

Memo

To: Commission Members
From: Alexander Khu
Date: Monday September 12, 2016
Re: September 12, 2016 Commission Meeting

Enclosed are the materials for the September 12, 2016 Commission meeting which will take place as follows:

Time: 6:00 PM
Location: 1485 Civic Court Suite 1200, Concord, CA
925-771-7300

A light dinner will be provided.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Kind Regards,

Alexander Khu, Executive Assistant
First 5 Contra Costa
1485 Civic Court
Suite 1200
Concord, CA 94520
925-771-7342 Direct
925-771-6083 Fax



Commission Meeting Agenda

Monday, September 12, 2016, 6:00 pm
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200
Large Conference Room
Concord, CA

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

2.0 Public Comment

The public may comment on any item of public interest within the jurisdiction of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission. In accordance with the Brown Act, if a member of the public addresses an item not on the posted agenda, no response, discussion, or action on the item may occur.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

Action

A Commissioner or member of the public may ask that any of the following consent items be removed from the consent calendar for consideration under Item 4.

3.1 Approve the minutes from the July 11, 2016 meeting.

3.2 Approve the Contracts Docket

APPROVE and AUTHORIZE the Executive Director to execute a contract amendment with Counseling Options & Parent Education Support Center, Inc. to increase the payment limit by \$77,250 (from \$67,250 to \$144,500) to provide Triple P classes to parents with children ages 0-5 utilizing certified trainers with skill sets in serving the development needs of young children and their families throughout Contra Costa County. FY2016-17 budget line: Early Intervention Initiative: Mental Health Therapeutic Services (\$304,500) 100% of additional funds are from Contra Costa County Health Services.

4.0 Consider for discussion any items removed from the consent calendar.

5.0 Consider accepting the final financial report for fiscal year 2015-2016.

Action

6.0 Consider appointing nominating committee for 2017 Officers Election.

Action

7.0 Consider approving the standing meetings for 2017.

Action

8.0 Update on QRIS activities.

Discussion

9.0 Executive Director's Report

Discussion

10.0 Communications

Discussion

- New Rating System provides insight into child care and preschool programs
- A Divided Electorate is united on Early Childhood Education
- Pittsburg: Group to launch exercise program at De Anza Park
- Retailers roll with new restriction on tobacco sales to minors
- Strengthening our tax system to improve our quality of life
- Thank You Letter to ASM Catharine Baker



11.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

Discussion

12.0 Adjourn

The First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission will provide reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities planning to participate in Commission meetings who contact the Commission's offices, at least 48 hours before the meeting, at (925) 771-7300.

Any disclosable public records related to an open session item on a regular meeting agenda and distributed by the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission to a majority of members of the First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission less than 96 hours prior to that meeting are available for public inspection at 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200, Concord, CA 94520 during normal business hours.

In consideration of those who may suffer from chemical sensitivities or who may have allergic reactions to heavy scents, First 5 Contra Costa requests that staff and visitors refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, or the use of strongly scented products in the work place. We thank you for your consideration of others.



Monday September 12, 2016

Agenda Item 3.1

Approve the minutes from the July 12, 2016 Commission Meeting.



**Commission Meeting
MINUTES**

Monday, July 11, 2016, 6:00 pm
1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200
Large Conference Room
Concord, CA

1.0 Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:17 PM.

Commissioners in attendance were:

Vice-Chair Kathy Gallagher for PJ Shelton, Secretary-Treasurer Gareth Ashley, Maria Fort, Dr. William Walker, and Joan Miller.

Alternate Commissioners who were present were: Katharine Mason and Matt Regan.

Also present was Contra Costa County Deputy Counsel Keiko Kobayashi.

2.0 Public Comment

Jessica Buscho, a Delta First 5 Community Advisory Council member thanked First 5 for helping her family during the formative years of her three young children. She emphasized the importance of having the community in her life. The community is like family to her especially when her family needed moral support. Because her youngest child is turning 6 years old, she felt it was time for her to move forward.

3.0 Approval of Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Dr. Walker and seconded by Gareth Ashley to approve the consent calendar.

AYES: Kathy Gallagher, Gareth Ashley, Maria Fort, William Walker and Joan Miller.

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

Motion was **APPROVED**.

4.0 Consider for discussion any items removed from the consent calendar.

There were no items from the consent calendar removed for discussion.

5.0 Annual presentation of reports from the First 5 Center Community Advisory Councils

The Family Support Initiative Program Officer, Lisa Korb opened the presentation. Each of the First 5 Centers has a Community Advisory Council, members comprised of parent volunteers from the neighboring communities. Each year, they conduct a needs assessment in order to solicit parent input regarding programing at their respective Center. CAC members learn to devise surveys and interviews and analyze the data they gathered and prepare presentations. Recommendations this year were based on the focus of their year-long projects on the "Five Protective Factors" (the foundation of the Strengthening Families framework).

Each of the five Centers (Delta, Bay Point, Antioch, West County and Monument) then made five minute presentations outlining their findings and recommendations, including classes and workshops that highlight parenting skills and fostering social and emotional competence of their children.

- 1) **BAY POINT:** The focus area is on parent and child development and the social and emotional competence of children and on the value of healthy eating. The council noted that they discovered their survey results varied from the focus group results. The group also found a number of parents having concerns regarding a sibling vying for attention from the newborn. Their recommendation encouraged more parent trainings and peer support.
- 2) **ANTIOCH:** The focus is also on the social and emotional competence of children and parents' resilience to stress. They also recommended more activities like "parent cafés" (informal gatherings in the center for parent support) that focus on stress reduction.

