

First 5 Kings County Strategic Plan

2020-2025

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Introduction

The Kings County Children and Families Commission (First 5 Kings) was established in 1998 when California voters passed Proposition 10 – The California Children and Families Act – which levied a 50-cent tax on each pack of cigarettes and other tobacco products sold. Revenue generated from the tobacco tax are distributed to all counties in California to fund local programs that promote early childhood development for children ages 0 to 5 years of age in the areas of health and wellness, early child care and education, parent education and support services and integration of services.

First 5 Kings has established, as mandated by law, this Strategic Plan in order to effectively guide the Commission in its efforts to make a significant impact in the lives of children age 0-5 residing in Kings County. This document outlines the Commission’s strategic focus, implementation, financial plan and evaluation processes. It shall be used as a living document requiring action, reflection, and revision in an ongoing effort for quality improvement.

Vision of First 5 Kings County

First 5 Kings envisions that all Kings County families receive access to the tools, knowledge and quality care necessary to encourage each child to develop to their fullest potential.

Mission of First 5 Kings County

First 5 Kings, in partnership with the community, will strengthen families, communities and systems of care for children prenatal to 5 years of age.

Guiding Principles of First 5 Kings County

- (1) Recognize and promote services and support for children ages 0-5 as the foundation for a lifetime of growth and success.
- (2) Support access and encourage outreach to geographically and socially isolated families
- (3) Provide appropriate services and support to children with disabilities and other special needs and their families
- (4) Support and encourage collaboration and leveraging opportunities among grantees
- (5) Support promising practices and evidenced-based models

Background

For more than 15 years, First 5 Kings has been working collaboratively across Kings County to ensure that every child enters kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. First 5 Kings is a public organization charged with directing Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues in Kings County toward issues relating to children from prenatal to age 5 and their families. Since its inception, First 5 Kings has invested more than \$26 million to improve the health, safety, and school readiness of children prenatal to age 5 by supporting multiple programs, research, partnerships, public education, and other policy and systems change efforts throughout the county.

Beginning January 2014, First 5 Kings County merged with Kings County Department of Public Health to better service the children of Kings County. The new partnership allows for First 5 Kings to leverage synergies and expand collaboration opportunities with Public Health Department programs expanding the reach and access to children aged 0 to 5.

First 5 Kings is poised to undergo a significant transition in its role and function, to increase its ability to make lasting impact for the greatest number of children. This transition is informed by a much clearer understanding of how to maximize First 5 Kings' impact given changing needs within Kings County, shifts in the early care and development and health systems for children, and declining tobacco tax revenues that have supported its work to date. Built on a robust foundation of data, analysis, consultation with the community and First 5 Kings' stakeholders, and deliberation amongst the Commission and staff, the strategies presented in this plan provide a road map for navigating the transition and increasing First 5 Kings' contribution to improving conditions for families, the communities they live in and the systems that support them.

In Fiscal Year 2021-2022, Commission staff have been involved in a number of projects to continue to strengthen the systems that serve the First 5 population, including Home Visiting Coordination and Kings County's ACEs Aware Network of Care. Commission staff continue to leverage resources from First 5 California to support families affected by the pandemic, including the First 5 COVID-19 Emergency Supplies and First 5 Family Book Distribution.

The Strategic Plan

The First 5 Kings County Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap to focus the Commission's investments over the next five years toward achieving key results that best promote early childhood development in Kings County. The plan guides funding decisions at a strategic level and establishes a framework to assist the Commission in measuring progress towards meeting its goals and holding it accountable in the work that it does. The Implementation Initiatives, Evaluation Framework, the 5-Year Financial Plan align with the Strategic Plan, and together these documents specify a detailed strategy for how the Commission will target its investments and the type of outcomes it seeks to achieve.

Strategic Results Sought by Proposition 10

Activities sponsored with Proposition 10 funds are expected to focus specifically on children 0-5 and their families. Further, according to established state level guidelines, four strategic results should be pursued:

1. Improved Child Health: Healthy Children.
2. Improved Child Development: Children Learning and Ready for School.
3. Improved Family Functioning: Strong Families.
4. Improved Systems: Integrated, Consumer-Oriented, Accessible Services.

These four strategic results served as the initial basis for strategic plans that are developed at both the state and county levels and drive the data reporting structure to First 5 CA by the counties.

Focus Areas, Goal, and Objectives

Result We Seek – Children develop to their potential

Focus Area 1 - Early Child Care and Education – Quality early childcare and education services will be accessible.

- Quality programs through research and best practices, including promoting higher education for teachers and provision of higher quality programs
- Capacity through availability of quality childcare slots appropriate for all skills and ages (infant, toddler, special needs)
- Parent education with emphasis on child development, parenting skills and parent/family stability
- Advocacy efforts for greater public investment in quality care and education

Focus Area 2 - Parent Education and Support - All parents/guardians and caregivers will be knowledgeable about early childhood development, effective parents and community resources.

- Evidence-based parent education that is culturally relevant
- Focus on language and literacy promotion within the family
- Promote and ensure child safety through exploration and implementation of healthy living models

Focus Area 3 - Healthy Children - All children will have an early start toward good health.

- Engagement of women from preconception to birth
- Early identification, developmental assessment and supportive referrals for children
- Support families develop life-long healthy habits

Focus Area 4 - Systems Integration & Alignment – A cohesive system of services for children and families will exist.

- Demonstrate integration through identifiable measures, including blended funding, MOUs, participation and joint work plans
- Leveraging Family Resource Centers as focal point for community access, incorporate Healthy Children, Parent Education and Support, and Early Childcare and Education as part of the RFP process
- Community-wide shared vision around early childhood
- Replicable and sustainable

All focus areas and goals contribute toward:

- Children prenatal to age 5 reach their maximum physical health potential
- Children prenatal to age 5 achieve their maximum socio-emotional health potential
- Children prenatal to age 5 attain their maximum cognitive development potential

Results Matrix

Focus Area 1 – Early Childhood Education	
Goal: Quality early childcare and education services will be accessible	
Objectives	Result Indicators
Quality and affordable early childhood education and childcare services will be supported to allow for retention and expansion	Increase in the number of children who participate in quality early childhood programs.
	Increase in the number of children who participate in First 5 funded projects.
	Increase in resources to support early care and education for Kings County.
	Increase in availability of high quality, affordable childcare programs/slots.
Strong professional development system will be in place that improves the quality of Early Childhood Education services	Increase in advocacy efforts for greater public investment in quality early care and education.
	Increase in skill development and mastery in the Kings County early care and education workforce.
	Increase of Kings County early care and education workforce in the knowledge necessary to help young children and their families prepare for success in school.
	Increase in Kings County early care and education workforce job retention.
	Increase in career development plans for Kings County early care and education workforce, including post-secondary units completed, attainment of certifications, permits and degrees.

Focus Area 2 – Parent Education and Support

Goal: All parents/guardians and caregivers will be knowledgeable about early childhood development, effective parenting, and community resources.

Objectives	Result Indicators
Parents/guardians and caregivers will have access to linguistically, culturally-relevant parenting education and family-strengthening support	Increase in the number of parents/guardians who receive general parenting education.
	Increase in the number of parents/guardian who participate in educational workshops.
	Increase in the number of parents/guardian who receive supportive services.
Parents/guardians and caregivers will have access to educational services to increase family reading/literacy and school readiness	Increase the number of parents/guardian who participate in school readiness events and activities.
	Increase the number of parents/guardian who access school readiness resources.
	Parents report that their children birth to 5 years of age are read to five hours per week.

Focus Area 3 – Healthy Children	
Goal: All children will have an early start toward good health.	
Objectives	Result Indicators
Pregnant women will be linked to early and continuous care	Increase the number of pregnant women who are referred to services.
	Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of prenatal care.
	Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of breastfeeding.
	Increase in the rate of mothers who report they are breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life.
	Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on fetal alcohol syndrome.
	Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of smoking cessation.
	Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided prenatal and/or postnatal home visits.
Children will be provided medical, dental, mental health, developmental and vision screenings and/or preventive services	Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings.
	Increase the number of children who receive health screenings.
	Increase the number of children who receive dental screenings.
	Increase the number of children who receive a social-emotional screening (ASQ-SE).
Children with identified special needs will be referred and linked to appropriate services	Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings prior to 3rd birthday.
	Increase the number of identified special needs children who receive special needs services.
Children will develop early healthy habits	Increase the number of children who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.
	Increase the number of parents/guardians who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.
	Increase the number of children who receive a health profile assessment.

