

2012-17

First 5 El Dorado Strategic Plan



**Firs 5 El Dorado
Children and Families Commission
March 19, 2012**

This document was developed with the collaborative expertise of
Social Entrepreneurs, Inc.

Adopted by the Commission on May 12, 2012

Reviewed and Adopted by the Commission on May 13, 2013

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Wendy David, Chair
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Introduction

First 5 El Dorado receives approximately \$1.2 million annually through revenues generated by Proposition 10 passed by California voters in 1998. These funds are used to enhance or fund new programs, services and infrastructure supportive of young children and families. The aim is to invest effectively in a network of prevention and early intervention services for families with young children.

Since 2001, approximately \$14.8 million dollars has been awarded to programs throughout the county. First 5 El Dorado supports building partnerships among agencies, organizations and the private sector, leveraging local resources to increase the value of its investments. The Commission identifies strategies based on research and best practice models to support services that make a difference in the lives of young children, and directs resources to build a comprehensive early childhood service system.

Background

First 5 El Dorado has used the Harvard Family Research Project's six key elements for a local, comprehensive early childhood system: family literacy and parent education, developmental screens, high quality early care and education programs, preventive medical visits, connecting families to community services and tailoring services to meet community needs. Through the 2006-11 Strategic Plan, Initiatives have been funded to address these elements.

In this first, five-year strategic plan, First 5 El Dorado laid the framework for the Initiatives, each designed to work together, providing a continuum of early childhood services to families with children 0-5 years of age in El Dorado County. It is the goal of the 2012-17 Strategic Plan to build upon this continuum and integrate Commission services with other community agencies.

Accomplishments

First 5 El Dorado Commission has made significant progress toward implementing their vision to “promote nurturing, stable and loving family environments so that all children enter school physically and emotionally healthy, **ready** to learn.” Among the achievements:

- Developed a plan to measure school readiness for all incoming kindergarteners in the county and to provide early intervention services as needed.
- Established a continuum of services supporting a family prenatally through five years of age.
- Designed an evaluation plan to report progress on goals, objectives, indicators, and data collection tools for each Initiative.
- Promoted the Commission's work through a Communication Plan: healthy, caring, growing, learning, connected and ready.
- Changed the early childhood culture in the County:
 - Children are seeing the dentist by their first birthday.
 - Families are using the 800 number for health related questions.
 - The library has become a place where families with young children gather.
 - Families are requesting developmental screens and home visits

Dear Partners and Community Members:

Fifteen years ago, the people of California voted, through Proposition 10, to prioritize the first five years of a child's life and provide funding to invest in strategies to promote school readiness.

Since that time, the school readiness conversation has moved from ABC's and 123's to the importance of well child exams, seeing the dentist by the time the child is one year of age and reading to your child on a daily basis. Parents understand their child's development and community resources that support them as their first teacher. Libraries are now early childhood beacons in the community second only to high quality early care and education programs. The importance of early childhood has taken on a whole new meaning and has taken root in our community.

First 5 El Dorado's 2006-11 Strategic Plan set the course for this change by using research based strategies necessary for a local early childhood system. In this Plan, the Commission implemented seven key Initiatives: Children's Health, Best Beginnings, Together We Grow, Ready to Read @ Your Library, High 5 for Quality, Community Strengthening and School Readiness. Together, these Initiatives form a continuum of services designed to support children and families prenatally through kindergarten. Building on this momentum, the next five-year, strategic plan seeks to integrate this early childhood continuum into the existing local family support system. Integration will be challenging given the current economic climate of the community and the Commission.

The Commission's budget mirrors a family budget in the current economy, income is going down so expenses must be cut. We need to live within our means. First 5 funding comes from a \$.50 tax on each pack of cigarettes, a declining revenue source. What started out as an annual allocation of \$1.7 million has now dwindled to just over \$1.2 million. The Commission's average annual budget for last four years was \$1.875 million. The time has come to slowly bring our program funding closer to the annual \$1.2 million allocation and live within our means.

