



STRATEGIC PLAN
July 2009 through June 2012

First 5 Tulare County
3435 South Demaree Street, Suite A
Visalia, CA 93277
(559) 622-8650
www.first5tc.org



VISION, MISSION, AND PRIMARY RESULTS

Our Vision for the Future (why we do what we do):

The children of Tulare County will thrive in supportive environments and enter school healthy and ready to learn so that they may become productive members of our community.

Our Mission (what we are here for):

First 5 Tulare County will enhance the early development of Tulare County's children by providing direct services, funding partner organizations, and participating in an integrated system of care serving children prenatal through age five and their families without regard to income.

Primary Results:

- I. Children will be mentally and physically healthy
- II. Children will be ready for school
- III. Families will have the knowledge and ability to promote their children's development
- IV. Services will be culturally appropriate, integrated, and collaborative



FOREWORD

First 5 Tulare County was established after California voters approved Proposition 10, the Children and Families Act of 1998, which added a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes. Revenue began flowing to First 5 Tulare County in 1999, and we have benefited from an annual allocation of approximately \$6.5 million since then to promote, support, and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage through five years of age. Proposition 10 funding provides opportunities to develop new programs and connect existing services in new ways. There is wide latitude under Proposition 10 to pursue innovative strategies and implement creative solutions to the challenges faced by young children and their families.

The Children and Families Act of 1998 includes language requiring First 5 commissions to have a strategic plan to guide their work. This comprehensive revision of the 2006-2009 plan will assist the First 5 Tulare County Commission, staff, service providers, and the community we serve regarding the programs and activities to be undertaken from July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2012.

Local decision-making is an emphasis of Proposition 10, and local commissions have been established in each California county to achieve that end. The First 5 Tulare County Commission serves as the governing body by providing general direction and oversight of the organization's activities. For the term of this plan, the Commission intends to support:

- Research-based projects with clearly defined outcomes consistent with this strategic plan
- Development and testing of innovative services and programs
- One-time projects where First 5 dollars provide for asset purchases and program development
- Multi-year projects with the understanding that programs need longer than one or two years to enhance efficiency and develop sustainability plans
- Projects that fulfill important unmet needs

Proposition 10 revenue is not great enough to allow us to meet all the needs of our young children, so the Commission will partner with other organizations to stretch these dollars as far as possible. We will strive to reach as many families as we can by effectively using the media to disseminate information about early brain development, children's health and nutrition, parenting skills, and other relevant topics.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of our current program providers, the Children's Health Initiative Steering Committee, and the members of the Tulare County Office of Education Program Policy Council in preparing this strategic plan revision. Members of these groups generously shared their expertise and experience regarding the needs of young children, and this plan would not be possible without their help.

Sincerely,



John Davis
Commission Chair



Janet Hogan
Executive Director

PLANNING PROCESS

An annual review of the First 5 Tulare County Strategic Plan is a requirement of Proposition 10. The most recent annual review was completed on February 28, 2008, and the Commission initiated steps to prepare a comprehensive revision to be adopted prior to the expiration of the 2006-2009 plan. The Commission held a kick-off session on October 16, 2008, to provide their initial ideas and direct staff to gather information from the community.

Approximately 40 parents of pre-school children from throughout Tulare County shared their wishes and needs at the Office of Education Program Policy Council meeting on November 4, 2008. Representatives from programs currently funded by First 5 Tulare County met to review and comment on the strategic plan on November 18, 2008. This group was led by a facilitator through a process to review the 2006-2009 plan with a focus on indicators. There were 38 participants representing schools, public social services agencies, and community based organizations. The Children's Health Initiative Steering Committee, an advisory group to the First 5 Tulare County Commission, gave their input on November 19, 2008. Ten individuals representing public social services, health care providers, community based organizations, and migrant education held a lively discussion based on their professional and personal experiences with Tulare County's children.

The information generated affirmed the direction of First 5 Tulare County to pursue strategies addressing children's health, school readiness, strong families, and an integrated system of services. There appears to be good understanding of the importance of health insurance and the value of preschool among the people who contributed suggesting that the First 5 Tulare County "message" is getting out to our community.

PRIMARY RESULTS

Programs, activities, and services provided or funded by First 5 Tulare County will move our community toward the following results:

- I. Children will be mentally and physically healthy
- II. Children will be ready for school
- III. Families will have the knowledge and ability to promote their children's development
- IV. Services will be culturally appropriate, integrated, and collaborative

Achievement of these results will lead to our vision:

The children of Tulare County will thrive in supportive environments and enter school healthy and ready to learn so that they may become productive members of our community.

OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

Objectives are building blocks supporting achievement of our primary results. They serve to better define what we intend in each result area. Indicators are the basis for measuring our progress. Programs, both in-house and contracted, will be designed to achieve one or more objectives based on measurable changes in the corresponding indicators.

For each of our objectives, there are one or more indicators that will be tracked over time to determine if First 5's programs are moving toward the outcomes we seek.

OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

- I. Primary Result: Children will be mentally and physically healthy
 - A. Children are born healthy
 - 1. Increase the percentage of pregnant women with early entry into prenatal care
 - 2. Increase the quality of prenatal care to insure it is culturally appropriate and includes parent education, nutrition and breast-feeding education, and screening for tobacco, drug, and alcohol abuse
 - B. Children are physically healthy and well nourished
 - 1. Increase the percentage of children with access to preventive, primary, and specialty health care including dental services
 - 2. Increase the percentage of children living in safe and healthy environments with access to active recreational opportunities and good nutrition
 - C. Children are emotionally healthy
 - 1. Increase the percentage of children with access to early screening, identification, and services for developmental delay and mental/behavioral health issues, substance abuse, violence, and neglect
- II. Primary Result: Children will be ready for school
 - D. Families support learning in their homes
 - 1. Increase the percentage of parents actively engaged in early development activities with their children
 - E. Children have access to early childhood development programs
 - 1. Increase the percentage of children participating in preschool and other school readiness programs
 - 2. Increase schools' readiness for children
- III. Primary Result: Families will have the knowledge and ability to promote their children's health and development
 - F. Families are stable and able to meet the needs of their children
 - 1. Increase access to information about services, jobs, training programs, parent education, child care, substance abuse, and other topics
 - 2. Increase parents' literacy skills
 - G. Children's homes are free from violence
 - 1. Reduce the number of children who are abused and neglected
 - 2. Reduce the number of children who are exposed to other forms of violence in their homes
 - H. Parents use effective, appropriate parenting skills
 - 1. Increase the availability of culturally and linguistically appropriate parent education services in locations easily accessible to parents
 - 2. Increase the number of families receiving parenting information by using the mass media including print, radio, television, and Internet

- IV. Primary Result: Services will be culturally appropriate, integrated, and collaborative
 - I. Families can easily access services
 - 1. Increase availability of services in locations accessible to children and their parents
 - 2. Increase availability of culturally and linguistically competent services
 - J. Programs actively collaborate to enhance services and avoid duplication
 - 1. Increase program integration to create an effective system of care
 - 2. Increase cross-professional training in order to provide a comprehensive approach to child and family needs
 - K. Programs pool funding and partner to leverage additional funding
 - 1. Increase total funding available for programs serving children and their families
 - L. Programs achieving desired results are sustained
 - 1. Increase public awareness regarding early brain development and the value of effective program aimed at young children and their families
 - 2. Increase organizations' ability to achieve program sustainability through training and consulting activities

PRIORITY STRATEGIES

A strategy is a set of activities, programs, or actions that work together to address an indicator. First 5's efforts and those of our funded providers move us toward achievement of our primary results.

Following are the strategies that will be a focus for the term of this plan. Additionally, as evolving or new strategies emerge, they will be considered.

1. **Children's Health:** This strategy includes the Children's Health Initiative (CHI), Healthy Kids insurance program, the Pediatric Specialty Care Project, and other programs that improve children's access to medical, dental, and behavioral health care.
2. **School Readiness:** We partner with First 5 California, who matches program funding dollar for dollar, to support school readiness activities in partnership with 10 school districts offering programs at 16 school sites. First 5 Tulare County will partner with additional school districts to offer programs in addition to the First 5 California sites.

3. **Family Resource Centers:** Centers are community focused and provide a range of services to children and families. Parent education, information and referral, case management, home visits, health screenings, and counseling are examples of services provided.
4. **Parent Education:** This strategy includes a number of activities such as classes, parent educator training, Kit for New Parents distribution, family literacy projects, and media campaigns. Parent education services are offered through Family Resource Centers, as part of school readiness programs, through First 5 Tulare County staff efforts, and by our funded providers.
5. **Mental Health and Special Needs Early Screening and Treatment Services:** Specialists offer early identification, assessment, and treatment services through Family Resource Centers, the School Readiness Program (some sites), and by funded providers.
6. **Mini Grant Program:** Home day care providers and center-based child care programs improve services to the children in their care by acquiring developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.
7. **Special Project Grants:** This strategy provides grants for projects and programs that aren't addressed under other funding methods. The special project grant format also allows the Commission to rapidly respond to unanticipated circumstances affecting children and families, extreme weather conditions for example.
8. **Community Development:** The Commission recognizes that young children live with their families, and that families live in communities. This strategy provides for programs to address the needs of young children and their families at the community level.
9. **System Access, Integration, and Collaboration:** Access is supported through information and referral programs while integration is addressed through funding initiatives and staff participation in planning and collaborative groups. First 5 Tulare County will promote partnerships among private, non-profit, and public programs to enhance and increase services for young children and their families.