Focus Area 4 – Systems Integration & Alignment	
Goal: A cohesive system of services for children and families will exist.	
Objectives	Result Indicators
Community members will have a shared vision and act collectively to improve the policies, access to services and environments that impact families	Increase the number of community members and other stakeholders who attend educational events on early childhood.
	Increase the number of community members and providers who attend Commission-led trainings, workshops or meetings.
	Increase the opportunity for community members to support advocacy efforts on behalf of early care and education.
Early childhood education and health-related supports will be established to reflect desires of the community and needs of the families	Increase the number of new partnerships within Family Resource Centers.
	Increase the number of parents and community members who participate in process to design FRC services offered.
	Increase in the depth and breadth of services offered within Family Resource Centers.
Communities will have physical places and spaces that promote early childhood education, support health and encourage interaction while leveraging resources to sustain	Increase community awareness of the value of the FRC model.
	Increase the number of new collaborations among parents/caregivers, organizations and institutions across multiple sectors to work together to achieve results through the FRC model.
	Increase the percentage of new leveraged resources that support FRC operations.

Financial Overview

The First 5 Kings County Children & Families Commission (Commission) has completed a financial plan as a means to determine funding allocations to support the Strategic Plan. This plan will be the guideline for future funding of programs and projects.

The 5 year projection takes into account the Proposition 10 sales tax revenues, which are predicted to decline regularly each year as the new federal tobacco tax takes affect and as efforts to curtail smoking among adults and teens continue to be an effective deterrent. This plan does not authorize or appropriate funding. This plan is a tool for the Commission to guide its actions and community investments given that its revenue is declining with program costs increasing.

This plan will be reviewed annually and updated if necessary to reflect actual revenue and expenditures at the end of each fiscal year. The assumptions used in development of this plan will be consistently reviewed to ensure there have been no changes to invalidate or change their effectiveness. The remaining sections of the plan will detail goals and objectives for the plan, outline the assumptions used to assemble the data, and present the spreadsheet view of the results.

Background

One of the purposes of this plan was to acknowledge the declining balance of funds and indicate how they will be used over the course of the 5-year strategic plan. It is anticipated that annual budgets will flow from this plan.

Concurrently, the Commission is encouraged to continue to pursue additional funding sources in partnership with their funded contractors. Federal, State, foundation or private grants should be researched as a means to build sustainability for the funding investments of the commission.

Financial Plan Goals

The main goal of the financial plan is to provide the guiding financial framework for appropriate funding decisions and encouraging long-term sustainability to the most successful and effective programs developed and supported with Prop 10 funds.

Additionally, the plan reflects the acknowledgement that revenues are declining, and that adjustments are necessary for long-term impact. The plan outlines the Commission's ability to fund its targeted initiatives and associated projects at approximately \$6.6 million over 5 years.

This funding commitment spends down the commission fund balance, but still attempting to maintain at least 25% of the projected budget each year. In June 2021, local Commissions throughout the State were advised of a potential decline in projected revenues, should SB 793 be upheld (flavored tobacco ban). The current rate of spending will result in the commission ending the 5-year term with a reserve account of approximately -\$85,056. Commission staff will need to identify additional funding streams to supplement the Commission's budget or reduce funding to its contracted Initiatives.

Financial Plan Objectives

The objective of the plan is planned actions to achieve the above stated goals.

- Provide stable funding over 5 years to select programs in an effort to achieve long-term results.
- Spend down the fund balance in an effort to provide services to children 0 through 5 and their families.
- Maintain a fund balance of no less than 25% of annual operational costs in an effort to meet financial obligations.

Financial Plan Principles

The financial plan provides the following guidelines and procedures.

- **Timeframe** – For operational purposes, the financial plan projects revenue and expenditure estimates for a 5-year period of time.
- **Annual Budget** - The annual budget will be based on guidelines approved in the 5-year financial plan.
- **Monitoring** – Commission Staff shall update the financial plan each year to reflect the actual expenditures and revenues for the fiscal year and prepare a report to the Commission. The Staff will also validate that the assumptions used in the preparation of the plan are still appropriate. If any assumptions require modifications, they will be included as part of the annual update.
- **Changes to Plan** – Changes can only be made to the financial plan with Commission approval. Request for changes to the plan will be accompanied by a financial projection spreadsheet reflecting the suggested modifications.
- **Surplus Budget Funds** – If the revenues and expenditures in the annual budget result in a surplus of funds, these funds will be placed in the operating fund.
- **Annual Review** - The Commission will evaluate the goals, objectives and principles of the financial plan on an annual basis.

Plan Assumptions and Funding Strategies

Economic Assumptions

- Revenue projections are based on figures provided by First 5 California and/or California Department of Finance for FY 21/22, FY 22/23, FY 23/24 and FY 24/25.
- .5% interest earnings.
- Fund Balance not to fall below 25% of annual operational costs per year.

Funding Strategies

- FRC Initiative Allocation:
 - Consistent funding level for FY 2020/2021, with a 2% decrease in FY 2021/2022, 5% decrease in FY 2022/2023, and a 10% decrease in FY 2023/2024 through FY 2024/2025.
- School Readiness Initiative Allocation:
 - Consistent funding level for FY 2020/2021, with a 2% decrease in FY 2021/2022, 5% decrease in FY 2022/2023, and a 10% decrease in FY 2023/2024 through FY 2024/2025.
- E3 Initiative Allocation:
 - Consistent funding level for FY 2020/2021, with a 2% decrease in FY 2021/2022, 5% decrease in FY 2022/2023, and a 10% decrease in FY 2023/2024 through FY 2024/2025.
- New Projects Initiative Allocation:
 - Consistent funding level for FY 2020/2021, with a 2% decrease in FY 2021/2022, 5% decrease in FY 2022/2023, and a 10% decrease in FY 2023/2024 through FY 2024/2025.

Results

- Funding to the community to support outcomes through services for children ages 0-5 and their families over the time period of the plan.

Implementation

The financial plan was initially approved by the Commission on June 2, 2020. It was the guideline for the preparation of the annual budget for FY 21/22, and will be the guideline for the preparation for future budgets for FY 22/23, FY 23/24, and FY 24/25. The plan is to be reviewed annually and updated if necessary.

The plan has been updated to reflect revenues should the Flavor Ban be upheld in November 2022.

First 5 Kings County Fiscal Plan FY21/22 through FY25/26

	FY19/20	FY20/21	FY21/22	FY22/23	FY23/24	FY24/25	FY25/26
	Actual	Actual	Budgeted	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected
Revenue							
General Allocation Revenues	\$1,563,290	\$1,481,711	\$1,476,680	\$1,394,605	\$1,253,729	\$1,196,995	\$1,113,809
IMPACT	\$480,241	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
PROP 56 Oral Health	\$186,104	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Interest (0.5% annually)	\$20,500	\$43,075	\$37,513	\$6,000	\$5,066	\$5,066	\$2,817
Miscellaneous Income		\$29,424	\$29,836	\$24,936	\$25,285	\$25,285	\$25,639
Total Revenue	\$2,250,135	\$1,554,210	\$1,544,028	\$1,425,541	\$1,284,080	\$1,227,346	\$1,142,265
Expenditures							
Salaries & Benefits	\$170,179	\$197,535	\$197,535	\$205,699	\$205,699	\$205,699	\$205,699
Services & Supplies	\$143,487	\$176,764	\$176,764	\$141,261	\$141,261	\$141,261	\$141,261
Contributions to Agents	\$2,142,512	\$1,291,164	\$1,265,341	\$1,226,606	\$1,162,048	\$1,162,048	\$1,162,048
FRC Initiative	\$726,012	\$721,012	\$706,592	\$684,961	\$648,911	\$648,911	\$648,911
Avenal	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$88,200	\$85,500	\$81,000	\$81,000	\$81,000
Corcoran	\$116,000	\$116,000	\$113,680	\$110,200	\$104,400	\$104,400	\$104,400
Kettleman City	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$88,200	\$85,500	\$81,000	\$81,000	\$81,000
Hanford & Lemoore	\$425,012	\$425,012	\$416,512	\$403,761	\$382,511	\$382,511	\$382,511
FRC Support	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
School Readiness Initiative	\$619,800	\$439,800	\$431,004	\$417,810	\$395,820	\$395,820	\$395,820
Parent & Me	\$349,800	\$349,800	\$342,804	\$332,310	\$314,820	\$314,820	\$314,820
Special Needs	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$88,200	\$85,500	\$81,000	\$81,000	\$81,000
Linkages 2 Learning	\$180,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
E3 Initiative	\$570,596	\$90,352	\$88,545	\$85,834	\$81,317	\$81,317	\$81,317
CARES	\$570,596	\$90,352	\$88,545	\$85,834	\$81,317	\$81,317	\$81,317
New Projects	\$226,104	\$40,000	\$39,200	\$38,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000
United Way	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$39,200	\$38,000	\$36,000	\$36,000	\$36,000
PROP 56	\$186,104	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$2,456,178	\$1,665,463	\$1,639,640	\$1,573,566	\$1,509,008	\$1,509,008	\$1,509,008
Excess of Revenues or Expenditures	-\$206,043	-\$111,253	-\$95,611	-\$148,025	-\$224,927	-\$281,661	-\$366,743
Fund Balance	\$1,270,295	\$861,503	\$750,250	\$654,639	\$506,614	\$281,687	-\$85,056
Fund Balance % of Revenues (25% floor)	38.29%	48.27%	42.40%	35.54%	21.94%	18.33%	-7.45%
Fund Balance % of Expenditures (25% floor)	35.07%	45.05%	39.93%	32.20%	18.67%	14.91%	-5.64%

