

**2020  
2025**



FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO  
**STRATEGIC** *plan*



First 5

San Diego

# LETTER

## *from the executive director*

To our Community Partners and Leaders,

First 5 San Diego is looking to the future with the presentation of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan which continues to build on the legacy of over 20 years of impact on pregnant women, children ages 0 through 5 and their families.

First 5 San Diego has been a leader in developing a stronger system of care that supports early identification through universal developmental and behavioral screening and services, home visitation services to targeted populations, oral health services and high quality early care and education.

In this plan, we continue our ongoing commitment to strengthening and connecting our early care and education systems, supporting families throughout the region, and impacting the overall well-being of our youngest children.

As we look to the emerging future, our declining revenue calls for us to consider a greater focus on our investments. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan positions First 5 San Diego with a unique opportunity to function as a convener and as an expert leader and thought partner to continue improving the overall system of care for our region's youngest children and their families.

First 5 San Diego is well positioned to support systems change efforts, develop a stronger network throughout our region, support greater connectedness among the systems of care, leverage additional funding to sustain and bring our initiatives to scale, and advocate for policy changes that will support our children and families for years to come.

On behalf of First 5 San Diego, we thank you for your ongoing commitment and partnership in improving the lives of our youngest children and their families.

Alethea Arguilez

# *acknowledgements*

## **First 5 Commission of San Diego**

Supervisor Kristin Gaspar, Chair, District 3  
Carol Skiljan, Vice Chair  
Sandra McBrayer, Secretary  
Nick Macchione, MS, MPH, FACHE  
Wilma J. Wooten, MD, MPH

## **Ad Hoc Advisory Committee**

Carol Skiljan, Chair and  
Commission Representative  
Penny Adler, Director of Education,  
League of Women Voters of San Diego  
Fred Baranowski, Finance Committee Chair,  
First 5 San Diego  
Sarah Garrity, EdD, Interim Chair & Associate  
Professor, Department of Child and Family  
Development, San Diego State University  
Leon Kelley, MD, Pediatrician (retired),  
Children's Primary Care Medical Group,  
Rady Children's Hospital  
Dina Polus, Community Representative,  
Newcomers Support & Development,  
Resident Leadership Academy  
Jeffrey Rowe, MD, Associate Clinical Professor,  
University of California San Diego  
Alyson Shapiro, PhD, Assistant Professor,  
Department of Child and Family Development,  
San Diego State University  
Dean E. Sidelinger, MD, MEd, Interim Deputy  
Public Health Officer & Child Health Medical  
Officer, County of San Diego  
Cecil Steppe, Chairman, Board of Directors,  
Mental Health America, San Diego  
Howard Taras, MD, FAAP, Child Development  
and Community Health, University of  
California San Diego

## **The Project Team**

First 5 San Diego:  
Alethea Arguilez, Executive Director  
Martin Cherry, Operations Manager  
Harold Randolph, Data and  
Evaluation Manager

## **The Consultant Team**

Carolyn Verheyen, MIG, Inc.  
Andy Pendoley, MIG, Inc.  
Nicole Bracy, Harder+Company  
Community Research

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# INTRO *duction*

For over 20 years, First 5 San Diego has championed the health and well-being of the youngest children throughout the San Diego region. In the next 20 years and beyond, we envision that all children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.



# [ 01 ]

## REFLECTing

on today, preparing for tomorrow

In 1998, California voters formed the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) upon the passage of the California Children and Families Act (Proposition 10), which added a tax increase on tobacco products to promote, support and improve the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age. As part of this initiative, State law requires that each County adopt an adequate and complete County-specific strategic plan for the support and improvement of early care and education systems within the County.

Since then, First 5 San Diego has invested over \$716 million in programs, services and systems of care to promote the vital importance of the early years and comprehensive early childhood health and development. Importantly, in addition to generating meaningful outcomes for our youngest children, these investments are improving the systems of care through innovative and proven practices that will make a difference for generations to come.

