

# Supporting and Sustaining the Health, Wellbeing and Success of Our Region's Youngest Children & Their Families

## The Impact of First 5 in the Sacramento Region

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

April 2010

In 1998, California's voters passed Proposition 10 which imposed a fifty cent tax on tobacco products with the revenue generated providing the state's first funding stream dedicated to helping children from the prenatal state to age five grow up healthy in all respects and ready to succeed in school when they enter kindergarten. This movement is now known as "First 5" to emphasize the importance of the first five years of life.

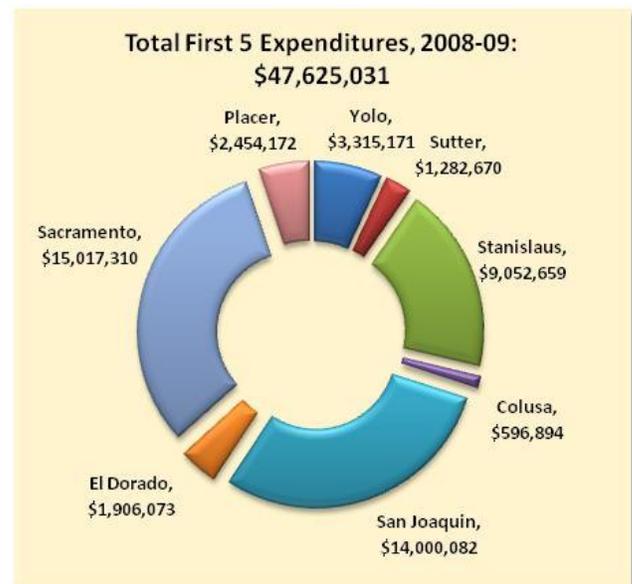
Since becoming fully operational, First 5's in the Region have been leaders in providing prevention and essential services that strengthen children and families. As of 2009, First 5's have had about eight years to invest in programs and improved systems of services. This summary describes the impact of First 5 within eight counties in California's Sacramento Region: Colusa, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter and Yolo Counties.

Over 3 million people make a home in the Sacramento Region. The Region is home to 318,217 children ages 0-5. Most families in the Region earn less than the California median income. In the midst of the national economic crisis, unemployment in the Region is much higher than normal—in some counties, more than double the rate prior to the crisis. These rates range between a low of 11.3% in Placer County to a high of 25.9% in Colusa County.

While the Region offers a picturesque backdrop, challenges particular to the area do exist. Typical family concerns such as the price of gas, increasing grocery bills and California's notoriously high rent prices hinder many of the options the geography offers. Additionally, the expansiveness of the terrain can lead to isolation—those living in rural areas or the mountain's foothills may experience winter conditions that preclude driving into town for services.

Increasingly, First 5's are plugging holes in the local safety net caused by diminishing resources, greater demand for services and the state budget crisis.

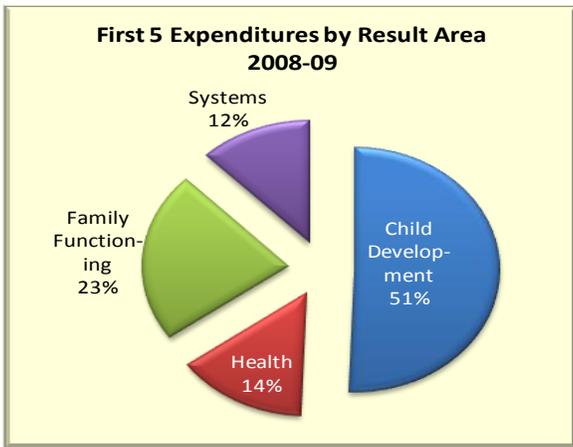
In 2008-09, First 5 Sacramento Region invested \$47,625,671 to serve 74,939 children ages 0 to 5 and 86,816 of their parents and other primary caregivers.



First 5 provides a flexible funding source that not only meets local needs, but brings millions of additional federal dollars into communities in the Region by providing the match that allows counties to leverage funds for nurse home visiting, prenatal care for high risk pregnancies, provider training, and an array of services that link children and families with needed care.

More and more people now live in the Sacramento Region. In fact, every single county in the Region has grown since First 5 was created. Despite the increase in population, child outcomes have improved because of First 5 contributions. More children are now being born healthy.

The percentage of First 5 investments in the Region across the four First 5 result areas is shown in the following chart.



