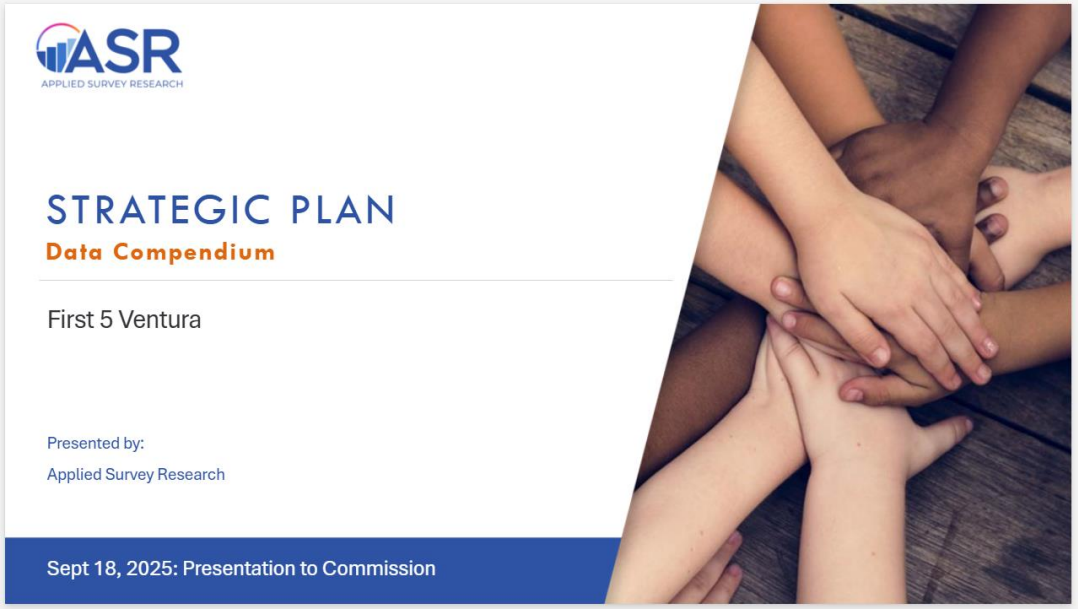
Strategic Planning Stakeholder Engagment Summary

This document provides a high-level summary of the recent Stakeholder and Community Engagement process conducted as part of First 5 Ventura County's (F5VC) 2025 Strategic Planning effort. It serves as a companion to the detailed Data Compendium of results and key findings.

The engagement process included a Parent Survey, Partner Survey, Focus Groups, and Key Informant Interviews with F5VC Commissioners. The purpose of this work was to gather feedback on F5VC's current Strategic Priorities and Desired Outcomes.

This summary is provided in preparation for the September 18th, 2025, Commission meeting, where Commissioners and staff will participate in a facilitated discussion on strategic outcomes. For more detailed information, please reference the companion Data Compendium PowerPoint, which includes slide numbers for each component.

Data Compendium Components



- County Landscape Data (Slides 3-7)
- Parent and Caregiver Survey (Slides 8-26)
- Community Partner Survey (Slides 27-38)
- Community Partner Focus Group (39-42)
- F5VC Commissioner Key Informant Interviews (43-50)

Ventura County Landscape Summary

Summary of conditions impacting children prenatal to age 5 and their families in Ventura County

Demographics	• 55,654 children 0-5; majority live in Oxnard Plains • Primary languages F5VC vs VC: English 53% vs 60%; Spanish 24% vs 32%; Mixteco 23% vs 8% • Race/Ethnicity F5VC vs VC: Latinx 66% vs 43%; White 17% vs 43%

Financial Stability	• VC Median Household income $103,111
	  ○ Latinx $93,806; Non-Hispanic/Latino $160,589
	• Income below $50,000 F5VC vs VC: 70% vs 24%
	• VC families with children living below poverty 3.9%
	  ○ Largest number and percent live in Oxnard Plains, Santa Paula, Simi Valley (9% or above)

Child Health and Development	• 97% of children have health insurance • 49% of children 0-5 are enrolled in Medi-Cal • 60% of Medi-Cal children with 6+ well-child visits by 15 months • 71% of 2-year-olds receiving all immunizations (IZ) • 100% of WEB children up to date on all IZ and completed well-child visits • 41% of Medi-Cal children received developmental screening by age 3 vs 55.8% F5VC children