With partners and service providers from throughout the region, First 5 San Diego has created care and support systems for children ages 0 through 5 and their families that did not exist 20 years ago, including:

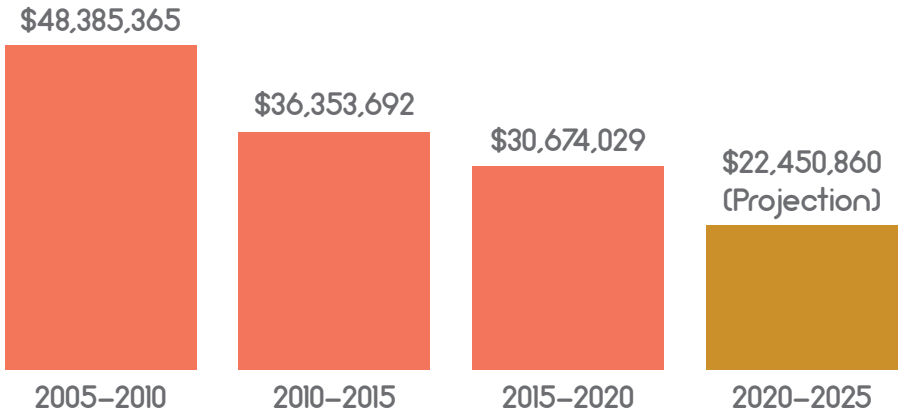
- Developmental checkup and screening services focused on assessing and treating developmental and behavioral concerns.
- Home visitation services for high-risk target populations including pregnant and parenting teens, military, refugee/immigrant and low-income families.
- Oral health services, care coordination, preventative education and expanded capacity for providers.
- Quality early care and education programs in targeted communities, and elevated quality levels across the region.
- Education for new and expectant parents and caregivers that builds their understanding, confidence and capabilities in being the child's first and best teacher.

These support systems are proven practices that are being replicated across the country and internationally. The San Diego region's programs, services and systems of care are frequently referenced as models of excellence.

Despite this tremendous progress, the needs and opportunities to support our youngest children and their families and improve our systems of care, always exceed available funding. Exacerbating this challenge is that tobacco tax revenues are continuing to decline. Nevertheless, First 5 San Diego will continue to innovate in leading our region's focus on the youngest children, their families and improving systems of care for lasting and sustainable outcomes.

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## DECLINE IN AVERAGE ANNUAL PROGRAM REVENUES BY PERIOD





# OUR YOUNGEST CHILDREN *today and tomorrow*

Our region's youngest children continue to highlight the significant diversity of San Diego County (County) today and in the future. With a total estimated population of approximately 3.5 million in 2020, the County's population is estimated to exceed 4.3 million by 2050. Today, approximately 44 percent of children between the ages of 0 and 5 are of Hispanic or Latino descent and are estimated to continue to grow as a share of the population. Additionally, the County continues to gain a large immigrant and refugee population with children and families from around the world.

First 5 San Diego is strengthening its role as a collaborative partner with organizations that address health, education, safety and social service needs that affect the youngest children and their families. Historically, First 5 San Diego directly supported many partners that provide services and programs to the youngest children and their families. In the future, these partnerships will evolve to focus on strengthening the comprehensive early care and education system and supports that are proven to ensure our County's youngest children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.

Additional data and perspectives from community partners regarding priority needs, strengths and assets, and gaps in the systems that serve children ages 0 through 5 and their families in San Diego County are addressed in the Research Report, Appendix C, which is available under separate cover.

## THE FIRST 5 SAN DIEGO *Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025*

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The First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan serves as a roadmap to focus our investments over the next five years toward changing the systems and achieving key results that best promote early care and education in San Diego County. The plan guides funding decisions at a strategic level and establishes a framework to assist in measuring progress towards meeting our goals and holding us accountable in the work that we do. The plan establishes the Evaluation Framework and aligns with the Financial Spending Plan, and together these documents specify a detailed strategy for how we will target our investments and the type of outcomes we seek to achieve.