Assumptions

- Fund balance minimum is currently set at 25% of annual budget by First 5 Policy

Manual

Funding Plan

The Commission has committed to continue the following three Initiatives as a mechanism to fulfill the goals and objectives of the strategic plan during the first year. This strategic plan will undergo further refinement in its first year:

- to ensure that the initiatives and programs are addressing the Goals and Objectives of this five year plan,
- to identify the appropriateness of the initiatives identified,
- to address the ever-changing needs of the community, in light of the current pandemic, and
- to ensure the Commission's ability to fund the initiatives, considering the continued dwindling of Proposition 10 revenue

Due to the unique services/programming provided through the Family Resource Center Initiative, School Readiness Initiative and Elevating Early Care and Education Initiatives, the Commission was able to pursue sole source justification for these projects. The entities that were funded under these Initiatives in Year 1 are uniquely suited to provide the services and program requirements of Proposition 10 statutes. These organizations have provided these services for numerous years, continue to be in good standing with the Commission, and are trusted resources within their respective communities.

Funding Policy: **FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER INITIATIVE**
Total Funding: **\$721,012/Year 1; \$2,689,375/Year 2-5**

The First 5 funded Family Resource Centers employ various models constructed to support the delivery of health, education, childcare, and other support services to children and families. Additionally, FRC's have the additional impact of building communities and systems that support these families.

Programs funded by the Family Resource Center Initiative during Year 1, and Year 2-5:

- Corcoran Community Foundation – Corcoran Family Resource Center
- Kings County Office of Education– Hanford Family Connection
- Kings County Office of Education – Lemoore Family Connection
- Kings Community Action Organization – Kettleman City Family Resource Center

Funding Policy: **SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE**
Total Funding: **\$439,800/Year 1; \$1,640,454/Year 2-5**

The School Readiness Initiative is designed to develop and sustain a system of collaborative school-based or school-linked services/supports that are based on research and promising practices to improve “school readiness” for children, families, communities and schools.

Programs funded by the School Readiness Initiative during Year 1, and Year 2-5:

- UCP - Parent & Me Program
- UCP - Special Needs Program

Funding Policy: ELEVATING EARLY CARE & EDUCATION (E3) INITIATIVE

Total Funding: \$90,352/Year 1; \$337,013/Year 2-5

The Elevating Early Care & Education (E3) Initiative provides a comprehensive approach to increasing childcare quality at family day care centers, Head Start, State and Private preschool programs, as well as support for Family, Friend and Neighbor homes and Home Visitors. This is accomplished by conducting Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS), developing Quality Improvement Plans and by providing the necessary supports such as technical assistance, material supports, and professional growth services that are responsive to site specific needs.

Programs funded by the E3 Initiative during Year 1, and Year 2-5:

- Kings County Office of Education CARES Program

Additionally, the Commission has committed to set aside funding to support systemic coordination of services for children and families through the New Projects Initiative.

Funding Policy: NEW PROJECTS INITIATIVE

Total Funding: \$40,000/Year 1; \$149,200/Year 2-5

A cohesive system of services for children and their families, that is easily available and accessible to families, will promote the physical, educational, and social-emotional needs of the children in our community.

Programs funded by the New Projects Initiative during Year 1:

- Kings United Way 211 Intellifull Translation

Programs funded by the New Projects Initiative during Year 2-5:

- Kings United Way – Kings County Referral Exchange System (Unite Us)

First 5 Backpack and Kindergarten Entry Support

First 5 Kings County will continue to support programming related to Kindergarten registration and orientation during the 1st two years of this plan. The backpack program will be supported throughout the entirety of this plan. Every year First 5 Kings County provides all registering Kindergartners the opportunity to prepare for their transition to kindergarten by providing them with basic tools such as crayons, pencil, sharpener, ruler, and magnetic letters and numbers, all packaged in an attractive and age appropriate backpack. The backpack also includes information for

parents to assist in their child's transition by offering practical and home based activities that can help children develop the core competencies expected of children upon kindergarten entry.

Evaluation Plan

The Children and Families Act of 1998 mandates the collection of data for the purpose of demonstrating results. The results-based accountability model as adopted by the state First 5 Commission requires the collection of data, the analysis of data, and the reporting of findings in order to evaluate the effectiveness of programs. Ultimately the goal of evaluation is to demonstrate best practices in order to build a "road map" for continued development of programs to serve the needs of all children. The Commission is committed to basing its funding decisions on the results achieved by funded programs. Because the Commission believes that program evaluation is an ongoing feedback process, it will provide technical assistance and support to funded providers for purposes of data collection and evaluation.

The purpose of program evaluation is to understand, through tangible results, the relative importance of service program impact toward achieving the goals and objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan. The process of program evaluation involves analysis of planning and outreach to underrepresented groups, the performance of programs, as well as the successes and challenges at improving the health and school readiness of Kings County's youngest children.

First 5 Kings' approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning will reflect the organization's commitment to using data to advance strategies that change policies and systems for the benefit of children from prenatal to age 5 and their families, as well as for learning how to continuously improve the efforts the organization participates in and supports. Evaluation activities during the first year of this strategic plan, will include, but not limited to:

- Increased project management activities and closer collaboration with the Evaluation Consultant,
- Technical consultation/assistance to enhance data system infrastructure and outcome measurement,
- Data collection and analysis activities, and
- Supplemental data collection and analysis activities.

The above-mentioned concentrated activities will also assist Commission staff in completing a cost effective analysis, with the help of the external Evaluation Consultant. Currently outcomes are measured primarily quantitatively; the hope is that qualitative measurements will also be developed, to truly measure the effectiveness of First 5-funded initiatives/programs. Commission staff and the Evaluation Consultant are reviewing the current Results Matrix, and the Scope of Work of the funded programs, to ensure that the goals and objectives of this Plan are addressed throughout the funded programs, and to identify areas of the Plan that may have service gaps.

Implementation

First 5 Kings staff will continue to develop and refine the initial strategies identified by the Commission. Focus areas, goals, objectives and result indicators identified during this strategic planning process served as the basis for providing the Commission with examples of how to deploy the strategies; ongoing strategy refinement may result in the identification of additional activities that will effectively advance the desired outcomes and areas of focus contained in this Plan. This strategy refinement work will include the following key steps:

1. Identifying key implementation details associated with each activity, including responsible personnel, time frames, and variables that could affect implementation.
2. Refining the estimated cost of implementation for each activity.
3. Developing a comprehensive policy, data development, and communications agenda across the strategies.
4. Identifying timely partnership opportunities that will accelerate the achievement of impact.
5. Updating the financial projections presented as released by First 5 California, First 5 Association and/or California Department of Tax and Fee Administration.