We can get there by working together. Key to First 5 El Dorado's funding philosophy includes terms like universal, sustainability, leveraging and collaboration. All families will have access to First 5 El Dorado Initiatives. It is our objective that the Initiatives become sustainable over time, integrating our work into existing delivery systems. We will seek out opportunities to leverage additional funding for the local early childhood system. First 5 El Dorado will continue to collaborate with community partners on early learning strategies to support families in our County. Together, we will achieve our mission.

Sincerely,

Wendy David
Chair

Kathleen Guerrero
Executive Director

Strategic Planning

The goal of the 2012-17 planning process was to enhance the capacity of Initiatives to meet family needs by reviewing existing strategies, comparing them against research-based, best practices and integrating with local early childhood services. The planning process has been comprehensive, collaborative and transparent.

Commissioners, our evaluator, contractors, service providers, community strengthening group facilitators and other interested partners were convened between July and September 2011. Commission staff met with Community Strengthening Groups monthly through January 2012 to share the planning process and gather feedback. Planning materials were available on the website.

In keeping with results-based accountability, evaluation goals, objectives and indicators were shared along with data collected in the previous five years. Partners were asked to provide feedback on the indicator, telling the story behind the data. From these discussions, it is clear that Commission Initiatives use similar key elements in delivering services to families:

- Assess a child's development.
- Develop relationships with parents and providers.
- Provide parent support as their child's first teacher.
- Offer flexible service delivery in location and frequency.
- Provide opportunities for parents and children to interact.
- Improve access to community resources and information.
- Meet families where they are geographically.

Based upon these strategies, staff identified five best practices currently implemented through Commission Initiatives. These strategies are often used in home visiting models:

- Conduct developmental screens.
- Partner parents and caregivers with family support staff.
- Facilitate positive child interactions with parents and caregivers.
- Offer place based visiting in a mutually agreed upon location.
- Facilitate connection to community resources.

The Commission looked to the expertise of providers utilizing home visiting strategies by convening focus groups in the fall of 2011. These groups were held in South Lake Tahoe and on the Western Slope, incorporating representatives from the Georgetown Divide. From these meetings, a process model for integrating Commission Initiative services with local providers was developed with implementation recommendation. These recommendations include well-defined scopes of service for Commission Initiative providers, a collaborative referral and training process, and ongoing communication among partners.

Commission Objective

It is the goal of the Commission to serve as a voice and advocate for young children by developing Initiatives that meet the best interests of children zero through five years and their communities. Commission Initiatives have been developed over the last five years in a process that strives to be collaborative, transparent and inclusionary. It is important that Commission actions are responsible, as they are accountable stewards of public funding with investments that are research based, long range and visionary. Each decision is focused on enhancing and supporting existing systems to achieve the Commission vision and mission.

The Commission has formally approved Decision Making Guidelines. These guidelines include the vision, mission, common understandings, funding parameters and evaluation objectives to ensure consistency prior to taking action. These guidelines are reflected in the Commission Initiatives, fiscal policies and evaluation practices.

“The people of El Dorado County will promote nurturing, stable and loving family environments so that all children enter school physically and emotionally healthy, ready to learn.” - *Vision*

The overall goal for Commission investments is for all children to enter school ready to learn. Through the School Readiness Initiative, teachers countywide assess incoming students utilizing the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP). This screening tool has eleven questions to better understand a child’s cognitive and social/emotional development levels. Information collected through this screen is used to identify children who may benefit from additional supports in the classroom. In addition to teacher screens, parents are asked about their child’s readiness for school through Pre-K Observation forms.

KSEP and Pre-K Observation results are used in developing professional development opportunities for early care and education and kindergarten teachers offered through semi-annual articulation meetings. Together, the screening tools assist the Commission in better understanding strengths and opportunities for our children, and how we can better guide the work of our Initiatives.

READY

School Readiness Initiative



Description

Children that are ready for school have met milestones for social, physical, emotional, language and learning development. Through a collaborative partnership with the El Dorado County Office of Education, the Commission has defined “readiness” and has a tool to better understand if our incoming kindergarteners are developmentally ready for school.