Strong and Resilient Families	• 1 in 4 VC residents receive Human Services Agency services
	• 27% of households below Real Cost Measure
	  ○ 49% households with children under 6
	  ○ 63% of single mothers
	• 39% of households spend more than 30% of income on housing
	  ○ Homelessness among children is increasing
	• 46% of substantiated child abuse cases are children 0-5
	• Basic Needs (housing, food, utilities) are top concern for families
	• Other needs: child care, inability to read hospital material, mental health services

Quality Early Learning	• 60.8% of children 3- 5 have licensed preschool or TK space • 17.3% of infants and toddlers have licensed child care space • Cost of child care outpaces wages: $19,790 average anual rate for infant/toddler • Family Child Care providers are steadily increasing: 611 in June 2025 vs 513 in June 2023

F5VC = First 5 Ventura County
VC = Ventura County

F5VC Mission – Vision - Equity

VISION

All Ventura County children are born healthy, thrive in nurturing environments, and enter school prepared and eager to learn.

MISSION

First 5 Ventura County's (F5VC) mission is to strengthen families, communities, and systems of care for children prenatal to five years through investments, expertise, and leadership so all children reach their full potential.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

F5VC is dedicated to serving families who can benefit the most and have the least access to other early childhood services. Program evaluation illuminated the F5VC's program outcomes in narrowing education- and income-related disparities that can affect parenting. The Neighborhoods for Learning have a powerful potential to promote equity in diverse communities.

F5VC Staff/Commissioner: Spring 2025 SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Comprehensive, free services for families (0–5), countywide network
- Skilled, diverse staff and trusted leadership
- Leaders in ECE, strong parent voice
- Focus on prevention, integration, research
- Financial transparency and professional culture

Weaknesses

- Reliance on declining Prop 10 funding
- Site challenges: location, space, safety, autonomy
- Limited staff capacity to meet demand
- Lack capacity to pursue all opportunities

Opportunities

- Diversified funding options
- Policy alignment: Managed Care Plan, CalAIM, AB 2083, Prop 1
- Early childhood as bipartisan priority;
- New preK/TK investments
- Strong partnerships & chance to realign vision

Threats

- External pressures: politics, immigration, housing, disasters
- Declining birth rates, family stressors, substance abuse
- Competition for qualified staff, burnout, high cost of living
- Distrust of government agencies

Parent and Caregiver Survey Summary

Who We Heard From	• 92% parents/guardians of young children • 66% Hispanic/Latino, 34% White • Responses concentrated in Oxnard and Santa Paula • 41% of households under $30K • Children mainly ages 1-3 (44%) and 3-5 (39%) • 34% prefer Spanish as primary language
Priorities & Communication	• Top needs: childcare, screenings, parent-child classes • Info most desired: child development, literacy, healthy lifestyles • Families prefer email (78%) for communication
Services & Barriers	• Highest awareness of PACT classes (75%) • Top barriers: Cost (55%), lack of info (40%), waitlists (37%)

Slides 8-26

Community Partner Survey Summary

Who We Heard From	• Mix of county government (39%), nonprofits, child care & service providers (15%) • Many serve families county-wide (61%), others concentrated in Oxnard & surrounding ZIPs
Program Awareness & Referrals	• Strongest awareness/referrals for NfL (82%) and MICOP (76%) • Moderate awareness for PACT (55%), Take 5 (66%), and HMG (52%) • Lower awareness/referrals for WEB (34%) and Fatherhood Summit (39%)
Perceived Priorities for Families	• Highest: referrals for children with special needs (88%), screenings (85%), parent connection to resources (85%), and child care (82%) • Other priorities: health insurance access (79%) and parent education (70%)
Top Services Partners Would Prioritize	• Child care, health insurance, and parent connection to resources (each 36%) • Parenting education (30%) and parent–child classes (27%)
Resources & Activities Partners Want More Of	• Funding for vulnerable populations (61%) • Strengthened NfL services (56%) • Universal prevention services (50%) • Cross-sector collaboration & bilingual literacy campaigns (~44%)

ASR Helping People Build Better Communities

Slides 27-38

2020-26 Desired Outcome Framework

Program and Systems Integration

We will measure progress towards achieving our mission and vision through desired outcomes.

