



## Minutes: Children and Families Commission Meeting

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**Date, time, location**

August 2, 2023  
3:36 p.m.  
First 5 San Bernardino Commission Conference Center

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**Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance by Chair Weinstein

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**Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

Commission members shall review agenda item contractors, subcontractors, and agents, which may require member abstentions due to conflict of interest and financial interests.

A Commission member with conflicts of interests shall state their conflict under the appropriate item. A Commission member may not participate in or influence the decision on a contract for which their abstention has been recorded.

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**Special Presentation**

Reach Out and Read Inland Empire presented by Delesa Barnes, Program Coordinator.

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**Attendees**

**Commissioners**

- Ted Alejandre
- Diana Alexander
- Supervisor Baca, Jr.
- Dr. Gwen Dowdy-Rodgers
- Joshua Dugas
- Gary Ovitt
- Elliot Weinstein, M.D.

**Staff**

- Wendy Lee, Section Manager, Evaluation & Impact
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**Changes to the agenda**

None

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**Advisory  
Committee  
Report**

Dr. Gwen Dowdy-Rodgers, Advisory Committee Vice Chair reported the following:

The Advisory members met on July 20 where James Moses was re-elected as Vice-Chair and the committee welcomed four new members. Members also discussed and made recommendations on First 5's outreach efforts for Parent, Family and Community Engagement efforts to help guide First 5's work.

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**Executive  
Director's  
Report**

**NACo Awards and Partnership**

San Bernardino County received a record 160 NACo Achievement Awards for 2023. Although, First 5 San Bernardino (F5SB) is ineligible to be considered for an achievement award on our own, F5SB is included in partnership projects such as with the Department of Public Health's "Smile SBC campaign and was recognized in the health category for the "[Little Teeth, Big Responsibility](#)" campaign, a bilingual (English/Spanish) oral health advertising campaign designed to raise awareness about the importance of and need for proper oral hygiene and twice-yearly dental visits for children five years of age and younger. A second goal of the campaign was to increase traffic to the SmileSBC.org "[Find a Dentist](#)" webpage that connects the public to nearby dentists for care appointments. A noticeable uptick representing 3,000 new users to the website was a direct result of the campaign's impact. F5SB will have a featured piece on this collaboration and award in the August 25<sup>th</sup> edition of the SBC Update where our Commissioners Baca, Jr., and Dugas are mentioned.

**Communications Update**

Some of our scheduled campaigns for this month include:

- A car seat find link, (hosted by the Highway Traffic Safety Administration), run on August 1<sup>st</sup> and on August 9<sup>th</sup>, resources for proper installation of car seats.
- August is National Breastfeeding Month.
- Celebration of International Youth Day is August 12<sup>th</sup>.
- "Kids Safe Summer" tips and resources for parents to ensure children are hydrated, wear sunscreen, use proper fitting helmets for activities and are safe while in and around water.

Posted on our website is information on the CalKIDS program which automatically provides babies born on or after July 1, 2022, a savings account of \$100 to help families begin saving for their child's postsecondary education, whether it be for college or career training. Parents can learn more by visiting our website accessing the registration link.

In our next Milestones newsletter, F5SB will feature our Employee Spotlight, shining brightly on our own Business Support Manager, Kim Browder. Don't miss that edition on 8/22.

Please do not hesitate to contact our office if you have any questions about what's currently being communicated to support our mission in service to children ages 0-5 or what might be on the horizon.

**Imagination Library**

The Imagination Library of California gifts high quality, age-appropriate books every month to children from birth until the child turns five. There is no cost to families and books are available in English or in bilingual English/Spanish.

In October 2022, Governor Newsom signed legislation, made possible by bipartisan legislation for SB 1183 (Grove) to bring Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program to all of California with an expected launch of mid-2023. The budget allocation was \$68 million over five years. The statewide non-profit overseeing the program named CA Imagination and Strong Reader Partnership has a Board but no employees.

On July 28, 2023, several F5's met with staff and consultants from the State Librarian's office to figure out how to implement this. The goal is to get books to all 2 million children aged 0-5 in California. In other states already implementing the Imagination Library, it is reported that an estimated 65% of eligible children are participating, meaning receiving a high-quality, age-appropriate book through direct mail each month. California is the first state to provide a bilingual option where children and their families can select to receive bilingual English/Spanish books for every book.

Information is still not totally clear but it was explained that in order to participate, a County would need to develop a local partnership that included a non-profit agency (and an agency willing to take on 50% of the costs for book delivery for children ages 0-5, naturally, that would be First 5 and reportedly, the contract is entered into with the Dollywood Foundation, not the state librarian.