Through the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP), teachers use eleven areas of readiness to screen children within the first month of school. Data is collected through the use of iPads, eliminating the costs for manually recording data. In addition, Kindergarten teachers are using iPads in the classroom, familiarizing children with technology at a young age. “Readiness” trends are used in developing semi-annual trainings for Kindergarten and early care and education teachers. Supplemental screens are included in the KSEP to target areas of weakness and develop a plan to support a child in their first year of school.

11-12 Accomplishments

- 76% of children scored 33 or higher on the KSEP indicating they were ready for school.
- Age and social-emotional development are important factors in a child’s school readiness: Children that turned 5 years of age by September 1st were 15% more likely to be ready for school (79%) than those that were not yet 5 by that date (64%).
- For children under the age of 5 at school entry, one year of preschool experience increased school readiness by 20%. Seventy-six percent (76%) of children less than 5 years of age at entry that had at least one year of preschool were ready for school, while only fifty-six percent (56%) of children under 5 without a preschool experience were ready for school.

Long Term Evaluation Goal and Objective

Goal	Objective	Indicator	11-12	12-13	Optimal FY 16-17
Children enter school physically and emotionally healthy, ready to learn	Increase the % of children enter kindergarten ready for school	% of entering kindergarten children scoring 33 or higher on the KSEP	75%	76%	85%

“The **Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP)** is a school readiness screening instrument comprised of 11 items that assess students’ social-emotional readiness and school-ready knowledge when they enter kindergarten. It also has content that allows teachers to document important aspects of each student’s physical health and background. ...Ratings are provided by each student’s kindergarten teacher on a 4-point scale (1 = *not yet*, 2 = *emerging*, 3 = *almost mastered*, and 4 = *mastered*) once they have had sufficient time to get to know each of their students (3-4 weeks into the school year)... In addition, the rubric describes how to rate each item, including examples of behaviors that teachers may observe in students at each rating level. Children can exhibit readiness on the KSEP in any language or mode of communication. “ Michael Furlong, UC Santa Barbara, 2012
<http://www.michaelfurlong.info/KSEP/>

School Readiness Initiative

El Dorado County Office of Education
 6767 Green Valley Road
 Placerville, CA 95667
 530-622-7130



Commission Initiatives

The six Commission Initiatives are integral pieces to the local comprehensive early childhood system. These Initiatives assist families to ensure their children are healthy, have access to community resources, are developing appropriately, are engaged in language and literacy activities and attend high quality early care and education programs. Together, these Initiatives create a continuum of care prenatally through kindergarten entrance.

The Commission will continue to build upon their investments in the 2012-17 Strategic Plan with the goal of implementing their mission.

“First 5 El Dorado Commission is committed to improving the lives of children 0 through 5 and their families by promoting, enhancing, and developing comprehensive early childhood systems through collaborative partnerships, early care and education, health, and community services.” - *Mission*



School Readiness Initiative: The Commission's overarching objective is to prepare children for school. Research tells us that families whose children have regular well child exams and dental visits, developmental screens, read on a daily basis, use high quality early care and education and are connected to their community are better prepared for school.



The Children's Health Initiative: Community Health Workers connect families with children to medical and dental services, including the El Dorado Children's Dental Van. The Initiative maintains partnerships with a broad network of health service providers and connects families with young children to resources that allow them to have a regular doctor or dentist and encourages well child visits.



Best Beginnings: Nurses provide newborn home visits for families delivering at Barton and Marshall Hospitals. Families with newborn children are offered a follow up home visit through Best Beginnings. At the visit, families receive a Kit for New Parents and a Child Health Record with information about community resources to support them and their newborn child.



Together We Grow: Early Childhood Specialists offer periodic developmental screenings and everyday parenting support and education beginning at 2 months of age through kindergarten entry. Children are screened utilizing a combination of 3 screening tools: Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), ASQ-Social Emotional, and a health questionnaire. Early care and education providers receive assistance in creating quality programs and assisting children with special needs in their care. Parents and providers are offered support in addressing their child's developmental needs.