The commission noticed that the father participation in their information-gathering was very little and encouraged the group to consider how to bring in more participation.

- 3) **MONUMENT:** The focus is also on children's social and emotional well-being and parents' positive discipline. Their recommendation includes more positive parenting programs (such as Triple P) to help with parents' questions on how to handle stressful situations. Three quarters of the parents who participated on their focus group had seen the benefits of having learned from the Triple P class offered through the center.
- 4) **DELTA:** The members reported that the community indicated a need for support with limiting time spent using a mobile device and instead making more in-person social connections. Their recommendation: Encourage parents to be the child's first teacher at home by providing more parent-child interaction.
- 5) **WEST COUNTY:** The members reported that their community wanted to find ways to dialog with their own children with socially relevant matters such as money, poverty, etc. They want to determine what is appropriate to share and talk to children about. Their recommendations were to find ways to empower parents' ability to discuss household issues with their children and include them in the solving process. They hope this process in turn helps support their child's self-identity and to value the diversity of others as they develop through social connections. The group also memorialized Lionel Johnson in their presentation. Lionel Johnson had been a very active member of the West County First 5 community almost since its inception.

The commissioners thanked all the presenters and centers with their findings.

Maria Fort suggested that centers and their members share their findings with each other and help each other with their recommendations.

Lisa Korb informed that some of the centers have done that and sometimes if a matter is not adequately addressed, the following CAC will likely be presenting it the next year.

6.0 Discuss potential structure and agenda for Commission Retreat in October.

Sean reported that some of the feedback he heard from the Commission and staff about our move into the next strategic plan has been about the role of the Commission in advocacy and policy. While we have dabbled in this somewhat over the years, it clearly is becoming more prominent in our work, and should only be more so in the years to come. He proposed that the Commission hold an October retreat to look at the issue and more publicly define the Commission's advocacy role and the objectives we

seek. The retreat would include a review of the kinds of advocacy activities we have engaged in, an opportunity to hear from the First 5 Association, other children’s advocates and local stakeholders as to the role First 5s can play as local advocates for children and families, and discussion of the breadth and depth of advocacy that the Commission would be willing to engage in going forward.

Commissioners agreed that it would be great to have the visit from First 5 Association to share with us what the other counties are doing and see what else may resonate for us, keeping in mind the change of direction of our strategic plan. Staff will work on setting up a date and place for the retreat.

7.0 Executive Director’s Report

QRIS Ratings

Last month, just as our “Race to the Top” funding from California CDE was coming to an end, we finished the first set of re-ratings for QRIS sites. The good news is that across the board sites are showing significant improvement as a result of their participation in quality improvement activities. Professional development, coaching and environmental improvements have all resulted in 2s becoming 3s, 3s to 4s, and 4s to 5s. These improvements are seen in both centers and family child care, public and private. Keep in mind also that the funding for Race to the Top required that we prioritize those providers who were serving the children of greatest need. This cohort includes 8 Head Starts, and 13 West Contra Costa School District state preschool sites. There were also 18 family child care sites, including one that jumped from a 2 to a 5. We have to commend the providers who participated in this first cohort – they were brave to step up at the beginning of this project – as well as our partners at the County Office of Education and at the Child Care Council, and of course our crack ECE Initiative staff, Edirle Menezes, Elida Treanor, Kim Stadlander, Francisca Hernandez and Linda Frazier-Stafford.

Early Head Start teams up with Welcome Home Baby

Last month the Commission approved a new, three-year home visiting contract for Welcome Home Baby. Since then I wanted to let you know that the Community Services Bureau renewed 59 Early Head Start slots that Welcome Home Baby carried last year, as well as 22 additional West County slots previously carried by Brighter Beginnings, and 24 new slots countywide. As a result, our \$1.2 million contract this year, supporting 13.5 FTE home visitors, will now leverage an additional \$500,000 and 8.75 FTE home visitors, creating 105 additional home visiting slots. Many thanks to CSB for being such a great partner on this.

First 5 California Conference in the fall

First 5 California has set November 8, 9, and 10 as the dates for its Health Education and Care Summit in Sacramento. We expect to receive a preliminary agenda for the event next month. We’ll send it out to the Commission at that time. As always, we will pay the registration and travel expenses for this event. We have reserved a block of 20 rooms for Commissioners and staff, so no one should feel they have to make arrangements on the side.

Upcoming FESP meeting

I thought you might be interested in the upcoming Family Economic Security Council meeting, July 21. The topic is taxes, specifically how tax structures could work better for families. Presenters will include Ezra Levin, with CFED, the Corporation for Enterprise Development, and Alissa Anderson, with the California Budget and Policy Center. That forum will be here.

New staff!

Last but not least, we will have another new staff member next week, when Liliana Gonzalez joins us as the new Help Me Grow Coordinator. She will replace Shaun-Adrian Chofla, who left that position in

May.

8.0 Communications

None received.

9.0 Commissioner F.Y.I. Updates

There were none.

10.0 Adjourn

Kathy Gallagher reminded, that in observance of the Labor Day Holiday, the next standing meeting on the calendar is Monday, September 12, 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 PM.



