



## Report from Commission Staff

June 16, 2022

### I. Administrative Updates

- FY 2022-23 Commission Budget
  - As required per ordinance, F5VC submitted its proposed FY 2021-22 operating budget for review and comment to Board of Supervisors.
    - ED presented summary of highlights and operating budget earlier this month.
    - Members of the Board were supportive of First 5's work and recognized the importance of the early years.
  - Staff continues efforts to submit the budget to the Community Commission of Ventura County, which has been inactive in recent years.
    - Pending no substantive comments by the Community Commission, the FY22-23 operating budget approved by the Commission would be considered final.
- F5VC named one of the Best Places to Work on the Central Coast
  - F5VC will be honored by the Pacific Coast Business Times as one of the "Central Coast Best Places to Work" at their June 23<sup>rd</sup> awards event.
    - <https://www.pacbiztimes.com/best-places-to-work/>
  - Thank you to our staff for making this a great place to work!
- New Neighborhoods for Learning Aide position
  - New job description for an entry level NfL Aide position has been created and posted.
    - Aides can work part- or full- time and require 6 ECE units.
    - Several positions are available.
    - Recruiting and interviewing has begun in partnership with local colleges.
- Commission's Fiscal Year 2021-22 Annual Audit
  - The annual audit is underway. The pre-audit meeting with the Administration/Finance Committee (established as the Commission's "Audit Committee") occurred on June 3, 2022, where auditors reviewed the audit procedures.
    - The attached letter of communication from Brown Armstrong, CPAs, outlines expectations and responsibilities for the audit.
  - This year, the audit will be conducted in two phases with interim work performed in June and final audit procedures in September. The audit report will be completed by mid-October.
  - The audit report will be presented first to the Administration/Finance Committee, and subsequently to the Commission at the October meeting.

### II. Update on Commission Initiatives

- Neighborhoods for Learning
  - Enrollment for next Parent and Child Together cohort is underway
    - Over 250 new families are expected to be enrolled
    - Outreach efforts were supported by WIC texting campaign, Amigo Baby referrals, and through word of mouth by families.

- Over 150 COVID-19 home test kits and 20 tubs of disinfectant wipes were provided to NFL sites by Foodshare.
  - Test kits will be distributed to families who need them.
- Kids and Families Together provided 100 activity kits from Lakeshore to NFL families.
  - Kits were purchased with funding from the California Family Resource Association and contain items that target multiple developmental domains.
- VC Library received a CA State Library grant to continue the PACT program in partnership with F5VC.
  - For the past two years, F5VC has been providing training and capacity building to library staff on implementing the PACT curriculum and is assisting with follow-up for families who need additional services.
    - This project period ends on March 31, 2024.
- Countywide Strategies
  - Wonderschool/Shared Service Alliance
    - In partnership with the Ventura Office of Education, F5VC contracts with Wonderschool, an online platform that aims to support family child care (FCC) providers in maximizing and strengthening their business practices.
    - 14 FCC providers have signed MOU's with F5VC
    - Participating providers will receive a \$500 technology stipend and business coaching from Economic Development Collaborative.
- Advocacy
  - SB 951(Durazo) Affordable Paid Leave for All: F5VC Signed On
    - SB 951 would increase wage replacement rates for State Disability Insurance and Paid Family Leave to make this leave accessible to all Californians, particularly low-wage employees.
- Early Literacy
  - Take 5 and Read to Kids returned May 4 and 5, 2022
    - Thank You to our Celebrity Readers for reading to PACT classes across the county.
    - Nearly 200 children went home with a free bilingual book to help build their home libraries.
- Prenatal Services and Supports
  - Efforts to deepen F5VC's engagement around increasing awareness about the importance of the prenatal period continues.
  - Gap in community base prenatal education and group support sessions (vs. hospital, health, or clinic-based) was identified.
    - Staff from F5VC and VCPH are collaborating on developing a prenatal group education curriculum and social support network pilot for expecting moms.
- Parent Engagement
  - The Parent Leaders continue to distribute their bookmark in the community.
    - Parents and NFL staff met with social workers at Cesar Chavez school.
    - Parent leaders Chrystal Tipping, Liz Bruce, and Elizabeth Szczepanek presented on their bookmark project during the PLN national monthly meeting.
  - Parent Leaders were actively participating in the Wellness Fair planning and implementation.