Ready to Read @ Your Library: Early Childhood Librarians promote language and literacy through monthly activities: preschool "Let's Read Together" storytimes, infant "Mother Goose on the Loose" storytimes, toddler "Musical" storytimes, Spanish storytimes, other special storytimes, workshops, and outreach visits to early care and education programs.



Community Strengthening: In an effort to ensure that families and service providers are informed about the services available in their community, Commission Initiative and early childhood partners meet on a regular basis to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate. These meetings are facilitated through three Regional Community Strengthening Groups: Divide Ready by 5, Western Slope Ready by 5, and the Lake Tahoe Collaborative.

HEALTHY

Children's Health Initiative



Description

The Children's Health Initiative (CHI) has been successful in assisting families with young children in securing, obtaining, utilizing and maintaining health insurance coverage.

In March 2011, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality recognized the CHI as an innovative practice in "County-Wide Collaborative Uses Pathways Model to Enhance Access to Insurance, Primary Care, and Mental Health Services for Low-Income Children".

Previously, the CHI was recognized by National Initiative for Healthcare Quality as an "Innovative Prevention program for Improving Children's Healthcare in California" in June 2009.

Building on this success, the CHI partnered with the County Office of Education and the Shingle Springs Tribal Health Program to expand oral health services for families receiving MediCal. The Children's Dental Van travels to school sites providing services throughout the County.

11-12 Accomplishments

- 97% of children had some sort of health insurance (Parent Surveys and Pre-K Observation Forms).
- Parent Surveys showed that 94% of children had a regular doctor or other health provider.
- 93% of Parent Survey respondents reported that their child has had a well-child visit within the past 12 months.
- More than 75 % of Parent Survey respondents had dental insurance for their children and 71 % of Parent Survey respondents reported that their children have a regular provider that they visit and see.
- The CHI and the El Dorado Children's Dental Van worked together to serve 1,126 children 0 through 5 through 2,043 dental visits and 2,908 dental procedures.

Long Term Evaluation Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective	Indicator	09-10	10-11	11-12	Optimal FY 16-17
Children 0-5 have annual well child exams	Maintain the % of children ages 0-5 that have annual health exams	% of parents that report that their child has had a well child exam in the last 12 months on the F5ED Parent Survey	97%	97%	93%*	97%
Children 0-5 have annual dental exams	Increase the % of children ages 0-5 that have annual dental exams	% of parents that report their child has had a dental exam in the last 12 months on the F5ED Parent Survey	54%	58%	60%*	95%

* While the percentage of children that received a well-child exam decreased somewhat this year, it is close to meeting the Commission's goal and objective of maintaining that percentage at or above 97% by June 2017. While the percentage of children that have received a dental exam increased somewhat from the previous year, it still falls well short of the Commission's goal and objective to have 95% of children 0-5 receive an annual dental exam by June 2017.

Children's Health Initiative

El Dorado County Health and Human Services Department
670 Placerville Drive, Suite 1B
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-6142



CARING

Best Beginnings:



Description

Families delivering newborn children at Marshall Medical Center and Barton Memorial Hospital are offered a home visit to support parents in the weeks following delivery.

A Registered Nurse will follow up with families two to four weeks after delivery to conduct short health assessments for mom and baby and provide education, support and referrals as needed. Additional support for moms choosing to breastfeed is offered.

Through this Initiative, parents are offered information about our community through a Child Health Record and a Kit for New Parents. The importance of healthy development is stressed and families are connected to Together We Grow to follow their baby's progress.

Families with newborn children delivering outside of El Dorado County are encouraged to attend a "Mother Goose on the Loose" session at their local library to connect with community services.

11-12 Accomplishments

- 49% of Parent Survey respondents indicated that they had learned of community resources to support them and their newborn child through a Best Beginnings home visit.
- Best Beginnings offered in-hospital support, follow-up home visits, and connections to community resources to the families of 896 newborn children. Nearly half of all of families delivering (432 or about 48%) at Barton and Marshall Hospitals received a home visit from a BB nurse.
- Through the Best Beginnings (BB) projects, scholarships supported a total of 409 participants in taking childbirth education, breastfeeding and baby basics classes.