[ 02 ]

# FRAMING

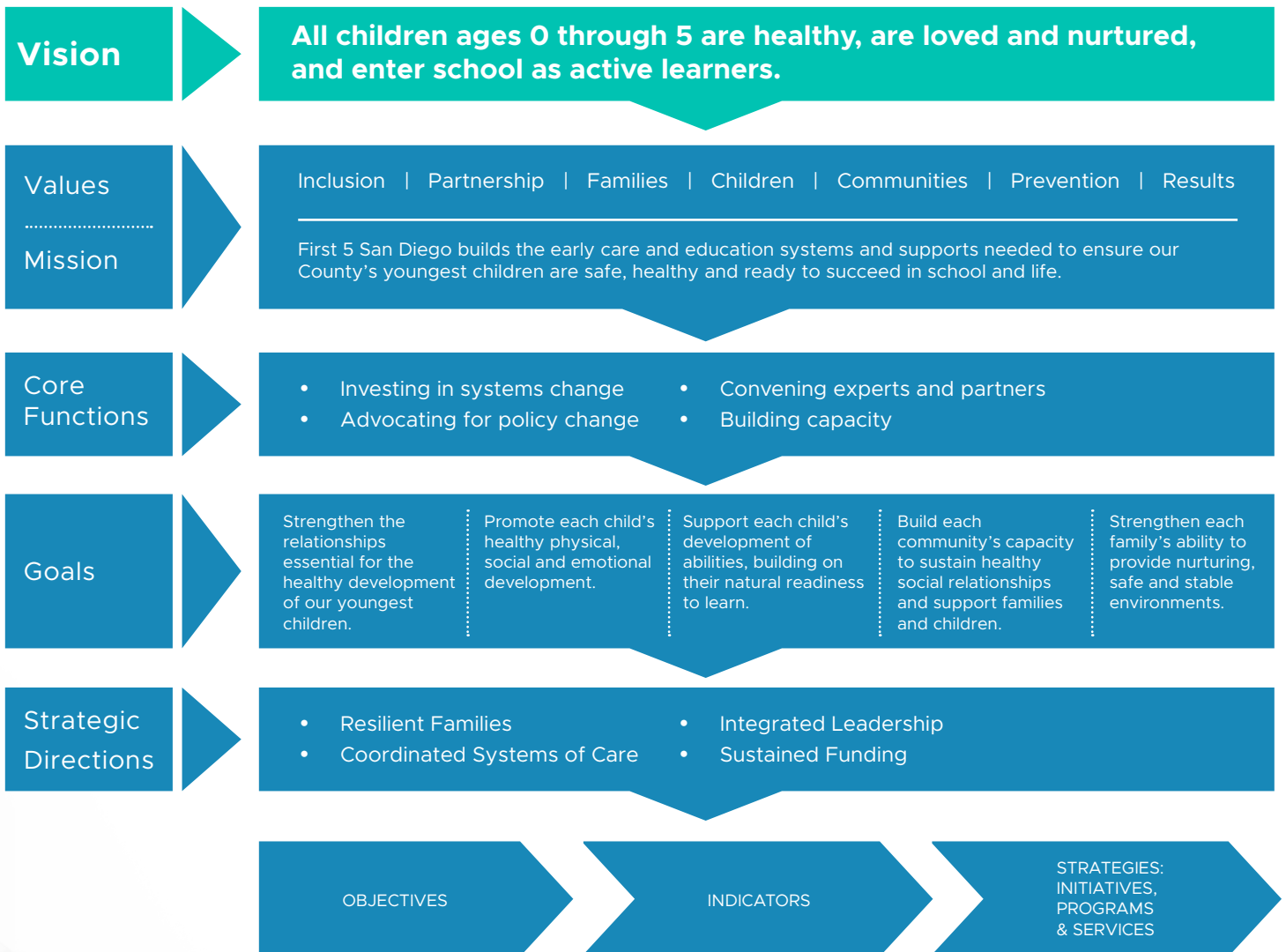
the future



# THE STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

## 2020 - 2025

The Strategic Plan framework provides an overview of the content and organization of the Strategic Plan. The First 5 San Diego values, vision, mission, and core functions serve as the foundation for the Strategic Plan goals and objectives. These provide the basis for the development and implementation of strategic initiatives, projects, programs and services. The first version of this framework was adopted in 2009 through in-depth community engagement, with revisions applied in recent years.



# [VISION, VALUES, MISSION]

## *and core functions*

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The vision, values, mission and core functions are foundational to First 5 San Diego, describing how we work and what we strive to accomplish.