- Results Based Accountability
  - F5VC external evaluation firm, Applied Survey Research, conducted parent focus groups to better understand parental outcomes and experiences in PACT classes, with a focus on benefits during COVID-19
    - A total of 13 parents participated in English and Spanish focus groups and shared how PACT
      - built trust, community, and a sense of social support
      - helped develop positive parenting practices that enhanced their relationship with their children
      - parents could better recognize developmental milestones and improve parenting confidence
    - Focus group responses will be incorporated into F5VC's Annual Evaluation, to be completed in late Fall 2022.
  
- Community Initiatives
  - Community Wellness Fair at McKinna Elementary School
    - The Early Childhood Coalition (ECC), co-led by F5VC, hosted a resource fair to provide information, resources, and COVID-19 vaccination for families of young children residing in South Oxnard, specifically the Kamala/McKinna neighborhood.
      - Over 15 organizations participated in the event, which included resource tables and presentations on anti-choking strategies for parents/caregivers of young children, local behavioral health and child safety programs, parent-child socio-emotional learning activities, in addition to fun kids' activities.
      - Approximately 65 families attended the event and 33 parents/caregivers completed a brief questionnaire about services in South Oxnard.
  - Smoke-Free Multi-Unit Housing Community Forum
    - F5VC co-sponsor the community forum hosted by Future Leaders of America (FLA) to increase awareness about the dangers of second-hand smoke
    - FLA youth (high school juniors and seniors) presented their findings on how this issue disproportionately affects families and the Latinx community who make up a majority of the occupants in multi-unit housing complexes in Ventura County and proposed solutions on how city councils can help.
  - Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC):
    - In partnership with Early Start- Tri-Counties Regional Center, VC SELPA, and Rainbow Connection FRC, F5VC co-leads the ICC, which is focused on integrating and coordinating services for young children with special needs.
      - F5VC staff presented on the newly revised CDC Developmental Milestones.
        - California's CDCs Ambassadors for "Learn the Signs Act Early" gave the background and research behind the revisions.
  - ACEs Aware
    - F5VC staff attended the ACEs Aware in Action: Innovations and Lessons Learned Conference in Long Beach, CA
      - Conference brought together ACEs Aware grantees and partners from across California to share experiences and best practices for addressing ACEs, toxic stress and building trauma-informed care networks of care within communities.

### III. County, Regional and National Updates

- California State Budget Update
  - The Governor's May Revise estimated a \$300 billion budget surplus
    - \$290 million over three years to address the most urgent needs and emergent issues in children's mental health.
    - \$136 million one-time federal funds for CDSS and \$21.3 million one-time General Fund for CDE to waive family fees for state-subsidized preschool and childcare and development services from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023
    - \$6.3 billion for childcare programs, including continued support for rate increases and supplemental funding to providers in the first collective bargaining contract ratified last year
    - \$6.5 million General Fund to support adjustments in identifying children with qualifying signs of developmental delays.
  - Legislature approved a placeholder state budget on June 13th, two days ahead of June 15<sup>th</sup> constitutional deadline.
    - \$300 billion package includes a record \$128 billion for schools and community colleges.
      - Talks also could drag out over the summer over budget "trailer" bills that detail compromise language.
- Formula Shortage
  - In late-February the FDA announced the largest recall of baby formula in recent history. The recall led to a massive shortage of popular baby formula brands around the country, leading some retailers to start rationing the amount of formula parents can buy.
  - WIC now has over 100 different baby formula options to purchase with the California WIC Card to increase the chance families can find formula in stores.
- Media
  - F5VC was featured in Center for the Study of Social Policy's (CSSP) May EC-LINC Newsletter
    - Article highlighted Ventura County's approach to the child care crisis (see attached)

