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# **First 5 Mono Strategic Plan 2014-2019**

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Revised April, 2014

Updated February, 2015

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## **Introduction**

The Mono County Children and Families Commission (First 5 Mono) last revised its strategic plan in 2009 and decided to begin the revision process again in 2013 with the goal of creating a five year strategic plan for 2014 to 2019. This guiding document provides a plan to support and improve the lives of young children and their families. Together with community partners and families, we have the opportunity to create and enhance efforts to promote our children's optimal development.

### **Vision**

All Mono County children will thrive in supportive, nurturing, and loving environments, enter school healthy and ready to learn, and be capable of reaching their full potential.

### **Mission**

First 5 Mono County will be a leader in a community-oriented and family-centered support network for children prenatal to age five and their families, and is charged with improving outcomes in children's health, safety, and learning.

### **Goal**

Enhance the network of support services for families with children ages 0 to 5 years.

### **Guiding Principals**

1. Strive to serve all families in Mono County using strength based, family centered, and culturally relevant approaches.
2. Promote and fund high-quality programs that are flexible and creative.
3. Foster coordination and partnerships with service providers.
4. Be accountable to the public with effective fiscal management and evaluation.
5. Leverage funds to maximize community resources and program support.

### **About the Commission**

The California Children and Families Act (also known as Proposition 10 or "First 5") was enacted in 1998, increasing taxes on tobacco products to provide funding for services to promote early childhood development from prenatal to age 5. Mono County currently receives approximately \$390,000 a year from these funds, through annual allocations, augmentations for small population counties, and child care quality matching funds. To access these funds, the county must adopt a strategic plan that shows how it will use Proposition 10 funds to promote a comprehensive and integrated system of early childhood development services.

The Mono County Children and Families Commission, First 5 Mono, was created in 1999 by the Mono County Board of Supervisors to:

- Evaluate the current and projected needs of young children and their families.
- Develop a strategic plan describing how to address community needs.
- Determine how to expend local First 5 resources.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of funded programs and activities.

### **Community Input**

Input was gathered in multiple ways with the goal of hearing from parents and community members county-wide. Participants in the planning process were provided a draft 2014-2019 Strategic Plan and the 2009 Strategic Plan. Issues considered included:

1. Outcomes and continued community need for currently funded programs.
2. New priorities and opportunities.
3. Capacity for funding.

### **Focus Groups**

Six focus groups were conducted in November and December at regularly scheduled Peapod Playgroups in the following locations:

- Walker
- Bridgeport
- June Lake
- Mammoth Lakes, English
- Mammoth Lakes, Spanish
- Crowley Lake

Notice was given to Peapod participants, and home visiting clients informing them a focus group was taking place in their community. Discussion was fostered by asking participants at each group the same list of questions.

### **Community Meeting**

A community meeting was held November 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:15 p.m. in Mammoth Lakes to elicit comments and suggestions from any interested community members unable to attend public hearings at commission meetings due to work. Notice was sent to our listserv, community partners, and the local newspapers: El Sol, The Sheet, and The Mammoth Times.

### **Public Hearings**

The October and December Commission meetings included public hearings, giving the public a chance to comment on potential revisions to the strategic plan. The October meeting was held in Bridgeport with the hope of getting more input from the north county. Notice was sent to our listserv, community partners, and the local newspapers: El Sol, The Sheet, and The Mammoth Times.

### **Written Comments**

With the notice of public hearings and the focus groups, we will also invited the public to submit written comments to the executive director. Community partners were contacted via email and invited to provide input. "Invest In..." comment cards (index cards with a blank spot after the words "Invest In") were placed around Mammoth Lakes with a flyer describing the need for input in the Strategic Plan. Cards were placed in the following offices: First 5 Mono, Sierra Park Pediatrics, Day & Night Pediatrics, Women Infants and Children (WIC), Inyo Mono Community Advocates (IMACA), and Mono County: Health Department, Social Services, and Behavioral Health.

### **Planning Retreat**

On January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the commission participated in a planning retreat to review public input, past accomplishments and investments, and current unmet needs with the goals of: 1) identifying potential indicators of success and outcomes; and 2) prioritization of strategies based on commissioners' identification of need, impact, and available infrastructure.

### **Evaluation Results**

Annual evaluations results from Fiscal Years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 were available at each focus group, community meeting, and public hearing, as well as posted on our website to help community members formulate suggestions for the strategic plan revision.

### **Public Hearing on the Revised Plan**

At the April Commission meeting, there was a public hearing on the draft strategic plan and the commission took action to adopt the plan.