### Vision

The ultimate goal of First 5 San Diego's work is that **all children ages 0 through 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.**

Additionally, our vision supports the efforts of our membership organization, the First 5 Association of California, which advocates for "strong, effective, stable systems serving California's youngest children." From a statewide perspective, **one day, California's success will be measured by the well-being of its youngest children.**

Within our communities, our vision aligns with *Live Well San Diego*, which envisions a region that is **building better health, living safely and thriving.** We proudly contribute to building better service delivery systems, supporting positive choices, pursuing policy and environmental change and improving our internal culture.

### Values

In all that it does, First 5 San Diego holds to these values:

**Children:** We honor and celebrate every child.

**Families:** We strengthen and support parents, families and primary caregivers to be their child's first and best teachers.

**Communities:** We believe strong communities help create healthy children and families.

**Inclusion:** We embrace and serve the diversity of San Diego's communities.

**Partnership:** We collaborate to create a seamless system of care and support for children and families.

**Prevention:** We invest "upstream," to create and promote opportunities for all children, families and communities to be healthy and strong.

**Results:** We are committed to achieving real and sustainable outcomes, demonstrating fiscal accountability and attaining measurable results.

### Mission

First 5 San Diego builds the early care and education systems and supports needed to ensure our County's youngest children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.

## Core Functions

First 5 San Diego achieves its mission through these core functions:

- **Investing in systems change** leading to improved outcomes
- **Advocating for policy change** at local and state levels
- **Convening experts and partners** to coordinate and leverage existing resources
- **Building community, organizational and system capacity** to strengthen and support families

## Goals

All First 5 San Diego priorities and investments are framed according to the following four goal areas: Health, Learning, Family and Community. The goal areas are closely interrelated and are not intended to represent exclusive categories. They express our key priorities to address the complexity and breadth of local needs.

Our overarching goal emphasizes the profound influence of relationships on a child's healthy development and long-term outcomes in all developmental domains. These relationships shape all efforts to promote the vital importance of the early years and comprehensive early childhood health and development.

## Overarching Goal

**Strengthen the relationships essential for the healthy development of our youngest children.**

These relationships are embedded in health, learning, resilient families and community settings or environments.

## Health

**Promote each child's healthy physical, social and emotional development.** Early childhood health and development includes the physical, behavioral and social emotional, and our systems must embrace a "whole child" approach. In addition, the well-being of primary caregivers has a direct impact on a parents and young child's health; as such, addressing maternal health and family stress issues is also an important part of improving the health of our County's youngest children.

## Learning

**Support each child's development of communication, problem-solving, physical, social emotional and behavioral abilities, building on their natural readiness to learn.** Quality early care and education plays an integral role in a child's cognitive development, and thus in preparing children to succeed in school and later in life. In addition, early learning is known to have a significant impact on a broad range of social and economic outcomes throughout the course of a person's life. Strengthening the systems that promote early care and education is critical to ensuring our youngest children receive this support.

## Family

**Strengthen each family’s ability to provide nurturing, safe and stable environments.**

**Parents and primary caregivers are a child’s first and best teachers.** Families shape the environment in which a child begins his or her life and thus they require the knowledge, tools and resources to nurture and support their children, particularly in their earliest years of development. In addition to meeting the child’s basic needs, families play an important role in early learning. Student achievement in school is linked to positive communication among family members, balanced expectations for achievement, engagement in their child’s school and formal education, and the extent to which learning is valued at home. Stable and nurturing family routines also provide a key foundation for social emotional stability. Supportive programs and services must be tailored to the roles and needs of the mother, father and primary caregiver.

## Community

**Build each community’s capacity to sustain healthy social relationships and support families and children.**

Healthy relationships in early childhood can create a foundation for healthy attachments built on caring, trust, and mutual respect and an inner resiliency that leads to improved life outcomes. Strong communities can provide a circle of support for families, bringing healing, help and a sense of belonging and identity. And, we know that advocating for policy change and funding, and educating the public helps strengthen the community to better support and promote health and early learning in the first five years of life.