Monday September 12, 2016

Agenda Item 5.0

Consider accepting the final financial report for FY 2015-2016



FY15/16 Revised Budget		
F5 Contra Costa Funds	Other Funds	Total Budget
REVENUE		
8,001,894		8,001,894
-	333,182	333,182
-	636,420	636,420
-	650,446	650,446
-	83,353	83,353
-	640,000	640,000
120,000		120,000
-	96,000	96,000
8,121,894	2,439,401	10,561,295
3,507,228	348,188	3,855,416
11,629,122	2,787,589	14,416,711

FY15/16 Fourth Quarter Revenue and Expenditures			
F5 Contra Costa Funds	Other Funds	Total Revenue and Expense	% of Budget
8,416,552		8,416,552	105%
	333,182	333,182	100%
	636,421	636,421	100%
	553,762	553,762	85%
	47,100	47,100	57%
	640,000	640,000	100%
176,638		176,638	147%
95	113,455	113,550	118%
8,593,285	2,323,920	10,917,205	103%
2,292,836	168,626	2,461,462	64%
10,886,121	2,492,546	13,378,667	93%

Line #

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PROGRAM			
Initiatives	7,640,326	1,905,227	9,545,553
Early Care and Education Initiative			
Professional Development	885,006	313,182	1,198,188
Early Learning Quality	64,000	812,495	876,495
Literacy	262,080		262,080
Total	1,211,086	1,125,677	2,336,763
Family Support			
First 5 Centers	2,328,718		2,328,718
Home Visiting	1,402,543		1,402,543
Training and support	25,200		25,200
Total	3,756,461		3,756,461
Early Intervention			
Therapeutic Services	171,155	75,000	246,155
ECE Consultation	993,177		993,177
Children's Developmental Needs	377,578	394,550	772,128
Children Experiencing Stress/Trauma	515,706		515,706
Training and Consultation	25,000		25,000
Total	2,082,616	469,550	2,552,166
Community Information and Education			
Public Information	444,413	310,000	754,413
Community Engagement	140,750		140,750
Family Economic Stability	5,000		5,000
Total	590,163	310,000	900,163
Program Expenses			
Program Salaries & Wages	1,069,754	455,018	1,524,772
Program Employee Benefits	585,918	223,313	809,231
Office Overhead and Other Expenses	239,616	45,541	285,157
Total	1,895,288	723,872	2,619,160
TOTAL PROGRAM	9,535,614	2,629,099	12,164,713

7,136,730	1,807,107	8,943,837	94%
865,140	313,182	1,178,322	98%
2,357	765,228	767,585	88%
262,080		262,080	100%
1,129,577	1,078,410	2,207,987	94%
2,184,184		2,184,184	94%
1,402,543		1,402,543	100%
18,349		18,349	73%
3,605,076		3,605,076	96%
126,336	75,000	201,336	82%
993,177		993,177	100%
282,072	393,612	675,684	88%
501,791		501,791	97%
10,037		10,037	40%
1,913,413	468,612	2,382,025	93%
362,758	245,097	607,855	81%
123,366	14,988	138,354	98%
2,540		2,540	51%
488,664	260,085	748,749	83%
1,064,738	394,174	1,458,912	96%
550,836	183,506	734,342	91%
191,386		191,386	67%
1,806,960	577,680	2,384,640	91%
8,943,690	2,384,787	11,328,477	93%

b.
b.c.
f.

EVALUATION		
319,251	25,760	345,011
165,381	13,871	179,252
360,286	50,000	410,286
63,751		63,751
908,669	89,631	998,300

300,453	17,653	318,106	92%
142,361	8,386	150,747	84%
354,344	39,581	393,925	96%
43,284		43,284	68%
840,442	65,620	906,062	91%

f.

ADMINISTRATION		
534,330	44,649	578,979
277,349	24,210	301,559
119,750		119,750
174,927		174,927
78,483		78,483
1,184,839	68,859	1,253,698
11,629,122	2,787,589	14,416,711

538,069	27,749	565,818	98%
278,440	14,390	292,830	97%
112,493		112,493	94%
115,916		115,916	66%
57,071		57,071	73%
1,101,989	42,139	1,144,128	91%
10,886,121	2,492,546	13,378,667	93%

f.

Distribution of expenses by department:	Program	85%
	Evaluation	7%
	Administrative	9%
	Total	100%

- a. \$222,291 more than last FY
- b. Last year of CARES Plus and Race to the Top grants
- c. Unexpended grants roll over to FY16/17
- d. TJ Long restricted funds received in prior years and expended in current year.
- e. \$107,000 of Brighter Beginnings First 5 Center loan written off per agreement.
- f. Printing, mileage, cellphone, maintenance and other overhead were underbudget.

Fund Balance as of 6/30/2016:	
Nonspendable	346,795
Prepays and Deposits	132,795
Loans Receivable - Perinatal Council	214,000
Restricted	549,405
Long Foundation - Help Me Grow	549,405
Committed	841,227
Capital Assets	841,227
Assigned	4,574,141
Elimination of FY16/17 Budget Deficit	3,962,057
Leases	612,084
Unassigned Funds	21,926,413
Contingency Fund	7,500,000
Unassigned	14,426,413
Total Fund Balance	28,237,981

e.
c.



Monday September 12, 2016

Agenda Item 6.0

Consider appointing nominating committee for 2017 Officers Election.