## Accomplishments

Over the last 13 years, First 5 Mono has offered families home visiting, playgroups, Kindergarten Round Up, and Summer Bridge Programs; and child care providers training, quality improvement assessments, and oral health education for children in their care. First 5 Mono has continued to build partnerships with community agencies, child care providers, the hospital, and schools. Successes since the last Strategic Plan revision include:

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| <b>Expanded Services</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Tooth Tutor program is able to provide home visits educating parents about optimal oral health.</li><li>• Topical fluoride varnish provided to children in playgroups.</li><li>• Creation of county-wide Peapod Playgroups.</li><li>• Development of two Home Visiting programs within the First 5 office.</li><li>• Coordination of a Childbirth Education Course at the hospital 2 times a year.</li><li>• Free breastfeeding bags for all moms giving birth at Mammoth Hospital.</li><li>• Expansion of School Readiness activities to northern Mono County (Coleville, Bridgeport, and Lee Vining); including Kindergarten Round Up and Summer Bridge.</li><li>• Creation of Birth-to-5 Health and Safety Fairs in Coleville, Bridgeport, Lee Vining and Benton.</li><li>• Distribution of free children's books to Mono County children through First Book.</li><li>• Distribution of free car seats through partnerships with IMACA and the Health Department.</li><li>• Distribution of free bike helmets at Kidapolooza and Birth-to-5 Health and Safety Fairs.</li><li>• Participation in a newly formed Breastfeeding Taskforce.</li><li>• Funding for a coordinator for Safe Kids California, Mono Partners.</li><li>• Participation in the First 5 California Sponsored Child Signature Project.</li></ul> |
| <b>Sustained Services</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Oral health education in child care settings.</li><li>• Topical fluoride varnish provided to children in child care centers and in-home child care.</li><li>• Raising a Reader</li><li>• Childcare quality improvements and maintenance (CARES).</li></ul>   |

- School Readiness activities in Mammoth Lakes and Benton, including Kindergarten Round Up and Summer Bridge (see also expanded services).
- Free breast pump lending.
- Readers' Theatre: educational productions for child care providers.

**New Local  
Funding  
Partners**

- \$40,000 contract with Mono County Behavioral Health to provide Peapod Playgroups
- \$29,000 CAPIT (Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Training) grant from the Department of Social Services to provide high-needs home visits for children 1-6 years old.

## Programs and Objectives

First 5 Mono programs were developed to fill community needs. Needs were assessed through collaboration with community agencies, input from families, and ongoing evaluation activities. Nationally recognized strategies have also influenced decisions around program development and maintenance. Programming decisions are also guided by the availability of funding from outside sources.

### FY 2013-14 Programs

#### 1. Home Visiting

**Rationale:** Home visiting is a nationally recognized strategy to improve outcomes for children and families. It has been demonstrated to improve family functioning, decrease child abuse, and improve school readiness and literacy. In partnership with other community agencies, First 5 also provides childbirth education—as no other agency has at this time the capacity to do so, and lactation services—as such services greatly enhance the will and ability for moms to sustain breastfeeding contributing to overall childhood health.

- a. **Welcome Baby!:** For all Mono County families with children age prenatal-12 months

Funded & Conducted by: First 5 Mono

- b. **Parenting Partners:** For high needs Mono County families with children age 1-5 years old

Funded by: First 5 Mono and Mono County Social Services

Conducted by: First 5 Mono

**Objectives:**

- Facilitate parents' role as their child's first and most important teacher
- Provide information on typical child development
- Stimulate child development by providing age appropriate activities
- Increase and support breastfeeding
- Increase and support literacy activities
- Link families to community services, and support access to services
- Conduct developmental screenings and refer families to early intervention programs for assessment
- Educate parents on parenting topics like: home safety, discipline, teething, introducing solids, immunizations, nutrition, oral health, and selecting a child care provider
- Provide culturally competent services in Spanish and English
- Facilitate optimal family functioning



- Decrease child abuse and neglect
- c. **Café Mom:** Lactation support provided in a weekly group meeting  
**Objectives:**
  - Provide research-based education about breastfeeding
  - Provide peer support for breastfeeding
- d. **Childbirth Education:** Held at least two times a year for expectant parents  
**Objectives:**
  - Educate families about childbirth, breastfeeding, and infant care
  - Prepare families for childbirth, breastfeeding, and infant care
  - Link families for community services available for young children

## 2. School Readiness

**Rationale:** A child's education begins very early. Since school-based educational systems don't begin until 3 -5 years of age, First 5 promotes programs that help children get ready for school in the early years. School readiness programs have expanded since the last strategic plan revision to include all the county's schools. The expansion of services is due to the programs' successes, based on both parent satisfaction surveys, and increased school readiness (determined by comparing readiness skills before and after summer bridge programs). Although First 5 California funding for school readiness activities ceased, the Commission has sustained services using its own funds.