The cost is \$2.60 for each book which I believe includes the cost of mailing. For San Bernardino County with 200,000 kids in the eligible age range, the cost would be a quite prohibitive \$6,240,000 per year. Even at 50% of the cost F5SB, as well as others on the call, could not afford this investment.

Members shared some ideas on other approaches that could be attainable and that ensure our children don't miss out on any opportunity like concentrating on serving zip codes with the lowest 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading scores, identifying other partners to help share in the cost such as hospitals/foundations, health plans, offices of education, Cal-Works and exploring libraries and library foundations.

Locally San Bernardino County would like to know how this can be offered to:

- Highly transient families, foster children, and homeless children (maybe establishing a pickup site at Family Resource Centers (FRC's);
- Connecting with other non-profit entities that regularly serve families, whereby they can be encouraged to sign up for the program including CAPS SBC, United Way 2-1-1 and others;
- Engaging in our own library systems with 32 County branch libraries and with SB City's Friends of the Library Foundation, whom F5SB might be able to collaborate with; and
- No evaluation outcomes are expected for F5s and others to contract with the Dollywood Foundation and participate in the Imagination Library Initiative, F5SB would certainly want to know that any investment was making a difference in improving literacy competence for our children as measured routinely in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

F5SB is looking closely at other literacy improvement supports in San Bernardino county that have either funded or partnered with such as Footsteps to Brilliance, Reach Out and Read, Raising a Reader, 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten, etc. to ensure F5SB is

aligned with the Countywide Vision - "Vision to Read," and identify any major gaps where F5SB could provide support that is manageable and will make a difference. More information to come over the next year as it is developed.

Ms. Scott informed Commissioner Alejandre that our office did explore a bookmark similar to the one Ms. Barnes had; it is a national model but there is a fidelity issue with Reach Out and Read, so F5SB is looking at different avenues to increase literacy.

Item No.	CONSENT
1	<p>Approve Minutes from July 12, 2023 Commission Meeting.</p> <p>Motion by Commissioner Baca, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner Dugas to approve the Consent Items.</p> <p>Without further comment or objection, motion carried by unanimous vote.</p>
2	<p>Approve the following contract amendments for implementation of Quality Start San Bernardino for Fiscal Year 2023-2024:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, Amendment A2 for Contract EC038 for \$221,721 resulting in a cumulative total of \$988,575 for administrative services; and</li> <li>b. University Enterprises Corporation/California State University, San Bernardino, Amendment A2 for Contract EC039 for \$401,839 resulting in a cumulative total of \$1,785,994 to enhance higher education opportunities in early care and education and conduct site assessments.</li> </ul> <p>(Presenter: Erika Willhite, Staff Analyst II, 252-4262)</p> <p><b><u>Abstentions</u></b>                      Commissioner Alejandre abstained to Item 2a due to his position as the Superintendent of Schools. Commissioner Dowdy-Rodgers abstained to Item 2a due to her position as a Board member for San Bernardino County Board of Education that serves the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools.</p>

Item No.	DISCUSSION
3	<p>Approve SA-23-02 with a one-time allocation in the amount not to exceed \$48,655 for the 2023 the California Association for Mental Health Conference in Ontario, CA.                      (Presenter: Scott McGrath, Deputy Director, Systems and Impact, 252-4259)</p> <p><b><u>Discussion</u></b>                      None</p> <p><b><u>Public Comment</u></b>                      None</p> <p>Motion by Commissioner Alexander and seconded by Commissioner Baca, Jr. to approve Item 3.</p> <p>Without further comment or objection and with no public comments noted, motion carried by unanimous vote.</p>

**Public  
Comment**

None

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**Commissioner  
Roundtable**

Children should be exposed to using their imagination to take them places and to let them realize what's possible, according to Commissioner Alexander, who stated that whatever we can do to encourage children to read should be done. In addition to thanking LuCretia Dowdy and Rudy Hernandez for a wonderful job at National Night Out, Commissioner Dowdy-Rodgers praised First 5 personnel for consistently serving the community despite the intense heat. Commissioner Ovitt thanked First 5 staff for a great job on the literacy campaigns. Chair Weinstein thanked Reach Out and Read for the great job they do and said, children in the poorest population have access to only one to three age-appropriate books, compared to 300 books for the wealthiest population.

The next Commission meeting will be held on the second Wednesday of the month, September 13, at 735 E. Carneige Drive, Suite 150, San Bernardino.

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**Adjourned**

The meeting adjourned at 4:12 p.m.

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**Next Meeting**

***Wednesday, September 13, 2023  
3:30 p.m.***

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**Attest**

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Elliot Weinstein, M.D., Chair

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Traci L. Homan, Commission Clerk

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