10. **Community Education:** Broad understanding of the value of quality early childhood development activities is the goal of this strategy. Having this understanding supports on-going financial sustainability for programs.
11. **Capacity Building:** First 5 Tulare County will support training and other activities to increase the ability of organizations to meet the needs of young children and their families.
12. **Advocacy:** First 5 Tulare County will advocate on behalf of young children and their families.

EVALUATION

First 5 Tulare County and our partners will continue working to gather, analyze, and report information about the services we provide and the effectiveness of those services. Evaluation covers both process and outcome measures. Process measures gauge what is being done while outcome measures tell us about changes brought about by our efforts. First 5 is concerned with both how well a program is operating and if services are improving the lives of children and their families.

Each program agreement will include an evaluation plan developed jointly between the service provider and First 5. Barbara Aved Associates is available to assist to insure that there is at least one outcome measure for each program. Programs operating under the California First 5 School Readiness Program will follow evaluation guidelines provided by the state commission. For programs that have established evaluation tools, such as the Save the Children Early Steps to School Success program, those tools will be used. Additionally, when opportunities for long-term longitudinal studies arise, they will be pursued.

First 5 Tulare County will continue to use the OCERS data system provided by the Corporation for Standards and Outcomes.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

Funding allocations will be made based upon the First 5 Tulare County Commission's adopted Long-Range Financial Plan and annual budgets. The Commission intends to continue contributing one-half of each year's Proposition 10 allocation to health programs, and local support for the First 5 California School Readiness Program will continue through Cycle II which ends June 30, 2011. It is the overarching goal of the First 5 Tulare County Commission to spend down reserves to provide maximum benefits to young children and their families.

The Commission will allocate program funds at current or greater levels, recognizing that awards are contingent upon the number and nature of proposals submitted for funding.

Target Allocation Percentages by Primary Result

PRIMARY RESULT	ESTIMATED ALLOCATION LEVEL
Children will be mentally and physically healthy	65%
Children will be ready for school	20%
Families will have the knowledge and ability to promote their children's development	14%
Services will be culturally appropriate, integrated, and collaborative	1%

Funding processes, grant programs, and grant amounts will be designed to achieve the objectives as outlined in this strategic plan. Funds may be awarded pursuant to Requests for Proposals, Requests for Applications, negotiated contracts, or other funding mechanisms.



KEY to RESULTS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIES

PRIMARY RESULTS	I. Healthy Children	II. Ready for School	III. Strong Families	IV. Service System
OBJECTIVES	A. Children are born healthy	D. Families support learning in their homes	F. Families are stable and able to meet the needs of their children	I. Families can easily access services
	B. Children are physically healthy and well nourished	E. Children have access to early childhood development programs	G. Children's homes are free from violence	J. Programs actively collaborate to enhance services and avoid duplication
	C. Children are emotionally healthy		H. Parents use effective, appropriate parenting skills	K. Programs pool funding and partner to leverage additional funding for services to families
				L. Programs achieving desired results are sustained

STRATEGIES	OBJECTIVES
Children's Health	A, B, C
School Readiness	B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K
Family Resource Centers	All
Parent Education	A, B, C, D, F, G, H
Mental Health and Special Needs	C
Mini Grant Program	B, E
Special Project Grants	All
Community Development	All
Access, Integration, Collaboration	All
Community Education	All
Capacity Building	All
Advocacy	All

FIRST 5 TULARE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

John Davis, Chair
Steve Bargeon
Ray Bullick
Christine A. Nelson, M.D.

Phil Cox, Chair Elect
Maureen Bianco
Ray Chavez

FIRST 5 TULARE COUNTY STAFF

Aaron Cooper
Selina Escobar
Veronica Gonzalez
Michele Morrow
Jim Ochs
Lucy Rouse

Sterling Bishop
Rose Froyd
Janet Hogan
Jim Moore
Vera Rodriguez

2008 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE ADVISORS

First 5 Tulare County Network of Providers
Children's Health Initiative Steering Committee
Tulare County Office of Education Program Policy Council

EVALUATION PARTNERS

Corporation for Standards and Outcomes
Barbara Aved Associates