- a. **Readers' Theatre:** Skits and book readings in child care facilities, preschools and at story time  
Conducted in partnership with Altrusa of Eastern Sierra and First 5 Mono  
**Objective:**
  - Promote early literacy
- b. **First Book:** Free books for Mono County children birth to 5  
Funded & conducted by: First 5 Mono  
**Objectives:**
  - Increase early literacy opportunities in home environments
  - Facilitate positive parent-child interaction
  - Increase literacy for young children
- c. **Raising a Reader:** Book bags distributed through libraries, child care providers, and preschools  
Funded by: First 5

Conducted by: Mono County Libraries

**Objectives:**

- Improve early literacy
- Encourage use of the library system
- Increase parental and care-provider literacy activities

- d. **Kindergarten Round Up:** Informational meeting held at all county elementary schools with parents of incoming kindergartners

Conducted in partnership with Eastern Sierra Unified School District (ESUSD) and Mammoth Unified School District (MUSD)

**Objectives:**

- Introduce families and children to the school, principal, and each other
- Provide information on entering school and kindergarten readiness
- Facilitate children and families' smooth transition into the education system
- Enroll children in kindergarten
- Sign children up for pre-k assessments and Summer Bridge

- e. **Pre-K Assessments:** School readiness assessments conducted by teachers

Funded by: First 5 Mono

Conducted by: ESUSD & MUSD

**Objectives:**

- Assess incoming students' school readiness
- Identify children's skill development needs before school begins
- Identify children who are not school ready to refer to the Summer Bridge program

- f. **Summer Bridge:** Two week kindergarten transition program held in the summer for incoming kindergartners, especially those assessed as not ready for kindergarten

Funded by: First 5 Mono

Conducted by: ESUSD & MUSD

**Objectives:**

- Increase school readiness skills
- Increase families' familiarity with the school campus and teachers

### 3. Child Care Quality

**Rationale:** Many children spend a significant amount of their early years with their childcare provider. Educating child care providers on how to best meet the needs of children in their care helps ensure children will spend their formative years in optimal learning environments. Financial support from First 5 California

facilitates county provision for programs that help create and maintain high-quality child care.

a. **CARES Plus:** In-home and center-based child care provider training

Funded by: First 5 California and First 5 Mono

Conducted by: First 5 Mono

**Objectives:**

- Increase child care providers' understanding of child development
- Provide curriculum ideas for child care providers
- Increase the quality of child care environments

b. **Child Signature Program:** Center-based child care provider quality improvement program

Funded by: First 5 California

Conducted by: Inyo County Office of Education

**Objectives:**

- Assess child care centers for quality indicators
- Create an improvement plan for each site
- Track implementation of goals

#### 4. Oral Health

**Rationale:** The 2009 Strategic Plan revision found significant community need in the area of oral health. Pediatricians saw visible tooth decay, and an opportunity to provide fluoride varnish and oral health education through paraprofessionals was developed.

**Tooth Tutor, Oral Health Outreach and Education:** Fluoride varnish and oral health education for children at playgroups, in childcare, at preschools, and at kindergarten round up.

Funded and Conducted by: First 5 Mono

**Objectives:**

- Provide semi-annual fluoride varnish application to all Mono County Children 1-5 not receiving services from a dentist
- Educate children and parents about oral health
- Provide free toothbrushes to families to help maintain good oral health
- Provide oral health checks at Kindergarten Round Up

#### 5. Family Behavioral Health

**Rationale:** In such a rural and geographically isolated county, it is easy for families to feel alone. Opportunities for children and their parents are fewer

than in more populated areas. To meet the social needs of parents and their children, a program was developed.

