

First 5 Tehama  
Annual Report Funding Year 2004-2005  
*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. The Act provides 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. It 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) and distributes approximately \$750,000 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 2004-05

**a. Program-level accomplishments**

Direct Services Efforts:

**Project: School Readiness/First Steps Center and Gerber Family Center**

This past year the School Readiness program was fully implemented at the First Steps Center at the Los Molinos Elementary School and the Gerber Family Center at Gerber Elementary School. Children under the age of five and their families who have been historically underserved due to the rural nature of their address were targeted for participation. The program addresses the needs of a rural county with attention to reach out to non-English speaking families. Transportation services are provided to enable families to participate in project activities and to obtain needed services.

The School Readiness program supports 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.

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.

The School Readiness program has bridged the gaps in linkage to services that were often times unavailable or unknown to the local communities within the county. Families and schools were brought together, reducing stigma and increasing communication. Through collaboration with schools, county agencies, families and other providers, we were able to identify specific needs/goals of the community members and provide programs or link services that were of direct benefit to the community.

### **Project: Family Start**

Northern California Child Development, Inc., implemented their Direct Services grant funded project known as the Family Start Early Intervention Collaborative Project. This bilingual (English/Spanish) family-focused early intervention home visiting program serves pregnant women and families with children 0 to 5, with priority given to children 0 to 3.

Family Start involves intensive and comprehensive home visitation, including educating parents about child development, developing a plan based on the parents' needs and desires, and obtaining needed resources. Services are provided through home visits, socializations at Head Start Centers and field trips in the community.

At the six-month follow-up, the percentage of children with health insurance, dental insurance and a medical home increased. All participating families had health insurance and a regular source of medical care for their children, and 90% had dental insurance at the six-month follow-up. While one quarter of parents reported reading to their children three or more times a week at intake, all parents reported doing this family literacy activity by the six-month follow-up survey.

### **Project: Genesis**

This year New Directions to Hope, a local non-profit, implemented its First 5 Tehama Direct Services grant-funded project, the Genesis Project. In collaboration with community referral sources, specialized professional therapeutic services were delivered to pregnant women and children 0 to 5. The Genesis Project offers 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. The Project provides training for mental health professionals in early childhood issues, training for community (parents, care providers, etc.) in issues related

to children age 0 to 5, and development of resource and referral partnerships to benefit target population.

Clients have received intensive, comprehensive and holistic therapeutic services aimed at improving family functioning for the target population. Children 0 to 5 are benefiting by growing up in more functional, healthy homes. They are better prepared for school as their family literacy activities increase; are healthier as the family receives appropriate referrals for health and dental services; and receive appropriate mental health care for themselves and family members that impact the development and life of the child.

**Project: CARES/ Child Care Retention Incentive (CRI) Project**

CRI, Child Care Retention Incentive Project in Tehama County, completed a successful second year with 51 total participants --27 returning and 24 new, including 15 private center staff, 11 Head Start staff, 19 Family Child Care home providers/assistants, and six family/friend/neighbor providers. A total of \$25,003.50 was paid in stipends. The CRI Project goals include supporting, educating, and retaining committed and qualified licensed childcare providers to ensure quality child care services for children & families.

New providers received many professional growth hours through Early Childhood trainings offered throughout the county while returning participants showed an increase in ECU units as well in addition to professional growth hours. The program saw an increase in family/friend/neighbor participation from two to six this year. Participants voiced a continued desire to remain in the field and an increased interest in applying for a Child Development Permit. One of the two family/friend/neighbor providers became licensed this year.

**Project: CARES/ Family, Friend and Neighbor (FFN) Caregiver Outreach Program**

The program continues to provide outreach, support, and training activities for family, friend, and neighbor child caregivers and Spanish-speaking caregivers through home visits, outreach, workshops, and technical assistance. Approximately 90 FFN caregivers working with children ages 0-5 were served this year, as well as 30 parents and 100 children in that age group. Activities included free workshops and trainings on various child development topics for providers and parents; "Morning Out" and Playdates in the Park for children; Incentive program for providers who attend trainings/workshops where caregivers receive educational materials, health and safety items, such as first aid kits, fire extinguishers, and outlet covers, and gift certificates for educational catalogs; Information on child development issues, assistance with licensing, and linkages to other community resources. Six FFN caregivers applied and qualified for the CRI/CARES stipend program.

**Project: St. Elizabeth Community Hospital (SECH) 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 their support people; provides postpartum services,

including infant massage classes and basic breastfeeding support; and referral services. Other perinatal classes are: childbirth, water birth, breast feeding, and baby basics. Special classes have been designed for special interest 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.

#### **b. Systems-level accomplishments**

In Tehama County, continued commitment to collaboration has extended the reach of First 5 funding and added depth and richness to services to high-risk families in isolated rural settings. Three major First 5 funded projects serving families in the county have worked closely together in the past year to maximize services, eliminate duplication and ensure that the greatest number of families in need are served appropriately. This effort has been effectively targeted in Gerber, Los Molinos and Corning.

The three projects include the school readiness project implemented in two schools (Gerber and Los Molinos Elementary Schools) and their respective districts, Family Start implemented by Northern California Child Development Inc., and Genesis implemented by New Directions to Hope. All three projects offer case management and home visitation services. Project staff worked together in the past year, meeting monthly to review work with individual families and assure that they were receiving the most comprehensive and tailored services to meet their needs. Using a common referral and consent form, school readiness project staff, Genesis therapists and Family Start home visitors shared information, concerns and insights on a regular basis on individual families and needed services.

All three of these projects record services to Core Participants in the state evaluation web based PEDS system and the evaluation consultant monitored families' services and milestones using the reporting functions in PEDS. The evaluation consultant was able to confirm that there was no overlap in families served. In interviews and focus groups conducted for the local evaluation, project staff of the three projects reported smooth referral and linkage among the three projects so that, for example, families needing more intensive therapeutic intervention were referred and served by Genesis. Evidence of close collaboration includes the full caseloads in all projects. Regular communication among staff of all three projects improved the quality of services to families and extended the benefit of First 5 funding.