2017 Nominating Committee Process and Timeline

2017 Nominating Committee	Chair: Wanda Session	Members: Marilyn Lucey Matt Regan
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Timeline:

September 12, 2016:	Executive Committee Appoints Nominating Committee Chair and Members
Late September – Early October 2016	Nominating Committee sends an email to the entire Commission to elicit interest to participate on Executive Committee
October – Early November 2016	Nominating Committee meets to discuss and approve nomination of Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer for 2017
No later than Nov. 15, 2016	In accordance with the Bylaws the Nominating Committee sends out the Slate of Officers for election for 2017 to the entire Commission 2 weeks prior to the voting meeting.
December 5, 2016	Commission votes and approves Slate of Officers for Election for 2017



Monday September 12, 2016

Agenda Item 7.0

Consider approving the standing meetings for 2017.



Standing Meetings Calendar (dates subject to change)

		2017											
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Executive Committee (EC) 4:00 PM 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200 Small Conference Room Concord, CA	MEETING DATE		2/6		4/3		6/5	7/10*		9/11*	10/2		12/4
Commission 6:00 PM 1485 Civic Court, Suite 1200 Large Conference Room Concord, CA	MEETING DATE		2/6		4/3		6/5	7/10*		9/11*	10/2		12/4
<i>*Moved to the 2nd week of the month due to conflicting events</i>													



Monday September 12, 2016

Agenda Item 10.0

Communications

EARLY LEARNING

New rating system provides insight into child care and preschool programs

By [Jeremy Hay](#) | July 17, 2016



Benu Chhabra has a two-year waiting list for her family childcare program in Concord. She improved her rating score from a 2 to a 5 since 2014.

Benu Chhabra is the new president of the [Family Child Care of Contra Costa County Association](#) and runs a child care program in Concord that is popular with parents – it has a two-year waiting list. Yet in 2014, evaluators for a new California initiative that rates child care centers and preschools gave Chhabra’s program the lowest possible score. Fast-forward two years: In the county’s newest ratings, delivered in June, Chhabra earned the top score.

The story of how Chhabra’s 16-year-old child care program went from the lowest rating to the highest offers a window into [California’s Quality Rating and Improvement System](#), or QRIS. The statewide system launched in 2014 to establish a baseline measurement of child care and preschool quality, to help parents decide where to send their children and to help providers improve their services.

The system is focused so far on programs serving lower-income children and those learning English or with other special needs. It is in place or being implemented in 48 counties, and as of February, 3,300 family child care businesses or preschools had been rated, out of more than 50,000 statewide. In Contra Costa County, one of the first to start using the system, 109 out of more than 900 facilities have been rated.

“We’re really focused on the ‘i’ in QRIS,” said Erin Gabel, deputy director of [First 5 California](#). A tobacco-tax funded agency that advocates for children ages 0-5, First 5 plays a lead role in the program in each county where it is operating. Assessors from First 5 conduct the evaluations. The organization also arranges for coaching, and for follow-up monitoring.

Programs are rated on teacher-child relationships; environment, which means not only safety but the availability of educational materials; teacher and/or site director qualifications; child skills and curriculum; health and development; and teacher-student ratios. [The California Department of Education](#) set those standards, but counties can add their own, such as family engagement and the number of bilingual staff. After they are rated in the individual categories, the programs are given an overall score ranging from 2 to 5.

Of 18 family child care centers ranked in Contra Costa County in 2014 – among the first groups to be evaluated statewide – Chhabra’s center, Benu Chhabra Family Child Care, was one of five to receive a 2.

Chhabra said she was unfazed by her score, and was motivated to make any changes necessary to better it.

“As a teacher, I always think that there is room for improvement,” she said.

On a recent day in May at Chhabra’s child care center, before the new scores were released, a racially and ethnically diverse group of children 18 months to 4 years old practiced yoga and sign language exercises before lunch, then charged into a well-groomed yard where a play structure sat on a bed of soft rubber tiles.

Watching Chhabra tend to her young charges was Monica Joseph, a quality improvement coach with Contra Costa’s [Child Care Council](#). Each program participating in the rating system gets a coach, and Joseph has worked with Chhabra since 2014 to remedy deficiencies in her program identified through the evaluation.

Joseph has worked with Chhabra about twice a month, she said, and “constantly” communicated with her via telephone and email. It’s an intensive process during which coaches build deep relationships with providers, Joseph said.

Joseph said Chhabra’s is a “model program” because her families have a good understanding of what Chhabra does to care for and educate their children and why. Assessors said Chhabra was “mastering” the crucial category of teacher-child relationships.

She was implementing measures to improve the environment of her center and taking steps toward improving her early childhood education qualifications, the assessors said. But Chhabra scored lower in the area of health and development, which includes making sure children get annual vision and dental check-ups. Also, her curriculum was not as rigorous or flexible as it could have been, Joseph said, in large part because Chhabra didn't have a system in place to assess children's development and progress.

"We wanted to work on a more intensive curriculum and more opportunities through the day for the children to have more engaged conversations, (for Chhabra) to ask more open-ended questions," Joseph said.

Joseph's approach was twofold. She worked with Chhabra on how to introduce parents to the importance of regular health screenings. And she encouraged Chhabra to start using the [Desired Results Development Profile](#), an assessment tool mandatory in publicly funded child care and preschool programs but not in private centers. The voluminous assessment, which requires updates through the year, is criticized by some for being unwieldy and inefficient in improving programs. But Chhabra, who took classes in using it, finds it useful, and Joseph said it has helped improve her ranking. With an effective way of assessing the children's progress, Joseph said Chhabra can also tell where they are falling short and need extra attention, and adjust her curriculum to meet that need.