Appendices

- Appendix A Family Resource Center (FRC) Initiative
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Appendix A



Family Resource Center Initiative

DESCRIPTION

The First 5 funded Family Resource Centers (FRC's) within Kings County; employ various models constructed to support the delivery of health, education, childcare, and other support services to children and families. FRC's have the additional impact of building communities and systems that support these families.

INTENT

It is the intent of the Commission to provide through either direct service or coordinated efforts a comprehensive system of support to children 0-5 and their families through the Family Resource Center model of service delivery. It is the goal of the Commission that all Kings County early childhood education services coordinated through Family Resource Centers will be delivered in a fully integrated manner, with an emphasis on quality, cultural competency, best practice and collaboration.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Strategic Plan Result Area I: Early Childcare and Education

Result/Outcome Indicators

- Increase in the number of children who participate in quality early childhood programs.
- Increase in the number of children who participate in First 5 funded projects.

Strategic Plan Result Area II: Parent Education and Support

Result/Outcome Indicators

- Increase in the number of parents/guardians who receive general parenting education.
- Increase in the number of parents/guardian who participate in educational workshops.
- Increase in the number of parents/guardian who receive supportive services.
- Increase the number of parents/guardian who participate in school readiness events and activities.
- Increase the number of parents/guardian who access school readiness resources.
- Parents report that their children birth to 5 years of age are read to up to five hours per week.

Strategic Plan Result Area III: Healthy Children

Result/Outcome Indicators (e.g.,)

- Increase the number of pregnant women who are referred to services.
- Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of prenatal care.
- Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of breastfeeding.

- Increase in the rate of mothers who report they are breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life.
- Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on fetal alcohol syndrome.
- Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided information and/or education on the importance of smoking cessation.
- Increase the number of pregnant women and mothers provided prenatal and/or postnatal home visits.
- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings.
- Increase the number of children who receive a social-emotional screening (ASQ-SE).
- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings prior to 3rd birthday.
- Increase the number of children who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.
- Increase the number of parents/guardians who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.

Strategic Plan Result Area IV: Systems Integration & Alignment

Result/Outcome Indicators (e.g.,)

- Increase the number of new partnerships within Family Resource Centers.
- Increase the number of parents and community members who participate in process to design FRC services offered.
- Increase in the depth and breadth of services offered within Family Resource Centers.
- Increase community awareness of the value of the FRC model.
- Increase the number of new collaborations among parents/caregivers, organizations and institutions across multiple sectors to work together to achieve results through the FRC model.
- Increase the percentage of new leveraged resources that support FRC operations.

BACKGROUND

Providing funding and support for Family Resource Centers (FRC's) throughout Kings County remains a key strategy of the Kings County Children and Families Commission (Commission). FRC's were established to be a single point of access for multiple services for children 0-5 and their families. They are designed to be community driven and coordinated services should be responsive to the needs of the community they serve. The goals of each FRC are specific to the local community with an overarching goal of increasing children's readiness for school. Integral to their success is their ability to foster relationships with community and local leaders. FRC's are meant to coordinate services and ensure that they are delivered in an integrated and culturally competent manner.

The Family Resource Center Initiative dates back to FY 2001/2002 when initial planning grants were offered by First 5 Kings County to entities representing each Kings County community to include Armona, Avenal, Corcoran, Hanford, Home Garden, Kettleman City, Lemoore, and Stratford. In March 2006, a new Family Resource Center Initiative was adopted, representing a shift from a planning to implementation stage of development. In 2008, the Commission was presented with the results of the 2006-2008 Evaluation that explored the effectiveness of the Family Resource Center strategy. While the results of the evaluation indicated that overall, "the FRC's are offering a number of useful services to families of children birth to five years of age", it also made a number of findings and recommendations in an effort to strengthen the approach. One of the findings of the evaluation was that the demographics being served by FRC's support the assumption that the strategy is targeting low income populations. While the FRC strategy was not originally intended to serve only low-income populations, it was apparent that by its original design it did just that.

FISCAL ALLOCATIONS

The Commission has allocated a total of \$721,012 to support the Family Resource Center Initiative during the 1st year of this plan. \$2,689,375 is tentatively allocated for this initiative for Year 2-5.

Future funding for this initiative will be distributed through the RFA process and once awarded, funding is contingent upon the successful completion of the previous year's Scope of Work. It is the intention of the Commission to continue to provide ongoing funding, if available, so long as this initiative continues to be an identified needed community resource.

It should be noted that the California Children and Families First Act of 1998, (HSC 130100) states that, "There is hereby created a program in the state for the purposes of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age." Therefore, as the Commission's mandate is to serve children ages 0-5, the grantees must identify other funding resources for services in which there is not a direct link to children 0-5.

CERTIFICATION

As Commissioners of the Kings County Children and Families Commission, each certified their support and commitment to the above Initiative for an additional year, as adopted by the Commission on February 11, 2020.

Appendix B



School Readiness Initiative

DESCRIPTION

School Readiness as defined by the National Education Goals Panel includes children’s readiness for school, schools’ readiness for children, and family as well as community supports and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success. The School Readiness Initiative is designed to develop and sustain a system of collaborative school-based or school-linked services/supports that are based on research and promising practices to improve “school readiness” for children, families, communities and schools.

INTENT

It is the intent of the Commission to work collaboratively with early education service providers in Kings County to improve the ability of families, schools and communities to prepare children to enter school ready to succeed.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Strategic Plan Result Area I: Early Childcare and Education

Result/Outcome Indicators

- Increase in the number of children who participate in quality early childhood programs.
- Increase in the number of children who participate in First 5 funded projects.

Strategic Plan Result Area II: Parent Education and Support

Result/Outcome Indicators

- Increase in the number of parents/guardians who receive general parenting education.
- Increase in the number of parents/guardian who participate in educational workshops.
- Increase in the number of parents/guardian who receive supportive services.
- Increase the number of parents/guardian who participate in school readiness events and activities.
- Increase the number of parents/guardian who access school readiness resources.
- Parents report that their children birth to 5 years of age are reading up to five hours per week.

Strategic Plan Result Area III: Healthy Children

Result/Outcome Indicators (e.g.,)

- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings.
- Increase the number of children who receive health screenings.
- Increase the number of children who receive dental screenings.
- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screenings prior to 3rd birthday.
- Increase the number of identified special needs children who received special needs services.
- Increase the number of children who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.

- Increase the number of parents/guardians who receive nutrition and/or fitness education.

Strategic Plan Result Area IV: Systems Integration & Alignment

Result/Outcome Indicators (e.g.,)

- Increase the number of community members and other stakeholders who attend educational events on early childhood.
- Increase the number of community members and providers who attend Commission-led trainings, workshops or meetings.

BACKGROUND

When children start school without certain skills, they are at a disadvantage that is difficult, if not impossible, to overcome – often resulting in poor school performance throughout their school experience. Children who come from low-income households or live in poverty are at greatest risk for school failure. Kings County is a community with both high ethnic diversity and high levels of poverty.

SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM APPROACH

United Cerebral Palsy – Parent & Me Programs

The goal of the Parent & Me program is to provide a community-based, inclusive child development program for parents to attend with their children 0-5 for an interactive early childhood learning experience. The emphasis is on birth to three and services focus on prevention and early intervention strategies. Children age 3-5 who do not have other early learning opportunities are also offered support through this program approach. The program is designed to support and strengthen the parent as their child’s first teacher. Teachers model developmentally appropriate practices as well as parenting practices and support parents to see their child’s unique strengths and needs. The program provides resources and a hands-on growth experience for parent and child which can be repeated at home during the week through take-home materials. Additionally, comprehensive and periodic screening captures delays and concerns early so that early intervention may occur either through the special needs project and/or referral to another resource. All services provided through the Parent & Me program center around service integration, are provided in a culturally competent fashion, and encourage parent peer support. A sense of belonging and parent buy-in are achieved by providing service in a culturally competent environment and activities that encourage peer parent support and long-term relationships.

Special Needs Project

The Special Needs project seeks to provide services to children identified as having or being at risk for developing a special need. This is a gap funding strategy to provide intervention to a population of children that because of stringent qualification standards, would otherwise not qualify for services under typical funding streams. Services provided through this project include conducting child development assessments, developing and providing interventions based on such assessments, and providing support services for children identified as having a special need for their inclusion into the Parent & Me program. Additionally, this project provides capacity building support to ensure providers are delivering services to children with special needs in an appropriate and inclusive fashion. This funding stream also supports the infrastructure of the Armona Parent & Me inclusion site.