### IV. Upcoming Events

- First 5 Committees
  - **Administration/Finance Committee, Friday, August 5, 2022. 9:30 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.**

### Anecdote

“We are so sad that this session is ending. We thoroughly enjoyed bringing him every week and watching him grow. We have seen such a huge impact that Neighborhoods for Learning has made on him. . He’s talking so much more and has become more curious about things. He asks questions and is very observant. He’s also become more social and interested in making friends. We are so grateful for the opportunity we were given and wished we had done this sooner. Thank you, teachers Juana and Elizabeth for all you do and for becoming part of our family.”

A mother who has a child diagnosed with Sensory Processing Disorder was having a hard time in class with transitions especially during last circle time and departure. ECFS staff worked diligently in walking the mother through different strategies of transition routines. After numerous strategies they both have found a mini routine that works to help the child depart effortlessly. At the end of each class, ECFS and mother allows the child to drink iced cold water, sit down, and take deep breaths together. Once the child is calm, ECFS walks the family out to the car to say goodbye. The routine has helped tremendously for the family as it has lessened the stress from the mother and importantly, it supports the child’s needs.

### **Best Places to Work Ad:**



The advertisement features a photograph of two adults and two children playing on a floor with toys. A circular logo in the top left corner reads "Featured in PACIFIC COAST BUSINESS TIMES 2022 CENTRAL COAST BEST PLACES TO WORK". The background is a solid blue color with white and red text.

**FIRST 5**  
VENTURA COUNTY

We are honored to be recognized as a  
**“Best Place to Work”!**

Our excellent team  
helps kids prenatal to five  
grow and thrive. We are  
preparing kids to be  
**YOUR** future workforce!

[First5Ventura.org](http://First5Ventura.org)



**EC-LINC**  
An initiative  
of CSSP



**The Early Childhood  
LINC NEWSLETTER**



 @CtrSocialPolicy

[www.CSSP.org](http://www.CSSP.org)

 \CtrSocialPolicy

May 31, 2022 | [EC-LINC Webpage](#)

***Building knowledge and sharing resources by and for local early  
childhood systems builders.***

## A Community's Approach to the Child Care Crisis



Stabilizing early care and education was a key component of the COVID relief and recovery packages that came out of Washington earlier this year. However, most of those investments were short term, and despite optimism that the federal government would approve a long-term plan to make quality child care more available and affordable, it hasn't happened yet. That has left local communities to do what they have been doing for years: creatively maximize dollars to serve as many families as possible while advocating for sufficient, sustainable funding.

“We have to make sure that every family has access to quality child care that meets their needs. That’s going to take funding to ensure access, build the workforce, and make sure we have adequate facilities,” explained Petra Puls, Executive Director of First 5 Ventura County.

**First 5 Ventura County** is part of California’s First 5 network, which is largely funded by a dedicated tobacco tax. When First 5 was approved more than 20 years ago, leaders in Ventura County focused on creating an additional 1,600 slots in quality early childhood education (ECE), subsidizing tuition payments in some communities and funding the creation of new classrooms in others. With less money coming from the tobacco tax today, First 5 Ventura County has worked to shift tuition payments to other funding sources, such as Head Start and a recently expanded state-funded preschool program. Thanks to trusted partnerships nurtured over two decades, Ventura County has not lost a single ECE spot that had been supported by First 5 funding.

“We couldn’t have done it without partners and the shared mindset of doing what’s best for kids and families,” Puls shared. “It wasn’t always easy as we had difficult conversations about how to blend and braid funding, but we worked through it. Commitment kept everybody at the table.”