"It made my job easier, it made it easier to meet their (children's) needs," Chhabra said. Khulood Jamil, who started her Pleasant Hill child care business, Khulood's Child Care, in 1996, was also in the first group of childcare programs to be evaluated in Contra Costa County. She received a score of 4 in 2014. Her otherwise stellar scorecard indicated "mastery" or "exceeding" in four of five categories but was lower in child skills and curriculum, with assessors saying she needed to improve in observing and documenting how children were developing.

She was aiming for a new score of 5 partly because "it's a marketing tool," she said. "I show it to parents."

Professional development is key to Contra Costa's program of supporting providers' efforts to improve. The county's QRIS budget is \$2.4 million, a combination of state and First 5 funds; most of it pays for stipends and reimbursements for classes, on-site trainings and ongoing coaching.



CREDIT: JEREMY HAY/EDSOURCE

Benu Chhabra reads a book to children at her child care center while they have lunch.

“It’s really an essential part, the professional development and the coaching,” said Sean Casey, executive director of First 5 Contra Costa. “Not only to train people and make sure they get their required coursework, but to make sure they’re actually applying it in the classroom.”

Patricia Haley, owner of Ms. Trish’s Preschool and Daycare in Concord, has worked to boost the score of 3 she received in 2014. Assessors said she needed to focus on curriculum and child health and development, although she was “mastering” or “exceeding” in teacher-child relationships, environment and teacher qualifications.

On a recent visit, she pointed to a table full of child development and curriculum materials she studies and others that she uses to assess children’s progress. They testify to skills she’s building, she said, and also to the equal weight the system places on improvement.

“I’m very good, I’m a professional. Why not try for the five star?” Haley said. “And everything they’re asking of us is good. It’s fair.”



CREDIT: JEREMY HAY/EDSOURCE

Khulood Jamil uses the Desired Results Development Profile to assess children’s progress.

Working with Haley that day was Suzanne Di Lillo. The early care and education liaison for the Contra Costa Office of Education and the county’s QRIS program rater, Di Lillo analyzes all the provider assessments and has the final say on rankings. She also visits each provider at least once a year. She spoke with Haley about helping a couple acknowledge their daughter’s speech impediment “in a

way that is respectful.” Then she and Haley discussed how to get doctors to complete a form about children’s vision and dental checkups, a step they weren’t taking.

“Oh, lazy doctors,” said Di Lillo, a veteran educator, sympathizing. She marked the form in red pen, and said, “Try using a highlighter.”

It’s a continual process of working collaboratively with providers to make them more effective at what they do, Di Lillo said.

“We very much endeavor to portray all this energy and effort as a professional journey,” she said. The goal isn’t just compliance, but an increased focus on how and why to take steps that will improve children’s care and education, she said.

In June, nearly two years after they first were ranked, the first child care centers and preschools evaluated through the quality rating system in Contra Costa County learned their new scores. Jamil’s ranking had risen from 4 to 5, making hers one of six family child care centers in the county to reach the top of the scale. None did in 2014. Haley’s ranking rose from 3 to 4, one of 11 family child care programs to reach that score, up from five centers in 2014.

On the day she received her new ranking, Chhabra said, “In every area, I understand more and more about childhood development – and I am able to make more connections with the parents to tell them how their child is doing and how to work as a team to make improvements.”

Original article may be viewed on:

<https://edsources.org/2016/new-rating-system-provides-insight-into-child-care-and-preschool-programs/566843>

A DIVIDED ELECTORATE IS UNITED ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION.

In the midst of an angry and polarized election, 90% of voters agree on one thing: Congress and the next president should work together to make quality early childhood education more accessible and affordable to low- and middle-income families. **That includes 78% of Trump supporters and 97% of Clinton supporters.**¹ The First Five Years Fund's annual national poll shows that early childhood education is one of the best ways for candidates to connect with voters because it is one of their top priorities—regardless of party.

Quality early childhood education is a top priority issue along with improving education and jobs. 80% say making sure that our children get a strong start in life through quality early childhood education is extremely or very important to them personally.

There is overwhelming support—with little opposition—for a federal plan that helps states and local communities provide better access to quality early childhood education. Nearly three quarters of the electorate support this plan: 73% favor and only 24% oppose. 54% of Republicans, 70% of Independents and 91% of Democrats voice support. A majority of key swing voter groups also favor investing more in early childhood education from birth to age five.



