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First 5 San Bernardino Celebrates 25 Years of Serving Young Children and Families in San Bernardino County

First 5 San Bernardino celebrates major milestone of championing for the growth and development of children prenatal through 5 years old

SAN BERNARDINO, CA (May 9, 2024) – [First 5 San Bernardino](#) is celebrating 25 years of prioritizing young children’s early development in San Bernardino County. The organization strengthens families with children prenatal through 5 years old through three strategic priority areas – child health, quality early learning and family support.

First 5 San Bernardino was founded in 1998 and funded by [Proposition 10](#) – The California Children and Families Act – through excise taxes on cigarettes and tobacco products. The revenue from this tax supports the various programs supported through the organization.

“What began from an effort to reduce the harmful effects of tobacco has evolved into a collective impact where tens of thousands of children, parents and caregivers have been served through our programs, services and partnerships,” said Executive Director Karen Scott, First 5 San Bernardino. “We have worked hard to build meaningful partnerships with organizations in our county who share in our mission to improve the lives of our children and their families.”

Over the past 25 years, First 5 San Bernardino has built sustaining collaborations with dozens of partner agencies, nonprofits and community stakeholders to help thousands of families. Engagement with programs such as Quality Start, Help Me Grow, Maternal Health Network, Smile SBC, Footsteps2Brilliance and more, ensure that all children in San Bernardino County are healthy, safe, nurtured and prepared to thrive.

Two Inland Empire programs that First 5 San Bernardino has served as a critical partner are Reach Out and Read and Help Me Grow. Marti Baum, MD, pediatrician and medical director of Community Health at Loma Linda University Health, has served as a physician champion for both programs.



“We congratulate First 5 San Bernardino for 25 years of exceptional work on behalf of children in our community,” said Dr. Baum. “Our region is making significant progress in collaborating on early intervention and prevention goals, so all children are kindergarten-ready by age 5. Thanks to First 5 San Bernardino, we have distributed over 100,000 books to children during well child visits across 30 pediatric clinics.

“Help Me Grow Inland Empire has screened over 15,000 children since its inception in 2021 and together with First 5 San Bernardino, has created a future where even more children will be screened for developmental and social risks to identify the need for early intervention services,” concluded Dr. Baum.

First 5 San Bernardino’s three priority areas are supported by annual campaigns that launch at different times throughout the year. In the winter, the organization executes an oral health campaign called “[Little Teeth, Big Responsibility](#)” that emphasizes the importance of pediatric oral health. Summer focuses on child safety in the hot months through its “[Kid Safe Summer](#)” campaign, and “[Gift a Kid a Book](#)” happens each fall encouraging early reading to build developmental learning skills.

In its 25th year, the organization has a dedicated logo that will be used throughout 2024 to celebrate the milestone. Other efforts include updated branding, new partnerships and innovative marketing and social media efforts.

The organization continues to grow in its community outreach efforts to meet the needs of families across the large footprint of San Bernardino County, the largest county by geography in the contiguous United States. First 5 San Bernardino continues to collaborate with partners at community events throughout the year to provide resources and information to families. This includes everything from providing free school supplies and books, to water safety materials and promoting special programs.

For more information on First 5 San Bernardino, visit First5SanBernardino.org.

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About First 5 San Bernardino

First 5 San Bernardino’s distinct purpose is to improve the lives of young children and their families by giving them the best possible start in life. For 25 years, First 5 San Bernardino has been working dynamically through strategic partnerships to promote, support and enhance the health and early development of children prenatal through age 5, their families and communities. Funded through the 1998 voter-approved initiative, California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues), First 5 San Bernardino has evolved into a system where stakeholders and services are integrated, coordinated and sustainable, and one that families experience as accessible, inclusive and equitable. For more information, visit First5SanBernardino.org.