**Peapod Playgroups:** Weekly group meetings for parents and children

Funded by: Mono County Behavioral Health with minimal First 5 funding

Conducted by: First 5

**Objectives:**

- Decrease isolation by providing parents and children an opportunity to socialize
- De-stigmatize seeking behavioral health services
- Link families to community services
- Encourage school readiness skills
- Encourage early literacy

## 6. Child Safety

**Rationale:** There are no agencies in the county focused specifically on child safety. While many agencies conduct safety activities, there was no coordination of services. Initially spearheaded by Mammoth Hospital, multiple community agencies met to pursue the formation of a Safe Kids Coalition. No other participating agency had the necessary funding or staff time to conduct coordinating activities. Based on higher than average injury data for Mono & Inyo Counties, and after learning the benefits of such collaborations, the Commission decided to fund the coordination of a Safe Kids California, Mono Partners group

**Safe Kids California, Mono Partners:** Group of agencies and organizations dedicated to child safety

Funded by: First 5

Run by: Mono County Office of Education

**Objectives:**

- Educate families and care providers about child safety
- Provide car seats and bike helmets to families
- Provide county-wide safety events

## **Lessons Learned and Unmet Community Needs**

Gathering the majority of our data through focus groups held at our Peapod Playgroups, most input was from parents and care givers of children birth to five. Written comments from community agencies provided suggestions about content of the plan itself, and were incorporated into the final draft. Consequently, the themes that emerged about unmet needs are from parents, a literature review, and informal discussions with community members.

### **Opportunities to Gather**

The need for an indoor place for kids to play and parents to socialize on a more regular basis came up again and again in the focus groups. While parents enjoy Peapod, one hour a week is not enough for kids to run around, especially in the winter. With the cold and snow that is common over the winter months in Mono County, parents struggle to accommodate active toddlers' need to move and parents' need to talk to other adults during the day. Some expressed this as a need for a recreation center, others an aquatic center, or young-child gym, others as classes or simply more playgroups. This was also a need included in the last Strategic Plan update.

Thankfully First 5 Mono, with the help of funding from Mono County Behavioral Health, has established county-wide Peapod Playgroups to help fill this need. Birth-to-5 Health and Safety Fairs, offered at all ESUSD sites, are another annual event offered for families. The major constraint for expanding such services is funding. First 5 currently expends all the Behavioral Health funding and some Commission funds as well for the Peapod Playgroups. First 5 will try to expand opportunities for families to get together—especially in the winter—without increasing existing levels of funding.

Mono County Social Services' needs assessment cited Peapod Playgroups as a community strength in many regards. Combined with the community input garnered through our own evaluation activities, the Commission remains committed to holding these groups.

### **Child Care & Early Learning**

Parents expressed their need for reliable, affordable, high-quality child care in Mammoth, Bridgeport, Lee Vining, and Walker. This is a need that has existed in Mono County for more than 10 years, and was included in the last Strategic Plan. While there is one center-based child care facility, several home-based providers, and three preschool options in Mammoth, the need remains. Outside Mammoth Lakes and Crowley Lake, there are no licensed childcare providers in the county—and parents expressed a need for it.

In addition to child care, lack of preschool is an issue in Benton and Bridgeport. Parents from both communities commented on the need for services, explaining that school readiness cannot be adequately addressed without some level of service.

First 5 Mono receives support from First 5 California to provide training and support for childcare quality improvement, but no such funding is available for the creation of childcare or preschool facilities. There is a USDA rural development loan that could help with construction costs, but the Commission would be forced to cease providing most, if not all, its other services to repay such a loan. Alpine County First 5, for example, expends all their funding to operate their childcare center. Thus far, the Commission has opted to focus on community needs for which matching funds can be leveraged. Preschool is much the same story. For First 5 to fiscally help support a preschool, other programs would have to fall away. Despite no longer receiving First 5 California school readiness funds, the Commission has continued to fully fund all its school readiness activities. While First 5 does not provide preschool funding, it does fund the Summer Bridge Program, which was expanded to every elementary school in the county to help address school readiness needs.

First 5 will continue to collaborate with community members and agencies to find solutions to child care and preschool needs. First 5 will continue to try to identify and support community members interested in becoming licensed providers as it has in the past. In partnership with Mono County Office of Education extensive plans for a child-care center in Mammoth Lakes were developed, but without funding to build the facility, or a lead agency run it, the plan has not been actualized.

### **Early Literacy**

Several comment cards asking what community members would like the commission to invest in included suggestions to invest in early literacy. The Commission has invested heavily in early literacy programs, and the Children Now report card for Mono County in 2012-13 reports 71% of young children are read to every day (source: California Health Interview Survey Child and Teen Health Profiles (July 2012) data is clustered with Tuolumne, Calaveras, Amador, Inyo, Mariposa, Mono, and Alpine Counties). The same source however, reports only 34% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders were reading at grade level—a common benchmark used to determine literacy (source: percentage of third grade students scoring “advanced” or “proficient” on the English Language Arts portion of the California Standards Test). To expand its early literacy programs, the Commission began funding First Book. Following research that children from homes with more books become better readers, First Book offers children books of their choosing to bring home

for free. The commission will continue to refine its early literacy strategies to provide the most optimal outcomes.