As a result of these investments, 75,942 children, and 86,706 parents and other caregivers were served in 2008-09 in the Region.

### The Bottom Line:

**Children are healthier and families are functioning better.** After over a decade of First 5's existence, fewer children ages 0 to 5 are growing up in poverty, family interventions have contributed to a decline in child maltreatment allegations, substantiations and entries, and as a result, children are staying safe with their own families. More mothers now receive early prenatal care. More infants are born at healthy birth weights, fewer are considered low birth weight infants and infant mortality rates are dropping. Adult smokers are decreasing in numbers, fewer youth are exposed to smoking at home and fewer youth are smoking themselves.

**Children are ready for school.** As a result of Proposition 10 funded services being provided to children ages 0 to 5, more second graders are scoring "advanced" or "proficient" and fewer second graders are scoring "below basic" or "far below basic" in English language arts and math since the first records in 2003. The special education population is receiving diagnoses and essential intervention earlier than ever before.

**Child development is improving.** Children and families are being screened earlier using standardized assessment tools. Families and children are connected to services and programs, and increased percentages of children are achieving developmental milestones. Quality standards for early care and education settings have been implemented and the education levels of child care professionals and skills and knowledge of family and informal care providers have increased.

**Community awareness, collaboration and partnerships are enhanced.** Hospitals, schools,

families and community leaders are contributing to improved infrastructure. Kindergarten teachers and early childhood education teachers are meeting at the same tables to discuss the same kids, families are forming their own support groups outside of First 5 sponsored activities, and Family Resource Centers (FRCs) have expanded throughout the Region to serve as vital community hubs.

### The Details:

## Health

There are many different factors that lead to good health. In the 2008 to 2009 fiscal year the Region invested nearly \$7 million dollars in a coordinated system of proven methods to improve children's health by addressing these factors.

- **Access to health services.** The lack of health insurance is a major barrier to receiving health care services. Access to health services continues to be a priority for the Sacramento Region. For example, in 2008-2009:
  - ▶ Services to support health access were provided to 7,919 children and 4,837 parents and primary caregivers throughout the Region.
  - ▶ More than 8,300 children and parents received primary care and prenatal care services, including breastfeeding support.
  - ▶ Every First 5 commission in the Region worked to help families find a medical home, reducing inappropriate emergency room usage and increasing access to preventive care.
  
- **Maternal health.** Focusing on health outcomes early for both mother and child has been shown to have long term benefits:
  - ▶ Since implementing Proposition 10, the number of pregnant women delaying prenatal care until after their first trimester has decreased by 3.4%.
  - ▶ Over the past nine years the average rate of births to teens in every county in the Sacramento Region has declined. Between 1999 and 2008 the rate decreased by 13.2 births for every 1,000 teens.
  - ▶ Since 2000, First 5 efforts have helped improve the overall breastfeeding rates for the Region as a whole; with El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Stanislaus and Yolo Counties exceeding the State rate and six of the eight counties reporting an increase in breastfeeding rates.
  
- **Oral health.** Tooth decay is the most common preventable disease affecting California's children,

causing pain, illnesses and problems with eating, sleeping and learning. First 5 is working in every county to improve oral health in many ways. First 5's coordinated system of education, screening and treatment for children ages 0 to 5 means that children enrolled in Healthy Kids or other First 5 funded insurance products also have access to dental care. Five of the eight counties fund direct oral health services, reaching more than 10,000 children in the Region.

- **Mental health.** In many counties, First 5 is a critical partner and funder of vital early childhood mental health services, using a coordinated systems approach. All eight counties support mental health through resource and referral as well as a variety of direct services ranging from early childhood counseling, a multi-disciplinary interview center, home visiting, screening, interventions, Differential Response programs and therapeutic interventions.
- **Nutrition and fitness.** Over one-third of California's children ages 2 to 5 are already significantly overweight or are at risk of obesity. First 5 has been on the forefront of fighting this looming health crisis by:
  - ▶ (1) educating children and parents about good nutrition; (2) encouraging child care providers and other service to promote good nutrition and physical activity; (3) offering activities for young children that create physical fitness; and (4) creating safe places for young children to play outside. In most counties, First 5 is the only source of flexible funding to support these types of projects.
  - ▶ Evidence of First 5's ability to have an impact on childhood obesity can be found throughout the Region, as six of eight counties in the Region fund direct services aimed at improving children's nutrition and physical fitness.