85%

HISPANICS



79%

SUBURBAN
WOMEN



65%

MODERATE/LIBERAL
REPUBLICAN



58%

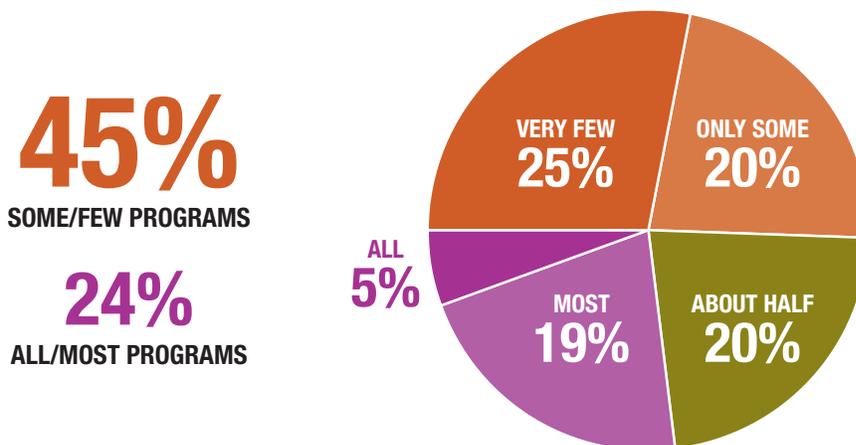
REPUBLICAN
WOMEN

Americans say our education priorities should be reversed, calling for more or equal investment in early education over college. 31% say we should invest more in early education when children are beginning school and creating the foundation for their education experience. 51% say we should invest equal amounts in early education and higher education. Only 14% say we should invest more in college education.

¹ **Methodology:** Public Opinion Strategies (R) and Hart Research (D) conducted a telephone survey of N=800 voters throughout the country on both landline and cell phones. The survey was conducted May 19-23, 2016 and has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.46%. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the nation and is demographically representative of the electorate.



Voters see a critical lack of quality, affordable early childhood education. In fact, 45% say there are only few or some local programs available to lower- and middle-income families that are high-quality and affordable.



More than two-thirds of voters say that children do not start kindergarten with the knowledge and skills needed to do their best. 68% say half or fewer of all children are prepared for kindergarten while 29% of the electorate believes most or all children start kindergarten ready to do their best.

Early childhood education is a nonpartisan issue. Majorities of every partisan persuasion support investing in birth-to-age-five early childhood education.

	 REPUBLICANS	 INDEPENDENTS	 DEMOCRATS
Making early education and child care more affordable for working families to give children a strong start.	82%	86%	98%
Helping states and local communities build better preschool services for parents and making them more accessible to children from low- and middle-income families.	75%	80%	97%
Making available high-quality early learning programs for infants and toddlers to give them a strong start on developing school-ready knowledge and social skills.	66%	71%	92%
Providing voluntary home visiting and parent education programs that help first-time parents support their child's early learning, health and emotional development.	60%	73%	89%

Quality early childhood education is essential for children and families.

Learn more at www.ffyf.org

Pittsburg: Group to launch exercise program at De Anza Park

By Jennifer Shaw, For the Times

POSTED: 08/09/2016 01:21:35 PM PDT

PITTSBURG -- A health-and-fitness-oriented grassroots organization has brought a key ingredient of its vision of promoting safer communities and having equal access to thriving parks to fruition.

The culturally diverse East County Regional Group is launching a robust exercise program at De Anza Park, further invigorating a public space in a low-income neighborhood that as of April 2016 has a new play structure, also due to the group's tireless advocacy -- and a \$50,000 allocation by the city. The old playground was destroyed by vandalism in 2010.

"(The residents) needed to take back their parks from the criminal element," says regional board chair and Antioch resident Janet Costa. "And the more we do to promote a healthy and active lifestyle, the more they (the residents) take that ownership back."

The newly formed walking group will gather, along with free Zumba at its Saturday debut of Pittsburg PACE at De Anza, where Costa, a community support worker with Contra Costa County's children's mental health department, and her cohorts have already seen a surge in its use.

The PACE program will also support low-cost sports leagues for soccer and T-ball during the year.

The free event on Saturday is being hosted in partnership with the city of Pittsburg, First Five, Healthy and Active Before Five, and Kaiser Permanente Northern California, offering a yearlong \$20,000 funding stream.

It follows a roughly 10-year process, with the group conducting needs assessment and rallying support from local agencies and East County municipalities.

"These things take time. It takes a while to get everyone on the same page," says past-chair Priscilla Nzessi of Oakley. "We want this change to have a long-lasting impact on our community." The group, Costa says, "grows leaders," from a pool of people who once "didn't know how to advocate for their children," and are now activists in schools and with local governance.

"(Group members are) have been learning to become advocates and realize that they have a voice," Nzessi adds.

A community survey yielded top concerns about childhood obesity and the lack of affordable exercise activities, noted Costa, who initially had brought her then-4-year-old twin grandchildren to one of the group-sponsored Week of the Young Child events at Pittsburg's Small World Park -- and was hooked.

"(That event) wasn't as long reaching as we'd like," says Costa of their ongoing activism to increase park usage.

The group, now comprised of 75 active families, evaluated 63 parks in that area, with grave inequity found in neighborhoods with low-income residents. In Pittsburg, De Anza was deemed a high priority after census data and statistics from the Contra Costa County Public Health Department revealed it as having the largest number of children who are overweight living in a community with a high crime rate and lowest income, cites Rhea Elina Laughlin, a community engagement program officer with First 5 Contra Costa.

Laughlin adds that advocacy remains under way to have the city provide increased lighting, video surveillance, and organize neighborhood watch groups, as part of a crime prevention strategy at the park, where they hope will experience ever-greater use.

The regional First 5 office is part of a statewide program funded by the increased tax for cigarettes, stemming from the voter-approved Proposition 10 initiative of 2010, which supports programs for children five and under.

The two identified parks in Antioch, with similar results, were Placerville and Contra Loma Estates, the latter of which opened its city-funded playground last November.

