas:
    - Ending childhood trauma through prevention and trauma-informed care
    - Achieving universal child care to support families, workforce stability, and economic security
    - Protecting immigrant families and ensuring access to essential resources
    - Navigating emerging technology to promote health development and digital equity

First 5 Commission of San Diego

October 20, 2026

- ED Arguilez and select program staff attended the Dyadic Care Healthy Steps SoCal Summit on September 15th in La Brea. This summit was focused on putting dyadic care into practice. Attached for reference is a draft white paper: First 5 Southern California Commission Response to Wraparound Immediate Needs Program Description. (**See Items 7-9 and 7-10**).

- On September 22nd, ED Arguilez attended the **San Diego Education Policy and Leadership Convening: Shaping the Future Together**, hosted by San Diego Foundation. This convening focused on convening key stakeholders to discuss policies, investments, and partnership structures that are needed to make a shared responsibility for TK-12 student success.

- ED Arguilez attended the 2nd and 3rd convenings of the San Diego Unified School District Early Learning Wellness Taskforce focused on strengthening early childhood wellness in the district. This first taskforce convening will focus on the following:
    - Define foundational wellness competencies for young children
    - Examine how current systems and structures support — or constrain — student wellness in our youngest learners
    - Explore the role of observation-based tools
    - Identify priorities and partnerships for continued work beyond the initial session

- ED Arguilez continues to represent First 5 San Diego in the following community stakeholder engagement efforts:
    - Child and Family Strengthening Advisory Board
    - SDUSD Early Learning Wellness Taskforce
    - SDSU College of Education Deans Advisory Board
    - Children's First Collective San Diego
    - Catalyst San Diego Early Education Funders Group
    - Child Care and Development Planning Council (designee is Lenette Javier)

First 5 Commission of San Diego

October 20, 2026

Background on First 5 San Diego Commission's Current Programs

FIRST 5 FIRST STEPS (F5FS)

F5FS provides 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) model and Baby TALK curriculum.

HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES (HDS)

HDS is an array of services for early identification and treatment of children with mild to moderate developmental delays. Services include assessment and treatment for behavioral and developmental concerns (including speech and language, occupational and physical therapies), parent education and care coordination to all families receiving HDS services.

KIT FOR NEW PARENTS

The Kit for New Parents is a free, comprehensive resource from First 5 California for new and expectant parents emphasizing the importance of a child's early years. Kits are distributed countywide and are available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese.

ORAL HEALTH INITIATIVE (OHI)

OHI provides oral health services, care coordination and preventative education to children ages birth through five with the goal of improving oral health and promoting positive oral health practices.

LEARN WELL INITIATIVE

The Learn Well Initiative supports sustainable development of quality early learning and care programs and aims to support providers in the form of technical assistance, instructional support, coaching and ongoing professional development.