## Child Development & Early Care and Education

First 5 has been a leader in raising awareness about the many facets of child development and in creating a Region-wide focus on the early detection and treatment of developmental concerns; and in preparing children to succeed in school.

- **Child development screening and referral.** Early screening is crucial. Children who receive early treatment for developmental delays are more likely to graduate from high school, hold jobs, and avoid

teen pregnancy and crime. There were 7,797 children ages 0 to 5 enrolled in special education throughout the Sacramento Region in the 2008-09 school year. This represents an average of 2.5% of the 0 to 5 population across the eight counties. First 5 is one of the only consistent funding sources for developmental screening of children ages 0 to 5, when intervention is most likely to be effective.

- **Children with special needs.** Because of First 5, more than 3,700 children in four counties were screened and at least 275 children a year received early intervention referrals and follow-up. Most likely, these children would not have had developmental issues identified until much later, if at all.
- **Early care and education.** Quality early care and education (ECE) programs are important to foster the intellectual, social and emotional development of children. Counties have invested heavily in improving the availability and quality of ECE throughout the Sacramento Region. These efforts have focused mainly on three core strategies:
  - ▶ Activities to increase access and availability of quality early care and education through training and retention of ECE providers, increasing access to early learning sites, and improving the quality of care through training and support.
  - ▶ In 2009, six counties in the Sacramento Region invested \$3.06 million in the CARES program on a 2:1 match (\$2.04 million from the counties and \$1.02 million from First 5 California). More than 12,000 children in the eight counties benefitted from First 5 investments in one year.

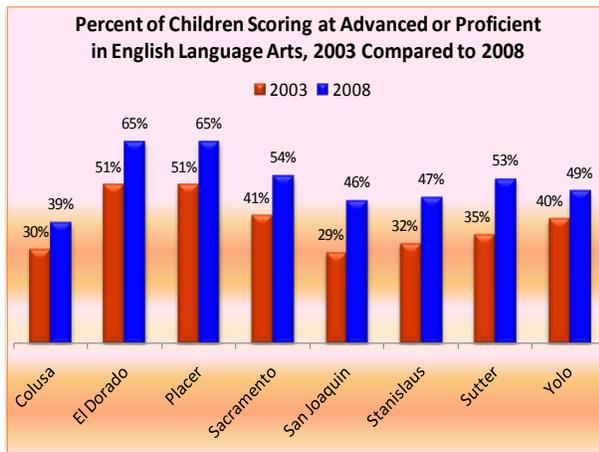
## Readiness for School

Readiness for school upon entering kindergarten is vital to later success in school and in life. A recent California study shows children who are solid in their early academic and social-emotional skills significantly outscore their peers in English and math tests at third and fifth grades.

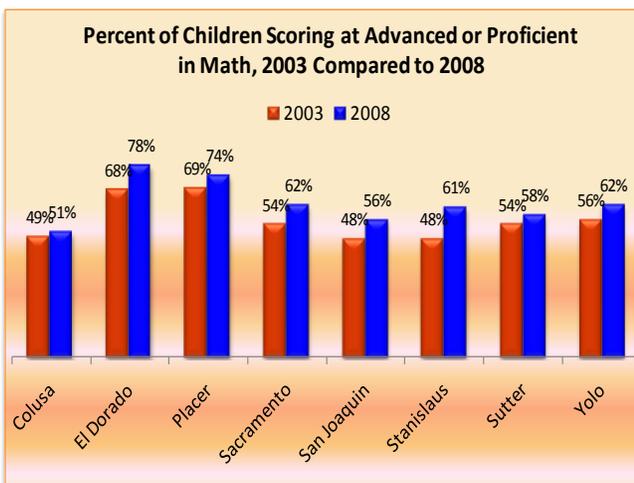
- **Readiness for school.** First 5 efforts are having a clear impact on school readiness:
  - ▶ Last year First 5 Sacramento Region invested \$17.1 million dollars and reached 31,438 by helping prepare 17,732 children and 13,706 of their parents be "ready for school." The average cost per person was \$44. All eight counties invest in school readiness through one or more of three primary strategies: comprehensive

school readiness programs, early literacy programs, and activities to help children transition into Kindergarten successfully.

- ▶ Since First 5 programs were just getting started in 2001, children in second grade during 2003 would not have had the benefit of any First 5 funded programs. By 2008, however, a significant proportion of second graders had been reached by one or more First 5 program during their earlier years.
- ▶ English language arts (i.e., reading) scores climbed in every county by 2008, with six counties showing double-digit jumps ranging from 13 to 18%.