IF YOU GO

Who: Pittsburg PACE

When: East County Regional Group exercise program launch

When: 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Aug. 13

Where: De Anza Park, East Trident Drive, Pittsburg

Cost: Free

When: 925-771-7338

Original article may be viewed on:

http://www.eastbaytimes.com/brentwood/ci_30225124/pittsburg-group-launch-exercise-program-at-de-anza

Retailers roll with new restriction on tobacco sales to minors

July 25, 2016

By Lisa Renner

At convenience stores and gas stations across the state, bright yellow signs are posted prominently on front doors: “Under 21/ No Tobacco.”

Libby Brown, a 16-year-old from Turlock, has no problem with the new state law, which went into effect in June, even though it raised the legal smoking age from 18. She wasn’t planning to smoke anyway.

“I think it’s a good law because it will make it so there’s not as many smokers,” she said.

But 18-year-old smoker Paige Shafer, who lives in North San Juan, is upset that her once legal right to use tobacco has been abruptly taken away. She now has to get others who meet the age limit to get her cigarettes.

“I think they should do a grandfather clause,” she said. “You can’t let us do it and then say, no you can’t. I don’t think it will work very well.”

She also complained that there wasn’t enough notice about the new law, which went into effect just five weeks after it was signed by Gov. Jerry Brown.

The only exception to the age limit is active military service members. Those with a military ID card who are 18 and over may still legally purchase tobacco.

The law is enforced by the public health department with random sting inspections at local stores and by local law enforcement. Civil penalties for breaking the law range from \$400-\$600 for a first-time violation to \$6,000 for multiple infractions plus the loss of a license to sell tobacco.

In a teleconference with reporters when the law went into effect, California Department of Public Health Director Karen Smith, M.D., said the goal of the law is to prevent a new generation of young people from being addicted to nicotine.

The department estimates that 217,000 California young people between 12 and 17 smoke either traditional cigarettes or e-cigarettes. According to Smith, the longer people wait to start smoking, the more likely they are to never pick up the habit at all.

A 2015 Institute of Medicine Report said that raising the tobacco sale age to 21 nationally would eventually reduce the smoking rate by about 12 percent and smoking-related deaths by 10 percent.

Tobacco-related diseases cost California \$17.1 billion each year in healthcare costs due to premature death or low productivity from illnesses, the public health department said.



Bishnu Subedi, owner of Brighton Street Grocery, a small store in Grass Valley that sells tobacco, said it hasn't been hard to follow the law. Most young people know about and accept the law. He has only seen a few people under 21 ask to buy cigarettes. While he expects the new law to lower his revenues, he understands the reasons for it.

Denis Bratan, a clerk at a Chevron gas station minimart in Roseville, has had a similar experience. He said only one under-age person pressed him to sell cigarettes. Bratan, 21, said he is indifferent to the law because he doesn't smoke but he knows some in the 18-20 age group who are mad. "The law is to prevent new smokers but everyone who was already a smoker is collateral damage," he said.

There are about 240,000 smokers between the ages of 18-20, said California Tobacco Control Program Branch Chief April Roeseler. However, the new law only penalizes the retailer, not the smoker. Penal Code Section 308 was amended to remove language that made it illegal for underage young people to purchase, receive or possess tobacco, Roeseler said.

Moreover, Roesler said underage smokers can get help quitting by calling the California Smokers' Helpline at 1-800-No-BUTTS (800-662-8887) or by visiting nobutts.org. The helpline is available in six languages.

The new law isn't affecting much at Sacramento City College because the campus was already planning to go tobacco free in August, said Rick Brewer, public information officer at the school. Those plans were in the works for more than a year. The only place people will be allowed to smoke on campus is in their car in the parking lot with the windows rolled up.

He has seen very little push-back to the law as most people understand the health benefits of smoking bans. "People in this age really do understand there are fewer and fewer places where smoking is allowed," he said.

It's a similar situation at San Francisco State University, which stopped selling tobacco in 2003 and has been smoke-free since 2004. The campus takes a positive rather than punitive approach when it comes to enforcing the ban. Police carry educational cards they can give to smokers listing the reasons to give up tobacco.

"Our focus is educational," said Gene Chelberg, the college's associate vice president of student affairs. "Not only is it bad for you but it is bad for the community."

Andrew Stuart, 17 of Modesto, believes smoking is losing favor in the teen population. He is glad the minimum age to use tobacco is now aligned with the minimum age to use alcohol.

"The drinking age is 21 so you might as well have that as the smoking age because it's really addictive," he said. "It doesn't make any sense to have one addictive thing at 18 and one addictive thing at 21."

Original article can be found on:

<http://www.calhealthreport.org/2016/07/25/19464/>



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July 28, 2016

[New on California Budget Bites](#)

Strengthening Our Tax System to Improve Our Quality of Life

Taxes · Work, Income & Poverty · July 28, 2016 · By Alissa Anderson

Although discussions around tax policy can often seem dry and wonky, our tax policy choices have a profound impact on our quality of life. Taxes generate resources that allow us to strengthen our communities and economy. And tax expenditures — spending through the tax code — reduce the resources available for other priorities. Recognizing the importance of our tax system to people’s economic well-being, the Coordinating Council of the [Family Economic Security Partnership](#) — a project of First 5 Contra Costa — devoted a morning last week to learning how federal and state tax policies could be changed to increase economic security and opportunity.