Long Term Evaluation Goal and Objective

Goal	Objective	Indicator	09-10	10-11	11-12	Optimal FY 16-17
Parents of newborn children are connected to services that support them and their newborn child	Increase the % of parents with a newborn child that have access to community support services	% of parents that report having learned of community resources to support them and their newborn child through a Best Beginnings Home Visit on the Parent Survey	8%	23%	49%	50%

Best Beginnings

Marshall Medical Center
1100 Marshall Way
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 626-2693

Barton Memorial Hospital
2170 South Ave.
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
(530) 543-5547



GROWING

Together We Grow:



Description

In the summer of 2011, First 5 El Dorado combined two successful Initiatives, Together We Grow and High 5 for Quality, to assure families have support for their child's development regardless of their care at home or in an early care and education setting.

Early Childhood Specialists support parents in using developmental screens to better understand their child's development. Specialists are also trained on quality assessments to assist providers in delivering high quality early care and education services. Based on the outcomes of the screenings and assessments, parents and providers are offered information, referrals and support.

An Inclusion Specialist is available to assist early care and education providers caring for children with special needs. Together, the Early Childhood and Inclusion Specialists will work with parents and providers to support children in meeting developmental milestones.

11-12 Accomplishments

- Parent surveys indicated that 56% of children had received a developmental screen in the past 12 months.
- Early Childhood Specialists (ECS) assisted parents to complete 1,099 developmental screenings for 620 children 0 through 5 using the Ages & Stages Developmental & Social Emotional Questionnaires (ASQ & ASQ-SE).
- Approximately 34% of screenings required some follow up by the ECS to address parent questions, concerns about the child's development or concerns identified by the screening.
- ECS facilitated 121 referrals to services, delivered 23 trainings to 203 providers, teachers and community partners, and provided 96 consultations to parents and Early Childhood Education (ECE) site staff.

Long Term Evaluation Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objective	Indicator	09-10	10-11	11-12	Optimal FY 16-17
Parents of children 0-5 complete developmental screenings on an annual basis	Increase the % of children ages 0-5 that have a developmental screening annually	% of parents that report their child has had a developmental screening (like the ASQ) in the last 12 months on the F5ED Parent Survey	53%	59%	56%*	85%
Early Care and Education sites complete annual quality screenings	Increase the % of licensed early care and education sites that complete quality screenings	% of licensed early care and education sites that complete quality screenings annually	NA	NA	NA	85%

* Program counts and Parent Surveys indicated that there were fewer developmental screenings than the previous year due to a decrease in staffing and a focus on screening younger children. In past years, a significant number of screenings were completed in collaboration with kindergarten registration events and processes at elementary schools countywide. During FY 11-12, TWG did not work directly with the elementary schools to screen incoming kindergarten children partly due to the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) being completed by all kindergarten teachers in the fall of 2011.

Together We Grow

El Dorado County Office of Education
6767 Green Valley Road
Placerville, CA 95667
530-295-2403



LEARNING

Ready to Read at Your Library:



Description

The library has literacy activities for children of all ages. There are a variety of storytimes available. Families with children under the age of two can participate in “Mother Goose on the Loose” storytimes. Toddler Music storytimes are available for two to three year olds. A variety of preschool storytimes are available including “Let’s Read Together”, Spanish and bilingual storytimes, and weekly themed storytimes.

The libraries are bringing the community to families by hosting “Family Place Library” and “Play to Grow” sessions. These multi-week workshops provide opportunities to play and meet early childhood professionals and learn more about your child and community.

For families with children in early care and education programs, library services are brought to the classroom including storytimes, activity packets for teachers and books to share.

11-12 Accomplishments

- Parent Surveys showed that 78% of parents read to their child 0-5 on a daily basis.
- Ready to Read @ Your Library provided enhanced early literacy services to 2,384 children 0 through 5 and 1,668 parents/guardians at all county library locations, serving about 15% more children and parents/guardians than during FY 10-11.
- Overall attendance was approximately 35,185 visits made by children 0 through 5 and their parents and guardians.
- Early Literacy Specialists (ELS) from the library provided 730 early literacy programs at 115 early care and education sites countywide, modeling best practices for building early literacy skills for ECE site staff.