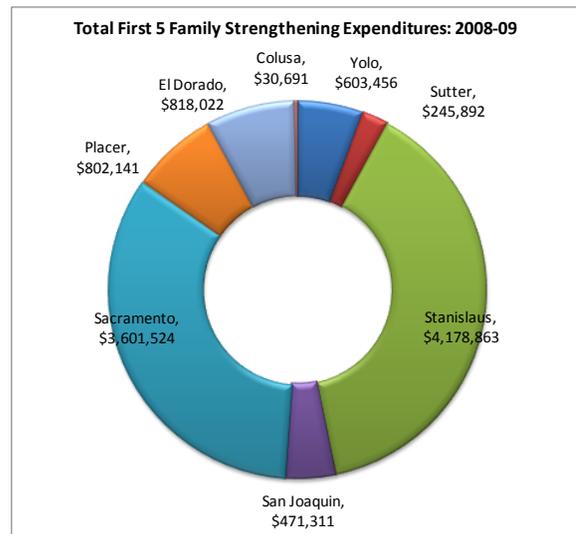
- ▶ Second grade math scores also climbed substantially from 2003 to 2008. Five counties showed improvements of at least 6% in the percentage of children scoring at Advanced or Proficient levels in math.



## Family Support & Engagement

Parents truly are their children’s first teachers, and often can benefit from information and support to meet their families’ needs. First 5 has been the catalyst to greatly expand parent and family support and engagement services in the Region, through active partnerships between family members, programs, professionals and communities. Funded strategies are strengths-based and focus on building the assets within a family, regardless of the family’s configuration. These strategies respect the culture and values of all types of families.

First 5 commissions across the Region invested \$10,751,900 in improved family functioning services and supports last year. These investments reached 24,216 children, representing 6% of the Region’s population of children between the ages 0 to 5. This funding also provided services to 34,818 parents, primary caregivers and providers. A total of 59,034 persons were served directly through improved family functioning funding at an average cost of \$182 per person.



- **Family access to services.** When Proposition 10 passed in 1998, there were very few places in the Sacramento Region where families could go for centralized, coordinated, community based “one-stop” information and assistance. First 5 has changed this in a very profound way by creating or expanding Family Resource Centers (FRCs):

- ▶ Before Proposition 10, there were 17 FRCs located throughout the Sacramento Region. This represented approximately one FRC for

every 20,261 children ages 0 to 5, and their families.

- ▶ By the end of 2009, the number of FRCs throughout the region had grown to 41, a 241% increase. Now there is one FRC for every 9,028 children ages 0 to 5, and their families.
  - ▶ This includes establishment of new FRCs in Colusa County and the development and expansion of a countywide network of FRCs in Stanislaus, Sacramento and San Joaquin counties.
- **Parent education and support.** First 5 is working to reach as many parents as possible through information, parent education programs and more intensive family support services like home visiting programs. For example:
- ▶ All counties in the Region provide broad based parenting information and supports by disseminating information through a number of strategies including publishing newsletters with parenting tips; participating in community fairs and outreach activities in order to link families to needed information and services; producing articles for local print and electronic media, and distributing the Kit for New Parents provided by First 5 California.
  - ▶ More than 9,000 parents and primary caregivers in the Region participated in general parenting education or intensive parenting supports in the 2008-09 program year in addition to the parents and caregivers that received parent education and supports through other First 5 strategies, such as school readiness programs, child development initiatives or home visiting.
  - ▶ Seven counties in the Region have First 5 funded programs to provide support services in the homes of families. This ensures that services are available in a familiar environment and language, and reduces barriers, such as lack of transportation or cultural differences that may prevent a family from seeking services.
- **Child safety.** Child abuse prevention is a major focus of First 5 with counties making substantial investments in family support and systems. When abuse does occur, First 5 funded programs often have a large role in improving family situations so abuse is not repeated. Some positive trends can be found from the work that First 5 has done in collaboration with county Child Welfare Services and other groups since 1999:
- ▶ Over the past nine years there has been a 12.7% increase in the total child abuse and neglect

reports in the Region, from 17,289 in 1999 to 19,448 in 2008.