FISCAL ALLOCATIONS

The Commission has allocated a total of \$439,800 to support the School Readiness Initiative during the first year of this plan. \$1,640,454 is tentatively allocated for this initiative for Year 2-5.

Future funding for this initiative will be distributed through the RFA process and once awarded, funding is contingent upon the successful completion of the previous year's Scope of Work. It is the intention of the Commission to continue to provide ongoing funding, if available, so long as this initiative continues to be an identified needed community resource.

CERTIFICATION

As Commissioners of the Kings County Children and Families Commission each certified their support and commitment to the above Initiative for an additional year, as adopted by the Commission on February 11, 2020.

Appendix C



Elevating Early Care & Education (E3) Initiative

DESCRIPTION

Improving the quality of child care is a key strategy of the Kings County Children and Families Commission (Commission) targeted at improving child development and school readiness of Kings County's children. The E3 Initiative is charged with facilitating and supporting Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) and related quality improvement activities identified for Family Childcare Providers, Kings County Head Start, State and Private Preschool centers.

INTENT

It is the intent of the Commission to work collaboratively with individuals, organizations, and community agencies to see that all Kings County children ages 0 – 5 will have access to high quality preschool, child care, early learning opportunities and be ready for school. The Commission plans to do so by funding a mechanism which will identify the quality enhancement needs of child development settings and provides the necessary supports to increase the quality of care provided.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Strategic Plan Result Area I: Early Childcare and Education

Result/Outcome Indicators

- Increase in resources to support early care and education for Kings County.
- Increase in availability of high quality, affordable childcare programs/slots.
- Increase in advocacy efforts for greater public investment in quality early care and education.
- Increase in skill development and mastery in the Kings County early care and education workforce.
- Increase of Kings County early care and education workforce in the knowledge necessary to help young children and their families prepare for success in school.
- Increase in Kings County early care and education workforce job retention.
- Increase in wage earnings of Kings County early care and education workforce.
- Increase in career development plans for Kings County early care and education workforce, including post-secondary units completed, attainment of certifications, permits and degrees.
- Continued implementation of QRIS for Kings County.
- Increase in awareness of parents and other stakeholders of QRIS (i.e., attend information session, read literature, view website).
- Increase in resource investment informed by QRIS.

BACKGROUND

Approximately 200 licensed family child care providers in Kings County have the capacity to care for and educate over 1600 children. Forty-seven licensed childcare centers have the capacity to serve an

additional 2,178 children. Fourteen licensed-exempt centers serve approximately 242 children. The programs which provide care and education to children prior to kindergarten entry are found in many different settings under various names: child care centers, Head Start programs, family child care homes, and preschools. No matter what the name or the setting, it is crucial that children be safe and that their development and learning be enhanced in these environments. We know that the experiences children have and the skills they develop in these programs can help or hinder their development, not just during childhood, but throughout their lifetime. A child's development is multifaceted, with development occurring in multiple domains simultaneously (physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development, cognition and general knowledge). Appropriate child development programs promote a smooth transition from child care to school, preparing children to be ready to learn.

Numerous recent studies suggest that many programs for preschool children in centers and homes fail to provide a level of care that enhances or maximizes a child's early development and learning. There are many contributing factors which hinder the delivery of high quality education in these settings. Many programs rely heavily on parent fees for program revenue (even programs associated with public schools), and many parents are unable to afford the cost of high-quality care.

Given the inadequate funding and financing that characterize the delivery of many early childhood services, the costs associated with making improvements to meet and maintain professional development standards can be a burden. High-quality program costs are significant and include facility improvement, ongoing consumables and staff professional development activities. Therefore, to alleviate this concern in part, the Commission has dedicated funding for the cost of a quality enhancement program through the E3 Initiative.

E3 INITIATIVE APPROACH

The E3 Initiative has identified three systems which are intended to work collaboratively to increase the quality of care provided to preschool aged children in Family Childcare Centers, Head Start, State and Private Preschool settings. Investments have been divided based on the centers being served and the funding stream supporting such efforts, however the approach is meant to be streamlined.

The activities which will be supported through the E3 Initiative include:

- Enrollment and program orientation to new sites
- Provision of technical assistance, trainings and materials supports
- Provision of coaching to FCC providers
- Collaboration with local Resource and Referral program to provide trainings
- Establishment and distribution of a county-wide training calendar for ECE professionals

CARES Project

The CARES Project is funded partially by First 5 Kings County and will offer concurrent services as that provided through the Early Learning Quality Enhancement Project to Family Childcare Homes, non-KCAO State funded Preschool Centers, and Private Preschool Centers.

FISCAL ALLOCATIONS

The Commission has allocated a total of \$90,352 to support the E3 Initiative during the first year of this plan. \$337,013 is tentatively allocated for this initiative for Year 2-5.

Future funding for this initiative will be distributed through the RFA process and once awarded, funding is contingent upon the successful completion of the previous year's Scope of Work. It is the intention of the Commission to continue to provide ongoing funding, if available, so long as this initiative continues to be an identified needed community resource.

CERTIFICATION

As Commissioners of the Kings County Children and Families Commission each certified their support and commitment to the above Initiative for an additional year, as adopted by the Commission on February 11, 2020.

Appendix D

Timeline for Development of 2020-2025 Strategic Plan

- At the April 2019 Commission meeting, the Commission discussed the process to develop a new Strategic Plan. As a result, the commission requested that staff host a convening of funded partners to discuss the impact of static funding.
- A convening of the funded partners occurred on May 13, 2019. The grantees brought up challenges related to the increase in minimum wage, which will affect all grantees and programs.
- At the October 2019 Commission meeting, staff presented a draft Strategic Plan Timeline; however, the Commission requested that a special meeting be held, to conduct an inventory of community services first, in order to inform the Strategic Plan. Staff were tasked with gathering information on community services from various agencies, and to compile the information gathered into a single document
- At the December 2019 Commission meeting, staff presented an Inventory of Community Services to the Commission, as well as an updated Strategic Plan Timeline. The Commission agreed that staff could continue with the process and begin gathering community input.
- At the February 2020 Commission meeting, the Commission voted to extend the current contracts for one year, to allow for continued services to the community while staff finalized the Strategic Plan.
- Focus groups took place January 21, 2020 to February 18, 2020, throughout the county with parents, caregivers and other interested parties. Community input surveys were conducted between February 14, 2020 to February 28, 2020. A survey for parents of Kindergarten students, and Kindergarten teachers was conducted between March 2, 2020 to March 15, 2020

Appendix E

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS/FOCUS GROUPS:

First 5 staff facilitated community conversations at each of the FRC's currently funded by First 5 Kings County between January-February 2020. The areas explored covered Early Childhood Well-being, Health, Early Childhood Care and Education, and Strong Families. A set group of questions were used for each community conversation; however, additional or clarifying questions were also asked, based on the participants' responses.

At each of the events, the participants emphasized the importance of their local FRC to their children and family, as well as to their community. The participants also shared the value of the relationship that they have built with FRC staff, and how they have learned to trust FRC staff. They relayed how the FRC's are central hubs in their community, where community members are able to learn about various resources available, and are connected with existing services. Many told stories about the importance of the socialization activities for the children, and the parents. A number of participants expressed concern about their local FRC being 'shut down' or losing funding.

Each community was able to identify existing resources, as well as resources needed. Some of the common barriers to resource access identified were community members' lack of knowledge of resources, lack of outreach/education to the community of available resources, lack of transportation, and costs of services. Each community also listed unique barriers in their community:

- Corcoran - a lack of an obstetrician was noted. Pregnant mothers have to seek prenatal care in Hanford or Visalia. This is a huge issue especially for those that lack transportation.
- Hanford & Lemoore – participants identified a lack of services overall due to limited slots available for early childhood education programs, or the high costs of programs.
- Kettleman City – participants identified a lack of programming available that is convenient for working families. They identified a need for more health-related activities (i.e., exercise classes, gym). Kettleman City does not have a grocery store either, so community members have to travel to purchase groceries or pay higher prices at neighborhood stores.
- Avenal – Participants identified a need for advocacy on their behalf to communicate with the local clinics, to improve services. Community members are unable to engage in walking as a form of exercise after work, due to the number of loose dogs in the community after hours.

