

First 5 Making an Impact in the Sacramento Region

First 5 Colusa • First 5 El Dorado • First 5 Placer • First 5 Sacramento • First 5 San Joaquin • First 5 Stanislaus • First 5 Sutter • First 5 Yolo

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BIG INVESTMENTS PAY OFF FOR SMALL CHILDREN

Study of Sacramento Region First 5 Commissions Finds Improvements in Child Outcomes

Sacramento, CA—A school playground and active preschoolers at American Lakes Elementary in Sacramento formed the backdrop for leaders of eight Sacramento Region counties who gathered this morning to release a report outlining the impact First 5 Commissions have had in improving the lives and futures of children ages zero to five years of age in eight counties.

The *First 5 Sacramento Region 2010 Impact Report* states more children are being born healthy; fewer children are growing up in poverty; more mothers receive early prenatal care; and more children are prepared for success when they enter kindergarten.

The study, prepared by Social Entrepreneurs, Inc. on behalf of the First 5/Children and Families Commissions of Colusa, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Sutter and Yolo counties showed marked improvement in the health and well-being of children ages zero to five years as a result of programs funded by these organizations.

Last year, the region invested more than \$47 million dollars to serve nearly 76,000 children and 86,000 parents and caregivers. Nearly \$7 million was spent in the area of children's health alone. Increasingly, commission leaders say, the flexible funding source provided by local First 5 commissions is plugging holes in their community safety nets caused by diminishing resources, greater demand for services, and the state budget crisis.

According to Toni Moore, Executive Director, First 5 Sacramento, "We are releasing this study to demonstrate the extraordinary importance of ensuring the Proposition 10 tobacco tax dollars remain available to the children and families in our communities so they will be provided with the programs and services they need to have a positive start in life."

Report highlights for fiscal year 2008-09 include:

- ▶ The regional commissions invested \$17.1 million to prepare more than 31,000 children and their parents to be "ready for school."
- ▶ Five county commissions invested approximately \$329,000 for family literacy activities; serving more than 3,000 parents and caregivers and 6,573 children.
- ▶ Nearly \$7 million was invested to improve children's health, including increasing access to care for almost 8,000 children and funding direct services to improve nutrition and physical fitness.

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- ▶ More than 4,000 children in five counties had health coverage through California Health Initiative/Healthy Kids at the end of the 2007 fiscal year as a direct result of First 5 investments.
- ▶ More than 3,700 children in four counties were given developmental screenings using standardized assessment tools. At least 275 children a year received early intervention referrals and follow-up.
- ▶ Commission funding also provided support services to nearly 35,000 parents, primary caregivers and providers.

"We're investing in our future by investing in children," stated John Sims, Executive Director of the Stanislaus County Children and Families Commission. "We know the first five years of life are vital. The report merely underscores the importance of the early years and our work."

In Sacramento County for Fiscal Year 2008-09:

- ▶ Immunization rates for two and five years old exceeded state averages: 84.2 percent (two year olds) and 91.7 percent (five year olds) had complete immunizations compared to the statewide average of 78.6 percent.
- ▶ 45% of Sacramento County received fluoridated drinking water.
- ▶ 600 children received health and developmental screenings.
- ▶ Quality improvements were provided to 102 preschool centers.
- ▶ 85% of families with a Child Protective Services (CPS) case had no recurring CPS involvement after receiving home visitation services.
- ▶ 3,162 children received early learning and school readiness services through six school districts.

Added Moore, "Not only are we using tobacco tax dollars to meet local needs, but we are able to leverage much of that funding to bring in millions of additional federal dollars to enhance service delivery for the children and families."

When every child enters Kindergarten prepared to learn, the entire K-12 system benefits as a result of having to commit fewer resources to either special education or remedial education.

"Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years, and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life," said Julie Gallelo, executive director, First 5 Yolo. "The Commissions have worked hard to identify needs, fund quality programs and ensure accountability through measurable evaluations so we maximize the beneficial impact on our children and their families."

In November 1998, California voters passed a statewide ballot initiative to add a 50-cent tax on tobacco products. The funds collected are utilized through the First 5 Commissions to fund education, health and early learning programs that promote early childhood development from prenatal through age 5.

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