



Reaching Every Child

FIRST 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT



INTRODUCTION

The **First 5 Early Childhood Mental Health Project** offers new strategies to achieve a seamless, integrated early childhood mental health system.

project vision

Counties throughout California develop systems that fully support young children’s social-emotional health, including the ability to regulate emotions, form secure relationships, and explore and learn within the context of their families, communities and cultures.

Over the past few years, a number of efforts—including those advanced by First 5, the Mental Health Services Act, and Child Welfare Redesign—have made improvements in social-emotional, developmental and autism services for young children.

Policymakers and practitioners now recognize the need to link these efforts. By creating coordinated systems that integrate local, county and statewide efforts, we can truly improve service delivery for children and families.

This project’s goal is to help California create an effective, accessible and fully coordinated early childhood mental health system to identify and serve children age 0 to 5 with mental health issues.

This project builds on promising approaches that have succeeded in counties and other states. And perhaps most important, it points to ways to leverage our resources and work together in challenging times.

the planning process

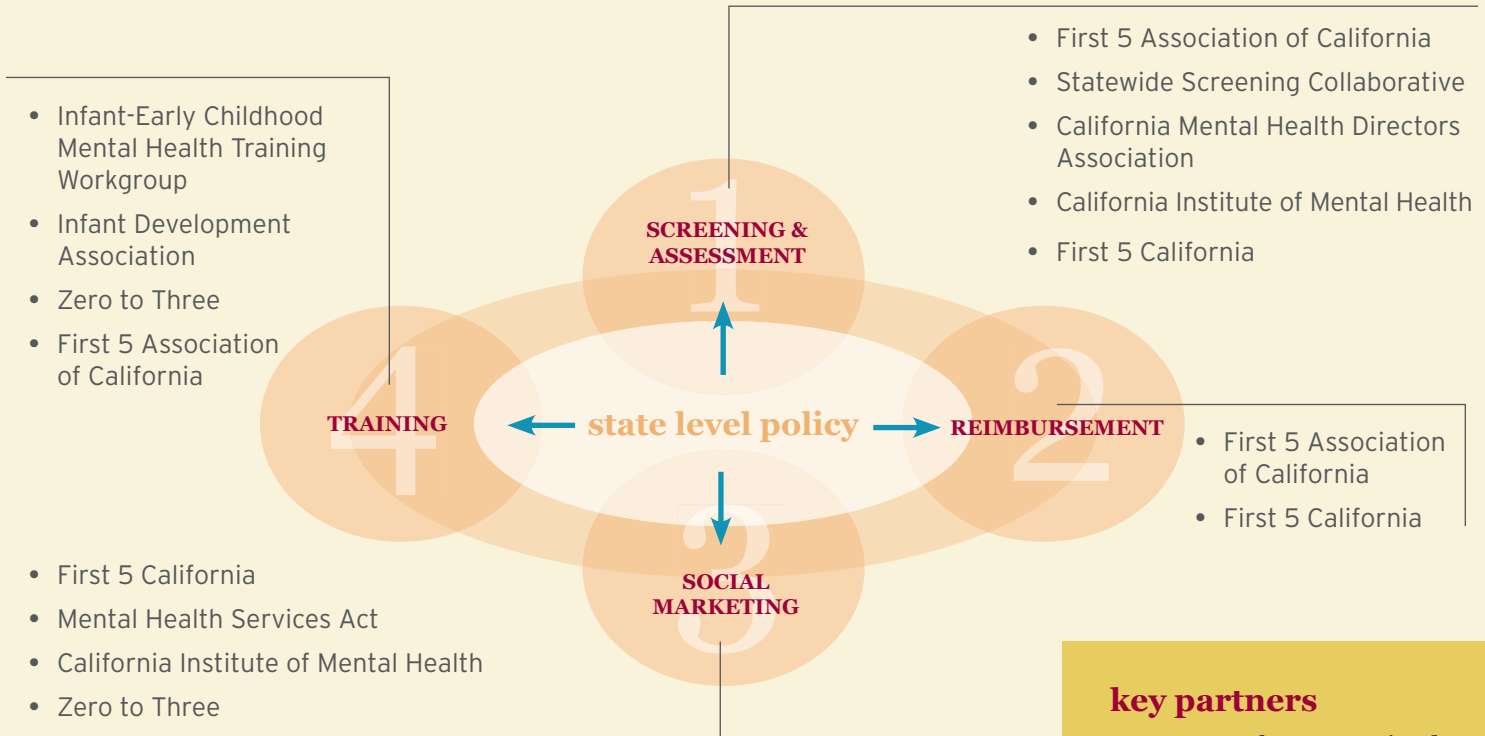
This project is the result of a two-year collaborative planning process led by the First 5 Association of California to identify the systemic barriers to and solutions for the delivery and funding of mental health services for children age 0 to 5 and their families. The project:

- Developed priorities and strategies
- Identified partners key to implementation
- Identified ways to leverage federal and state funds
- Worked with potential partners to refine priorities and strategies
- Promoted county-level efforts

Project participants included representatives from First 5, mental health, special needs, child care and community agencies.

priorities and partnerships

Four critical priorities emerged during the planning process. They require county and state-level implementation, and state-level policy change. Committed partners for each priority are listed.



key partners

Key partners have committed to take on a leadership or support role in implementing strategic priorities.

- California Institute of Mental Health
- California Mental Health Directors Association
- First 5 California
- First 5 County Commissions
- Infant Development Association
- Statewide Screening Collaborative
- Zero to Three
- Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Training Workgroup

strategic priorities

The four core priorities in this plan include those that should be implemented by counties, as well as strategies for state-level policy initiatives. These priorities and strategies respond to the many barriers and opportunities identified through the planning process. They address broad system changes and critical local needs. The strategies build on best practices, evidence-based programs and successful county efforts.

On each page, you'll find a core priority, and any associated strategies. The agencies that will take a leadership role in

implementing the strategy are listed in the diagram on this page.

As the examples of existing county programs on the following pages show, many counties are already working to improve the early childhood mental health system with outstanding results.

Leadership across organizations emphasized the critical need for strategies that point to both local action and state-level policy changes. The First 5 Association of California will advocate for and facilitate policy changes at the state level in collaboration with key partners.

1

SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT PRIORITY

Establish **comprehensive screening** protocols for social-emotional, developmental, autism and maternal depression as part of all **well child and prenatal visits** at appropriate periodicity through age five and **ensure access to comprehensive assessments**.

STRATEGY: Consolidate the number of screening and assessment tools accepted by providers and reimbursed by Medi-Cal and Healthy Families. Ensure consistency and acceptance of tools related to eligibility across agencies and providers.

STRATEGY: Provide and promote written guidelines to establish common procedures for social-emotional, developmental, autism and maternal screening and appropriate periodicity for all Medi-Cal Managed Care well-child visits. Adopt quality measures to ensure statewide consistency.



Countywide Coordination MONTEREY COUNTY

In Monterey County, a multi-agency Special Needs Task Force supports coordinated and comprehensive services and has increased early identification and intervention to help infants with special needs.



RESULTS

- Comprehensive service referrals
- An infant stimulation and parent education program for children 0 to 3
- Day classes and home-based services for parents with toddlers
- Parent-child playgroups and an on-going parent dialogue support group
- Developmental screening, medical treatment, comprehensive psychological assessments, occupational therapy, home visiting and dyadic therapy to high risk children under five
- A summer transition to kindergarten program
- Community-based services with co-location at four Family Resource Center sites
- Infant and preschool mental health services
- Dyadic therapy (including Theraplay and PCIT)
- Mental health consultation to 18 area Head Start centers and 19 preschool classrooms
- Reflective supervision for selected family child care providers

KEY PARTNERS

- Monterey County Children’s Behavioral Health Team
- Office of Education Program for Infants with Special Needs
- Monterey County Screening Team for Assessment, Referral and Treatment
- The First 5 California Special Needs Project
- First 5 California and First 5 Monterey County
- Alisal Union School District



Coordinated County Service Systems ORANGE COUNTY

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County has implemented a strong screening initiative across multiple service delivery systems and sectors. The programs screen children for developmental milestones and link them to comprehensive or early intervention services. They have increased access to early treatment.

RESULTS

- In 2007 and 2008, Commission-funded programs screened 33,422 young children for developmental delays and linked them to comprehensive or early intervention services
- Developmental and behavioral screenings are provided by School Readiness Nurses; American Academy of Pediatrics; Family Support Network Community Screening Project; Help Me Grow; LEAPS Special Needs Demonstration Project; and the Early Childhood System of Care
- Children identified with mild delays or risk factors are referred for early intervention services, and those identified with severe delays receive a comprehensive array of services
- A Pathways Leadership Committee implements an enhanced developmental services system

and includes representatives from health care, government, education and community-based organizations

- In 2008, the Pathways Leadership Committee finalized goals and strategies to strengthen the Orange County Developmental & Behavioral Pathways system

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

- Early Childhood Mental Health
- Assuring Better Child Health and Development
- Mental Health Services Act
- The First 5 California Special Needs Project
- Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act State Planning
- The Children and Families Commission of Orange County



2

REIMBURSEMENT PRIORITY

Ensure greater reimbursement for **early childhood mental health screening, assessment and treatment.**

STRATEGY: Develop a state-level policy proposal that requires greater statewide collaboration and coordination to increase utilization of existing reimbursement mechanisms for screening, assessment and treatment.