	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Barriers to Access to Resources	Potential Resources
Early Childhood Well-being	Safety/ Car seat classes	Transportation	Not as many classes (Exercise/Dance)	Family
	Parent-child bonding classes	Attention	Parent and Me	Friends
	Child age activities	Education	New residents unaware of programs	Teachers
Health	Food bank/ farmers market	Pediatrician in Corcoran	Emergency room (30 minutes)	Nothing noted
	Community booths	Need an OBGYN in Corcoran	No doctors at the clinics	
	Community festivals (cotton fest, Spring fest)		Childcare for self care/ health appointments	
Early Childhood Care & Education	KCAO		Lots of planning ahead of time	Sister
	Home Licensed Childcare		Late to appointments	Close Friend
	After School Programs		Ask for a ride	Mom
Strong Families	Nothing noted	Nothing noted	Health	Independence
			College- commute	Gym- affordable
			Teens- no transportation	High school- Provides after school

Hanford FRC

	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Barriers to Access to Resources	Potential Resources
Early Childhood Well-being	Parent and me	Healthy	On a waitlist at parent and me	None noted
	Library	Stability	Not aware of any other services on the community	
	Preschools	Dedicate time to our children	KCAO has a waitlist with childcare	
Health	FRC's	More veteran services	Childcare for self care/ health appointments	Bilingual classes for children
	Socialization for children (FRC)	More female providers	Trying to get counseling	More art classes
	Schools who provide bilingual classes for children	After school programs- extending to all children and not just to select grades	Obtaining health insurance	More ESL classes for children
Early Childhood Care & Education	Counseling	Friends	Have nobody	Speak to the children in other languages
	Kings River- grade status check	Field trips	Having counselor's at the schools- discuss child's future, career.	Family member
	Hug bug program- how to express emotions	Reading program	Focus more on cultures	Certified referral
Strong Families	Nothing noted	Nothing noted	Learn to communicate with the children	More daycare/childcare
			Emotional support for parents	Teach children CPR
			Have more seminars for parents	Safety programs for children

Lemoore FRC:

	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Barriers to Access to Resources	Potential Resources
Early Childhood Well-being	FRC's	Safe Environment	Parenting levels are different for each child.	How to be playful and not to always be serious as a parent.
	UCP	Social and Emotional needs met	Age of the internet. Not knowing what to trust.	Other adults to help out.
	La Leche League	Routines and boundaries	Hard to find affordable programs with children their age	Coming to the FRC helps parents to help the children.
Health	WIC	Nothing noted	Asthma- wildfires, air quality	Nothing noted
	Medi-cal		Wait times to be seen by a doctor	
	Food banks		Environment- community wellness	
Early Childhood Care & Education	Rec center	Childcare centers at the base for doctor appointments	Liability	Babysitter
	Storybook- Hanford	The First 5 years of the child's life is important for the children.	Availability	Siblings
	The FRC helps prepare the children for school	Children are prepared and ready for school (knowing ABC's, numbers, Name, etc.)	Certified Childcare	Family
Strong Families	KCAO- lending library	More Parks	Nothing noted	Girl scouts
	Bright by text	Mommy and me classes		Safety programs for children
		More of a community Involvement		

Kettleman City FRC:

	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Barriers to Access to Resources	Potential Resources
Early Childhood Well-being	KCAO	Healthy food	Fast food vs Healthy food	Nothing noted
	Home visiting program	Play more	Hard about giving the children nutritious food	
	Food program	Good family	Picky eaters	
Health	Church	Nothing noted	Having to wait for a referral	Farmer's market
	Clinic to see a therapist		Lack of access to exercise/workout	Play outside with the children
	Family		More stores	Timing their screen time
Early Childhood Care & Education	Nothing noted	Asking around	Work	Bring in a professional teacher
		Finding licensed childcare providers	Doctor's appointments	Challenging a provider who would raise their voice with the children. It's important to know who you leave your child with.
		FRC	Clean environment	Providers from KCAO get professional development that helps with materials.
Strong Families	Food	Parenting classes	Hours- classes are too early and parents have to work.	Recognition of attendance
	More resources	More of a community involvement		Free food/ refreshments
	Activities for all ages	Providing activities for parents to learn and take home.		Safety programs

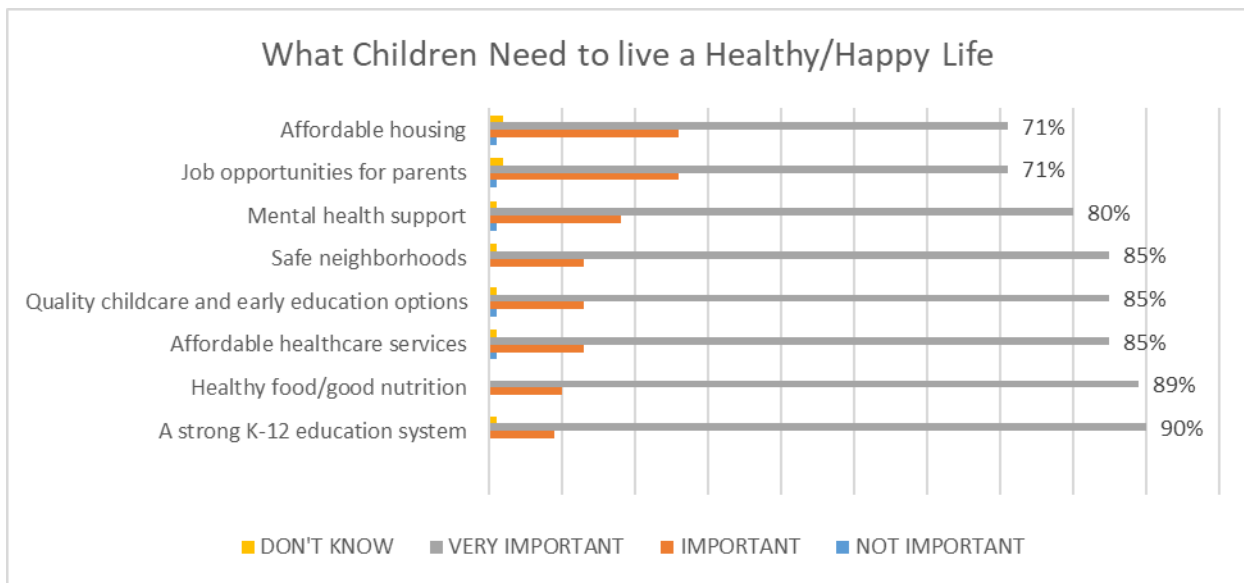
Avenal FRC:

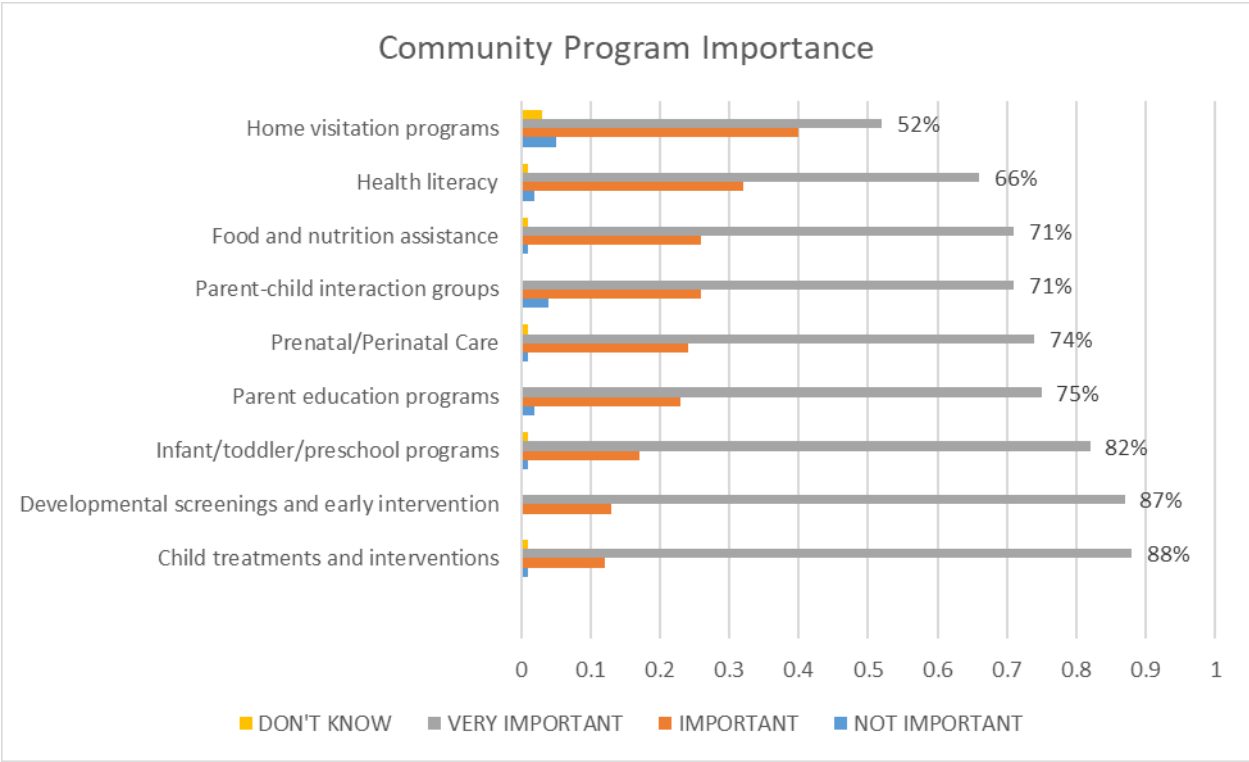
	Existing Resources	Resources Needed	Barriers to Access to Resources	Potential Resources
Early Childhood Well-being	Different programs- but focus on different themes such as immigration program.	Dedicate your time to the children when they need it physically, emotionally and socially	Taking the bus you lose lots of time in your day.	A parent learned about the FRC and Mrs. Dulce through her sister.
	Afterschool program (k-8)	Healthy food	There's 2-3 buses but all come at certain hours	A parent's sister in law introduced the parent to the FRC and Mrs. Dulce.
	Parent and Me	To be ready for school	No childcare for parents who work late	Mrs. Dulce introduced a parent to the FRC and the different programs.
Health	Zumba- you have to pay	Nothing noted	Adult school	Reading books to the children at the FRC and at home.
	Sports- for children		Walk-in clinics won't see you even when the lobby is empty.	
	Sports for children- but hard for parents to register more than 1 child because it's expensive.		If it's an emergency, the clinic will tell you to go to the emergency room.	
Early Childhood Care & Education	Parents		Waitlist	Transportation to school
	Providers		Only two preschools	House has all requirements to watch children.
	Friends		Child could only miss so many days before being dropped.	Teach responsibilities- how to be clean
Strong Families				Educate parents- better vocabulary
				Parents to be responsible and have quality time with the children so there aren't a lot of children walking the streets.
				More Programs to be offered for parents.

Appendix F

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS

First 5 Kings County conducted a survey to obtain community input on the importance of a variety of community services. The survey was offered online or hard copy, in English and Spanish. Three hundred sixty-three surveys were completed between February 15, 2020 and February 28, 2020. Almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents resided in Hanford and Lemoore (50% and 21% respectively). Over half of the respondents were Hispanic or Latino (61%). The majority of respondents were female (87%). The tables below summarize the respondents' thoughts on what children need, which community programs are important to have, and barriers to accessing services/programs in the community.





BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO PROGRAMS/SERVICES	% OF RESPONSES
Financial (not having enough money and/or high costs)	74%
Lack of information	63%
Limited transportation	50%
Language or other communication barriers	47%
Concerns about privacy or safety	20%
Lack of services offered in the community	55%
Don't know	3%
Other	7%

Appendix G

KINDERGARTEN TEACHER SURVEY RESULTS:

Thirty-one Kindergarten teachers throughout Kings County responded to our survey. At the time of the survey, the teachers reported that their average class size was 22 students, with class size ranging from 17-28 students. Six hundred seventy-five students were represented in the survey results, with 5% (42 students) having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), 2% (15 students) having a Section 504 Accommodation, and 27% (180 students) being English Language Learners (ELL). Students whose primary language is Spanish represented 94% of the ELL population.

A variety of questions were asked in the survey, including inquiries about:

- Student transition to Kindergarten experience
- Skills indicating Kindergarten readiness
- Activities/practices to facilitate children’s transition into Kindergarten
- Barriers to successful transition into Kindergarten
- Kindergarten teacher’s relationship with preschool or early childhood professionals

Some highlights of the survey can be found below:

STUDENTS’ TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

Survey responses regarding students’ experiences transitioning into Kindergarten and their overall adjustment, indicates that 55% of students successfully entered Kindergarten, having virtually none to some problems (Graph G-1). Identification of practices and activities to increase students’ successful entry shall be a priority during the upcoming fiscal year. Further inquiry into commonalities or best practices that contributed to their success level should also be studied.

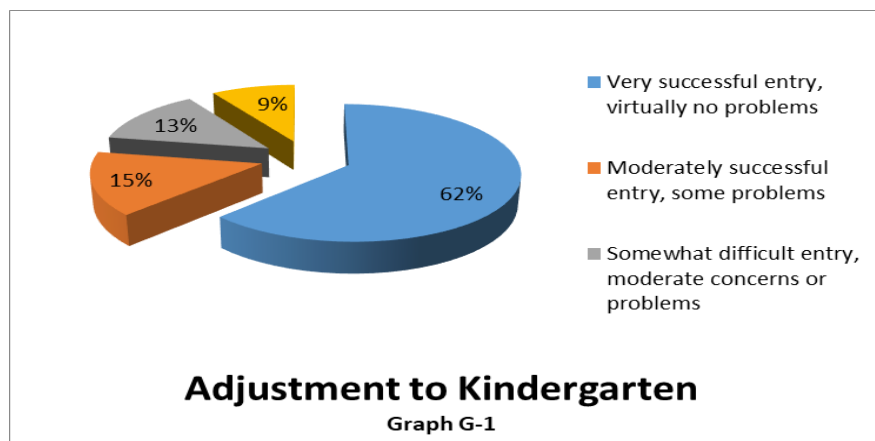


Table G-2 below represents further review of successful transition to kindergarten by special populations. It shows that the majority of children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds (51%) and low-income families (58%) transitioned successfully to kindergarten. The highest percentage of children who did not attend any preschool fell into the ‘Some’ successfully

transitioned category (42%). English Language Learners was a mixed representation, primarily students identified as ‘Most or all’ having a successful transition (39%) and students identified as ‘A Few’ having a successful transition (36%). Students who entered late in the school year, who had disabilities and other special needs primarily showed only ‘A Few’ of these students transitioning successfully, 35% and 29% respectively.

Special Populations	Most or all	Some	A Few	None	Group not present	Don't know
Children from low-income families	58%	29%	13%	0%	0%	0%
Children who are English learners	39%	19%	36%	3%	3%	0%
Children who did not attend any preschool program	26%	42%	29%	0%	0%	3%
Children with disabilities and other special needs	16%	16%	29%	10%	16%	13%
Children who entered late in the school year	19%	23%	35%	10%	10%	3%
Children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds	51%	29%	10%	10%	0%	0%

Table G-2 Targeted Activities by Special Population

Closer study of the reasons why students who had higher percentages in the ‘Most or all’ category would be highly recommended, to identify best practices, and the ability to replicate said practices, to increase the number of children falling into the ‘Most or all’ category.

IMPORTANCE OF ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

Survey respondents categorized the importance of 13 academic and emotional skills for incoming Kindergarteners as follows:

ACADEMIC AND EMOTIONAL SKILL IMPORTANCE				
Not Important	Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
		Can count to 20 or more	Finishes tasks	Takes turns and shares
		Has good problem-solving skills	Takes turns and shares	Participates without disrupting activities
		Knows most of the letters of the alphabet	Is able to use pencils and paintbrushes	Can follow directions
		Identifies primary colors and shapes	Is sensitive to other children's feelings	Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in child's primary

				language
			Sits still and pays attention	
			Communicates needs, wants, and thoughts verbally in English	

Table G-3

Although basic academic skills are important, the respondents consider emotional skills far more important. First 5 programming related to school readiness should consider increasing activities related to acquiring emotional skills, as well as targeted community education on the importance of soft skills and emotional regulation. It should also be noted that the respondents placed greater emphasis on a child’s ability to communicate verbally in their primary language (49% of the respondents) compared to their ability to do the same in English (26% of the respondents).