Despite that success, Ventura County still doesn’t have enough child care to meet the needs of all families, particularly those with infants and toddlers. Across the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has only added to the shortage. The child care workforce has declined by more than 10 percent since March 2020, with about 15,000 providers closing their doors and many others struggling to stay afloat.

The underlying causes of the child care crisis remain the same: families cannot afford to pay more, while ECE providers are already among the lowest-paid workers in the country. Decades of underfunding has led to a shortage of quality care that has forced many parents—overwhelmingly mothers—out of the workforce and deprived too many young children of quality early learning opportunities.

Advocates agree substantial federal investment is necessary, and while that remains elusive, there have been policy wins at the state and local levels. Universal preschool in California is one example. First 5 Ventura County has also had recent success with the county government, requesting a commitment that five percent of all American Rescue

Plan money funneling through the county will be dedicated to supporting young children and their families—“five percent for the first five years.”

While there is significant progress in many communities and increased public awareness of the problems, many advocates are frustrated we still don't have the support for the sweeping changes needed to provide every young child with the quality early care and education they deserve.

“I don't think we're there yet,” Puls said. “Change is happening incrementally. In California, we've been advocating for universal preschool for as long as I have been in the field. By 2025, our state has promised universal access for all four-year-olds regardless of income, but that has been more than 20 years in the making. That represents several generations of kids that couldn't afford to wait.”

### **Media Contact**

Jessica Pika, Communications Director  
Joshua Perrin, Communications Manager

[communications@cssp.org](mailto:communications@cssp.org)



**For Immediate Release**

April 27, 2022

**Contact:** Jamiann Collins-Lopez  
(916) 319-1924

## **Giannina Pérez Named Chairperson of California Children and Families Commission**

**Sacramento, Calif.** — Yesterday, Giannina Pérez, former Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood in the Office of the Governor, was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to the [California Children and Families Commission](#), commonly known as First 5 California.

Pérez, an early childhood policy expert with over 18 years of experience in advocacy and government, was selected for the appointment after working closely with the Governor for the last three years on developing children-first policy platforms. During her time in the Governor’s office, Pérez helped spearhead progressive policies in the areas of childcare, preschool, kindergarten readiness, home-visiting, developmental screenings and intervention, and other family supports.

“Giannina Pérez has been a strong advocate for young children and families for nearly two decades,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director of First 5 California. “Ms. Pérez’s experience both inside and outside government will be an incredible asset to the First 5 California Commission. We look forward to tapping into her expertise to improve the lives of our littlest learners.”

As Chairperson of the First 5 California Commission, Pérez will lead the agency in making progress towards its newly adopted Audacious Goal - that in a generation, all children 0-5 will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.

Pérez succeeds former California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris who is stepping down from her state roles to spend more time with her family. “As California begins to recover from a multi-year pandemic that has had

profound and devastating effects on children and families throughout the state, the work of First 5 California is more important than ever,” said Dr. Burke Harris. “As I pass the torch, I am confident that Ms. Perez is the right leader at the right time to see families through these difficult times.”

“As Chair of First 5 California, I am humbled and thrilled to follow the incredible footsteps of Dr. Burke Harris, serving California’s families and furthering the Commission’s work to ensure all children have a healthy start to life during the first five years,” Pérez stated. “All Californians thrive when young children and families have access to supportive services and programs. I am excited and ready to get to work with the Administration, Legislature, and advocates to ensure California’s promise becomes reality for all our state’s children.”

Pérez has previously worked with Early Edge California and Children Now, leading policy initiatives centered on children and families. Ms. Pérez holds a Master of Public Policy degree from University of California, Los Angeles.

For more information about First 5 California, visit [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).

###

**ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA:**

*First 5 California was established in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which taxes tobacco products to fund services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 California programs and resources are designed to educate and support teachers, parents, and caregivers in the critical role they play during a child's first five years – to help California kids receive the best possible start in life and thrive. For more information, please visit [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).*