## Results, Strategies, Indicators, and Outcomes

### Definitions

**Result Areas** are the ultimate result and improvement the commission is striving for. The result areas identified by First 5 California are: improved family functioning, improved child development, improved health, and improved systems of care.

**Strategies** are activities and services that can be implemented to achieve desired outcomes.

**Indicators** are observable, measurable characteristics or changes that represent achievement of an outcome.

**Outcomes** are the impact, change or benefit that result from implementing certain activities or services.

### Goal:

Enhance the network of support services for families with children ages 0 to 5 years.

**Result:** Mono County children 0-5 are educated to their greatest potential.

#### Strategies:

Provide the following county-wide services:

- Home visiting
- Child care quality
- School readiness
- Peapod Playgroups

#### Indicators:

- Number and percent of children in households where parents and other family members are receiving child-development and parenting education.
- Number and percent of children 6 months to 5 years old screened for developmental delays.
- Number and percent of children served in home child care settings and childcare centers that exhibit moderate to high quality as measured by a quality index.
- Number and percent of licensed child care providers in Mono County advancing on the Child Development Permit Matrix.
- Number and percent of licensed center and family child care spaces per 100 children.



- Number and percent of children “ready for school” upon entering Kindergarten.
- Number and percent of children who have ever attended a preschool, Pre-K, or Head Start program by the time of Kindergarten entry.
- Number and percent of children receiving Kindergarten transition support.
- Number and percent of entering Kindergarteners assessed for school readiness prior to entry.

**Outcomes:**

- Improved parental knowledge, understanding, and engagement in promoting their children’s development.
- Improved screening and intervention for developmental delays, disabilities, and other special needs.
- Improved quality and availability of childcare providers.
- Improved school readiness.

**Result:** All Mono County children 0-5 are healthy.

**Strategies:**

Provide the following county-wide services:

- Lactation education and support
- Home visiting
- Oral health education and support
- School readiness
- Child care quality
- Peapod Playgroups

**Indicators:**

- Number and percent of children where breastfeeding is successfully initiated and sustained.
- Number and percent of children 0 to 5 years of age who are in the expected range of weight for their height and age, or BMI.
- Number and percent of children who regularly access preventive dental care.
- Number and percent of children at Kindergarten entry with untreated dental problems.
- Number and percent of prenatal women who receive dental hygiene education.
- Number and percent of children ages 1 or older who receive annual dental screenings.
- Number and percent of children in families provided with information about appropriate community services.

**Outcomes:**

- Improved parental knowledge, understanding, and engagement in their children's physical and mental health.
- Improved access to healthcare services for children 0-5.
- Increased breastfeeding rates.

## Financial Plan

As of July 1, 2013, the First 5 Mono County Children and Families trust fund had an ending fund balance of \$541,125. All of these funds have already been committed to programs and services for children and families in the fiscal year 2013-14 and beyond. The challenge becomes how to manage the remaining resources, and new funds allocated to Mono County through the Prop 10 system, in a way that allows the strategies described in this plan to be successfully implemented and sustained for long enough to allow measurable improvements in the well-being of young children.

The State Commission has been providing an annual augmentation to support small county operations, which has allowed the Commission to free up tax revenues for programs. The rationale for this allocation was to address the administrative burden on small counties, who must use a proportionately greater share of their tax revenues to provide basic operations, including administrative services, planning, outreach, and evaluation. Currently, First 5 Mono County receives small county augmentations based on the amount of funds in First 5 California's unallocated account, current births, and 0-5 population in the county— approximately \$185,000 per year (a drop from previous funding levels of \$200,000 per year). The State Commission has committed to continuing these augmentations, at some level, through FY 2013-2014 for eligible counties, which includes Mono County. The state commission is currently reexamining its small county augmentation calculation and commitment.

In August of 2008 the Commission established a policy to set a minimum fund balance of no less than one year's current revenue thus allowing the commission to sustain program operations or close them out, should it be necessary. Revenues continue to decrease due to an approximate 3% annual decline in tobacco tax revenue. Current annual revenue projections from tobacco tax and small county augmentations are: \$292,376. Using the current annual revenue (\$292,376), the threshold set in 2008 is predicted to be crossed early in FY 2017-18.

To continue funding current programs, the Commission has actively sought—and succeeded in forging—fiscal partnerships with other local agencies. The Commission will prioritize funding programs that are able to leverage Commission funding to draw resources from other sources (such as local government, federal Medicaid, the State Commission, or other state funds). The Commission will encourage and assist programs in seeking funding from other sources to assure sustainability. Finally, the Commission will continue to seek funds from additional sources (aside from Proposition 10 revenues, Proposition 63 and CAPIT funds) to sustain the activities in its strategic plan.

