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*"Making a positive difference in the lives of young children"*

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## Annual Report Funding Year 2003-2004 *Executive Summary*

### **Background**

In November 1998, California voters passed the California Children and Families Act, also known as Proposition 10, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes. Providing funds to create a comprehensive and integrated delivery system of information and services to improve child health, strengthen families, and help children be ready to learn by the time they start school. The Act applies to children, prenatal to age 5, and their families and caregivers. This initiative became known as "First 5" to emphasize the importance of the first five years of a child's life. The Tehama County Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance creating the Tehama County Children and Families Commission, currently known as First 5 Tehama. First 5 Tehama oversees the implementation of the tobacco tax allocations and supplemental funding from the First 5 California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California). First 5 Tehama distributes approximately \$500,000 a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

The driving force of First 5 Tehama can be found in its vision:

***"All Tehama County children will be born healthy and thrive in safe, supportive, nurturing, and loving environments; and will enter school as healthy, active, socially appropriate learners."***

### **Major Accomplishments in FY 2003-2004.**

#### **a. Systems-level accomplishments**

During the 2003-2004 fiscal year, First 5 Tehama County and its partners made systems level advances in School Readiness and the Retention Incentive for Early Learning Staff. In both projects, Tehama First 5 applied for and received state matching funds from California First 5.

During 2003-2004 a school readiness collaborative was established as a part of the Early Childhood Collaborative, a subcommittee of the larger Tehama County Health Partnership (TCHP). This positioned the school readiness projects to integrate into other efforts to improve conditions for children and families and apply the lessons learned in school readiness county-wide. The school readiness collaborative is continuing to address the need for service integration, avoidance of duplication of services, increased access to services for the target population, and enhanced access to the expertise and resources of partner agencies. Subcommittee partners include the Los Molinos Unified and Gerber Union Elementary School Districts, Head Start, kindergarten teachers at the participating schools, the Child Care Resource and Referral Agency (CCRE), St. Elizabeth's Hospital (a major

birthing hospital in the county), Northern California Catholic Social Services, Home Help for Hispanic Mothers and New Directions to Hope.

Tehama County First 5 received approval for state matching funds for the Child Care Retention Incentive Pilot Project. This pilot program aims to increase the retention of child care providers, decrease staff turnover and increase training and professional growth among providers. Child care providers receive a stipend in recognition of their participation in professional development offered at the community college, for both classroom and on-line attendance. This initiative helps to advance the long term quality of child care in Tehama County by developing an educated child care workforce.

*Other system level accomplishments include:*

1. Creation of a pre-qualification proposal as part of the funding process for First 5 Tehama programs. Results in building the organizational capacity of community-based organizations and public agencies that apply for funds and increasing the likelihood of well-planned, quality services.
2. Denise Snider, director of First 5 Tehama, was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to serve on the Children and Families Leadership Team (Child Welfare Redesign).
3. Director involved in the 'Tehama County Family Resource Center Network'. Their mission is to provide neighborhood-based places where individuals, families and organizations have access to resources that support children, families, and communities.
4. Denise formed an informal network meeting of Early Care and Development Educators in February 2003, to stay current on state and federal issues affecting early child care and education. This group also supports each other in coordinating local efforts to realize optimal child development. The group leadership transferred from First 5 Tehama to the Local Child Care Planning Council in September 2004.
5. Participation in the 'Early Childhood Collaborative Subcommittee' of the Tehama County Health Partnership. This subcommittee was formed to create and implement an integrated comprehensive and collaborative system of information and services to enhance optimal early childhood development.

#### **b. Program-level accomplishments**

Capital Improvements Efforts:

**PROJECT: Creative Learning Center (CLC)** was developed as a private non-profit child care center with infant care, toddler care, preschool and extended hours. The license capacity of the Creative Learning Center is 111; 28 infants (0-2 years) and 83 preschoolers (2-5 year olds). This center is the first in the county to accommodate parents who work late shifts. The employer sponsored Creative Learning Center emerged from a planning grant from Tehama First 5 to the Local Child Care Planning Council that included funds for developmentally appropriate indoor furnishings.