STRATEGY: Implement a statewide DC: 0-3R (Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health & Developmental Disorders of Infancy & Early Childhood, Revised) to crosswalk to existing criteria and ensure statewide training to promote consistency and understanding.



Strong Funding Partnerships SONOMA COUNTY

The First 5 Sonoma County Early Childhood Mental Health task force has developed and begun implementing a plan for an effective ECMH system that supports the optimal social-emotional development of children from the prenatal stage through age five. This effort focuses on promoting healthy attachment relationships between children and their caregivers through education about child development and positive parenting.



RESULTS

- 25-30% of Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention (MHSA-PEI) funds pledged to children 0 to 5
- MHSA-PEI and First 5 are collaborating on a joint funding opportunity to increase parent support and screening for maternal depression and children’s social-emotional issues
- Social workers and foster parents have been trained and are conducting periodic screenings of children in foster care
- A First 5-funded study by County Mental Health to expand local use of Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) funding for children birth to 5 and a pledge from First 5 to fund a portion of the local match when those methods are identified

KEY PARTNERS

- The First 5 California Special Needs Project
- Community-based organizations serving young children and their families
- First 5 Sonoma County
- Department of Human Services, Family, Youth, and Children’s Services Division
- Department of Health Services, Mental Health Division
- Children’s Mental Health Partnership
- Early Learning Institute
- Mental Health Services Act
- Families First Home Visiting
- Easter Seals Northern California
- Kaiser Permanente, Petaluma
- First 5 Marin
- Behavioral Consultation Project



Seamless Early Identification and Intervention FRESNO COUNTY

The SMART Model of Care, an integrated behavioral health system, identifies and intervenes early for children 0 to 5 before school failure or juvenile justice involvement.

RESULTS

- Community-based identification
- Center-based assessments
- Accessible treatments
- Public-private partnerships

KEY PARTNERS

- First 5 Fresno County
- Fresno County Department of Community Health, Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health
- Parents of high risk children



SOCIAL MARKETING PRIORITY

Implement a statewide **social marketing campaign** to reduce stigma and promote behaviors that enhance young children’s **social-emotional health**.

“A comprehensive social marketing campaign is an opportunity to spread a consistent message about supportive parenting and its dramatic effect on social-emotional development. We want to reach all families with young children and the professionals who work with them.”

—MOIRA KENNEY, STATEWIDE PROGRAM DIRECTOR, FIRST 5 ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

Raise & Shine™ MENDOCINO COUNTY

Mendocino County has implemented a comprehensive social marketing campaign called Raise & Shine. The campaign helps parents link to local organizations that offer parenting services in support of a county-wide early childhood mental health initiative.



CAMPAIGN COMPONENTS

- A provider directory and website, including family videos (www.raiseandshine.org)
- Spanish and English posters and information cards
- “Ask Raise & Shine” newspaper column, press releases and event flyers
- Radio and bus ads
- Movie theater slides
- and Positive Parenting Program (Triple P)
- A bilingual warm line is available 40 hours a week for families with questions about child behavior
- The county’s largest pediatrics practice, which serves 50% of children 0 to 5, has fully integrated Triple P and delivers all Triple P levels in Spanish and English

RESULTS

- More than 100 local clinicians and paraprofessionals have been trained in parenting skills programs such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
- Head Start home visitors countywide have been trained to provide Triple P on-site and in homes, in Spanish and English; classroom teachers in the Ukiah area have also taken advanced Triple P training through the community colleges



More Screenings, Better Linkages SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY

San Francisco has made deep investments in an Early Childhood System of Screening, Assessment, Referral and Treatment with strong collaborative partnerships in the early childhood mental health, early intervention and family support fields.