Ezra Levin, Associate Director of Government Affairs at [CFED](#), kicked off the convening with an engaging [video](#) that makes learning about federal tax policy fun. The video and Ezra’s [presentation](#) point out that many federal tax expenditures, such as the mortgage interest deduction, disproportionately benefit the wealthiest households, in turn exacerbating inequality. For example, federal tax programs designed to encourage homeownership provided an average of \$1,236 per month for multimillionaire households in 2013, compared with an average of just 8 cents per month for low-income households. CFED recently launched a campaign called [Turn It Right Side Up](#) that seeks to improve federal tax policies so that more people have the opportunity to build wealth.

After Ezra’s presentation, the conversation turned to ways to strengthen California’s tax system. In my [presentation](#), I highlighted two major limitations of our current state tax code:

- **First, California’s tax system is regressive, and it will become more regressive if the Proposition 30 tax increases expire.** Currently, the lowest-income households pay a [larger share](#) of their incomes in state and local taxes than the top 1 percent, and California’s tax system will become even *more* regressive if the Prop. 30 personal income tax rates on high-income earners are allowed to expire at the end of 2018. Why should we be concerned about this? As I show in my slides, the wealthiest 1 percent of Californians have seen their incomes *more than double*, on average, since the late 1980s, while the average incomes of low- and moderate-income Californians have actually declined, after adjusting for inflation. Given this rise in inequality, it’s deeply unfair that the top 1 percent contribute a smaller share of their incomes to state and local taxes than families lower on the income scale.
- **Second, California’s tax system doesn’t currently generate enough resources to meet the needs of our communities.** California made deep cuts to critical public systems and services to close budget shortfalls during and after the Great Recession, and many of these systems are still operating with diminished resources in spite of increased revenues resulting from our improved economy and Prop. 30’s tax rates. For example, support for seniors and people with disabilities through SSI/SSP grants remains below the recession-era level, in spite of a modest [cost-of-living increase](#) provided this year. What’s more, California will see an even *greater* need for public services in coming years as our state’s population continues to grow and age. (The number of seniors in our state is expected to [nearly double](#) by 2030, increasing the need for services, such as health care and in-home care.) This underscores the need to shore up our tax system so that it produces enough revenues to meet our communities’ needs well into the future.

My presentation last week outlined three policy options for improving the progressivity and adequacy of our tax system. California could:

- **Maintain the Prop. 30 personal income tax rates on high-income earners.** Extending these tax rates would not only prevent our tax system from becoming more regressive, but also avoid a permanent gap in state revenues. As we show [here](#), the expiration of the Prop. 30 personal income tax rates is expected to create a gap in General Fund revenues of \$7.7 billion in 2019-20 — nearly as much as the state budget provides for higher education this year. In the coming weeks, watch for our analysis of how Prop. 30 helped California begin reinvesting in our communities after years of deep budget cuts, and our brief analyzing the potential impact of Prop. 55, a measure on this year’s November ballot that would temporarily extend the Prop. 30 personal income tax rates.
- **Expand California’s new state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC).** The CalEITC, established last year, is a refundable tax credit designed to reward work and help the lowest earners in our state better afford basic necessities. California’s credit is modeled after the highly successful federal EITC, which [decades of research](#) shows has boosted employment among women-headed families and, together with the federal child tax credit, cut poverty among children more than any other federal policy. Given the federal EITC’s track record of success, California should gradually expand the CalEITC so that it benefits more low-earning workers. Watch for our work later this year outlining specific options for strengthening this important tax credit.
- **Reduce or get rid of ineffective, costly tax expenditures.** Major personal and corporate state income tax breaks are expected to cost California [over \\$48 billion](#) this year. That’s more than total General Fund spending on K-12 schools in this year’s budget. There are many problems with these tax expenditures, including that 1) they are not reviewed or approved annually like spending through the state budget, even though they *are* forms of spending in that they reduce revenue available for other purposes; 2) it only takes a majority vote of the Legislature to establish a tax break but a two-thirds vote to get rid of it — even if it fails to achieve its intended purpose; and 3) some of our most costly tax breaks, such as the mortgage interest deduction, disproportionately benefit high-income households who least need the help. Reducing or eliminating ineffective, costly tax expenditures would not only make the tax system more progressive, but also free up revenue for other priorities. Watch for our forthcoming analysis on this critical issue.

With [wealth inequality](#) higher than at any point since 1929, and new [research](#) suggesting that widening inequality may actually reduce people’s ability to move up the economic ladder, it’s critical that our state make tax policy choices that put economic opportunity within more people’s reach.

— Alissa Anderson

September 2, 2016

ASM Catharine Baker
District 16
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 94249

Dear Assemblymember Baker,

I am writing to thank you for supporting the New Parent Leave Act (SB 654), which will improve Contra Costa parents' ability to bond with their newborns.

California has led the nation on providing paid family leave, and SB 654 will extend this support to even more working families.

Thank you for your vote. It puts us one step closer to making measure successful. Let's hope Governor Brown signs SB 654 into law since it will be a tremendous benefit to our parents, children and society.

Sincerely,



Sean Casey / ak
Executive Director
First 5 Contra Costa
(925) 771-7316
scasey@first5coco.org
www.first5coco.org

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1,473

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Catharine Baker @CBakerAD16 · Sep 2

TY @First5CoCo for the kind note about my vote on parental leave to benefit parents, children, & our community.



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Catharine Baker @CBakerAD16 · Sep 1

Proud to speak in support of HR 58, addressing the pay disparity