Early learning education comes in a number of forms, including childcare, preschools and informal education by parents/caregivers. Regardless of the early educational setting that children experience, each child should receive exposure to a variety of educational experiences to ensure their future success in school. University of Missouri’s College of Education published a study in October 2019, indicating that a school readiness test can predict kindergartener’s success in school after 18 months. The study emphasizes the importance of early assessment of student academic and emotional readiness to provide support as early as possible.

PRACTICES TO FACILITATE KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION

Survey respondents were asked a series of questions related to practices used to facilitate children’s transition into kindergarten. The practices could have been completed by the responding teacher or anyone at their school site, prior to or shortly after kindergarten started this school year (2019-2020). Responses indicated that the majority of the teachers and/or school sites had opportunities for parents and children to visit the classroom and school before school started, sent information to the parents related to contacting school personnel, or communicated one-on-one with the parents. It should be noted that only a small percentage of activities concentrated on assessing children’s skills prior to entering kindergarten, communication with childcare or preschool teachers, or inquiring about the student’s home environment.

Table G-4 below shows the percentage of the activities that occurred for the current kindergarten class.

FACILITATION OF KINDERGARTEN ENTRY	
Invited parents and children to visit the classroom and school before the school year began (e.g., open house)	94%
Sent home information on how to get in touch with the teacher or school staff to discuss any concerns or questions about children	87%
Had one-on-one conversations with parents (either by telephone or face to face)	74%
Reviewed information about children's home experiences from a parent survey or checklist (e.g., bedtime, being read to by parent, use of library)	32%
Communicated with child care or preschool teachers about children	23%
Screened children for developmental delays by using a formal instrument	23%
Reviewed written records of children's past experiences or status	19%
Facilitated parent-to-parent contact	16%
Other	6%
Interviewed parents to screen children for developmental or learning delays	6%
No practices or strategies were used.	0%
Visited children's homes	0%

Table G-4

The survey also asked the kindergarten teachers to recall if they or anyone at their school did any special activities or practices to facilitate entry into kindergarten, for specific populations. Based on their answers, over half of the teachers and/or school personnel currently have targeted activities or practices with low-income families and English Learners. Approximately one-third of the school sites had targeted activities to facilitate entry for the other special populations. A third of the school sites also did not have any activities for the special populations mentioned in Table G-5 below.

FACILITATION OF KINDERGARTEN ENTRY BY SPECIAL POPULATION	
Children from low-income families	52%
Children who are English learners	58%
Children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds	35%
Children who did not attend any preschool program	35%
No activities for special populations occurred	35%
Children with disabilities and other special needs	29%
Children who entered late in the school year	23%
Other	6%

Table G-5

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

First 5 Kings County also wanted to identify potential barriers to a successful kindergarten transition. Respondents were given a list of barriers, and were asked to mark all that applied to their school site. The main reason that stood out as a barrier to successful transition was parents not bringing children in for registration or open house (48%). Almost one-third of the respondents indicated that no barriers were present. Additional barriers were identified; however, they were at fairly low percentages. Table G-6 below provides a full listing of the survey results:

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION	
Parents did not bring children in for registration or open house.	48%
No barriers to successful transition were present.	32%
Parents cannot read letters, etc. sent home.	19%
I could not reach most of the parents who needed help transitioning.	16%
Parents were not interested.	16%
Class lists were generated too late.	13%
Work was required in summer but was not supported by salary	13%
Information from childcare or preschool teachers was incomplete.	10%
The school/district does not provide teachers with a transition plan or suggested activities/practices.	6%
The school or district does not support transition activities.	6%
Contacts with parents before the start of school were discouraged.	3%
Funds were not available.	3%
Transition activities take too much time.	3%
Creating negative expectations with parents was a concern.	0%
Materials were not available.	0%
Childcare or preschool teachers were not interested.	0%
It was dangerous to visit students' homes.	0%
Other	0%

Table G-6

Strategies to overcome the above-mentioned barriers should be explored, including but not limited to increased outreach to parents about the importance of early registration and orientation attendance. Examining relationships between Kindergarten teachers and early childhood or preschool professionals, and involvement in First 5 School Readiness Initiative activities as potential solutions to remove these barriers should also be taken into consideration. Table G-7 and G-8 below provide further information on the aforementioned topics:

RELATIONSHIPS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD OR PRESCHOOL PROFESSIONALS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS	% of Respondents
Invited preschool teachers(s) to bring this year's children to your classroom	48%
I do not have a relationship with early childhood or preschool professionals	45%
Attended regular meetings of elementary school, early childhood, and preschool staff in the community	13%
Participated in joint workshops with school staff on issues of interest with early childhood or preschool staff in the community	6%
Made contacts to develop a coordinated curriculum with preschool programs	6%
Other (please specify)	10%

TABLE G-7

Respondents were able to mark all scenarios listed in Table G-7. Almost half of the respondents invited preschool teacher(s) and their class to a Meet and Greet; however, almost half of the respondents also indicated that they did not have a relationship with early childhood or preschool professionals. First 5 could continue to assist in engaging early childhood educators and kindergarten teachers to ensure readiness of children for transition to kindergarten.

INVOLVEMENT IN FIRST 5 SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES	% of Respondents
Working on school readiness issues with your First 5 County Commission or Linkages 2 Learning Coordinator	84%
Working with programs or organizations in your community to promote school readiness (e.g., preschools, social service agencies)	32%
Establishing school readiness programs and/or activities that take place in your school	61%
I am not involved in any school readiness activities	0%
Other (please specify)	3%

TABLE G-8

Survey respondents indicated that aside from participating in First 5 School Readiness Initiative activities, they also work with other programs and organizations in the community, as well as have programs and activities taking place at their school site (Table G-8). First 5 Kings County should explore increased coordination of community-wide school readiness programs and activities, to avoid duplication of programs, and to maximize funding to ensure the future educational success of young children.

Appendix H

KINDER PARENT SURVEY RESULTS:

One hundred forty-six parents of current kindergarten students completed a reflection survey. The table below represents the parents' answers regarding transition activities that parents may have/may not have participated in prior to their child entering kindergarten. The last 3 questions only applied to children who attended preschool.

Transition Activity	Participated?		Very Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not Useful
	YES	NO			
1. My child and I visited their Kindergarten classroom prior to the start of school.	85%	15%	91%	5%	0%
2. My child and I attended a spring (April-June) Kindergarten Orientation.	57%	43%	94%	5%	1%
3. My child and I attended a fall (July-August) Kindergarten Orientation.	60%	40%	91%	6%	1%
4. At Kindergarten Registration, I was provided with information about preparing my child for Kindergarten.	84%	16%	88%	7%	1%
5. At Kindergarten Registration, my child was provided with a free school readiness backpack.	74%	26%	87%	8%	2%
6. My child received a kindergarten assessment prior to the beginning of school.	65%	35%	93%	3%	0%
7. My child and I met their Kindergarten Teacher prior to the first day of Kindergarten.	81%	19%	93%	2%	1%
8. My child and I received a tour of the school prior to the first day of Kindergarten.	54%	46%	94%	8%	1%
9. My child received a postcard from his/her school prior to the first day of school.	50%	45%	88%	7%	4%
Only complete the following (10-12) questions, if your child attended preschool.					
10. My child attended a preschool, and they visited a Kindergarten Classroom.	50%	50%	81%	6%	6%
11. My child attended preschool, and a Kindergarten Teacher visited their preschool classroom.	30%	70%	73%	10%	10%
12. My child attended preschool, and I was provided with information about preparing my child for Kindergarten.	80%	20%	70%	6%	1%

TABLE 6-9

The parents' responses indicate that the majority of families had an opportunity to visit the kindergarten classroom and meet the teacher, attended an orientation and were provided information related to preparing their child for kindergarten, as well as a free school readiness backpack. For those children who attended preschool, 80% indicated that they were provided kindergarten preparation information, half visited a kindergarten classroom, and one-third of the children were visited by a kindergarten teacher at preschool.