RESULTS

- Early childhood mental health consultants in nearly all subsidized childcare centers, Preschool for All classrooms and family resource centers
- Expanded early childhood mental health services, including on-site therapeutic playgroups, sensory integration and speech services, and inclusion supports
- Early childhood mental health consultants that help parents and providers complete developmental screenings, support teachers and families, and refer children and families to needed services
- A Multi-Disciplinary Assessment Center at San Francisco General Hospital that partners with the Child Development Center of California Pacific Medical Center
- A Support for Families of Children with Disabilities Family Resource Center that offers a range of family support services
- A High Risk Infant Interagency Council that provides triage service to help children and families access services

KEY PARTNERS

- The Department of Public Health
- Human Services Agency
- Department of Children, Youth and their Families
- First 5 San Francisco County
- The First 5 California Special Needs Project



4

TRAINING PRIORITY

Establish a **statewide system** for training **multidisciplinary** early childhood professionals with **uniform competencies**.

STRATEGY: Promote universal adoption of the *California Training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health* by state and local agencies and institutes of higher education.

STRATEGY: Designate the Department of Mental Health as the lead agency in a California interagency collaborative

early childhood mental health workforce development effort.

STRATEGY: Promote state-level coordination and collaboration to develop a statewide system for training early childhood professionals from multidisciplinary backgrounds to attain the Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health Competencies.

A Continuum of Services RIVERSIDE COUNTY

Riverside has developed a comprehensive Mental Health Initiative that promotes social competence through a full screening, early intervention and treatment continuum. The Initiative targets high-risk communities and has not been awarded to date. The Commission currently partners with the Riverside County Department of Mental Health to provide a host of mental health services including social-emotional screening and mental health treatment services to preschool-aged children at various sites throughout the county. Mental health staff offer concerned parents case management services, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, and the Incredible Years curriculum.



RESULTS

- All clients served received comprehensive service referrals
- Developmental and behavioral screening is available at 32 sites including primary health care clinics, child care and schools
- Child-focused early intervention services are available through the Incredible Years curriculum to children demonstrating severe behavioral problems
- Head Start Preschools employ the Incredible Years curriculum to accommodate children's needs and to help preschool teachers manage disruptive classroom behaviors
- Over 1,000 children received social-emotional screenings
- 60% of participating parents showed decreases in parental stress after engaging in parenting programs

PARTNERS

- Riverside County Department of Public Health
- Lake Elsinore Unified School District
- The First 5 California Special Needs Project
- The Carolyn E. Wylie Center for Children, Youth and Families
- V.I.P. TOTS



A System of Care ALAMEDA COUNTY

The Alameda County Early Childhood Mental Health System of Care weaves together prevention, early intervention and treatment services and identifies funding streams to support the service delivery system.

RESULTS

- Early childhood mental health practice standards for all clinicians
- Intensive training for 200 culturally and ethnically diverse clinicians to provide dyadic treatment to young children and families in non-traditional mental health settings through the Irving Harris Early Childhood Mental Health Training Seminar
- Child Care Mental Health Consultation to 80 child care sites (to be expanded next year through Mental Health Services Act Prevention and Early Intervention funds)
- Expanded Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) for the 0 to 5 population in 12 community organizations using a home-based model
- More than 30% increase in maternal depression screening by our community-based partners
- A Children's Screening, Assessment Referral and Treatment Initiative (SART) with points of entry at pediatric offices, early care and education programs, and the foster care system

KEY PARTNERS

- Alameda County Early Childhood Policy Committee
- First 5 Alameda County
- Behavioral Health Care Services
- Alameda County Child Care Planning Council
- Children's Hospital Oakland and Research Institute
- Community-based organizations serving young children birth to five





First 5 Association of California

The First 5 Association of California works to improve the lives of California's youngest children and their families through an effective, coordinated and inclusive implementation of the California Children and Families Act at the local and state levels. Since 1998, First 5 Commissions, with funding from the Act, have supported comprehensive and integrated systems and services promoting early childhood development from prenatal to age five. The ultimate goal is to enhance the health and early growth experiences of children, enabling them to be more successful in school and to give them a better opportunity to succeed in life.

advisory committee

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Mary Jane Burke, Superintendent of Schools, Marin County

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partners

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County Offices of Education

Special Education Local Plan Area and Regional Center Staff

Community-Based Organizations Serving Families with Young Children

Early Childhood Education Providers and Advocates

American Academy of Pediatrics, California Chapter

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Susan True, Executive Director, First 5 Santa Cruz County

Pat Wheatley, Executive Director, First 5 Santa Barbara County

participating first 5 county commissions

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| Alameda | San Benito |
| Contra Costa | San Francisco |
| Fresno | San Mateo |
| Humboldt | Santa Barbara |
| Los Angeles | Santa Clara |
| Marin | Santa Cruz |
| Mendocino | Solano |
| Monterey | Sonoma |
| Napa | Stanislaus |
| Orange | Ventura |
| Riverside | Yuba |
| Sacramento | |

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