## Objectives

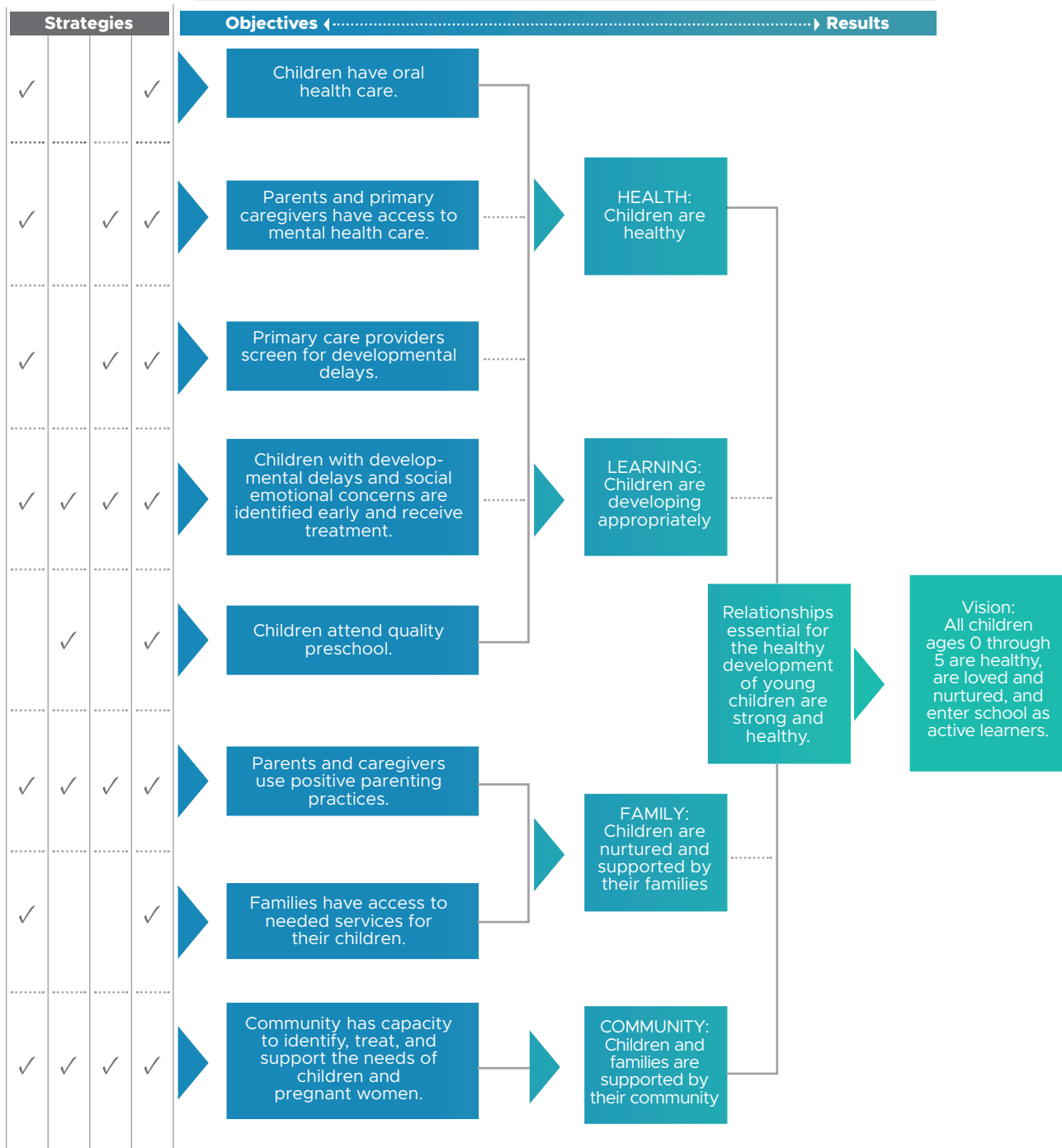
With direct ties to the goals, our objectives reflect First 5 San Diego’s commitment to invest in systems, programs and services that achieve measurable results. The objectives are quantifiable and measurable targets of real improvements in the lives of San Diego’s youngest children and in the comprehensiveness of the system of care. The following objectives provide concrete direction for our investments and a framework for monitoring progress.