As it begins its second year of operation, Creative Learning Center's is at full capacity with waiting lists, employs 20 staff members, and serves families at all income levels. Community members serving as volunteers are providing story times for children at the Center. They strive to meet a variety of family challenges by providing flexible payment schedules, accommodating hours to fit individual parent work schedules, and by addressing the specific developmental needs of the children they serve.

Direct Services Efforts:

**PROJECT: First 5 Tehama's School Readiness Program was implemented in two school districts, Los Molinos Unified School District (LMUSD) and Gerber Union Elementary School District (GUESD).** LMUSD First Steps Center is housed on the Los Molinos Elementary School campus and GUESD Gerber Family Center is located on the Gerber Union Elementary School campus. At both sites, services focused on four result areas, improved: (1) child health, (2) child development, (3) family functioning, and (4) systems of care. The areas are interconnected and must all be addressed to ensure that a child is ready to learn. The Centers are client-oriented, community designed and driven to serve and support local pregnant women, young children, and their families. The programs support children 0-5 by providing, supporting, and advocating for early care and child development programs and services, family support, provision of and/or referral to basic health care, counseling, nutrition services, child abuse and prevention services, transportation services, and building school capacity.

The Centers have offered activities and resources including preschool and kindergarten registration round-up, parenting classes, school readiness workshops (2 hour semi-weekly presentations), Even Start in-home 90 minute weekly family literacy services, on-site dental screenings, school readiness skills with take-home activities to support training, KinderCamp (4 hours a day for 5 weeks), other home/childcare to kindergarten transition activities, and regular communication (welcome letter, newsletters) to help bridge the gap between home and school.

These services have had a positive impact on children and families. Children are learning school readiness skills, parents are becoming more familiar with school and more involved, children are receiving check-ups and immunizations in a timely manner, and KinderCamp is beginning to help build confidence and ultimately school success.

**PROJECT: Child Care Referral and Education (CCRE) – Informal Caregiver Home Visiting and Training Program.** This program focuses on improved child development and school readiness for informal child caregivers (license exempt providers), and mainly targets providers who receive child care subsidies and Spanish-speaking providers. Activities include orientations for new providers, home visits, workshops on early childhood topics, and technical assistance with obtaining licensing, as well as professional development. All programs are free and each provider who completes 10 hours of training gets a \$50 gift certificate to an early childhood supply catalog. The program is research-based in early childhood best practices and principles, including 'First Years Last Forever' information on brain development. One grandmother has taken 80 hours of trainings and received \$450 worth of gift certificates. She has improved her level of care and has pursued licensing.

**PROJECT: St. Elizabeth Community Hospital (SECH) – Bilingual Perinatal Education Program.** Prior to this program, there were no perinatal education classes in Spanish and only one childbirth class in English, taught by someone outside the community. The program is designed for prenatal parents and the people who support them. It provides postpartum services, including infant massage classes, basic breastfeeding support; and referral services. Other perinatal classes are childbirth, waterbirth, and baby basics. Including spouses, relatives, and friends of the pregnant mom has resulted in an increase of community knowledge, as well as a strong extended support system for the mothers to be. Special classes have been designed for specific groups such as Latinos, rural teens, and most recently those in juvenile hall. The program has also successfully trained staff as

childbirth and lactation educators. Results-based outcomes include increased preparedness for childbirth with healthy birth outcomes, increased breastfeeding initiation rates, preventive health care for infants, and education and support for women.

**c. Commission-level accomplishments**

Commission level accomplishments focused on supporting system change, results based accountability from funded projects and quality of services provided by funded projects.