- ▶ During this same time, the rates of child abuse reports per 1,000 children between the ages 0 to 5 decreased by 6.5 points for the First 5 Sacramento Region, while they increased for California.
  - ▶ For child abuse cases opened, recurrence within 24 months for the Region as a whole had dropped to 3.8% of cases in 2008 – almost half of what it had been less than a decade before.
- **Family Literacy.** Adult literacy is crucial for the well being and development of children. Family literacy programs provide parents with the tools, skills and knowledge of how to support their children to learn specific skills that provide the foundation for child literacy success. In the Region:
- ▶ Five counties invested a total of \$328,983 specifically for family literacy activities in fiscal year 2008-09. As a result, an additional 3,160 parents and caregivers and 6,573 children were served for less than \$34 each.
  - ▶ All counties investing in family literacy report that participation in literacy programs increased the amount of time and frequency families spent reading with their children.

## Community Awareness & Capacity Building

The impact of First 5 goes far beyond increasing the type or amount of services for children and families. A critical role of First 5 is to help make services work better so that they are more accessible and effective for families. First 5 builds:

- **Community Awareness and Engagement to Benefit Children.** Every county is working to improve the linkages across different types of children and family services. The Sacramento Region implements effective strategies – “what works” - to increase awareness and support for children.
- **Service Capacity.** First 5 has enhanced the capacity of community services in every county in the Region through training and technical assistance, investments in physical infrastructure, investments to enhance service capacity, and developing the community’s capacity to solve its own problems.

■ **Systems Change.** First 5 has sought to effect systems change by investing in strategies to maximize the impact of existing funding streams and enable programs to use limited resources in the most effective manner. Strategies used across the Region have enhanced data systems, reduced duplication of services, promoted web-based universal enrollment and created centralized registries related to immunizations and breastfeeding.

## Efficient and Effective Use of Resources

First 5 is highly effective at investing in what works, holding service providers accountable to produce results, evaluating the results of investments and getting the most value possible out of available funds. Accountability is maintained through long-range program and financial planning, contracting and monitoring of funded programs, strong fiscal systems, and annual audits.



Ongoing investments have been made in evaluation processes throughout the Region. These include designing an evaluation framework for First

5 as a whole and for each program, creating systems to collect and report evaluation data, monitoring services delivered, analysis of specific desired outcomes, and regular discussion of evaluation findings with program staff and the First 5 commissions. At the same time, the Region's funding last year on evaluation and administration, relative to total expenditures demonstrates efficiencies across the Region with only 9.9% on average spent on administration. Evaluation expenditures average 4.4% in the Region, leaving 85.7% of all expenditures going to programs and services.

First 5 gets the most out of its limited resources. Four counties have used their funds as matching funds or other forms of leverage to secure over \$56.7 million in additional funding from federal reimbursements, foundations, special grants, investments from the business community and other sources over the past five years.

			%
FY 2005-09	Tax Revenue	Leveraged Funds	Leveraged
Colusa	\$ 1,167,025	\$ 113,000	9.7%
Sacramento	\$ 68,635,756	\$ 38,729,924	56.4%
Stanislaus	\$ 27,036,753	\$ 13,689,327	50.6%
Yolo	\$ 8,098,863	\$ 3,265,043	40.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 104,938,397</b>	<b>\$ 55,797,294</b>	<b>39.3%</b>

Over the course of four years these counties have been able attract nearly 40% of the total tax revenues received in additional funds.

## What Makes First 5 Unique?

Other characteristics that make First 5 special include:

- **Champion for children 0 to 5.** First 5 is uniquely focused on the first years of life, and addresses the full range of issues that lead to healthy, well developed children.
- **Catalyst for change.** First 5 focuses on results for children, not specific types of services, and is able to drive changes in services to create better results.
- **Local flexibility.** Each county is able to decide how to best use First 5 funds in order to meet unique local needs and complement what already exists.
- **Relationship based.** First 5 respects and builds upon family and community relationships; children are served in the context of their family and families are supported in the context of their community.
- **Prevention and early intervention focus.** First 5 is committed to preventing child health/development problems and addressing issues early.
- **Non Partisan.** First 5 is concerned about all children ages 0 to 5, not just particular income or demographic groups, or belief systems.
- **Partnership Spirit.** First 5 engages all sectors of the community – public and nonprofit agencies, businesses, parents and others – and strives to build lasting partnerships across sectors to serve children and families better.

*The study was conducted by Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. The complete report is available from the First 5 Association of California website at [www.f5ac.org](http://www.f5ac.org).*