The Commission has made significant, successful investments in home visiting and school readiness services. Funds have been allocated below to refine and continue

these existing strategies, as well as establish new services that address gaps identified through data gathered from the home visiting and school-linked service systems.

The Commission prioritized program areas and individual programs at its Strategic Planning Retreat. The program areas deemed of highest priority are: 1. Home Visiting; 2. Family Behavioral Health; and 3. School Readiness. The highest priority programs are: 1. Welcome Baby; 2. Peapod Playgroups; and 3. (tie) Parenting Partners and Summer Bridge/ pre-kindergarten assessments. As revenues decline, these priorities will help determine which programs are of highest importance to continue funding.

In compliance with state law, First 5 monies will be used only to supplement existing levels of service and/or create new services, and not to fund existing levels of service. No monies from the Children and Families Trust Fund will be used to supplant state or local General Fund money for any purpose. During the next five years (beginning in July 2014), the Commission will dedicate funds aligning with the objectives of this strategic plan, using the following estimated guidelines:

Strategic Objective	5-Year Investment	Percent of 5-year Investment
1. Home visiting services	\$676,845	34%
2. School readiness services	\$394,210	19%
3. Child Care Quality	\$177,000	9%
4. Oral health services	\$18,500	1%
5. Family Behavioral Health	\$150,000	7%
6. Child Safety	\$32,000	2%
7. Commission Operations/Support* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administrative costs – not to exceed 20% of total operations budget</li> <li>Program – varies, approximately 7% annually</li> <li>Evaluation varies, approximately 3% annually</li> <li>Misc.(county counsel and audit)</li> </ul>	\$316, 740 (16%) \$158, 370 (8%) \$52,790 (3%) \$35,000 (2%)	28%
*Commission Operations/Support costs are categorized as Administrative, Program, and Evaluation Costs, consistent with the definition of these functions as defined in the First 5 Financial Management Guide. The percent of administrative costs that may be spent on administrative functions in a fiscal year shall be no more than 20% of the Mono Commission's total operating budget.		
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2016,455</b>	

## Summary

Children and Families in Mono County have benefited from myriad services provided by First 5 Mono and collaborations including First 5 for almost 15 years. While multiple services are provided, and have been for many years, parents and community members feel a need for more: 1) opportunities to gather; 2) childcare and early learning opportunities; and 3) early literacy services. First 5 will continue to prioritize the services parents and community members want within the boundaries of its funding sources. The Commission prioritized its investments by program areas—which encompass strategies to address the most commented upon services during the planning process: 1) Home Visiting; 2) Family Behavioral Health; and 3) School Readiness.

As this strategic plan is implemented, First 5 will work with community agencies to improve the indicators in the Strategic Plan. Annual evaluation reports to the Commission at public hearings will provide data demonstrating First 5 Mono's effectiveness at improving indicators, providing services county-wide, and meeting its overarching goal of enhancing the network of support services for families with children ages 0 to 5 years. Evaluation results over the next five years will also help guide the next strategic planning process.

## **Appendix 1: Summary of Community Input from the 2013 Strategic Plan Update Process**

*Minutes and correspondence from all public hearings, written comments, community meetings and focus groups are available by contacting the Commission office in Mammoth Lakes.*

### **Compiled comments from all focus groups**

#### **What participants like about First 5 programs:**

##### **Peapod**

- Socialization with kids same age (7)
- Safe indoor space to play- especially in the winter (5)
- Child looks forward to (4)
- Socialization with other parents (4)
- Forming friendships (3)
- Learn about the community (2)
- No Charge (2)
- In-community services (2)
- Decreases isolation
- Beneficial and necessary
- Family oriented
- Learning & education
- Helpful
- Vent frustrations & triumphs
- Not having to commit
- Speakers
- Parent-child interaction
- Art projects
- Toys
- Ideas about parenting topics

##### **Home Visiting**

- Support, reassurance (3)
- normalization of parenting (2)
- learning about positive reinforcement
- non-judgmental
- Early identification of special needs
- Someone coming to the house for support
- Really care about my child

##### **Café Mom**

- Good for newborns (2)

##### **Round Up**

- Get excited about Kindergarten

##### **Story Hour**

- Good resource

##### **Tiny Toes**

- answered a lot of new mom questions (would like it to resume)

### Participants' biggest challenges are:

- Isolation (3)
- No preschool (2)
- Not a lot to do (2)
  - suggestions: museums, sports, ballet, swim lessons