- Decrease the percentage of children ages 0 through 5 with untreated dental disease.
- Increase the percentage of parents and caregivers receiving mental health services as identified.
- Increase the number of primary care providers in San Diego County that screen for developmental concerns in children ages 0 through 5 as part of regular visits.
- Decrease the percentage of children entering Kindergarten with undetected and/or untreated developmental, social emotional, or behavioral delays or concerns.
- Increase the percentage of children ages 0 through 5 enrolled in a quality early care and education environments with a highly qualified workforce.
- Increase parents’ and caregivers’ knowledge and capacity to promote the healthy development of children ages 0 through 5.
- Increase parents’ and caregivers’ access to needed services for their children through care coordination.
- Increase the community’s capacity to identify, treat, and support the needs of children and pregnant women.

# Evaluation Logic Model

The Evaluation Logic Model depicts the flow from goals to strategies to results. The wording of the goals and objectives has been translated into results statements for purposes of evaluation. The accompanying Evaluation Framework (Appendix A) identifies specific indicators and targets that will be regularly monitored to measure progress toward reaching these objectives.

- 1. Pregnant Women/Family Support
- 2. Quality Early Education
- 3. Healthy Developmental/Social/Emotional
- 4. Public Education





[ 03 ]

# STRENGTHENing

systems, investing for results

**Cross-sector systems-level change is vital to achieving critical outcomes for young children and their families.**

Stronger integration of policies, initiatives and services will be more effective and facilitate navigation for families. In addition, organizations working together in a coordinated way will increase the long-term viability of programs and services to meet child and family needs. In short, aligning existing systems will create a more efficient, sustainable, customer-focused network where continuity of care and quality of service are the priority.



# In the coming years, forming and strengthening the partnerships that can create lasting changes to systems of care and generate better outcomes for our youngest children and their families will become a defining role for First 5 San Diego.

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The Strategic Plan will help focus First 5 San Diego investments to maximize the impact on children's lives. This will include direct investments in proven initiatives and working with system partners to help leverage our collective efforts.

In addition to addressing early childhood development needs, the ballot initiative that created the First 5 organization also focuses on smoking prevention, which has been very successful. As a result, tobacco tax revenues have steadily declined over the years, reducing funding levels for early childhood development programs and services.

Now, First 5 San Diego must invest fewer dollars year-by-year in innovative and proven approaches that improve the larger systems of care and coordination of service delivery. These investments may take the form of direct services and programs, or systems change initiatives, or combinations of both. Importantly, systems change initiatives will require complementing and leveraging other funds from public, philanthropic, and private sector partners that have shared visions and commitments.

# STRATEGIC *directions*

Strategic directions primarily provide guidance for how First 5 San Diego will create lasting changes to the systems of care. The strategic directions are interrelated and are applicable across all goal areas, which supports the importance of systems of care that address multiple and interrelated needs.

## ***Resilient Families:***

Provide families with the foundational support and knowledge to be their child's first and best caregiver and teacher.

## ***Coordinated Systems of Care:***

Connect or integrate systems of care to ensure that the youngest children and their families have timely and seamless access to supports and services that best meet their needs.

## ***Integrated Leadership:***

Build partnerships across sectors and systems that increase community commitment to supporting the first five years of life.

## ***Sustained Funding:***

Identify and integrate existing and new funding sources from public, private and philanthropy sectors that establish innovations to the systems of care and expand services to the youngest children and their families.

## Strategies

The strategies are designed to be impactful and multi-faceted, primarily through addressing today's critical needs with best and proven practices, particularly for high need/high risk populations. A direct service approach will continue in the near-term, now with a greater focus on how these investments may also support systems change and sustainability beyond First 5 San Diego's investment in the long-term.

Ultimately, the strategies offer great potential in continuing to generate outcomes in the goal areas of Health, Learning, Family, and Community, all while showing a strong return-on-investment through a focus on prevention.

## 1. Services for pregnant women and families that support healthy infant/toddler development

- Targeted home visitation for specific at-risk populations.
- Consolidated programming of home visitation programs in San Diego County.
- Increased emphasis on parent and caregiver mental health.

## 2. Quality enhancement of early education environments

- Quality enhancement of early education environments in targeted areas through parent engagement, intensive provider coaching and screening and supporting children with special needs.
- Partnerships that increase quality standards and availability of early care and education.

## 3. Early identification and treatment of developmental delays and social emotional issues

- Regional networks that provide developmental checkups and services for development, speech and language, and behavioral issues, and promote care coordination.
- Enhanced primary care practices to include social and emotional development.