- Early Childhood Systems are strengthened with increased capacity of partners
- Early Childhood Systems are integrated with increased cross-systems understanding, resources, sharing, referral, and collaboration
- Early childhood resources, services and supports are sustained with legislation and policy

We apply a program and systems integration lens to the following strategic priority areas to focus efforts in achieving our vision and mission.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	INVESTMENTS	DESIRED OUTCOMES
Comprehensive Child Health and Development	• Access to and utilization of health care services • Early identification of developmental delays and social emotional issues • Parental mental health screening • Pediatric Support for Social and Emotional Development	• Children are meeting developmental milestones, have health insurance, and are up to date with well child & dental visits • Children with developmental or health concerns are identified and connected to services • Mothers identified at-risk for depression are connected to appropriate services and support
Strong and ResilientFamilies	• Social Needs Screenings • Parent and Child Together Classes • Parent Education and Supports • Community Resource and Referral • Service Coordination and Case Management • Parent Engagement	Parents have: • Knowledge of and capacity to promote healthy child development • Access and connections to essential community services/resources • Confidence in their ability to meet their child's developmental needs • Positive relationship with their child and secure attachment • Opportunities for social connections and sources of support
Quality Early Learning	• Quality enhancement of PACT • Take 5 and Read! Early Literacy Campaign • Community Investment Loan Fund	• Parents have access to high-quality early care and education • Parents promote their child's early learning and literacy

Focus Group and Commissioner Interviews

The following sections summarize qualitative input gathered through Parent and Partner Focus Groups, as well as Key Informant Interviews with F5VC Commissioners. Each page highlights feedback related to one of F5VC's four Strategic Priorities, as outlined in the 2020–26 Desired Outcome Framework

COMPREHENSIVE CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

F5VC invests in services for families that support comprehensive health and development for infants and toddlers.

	Parent/Partner Feedback	Commissioner Interviews
Strengths	1. F5VC Staff are "gold". Staff have great reputation and are strong advocates/ partners 2. PACT classes include education on social-emotional development 3. Developmental screenings are invaluable 4. Public Health Integration: Nutrition and child development support embedded Into PACT 5. WEB program grounding with meaningful post-partum Support 6. HMG provides developmental support	1. F5VC is a trusted 0-5 resource (strong reputation with educational development, WEB, PACT, parent education, strong parent engagement, excellent teachers, NfL- tailored to local community, home visiting parenting coaches- excellent) 2. Partnerships, such as libraries 3. Strong use of data- measuring program enrollment, screenings, and results 4. Health and developmental screenings 5. Post-partum depression is critical and First 5 Ventura adopted to address the need
Weaknesses	1. Support navigating Medi-Cal (eligibility, full services available, coordination) 2. Maternal mental health support for families with children with developmental needs 3. Increase post-partum WEB sessions 4. Less burdensome screening tools 5. Referral support and better follow-up earlier early intervention-linkage lag 7. Ambiguity about whether pediatrician/educator does follow-up screenings	1. Pre-pregnancy parent education- (on F5 service offerings, setting realistic expectations- post-partum awareness, developmental milestone workshops, destigmatizing screening and accessing support 2. Increase awareness of free services 3. No follow-up tracking data for referral services after identified as having behavioral/developmental health needs 4. Improve physical and social health 5. School-age drop-off in check-ups
Opportunities	1. TK counseling support-leverage "expert" reputation to support parents in decision-making (well-funded) 2. Greater awareness of Available Services 3. Deploy surveys to adapt programming regularly to local demographic needs 4. Partner support amplifying brand 5. Navigating developmental concerns (ASD, speech, OT/PT/ABA) and (IEPs) 6. Delay in receiving support/referrals 7. Partner Mental Health Supports	1. Prenatal counseling outlining developmental expectations pre-pregnancy 2. Adopt model similar to "care ambassadors" to cultivate trust with community and support them in navigating benefits 3. Potential Behavioral Health funding 4. Medi-cal reimbursement 5. Become an ECM provider through CalAim 6. Go beyond tracking "how many" screened to "how well" received support
Threats	1. Transportation and time constraints 2. Lack of affordable childcare 3. Difficulty accessing services and support within the school system	1. Potential Medi-Cal cuts. 2. People feeling unsafe due to the current climate 3. Constaints on attaining concrete basic needs

STRONG AND RESILIENT FAMILIES

F5VC invests in programs that provide families with the foundational support and knowledge to be their child's first and best teacher. F5VC programs aim to build parental resilience, social connections, concrete support in times of crisis, and knowledge of parenting and child development