#### Peapod

- Lack of participation (2)
- Scheduling (doesn't always work with part-time job)
- On days when most dads can't come
- Finding time to participate

### Participants' memorable experiences in First 5 programs are:

#### Peapod

- Leader is the reason mom put son in preschool (2)
- Parachute (2)
- When there were a lot of kids (2)
- Connections with other parents, friendships
- Interaction for caregivers
- Nature bracelets (tape bracelets with objects from nature stuck on them)
- Leader provides activity ideas
- Halloween party (32 kids!)
- Organized activities-peapod

#### Songs

- Socialization
- Arts & crafts

#### Home Visiting

- Book to record development
- modeling dealing with two kids
- doing a visit at her own house

#### Other programs

- Thanksgiving luncheon at Café Mom (2)
- How to sooth & massage a baby-Tiny Toes

### What would you change to make the programs better?

#### Peapod

- More frequent groups, (6)
  - Suggestions: year round. Longer groups, more times a week
- Open enrollment (2)
- Do measuring activities, cooking (2)
- Have 2 groups separated by age (2)
- More participation from dads-playgroups & home visiting (2)

- Permanent facility (2)
- Better communication about programs
- Help getting more attendance
- More manpower & advertising
- Don't allow everybody-peapod
- Pumpkin decorating activity
- Visit community places, like fire stations, once a month

**Community needs participants feel families face are:**

- Indoor park, recreation center (7)
- Childcare (6)
- More activities, classes (5)- swimming, art, ballet, sports
- Early childhood Love & Logic (3)
- Child-based entertainment (musician)
- Timely heating assistance, emergency services
- Kids Committee for the Antelope Valley (Four designated parents, conduct quarterly events)
- Picnic area that is covered
- Dyslexia education & training (for First 5, Peapod Leaders, & Preschool teachers)
- Playground in Mono City
- Tell moms at the hospital about all the programs offered
- A family area in the Village
- More preschools
- Swimming pool
- Target

**“Invest In....” Cards**

**Themes:**

Childcare facility (6)  
Gathering Opportunities (5)  
Indoor play facility (4)  
Early literacy (3)  
Classes (2)  
Outdoor play equipment (2)  
Breastfeeding (2)

**Other topics:**

Teen parenting classes  
Covered picnic area  
Curriculum for child care providers  
Collaboration with IMACA targeting child care providers  
Parent education  
Home visiting  
Hispanic specific connections for school readiness  
Summer bridge  
Child entertainment (musical)



## **Appendix 2: Description of Mono County**

Mono County is located south of Lake Tahoe on the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. With over 3,000 square miles and a population a bit over 14,000, it is rural in character. Two of the county's 4 passes typically close through the winter, contributing to its geographic isolation.

While the Latino population increased consistently from 1995-2005, the percentage of Latino families currently remains at about 50% and is concentrated in communities whose economies are tourism-based (Mammoth Lakes, June Lake, and Lee Vining). There are three Paiute Tribes—one without federal recognition—and two American Indian Reservations (in Benton and Bridgeport).

Geographic isolation and limited career opportunities are challenges families in Mono County face. Other challenges include: access to medical specialists, high-quality child care, and preschool in the most rural communities (Benton and Bridgeport).

Collaboration between varied agencies, schools, service providers, businesses, the community and faith organizations is common. The small population facilitates easy communication between groups. Residents are quick to help one another and solve issues facing the community.

Mono County is a strikingly beautiful place. The Sierras offer hiking, fishing, hunting, climbing and skiing. Families have the opportunity to know their neighbors, and enjoy low crime rates.

## **Appendix 3: Committees and Collaborations**

Below is a list of coalitions, task forces and committees in which First 5 Mono participates that work to promote health and wellness for families in Mono County

### **Breast feeding Taskforce**

Co-Chairs: Katie Armstrong, Nurse-Mammoth Hospital Labor & Delivery  
Stephanie Riley, Dietician, Mammoth Hospital

Purpose: Planning for breastfeeding support in Mono County

Members:

- First 5 Mono
- Mammoth Hospital Labor and Delivery
- Mono County Women Infants and Children

### **Child Abuse Prevention Council**

Chair: Barbara Miller, Program Director—MUSD Husky Club

Coordinator: Didi Tergesen, Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: Provide a forum for interagency cooperation and coordination in the prevention, detection, treatment, and legal processing of child abuse cases.