Long Term Evaluation Goal and Objective

Goal	Objective	Indicator	09-10	10-11	11-12	Optimal FY 16-17
Parents read to their children on a regular basis	Increase the % of parents that read to their children on a regular basis	% of parents that report reading to their child on a regular basis (6-7 days per week) on the F5ED Parent Survey	75%	77%	79%	85%

Ready to Read at Your Library

Main Library in Placerville
345 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
530-621-5540

Pollock Pines Branch
6210 Pony Express Trail
Pollock Pines, CA 95726
530-644-2498

Cameron Park Branch
2500 Country Club Dr
Cameron Park, CA 95682
530-621-5500

South Lake Tahoe Branch
1000 Rufus Allen Blvd
South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150
530-573-3185

El Dorado Hills Branch
7455 Silva Valley Parkway
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762
916-358-3500

Bookmobile
530-621-5642

Georgetown Branch
6680 Orleans Street
Georgetown, CA 95634
530-333-4724

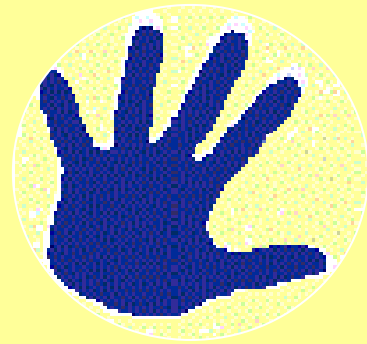


www.first5eldorado.com (530) 622-5787

Growing Children, One by One...

CONNECTED

Community Strengthening Initiative



Description

Community collaboration means that programs and providers work together so that children and families have seamless access to services and supports they need.

First 5 El Dorado engages community partners through Community Strengthening Groups in each region of the County to assess community needs and design outreach and promotion strategies that connect families to key services in their communities.

In an effort to ensure that families and service providers are informed about the services available in their community, Commission Initiative and early childhood partners meet on a regular basis to communicate, coordinate, and collaborate.

These meetings are facilitated through three Regional Community Strengthening Groups: Divide Ready by 5, Western Slope Ready by 5, and the Lake Tahoe Collaborative.

11-12 Accomplishments

- The Lake Tahoe Collaborative met 11 times with representatives from 28 partner agencies to discuss a broad range of services in the community such as child care, childhood vaccinations, oral health, child protective services, child and family nutrition, and mental health.
- Western Slope Ready by 5 met 8 times with 23 partners, sharing information about a wide variety of services, but with a particular focus on car seat safety and promoting the healthy social and emotional development of children.
- Divide Ready by 5 met 10 times with 21 partners to discuss and promote school readiness, kindergarten transition activities, access to low cost/no cost health insurance, childhood vaccinations at WIC, and the promotion of services for children 0 through 5 at community events.

Long Term Evaluation Goal and Objective

Goal	Objective	Indicator	09-10	10-11	11-12	Optimal FY 16-17
Parents of children 0-5 are aware of, utilize and are satisfied with First 5 funded services	Increase the % of parents that are aware of, utilize and are satisfied with First 5 funded services	% of parents that report they are very or extremely satisfied with First 5 funded services on the F5ED Parent Survey	NA	NA	NA*	

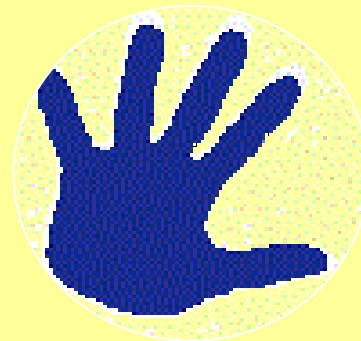
*This indicator is under revision.