	Parent/Partner Feedback	Commissioner Interviews
Strengths	1. Parent/caregiver support/education 2. Social Determinants of Health 3. Treats the whole family 4. Great connector 5. Trusted resource for families 6. Father engagement 7. Established early childhood experts 8. Provide much needed support to new parents	1. NfLs tailored to hyper-local area; responsive to needs- excellent programming 2. Parent engagement- Parent Leaders are motivated 3. Developmental screenings- can be used to assess need 4. Shift to treating whole family from whole child 5. Cultivating a community of peer-peer resources, a welcoming and inclusive community 6. Culturally responsive and humble approach 7. Expert teachers and Home Visiting program supports parents 8. Protective Factors model 9. Parent education-relating/bonding with child 10. Paternal engagement
Weaknesses	1. Limited capacity of staff/referral place 2. When parents graduate from PACT, resources and awareness of events drop-off 3. Sometimes no communication after waitlist 4. A lot of information to navigate and parents don't know what to ask 5. More transparency about PACT enrollment and scheduling on website	1. Increase non-reading learning activites 2. Collaborate more with other partners 3. Increase presence in K-12 schools 4. Support parents/caregivers on the spectrum in navigating insurance, IEP, mental health support 5. Lack of community awareness of full program offerings 6. Waitlists for PACT classes 7. Raise attendance/engagement at NfL
Opportunities	1. TK counseling support-leverage "expert" reputation to support parents in decision-making 2. Promotion of available services 3. Parent Leaders are motivated to fill niche need; reach out to those on waitlist and invite to events; create meetups or support groups and other opportunities for social engamgent and conenction 4. Collaborate with local agencies and organizations (i.e. parks and recs) for temporary facility use 5. Begin process of informing parents about First 5 resources during pregnancy.	1. Leverage PACT to increase general NfL engagement in other programs 2. Develop innovative approach in the face of pervasive fear (i.e. similar to Wellness Ambassadors at schools); have a warm-touch expert support with benefits navigation and eligibility 3. Collaborations with different health agencies (i.e. Gold Coast experts) 4. Increase community visibility and encourage immunizations/screenings-set up booth at fair or farmer's market 5. Join other Parent Leader groups
Threats	1. Wages outpaced by cost of llving 2. Constraints on time and transportation. 3. Current climate feels unsafe for immigrant populations.	1. Families are having difficulty accessing their basic needs, like health, housing, and shelter. 2. Working families and single-income families face severe time constraints. 3. Transportation 4. Medi-cal funding- potential cut 5. Rapidly shifting policies

QUALITY EARLY LEARNING

F5VC invests in services that promote high-quality early learning starting at birth.

	Parent/Partner Feedback	Commissioner Interviews
Strengths	1. Trusted Early Childhood Experts 2. Library collaboration- provides acess to amazing books 3. Reputation- reading experts-respected by colleagues/community as reading experts and advocates 4. Great trusted community partner and valued resource in education space 5. Bi-lingual offerings 6. Screenings allow for earlier intervention which sets up children for greater success during school years-supports school readiness	1. Take 5 and Read! Early Literacy Campaign 2. Effective county-wide reading campaigns are impactful and fun 3. PACT classes- SEL 4. Have evolved programming over the years to better address most pressing County needs 5. Recognized as powerful advocate and great connectors of people 6. Much stronger education awareness than health 7. Holistic approach to education focused on mother-child learning together and social interaction 8. High PACT enrollment- great because entry point to other First 5 services 9. Successfully levels the playing field by making accessible child care and early learning opportunities 10. HMG- holistic approach to brain development
Weaknesses	1. Limited PACT availability-waitlist 2. Challenging navigating getting support for children with behavioral/developmental/learning challenges with the school district 3. Gap in students with speech/developmental needs receiving support between the age of 4 and 5 4. Support lag due to staff shortages 5. More learning activites beyond literacy—consider Library activities or park/nature ones 6. No programming for children who age out of PACT classes	1. Provide support for parents/caregivers navigating children challenges with behavioral needs 2. Provide support in helping parents navigate school system 3. Educational programming- limited availability and schedule 4. Bureaucratic red-tape of school district support for those with developmental delays/behavioral needs 5. Facilitate connecting families to schools and other education resources
Opportunities	1. Support/connect familes to resources navigating school system- mediate decision making 2. TK counseling- funds moving there 3. Support parents who may be reticent to access support for their child with developmental delays or behavioral support needs; set the expectation during prenatal period about potential of post-partum depression	1. Support parents/caregivers of children with developmental needs 2. Fill in gap for age 4 (if opt out of TK) 3. Leverage PACT to promote other programs 4. Innovative partnerships- 5. Amplify other agencies
Threats	1. Lower birth rates- lower enrollment in schools-fewer qualified educators	1. Qualified educator teacher shortage 2. Lower attendance in schools

PROGRAM AND SYSTEMS

At First 5 Ventura County focuses on driving systems change by collaborating with community partners, policymakers, and service providers to align efforts to support children and families