First 5 Tehama adopted an evaluation design for school readiness which clearly defines how success for the project will be measured. The evaluation design for school readiness was developed by the Commission's evaluation consultant, reviewed by the partners and adopted by the school readiness collaborative and the First 5 Tehama commission members.

In order to better serve families, the School Readiness Collaborative adopted the multi agency referral form and agreed to an Integrated Child Service Project so that agencies working with the same family would share information. Staff of partner agencies will meet as a multidisciplinary team and select a case manager when families are working with multiple organizations.

The Commission provided funded programs with training, technical assistance, and support to conduct evaluations and use data. The Commission also continued to implement an evaluation design which incorporates First 5 California outcomes from the SRI International evaluation and the School Readiness outcomes. Commission staff and the evaluation consultant supported the funded project's effort in ensuring that evaluation reporting and data collection systems align with the Prop. 10 Evaluation Data System (PEDS).

*Other Commission level accomplishments include:*

1. A strategic planning session in August 2003 that resulted in a specific thirteen page action plan.
2. Approved revision of the proposal process to include a comprehensive 'Scope of Work' for funded programs that will result in outcome based program evaluation and clear contract monitoring. Integration of First 5 Tehama principles, values, vision and researched best practices into the revised Direct Services proposal process.
3. Development, approval and implementation of policies and procedures for First 5 Tehama funded projects.

**Plan Highlights for FY 2004-2005.**

In 2004-2005, New Directions to Hope will implement their First 5 Tehama Direct Services grant funded project, named the Genesis Project. In collaboration with community referral sources, specialized professional therapeutic services will be delivered to pregnant women and children, ages 0-5. The Genesis Project has three primary components: 1) in-home therapeutic support services; 2) office and school-based therapeutic and educational services; and 3) community outreach and education of professionals. Each program component will support and expand parent education and counseling opportunities for parents with children 0-5, including prenatal education, individual counseling and parent-child therapies, positive discipline, school readiness and information/referrals to appropriate community support services.

Northern California Child Development, Inc., will implement their newly awarded Direct Services grant funded project, named Family Start-Early Intervention Collaborative Project.

This is a bilingual (English/Spanish) family focused early intervention home visiting program serving pregnant women and families with children 0-5, with priority given to children 0-3. Services include: regularly scheduled educational home visits, case management, health services appropriate to children's needs, family assessments, referral services, parenting education classes, fatherhood involvement activities, and child safety information. The collaborative services include a new "Dads" program in conjunction with Tehama County Health Services Agency, Drug and Alcohol Division. This program will offer treatment three days a week, one and a half hours per day. Treatment includes drug and alcohol counseling, case management, and parent education.

In 2004-2005, the school readiness program will be fully implemented. The LMUSD First Steps Center and GUESD Gerber Family Center, both based on a family resource center model, will continue to expand their program and services. Through the Gerber Family Center, Home Help for Hispanic Mothers is contracted to facilitate leadership training for a minimum of ten Latina mothers. The leadership work includes eight monthly meetings and four trainings focused on building communication skills and community and school involvement. The resulting increase in communication skills, coupled with knowledge of the infrastructure of school systems will encourage Latina mothers to become more involved in the activities of their children, serve on committees and participate in the education of their children.

The LMUSD First Steps Center will hold a children's fair in spring during the preschool and kindergarten registration round-up. The fair's purpose is to create a family-friendly environment where information can be disseminated about: school readiness, early childhood development, community child care, health services, social services, and education services available to families.

*Other plans for 2004-2005 include:*

1. Capacity building of First 5 Tehama funded projects to include training on sustainability.
2. Release the 'Emerging Issues' Request for Proposal – a funding mechanism to supplement, expand and integrate services focused on specific, previously unforeseen, needs.

System, program and Commission level changes will continue to focus on supporting networks of providers that partner with parents to ensure that all Tehama County children thrive in safe, nurturing environments and enter school ready to learn.

Denise E. Snider, MSW  
Executive Director