Community Strengthening Initiative

Divide Ready by 5
 P.O. Box 4630
 Georgetown, CA 95634
 530-333-8320
www.dividereadyby5.org

South Lake Tahoe Collaborative
 First 5 El Dorado Community Strengthening Project
 Meets second Monday of each month from 1-2:30 PM
 Boys and Girls Club of Lake Tahoe, 1100 Lyons Ave, South Lake Tahoe

Western Slope Ready by 5
 El Dorado County Office of Education
 6767 Green Valley Road
 Placerville, CA 95667
 530-295-2312



Long Term Financial Plan

In developing a long term financial plan, the Commission is committed to preserving an early childhood system. The Strategic Plan is the basis for decision making and budgets are developed with the intent of living within the annual funding allocation. Funding decisions will be strategic, systematic and assessed over a five year period of time. Reserves will be considered in the total funding. Staff and contractors will continue to research opportunities to leverage additional funding.

The current annual allocation from the CA Children and Families Commission Trust fund is approximately \$1.2 million annually. This amount has decreased 20% since 2008-09 when the allocation was \$1.5 million. The decreases are a direct result of increased costs from the Board of Equalization in managing the trust fund, fluctuations in cigarette sales and birth rates in the county. Revenue is decreasing.

As the Commission has moved toward funding research based, best practices, they have funded above their annual allocation. In 2009-10, annual Commission expenditures were \$2.8 million. The 2011-12 budget is \$1.8 million, a decrease of 35%, but still \$600,000 above the \$1.2 million of annual revenue. The goal of this strategic plan is to gradually move toward operating within our annual allocation in the next five years.

Collaboration, integration, and leveraging are key in the next five years. Through collaboration, the Commission will look for efficiencies in Initiative services and opportunities to integrate their work with other partner agencies.

Evaluation Plan

First 5 El Dorado considers evaluation as critical and ongoing. The Commission has used various approaches to evaluate the effects of the investments on the children and families in the county, and the systems that serve those children and families. Evaluation is conducted on three levels:

1. Evaluation of funded projects/strategies:

First 5 El Dorado grantees receive training and technical assistance regarding the evaluation of their project. The intent is to assist the grantee in identifying and achieving expected results, and to monitor outcomes of the strategies being utilized. Parent surveys of clients served by funded projects that deliver direct services to children 0-5 years of age and/or their parents/guardians are utilized to check for outcomes that are aligned with the evaluation plans of the funded projects.

2. Early Childhood Service System Evaluation:

Community Strengthening data collection and funded project semi-annual reports provide qualitative data regarding the impact of First 5 funding on the early childhood service system. This qualitative data allows the Commission to capture information regarding changes in service

accessibility, leveraged funding, and positive changes in standard practices to address barriers or increase efficiency.

3. Monitoring of Population-based Indicators:

First 5 El Dorado also reviews countywide population-based indicators related to the health and education of children and the well being of families in El Dorado County on a regular basis to study the long-term impacts of Commission-funded projects on the overall population of young children and their families.

First 5 El Dorado has built its evaluation capacity over time and now has baseline data against which to measure results. Incremental progress toward the Commission's goals is measured annually and trends are analyzed over a five year period. Evaluation is based on Results Based Accountability principles and is analyzed on an ongoing basis to link to the Commission's strategic plan and to tell the story of the impact of Commission's investments.

Implementation

The 2012-17 Strategic Plan will provide direction to strengthen Commission Initiatives by integrating curriculum, training, professional development and evaluation. The Commission will work with collaborative partners to provide outreach, education, referrals and ongoing communication in the early childhood system.

Progress on the Strategic Plan will be monitored through the Evaluation Report presented each January and reviewed at the Annual Business Meeting each March. Scopes of work for Commission Initiatives will be reviewed with contractors each April with annual budgets considered for approval in May. Contracts for services are executed in June in preparation for the next fiscal year.

A communication plan will be implemented by the Commission to promote key early childhood messages:

- ✓ Take your child to all well-child visits and see a dentist by their first birthday.
- ✓ Welcome your newborn.
- ✓ Make sure your child is developing on track.
- ✓ Read with your child each day.
- ✓ Choose quality child care programs.

Each message is associated with a Commission Initiative service and will provide contact information.

Through participation at Community Strengthening Groups, the Commission will continually exchange information with partners. Regular communication will improve the quality of services provided through Commission Initiatives and relationships with community partners.