	Parent/Partner Feedback	Commissioner Interviews
Strengths	1. Strong partner presence and sought after collaborator; 2. Advocate in legislative space in service of best interest of children prenatal to age 5 3. Programming responsive to expressed feedback and neds of county 4. Incorporated more post-partum resources based on feedback as well as paternal engagement 5. Relationship-minded organization will allow F5VC to whether volatile context and leadership changes 6. PACT classes are a vital resource in community	1. Staff is caring, committed, transparent, communicative 2. Mission-driven, humane work culture 3. Leadership-excellent character; strategically effective and focused. Consistently delivered on desired outcomes; relationships-driven 4. Proven track record successfully delivering on all strategic priorities-honed focus and executed exceptionally well; operationally well-run; fiscally sound 5. Adaptive pivots on services to meet County needs 6. Strong community partnerships ; connect people 7. Strong Commission with commitment to adapt program offerings to be culturally responsive and inclusive for County demographic served 8. Trainings at NfLs are values aligned 9. If continue to offer same services at same level of quality and capacity—would be successful- done very well 10. First 5 provides invaluable parenting resources and classes that lower-income families might not otherwise be able to access, therefore leveling the playing field 11. Home Visiting program is great and could be mobilized more
Weaknesses	1. For families with a sibling who has aged out of PACT, there is no available options 2. Waitlist- lack of understanding of how it works 3. Communications- you have to know to know what the services are-have to be proactive and may not know the right questions to ask 4. In order to address growing needs in Ventura County will have to expand 5. Inflexible schedule for working parents	1. Lack of secure. longstanding facilities for NfL undermines ability to establish entrenched role in community- having a constant location in a high need community and desirable location would enhance brand identity and perception as local resource center to support vulnerable families 2. Lack of publicizing full services = lack of brand awareess 3. Support in bridging gap and communicate services available to program participants in palpable way to allay some fear and establish trust
Opportunities	1. Virtual screenings 2. Communication- newsletters- detailing and outlining offerings 3. Reminders—automated and messaged in a fun and personalized way-reminders for screenings/appointments 4. Leveraging social media for education campaigns on available resources 5. Leverage behavioral health reform 6. Can leverage established trust to bridge the gap caused by wariness of systems in current climate;	1. Designate staff member to track all existing partnerships and grow further 2. Designate a staff member to stay ever abreast of rapidly shifting federal/state legislative budget priorities 3. Develop advocacy partnerships to help secure long-term reasonably priced facilities for NfL 4. Explore qualitative feedback 5. Seek out partnerships with growing presence of non-profits in Ventura County 6. Seek out mission-aligned corporate sponsorships, or organizations 7. With strategic plan opportunity to re-align services with ever-changing need and to be very intentional and efficient with resources 8. Follow flow of money-be wiling to be agile, flexible and research successful models to see if fit for the County
Threat	1. Unprecedented need to diversify funding and potentially seek non-government funding	1. Volatile context foments fear and fear for safety 2. Rapidly shifting landscape 3. Houselessness, inflation, food insecurity

Upcoming Commission Meeting Facilitation Guide

At the September 18th, 2025, Commission Meeting ASR and F5VC staff will facilitate a conversation with Commissioners on potential refiniements to the existing Strategic Priorities

Current			Future
FY 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities	**Investments**	**Outcomes**	**Potential Refinements**
Comprehensive Child Health & Development	• Access to and utilization of health care services • Early identification of developmental delays and social emotional issues • Parental mental health screening • Pediatric Support for Social and Emotional Development	• Children are meeting developmental milestones, have health insurance, and are up to date with well child & dental visits • Children with developmental or health concerns are identified and connected to services • Mothers identified at-risk for depression are connected to appropriate services and support	
Stong and Resilient Families	• Social Needs Screenings • Parent and Child Together Classes • Parent Education and Supports • Community Resource and Referral • Service Coordination and Case Management • Parent Engagement	• Knowledge of and capacity to promote healthy child development • Access and connections to essential community services/resources • Confidence in their ability to meet their child's developmental needs • Positive relationship with their child and secure attachment • Opportunities for social connections and sources of support	
Quality Early Learning	• Quality enhancement of PACT • Take 5 and Read! Early Literacy Campaign • Community Investment Loan Fund	• Parents have access to high-quality early care and education • Parents promote their child's early learning and literacy	
Program and Systems Integration	• Help Me Grow • Community Investment Loans • Capacity building and training • Communication and messaging • Convening and collaboration • Innovation and learning • Financial sustainability • Advocacy and policy development	• Early Childhood Systems are strengthened with increased capacity of partners • Early Childhood Systems are integrated with increased cross systems understanding, resources, sharing, referral, and collaboration • Early childhood resources, services and supports are sustained with legislation and policy	