Members:

- First 5 Mono
- Inyo Mono Advocates for Community Action
- Mono County Health and Social Services Departments
- Parent and Community Representatives
- Wild Iris

### **Child Care Planning Council**

Chair: Barbara Miller, Program Director—MUSD Husky Club

Coordinator: Cindy Duriscoe, Director, Child Development and Family Services—Inyo Mono Community Advocates

Purpose: Planning for improvement of child care options in Mono County

Members:

- First 5 Mono
- IMACA Community Connection for Children
- Mammoth Elementary School Husky Club
- Mammoth Kids Corner
- Mono County Health Dept.
- Mono County Office of Education
- Mono County Social Services Dept.
- Parents/consumers of child care

## **Chronic Disease Taskforce**

Chair: Nancy Mahannah

Purpose: Heighten the community's awareness of chronic diseases and their risk factors; improve the community's access to chronic disease resources, including screening, education, health care services, and elimination of health disparities; Use innovative evidence based strategies to promote healthy lifestyle choices that prevent chronic disease; and advocate for policies that support healthy lifestyles and healthy communities.

Members:

- Inyo County Tobacco Control Program Director
- Mammoth Community Water District Risk Manager
- Mammoth Hospital: Community Relations and Clinic Manager
- Mammoth Lakes Foundation Student Housing
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Area: Risk Management
- Mammoth Vons Risk Manager
- Mono County: Health Officer, Health Promotion Division Manager, Public Health Risk Management, and Behavioral Health

## **Inter-Agency Coordinating Council (ICC)**

Chair: Jenni Huh, SELPA Director-Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: Coordinates services for special needs children ages 0-3

Members:

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| • First 5 Mono                            | • Mammoth Hospital                    |
| • Heart to Hand Family Resource Center    | • Mono County Health Dept. - CCS      |
| • IMACA Community Connection for Children | • Mono County Behavioral Health Dept. |
| • IMACA Head Start                        | • Mono County Office of Education     |
| • Kern Regional Center                    | • Mono County Social Services Dept.   |

### **Multi-Agency Leadership Council (MAC)**

Chair: Stacey Adler, Mono County Superintendent of Schools-Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: To create procedures regarding matters of safety and security

Members:

- Department of Social Services
- Disabled Sports Eastern Sierra
- Eastern Sierra Unified School District
- Mammoth Lakes Police Department
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
- Mammoth Unified School District
- Mono County Behavioral Health
- Mono County Court
- Mono County District Attorney
- Mono County Health Department
- Mono County Office of Education
- Mono County Probation
- Mono County Sherriff
- Wild Iris

### **Oral Health Taskforce**

Chair: Hilary Bayliss, Health Program Manager-Mono County Health Department

Purpose: Planning for the improvement of oral health in Mono County

Members:

- DDS Comfort
- DDS Schragar
- First 5 Mono
- IMACA Head Start
- Mammoth Hospital & Clinics
- MCOE School Nurse
- Mono County Health Department
- Mono County WIC
- Sierra Park Dental Clinic

### **Safe Kids California, Mono Partners**

Coordinator: Didi Tergesen, Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: Planning for improvement of child safety in Mono County

Members:

- California Highway Patrol
- First 5 Mono
- Mammoth Hospital
- Mammoth Lakes Fire Department
- Mammoth Lakes Police Department
- Mammoth Mountain Ski Area
- Mono County Health Department
- Mono County Office of Education
- Mono County Sheriffs

### **Strengthening Families**

Chair: Didi Tergesen, Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: Planning for strengthening families in Mono County

Members:

- First 5 Mono
- Mono County Behavioral Health
- Mono County Office of Education
- Mono County Social Services

### **Toiyabe Indian Health Project**

Chair: Dale "Chad" Delgado, Jr., Tribal Chair-Bishop Paiute Tribe

Purpose: Provide healthcare and promote wellness to Indian Communities

Members:

- Big Pine Paiute Tribe of the Owens Valley
- Bishop Paiute Tribe
- Bridgeport Indian Colony
- Fort Independence Indian Reservation
- Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone Reservation
- Timbisha Shoshone Tribe
- Utu Utu Gwaitu Paiute Tribe

### **First 5 Mono Children and Families Commission**

Chair: Stacey Adler, Superintendent of Schools-Mono County Office of Education

Purpose: Oversee the distribution of First 5 funds to benefit children 0-5

Members:

- Stacey Adler, Superintendent of Schools-Mono County Office of Education
- Kim Escudero, Pediatrician-Sierra Park Pediatrics
- Karin Humiston, Director- Mono County Probation
- Byng Hunt, Mono County Board of Supervisors
- Rick Johnson, Mono County Public Health Officer
- Barbara Miller, Program Director-MUSD Husky Club
- Jeanne Sassin, Teacher-Lee Vining Elementary School