## 4. Public education about the importance of the first five years of life

- Targeted efforts within each of the core strategies. Telephone and online information and referral to connect families to services. Information to increase awareness, access and use of First 5 San Diego services. Broader community efforts to strengthen and support families and reduce the need for direct services.
- Collaboration with partners to educate policymakers and opinion leaders on the value and impact of a family-centered approach in support of healthy children and resilient families.

## Strategic Plan Implementation

The Strategic Plan guides allocation of funds at the strategy level and is complemented by a detailed investment and allocation strategy in the Financial Spending Plan. The following funding principles will continue to guide First 5 San Diego's implementation efforts:

**Prioritization:** First 5 San Diego cannot meet all the needs of the County's youngest children and their families. Funding must be directed to a few specific priorities.

**Sustainability:** First 5 San Diego will fund initiatives that are strongly positioned to continue when our investment levels decline.

**Systems-focus:** First 5 San Diego will fund initiatives that are evidence-based in improving the systems of care and generating meaningful outcomes for the County's youngest children and their families.

**Leveraging:** Funds must be optimized by supplementing, pooling or matching existing resources.

Additionally, First 5 San Diego continues to uphold the highest standards for responsibility and accountability in its implementation practices.

Implementation of this Strategic Plan will increasingly focus on improving the systems of care through evidence-based, sustainable practices. On an annual basis, First 5 San Diego will review and adjust our framework and investments based on changes in community needs and funding conditions, as warranted. These efforts will strengthen our County's capabilities and capacities to support our youngest children despite the continued decline in First 5 San Diego revenues. First 5 San Diego dedicates itself to leading San Diego County in ensuring our County's young children are safe, healthy and ready to succeed in school and life.

# APPENDIX



## EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

| GOAL AREA               | OBJECTIVES   | INDICATORS  | LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT | BASELINE           |
|-------------------------|--|---|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Health</b>           | Obj. 1: Decrease the percentage of children ages 0 through 5 with untreated dental disease.  | Percentage of children participating in F5SD programs, identified as high-risk with dental disease who receive treatment. | <b>Program</b>       | <b>98.4%</b>       |
|                         |  | Percentage of children ages 0 through 5 who have had a dental screening in the past year.                                 | <b>Community</b>     | <b>76.6%</b>       |
| <b>Health</b>           | Obj. 2: Increase the percentage of parents and primary caregivers screened and referred for mental health services when identified.                                      | Percentage of parents and primary caregivers who are screened for mental health concerns.                                 | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                         |  | Percentage of parents and primary caregivers identified with a concern who are referred for mental health services.       | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |
| <b>Health, Learning</b> | Obj. 3: Increase the number of primary care providers in San Diego County that screen for developmental concerns in children ages 0 through 5 as part of regular visits. | Number of primary care providers in San Diego County that screen for developmental delays.                                | <b>Community</b>     | <b>No Baseline</b> |

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

| GOAL AREA     | OBJECTIVES  | INDICATORS   | LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT | BASELINE           |
|---------------|---|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Health</b> | Obj. 4: Decrease the percentage of children entering kindergarten with undetected and/or untreated developmental, social emotional, or behavioral delays or concerns. | Percentage of children ages 0 through 5 identified with a developmental, social emotional or behavioral need who have received treatment.                                | <b>Program</b>       | <b>67%</b>         |
|               |   | Percentage of children ages 0 through 5 making gains after receiving treatment for developmental, social emotional or behavioral delays or problems.                     | <b>Program</b>       | <b>96%</b>         |
|               |   | Percentage of children with special needs who are identified before kindergarten entry.  | <b>Community</b>     | <b>Pending CDE</b> |
|               |   | Percentage of parents/ caregivers receiving F5SD services who increase their capacity to support their child's developmental, social emotional or behavioral well-being. | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |

| GOAL AREA                       | OBJECTIVES   | INDICATORS   | LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT | BASELINE           |
|---------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Learning</b>                 | Obj. 5: Increase the percentage of children ages 0 through 5 enrolled in a quality early care and education (ECE) program with a highly qualified workforce. | Percentage of children participating in F5SD supported ECE programs who demonstrate gains.   | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                                 |  | Number of ECE teachers/providers with an advanced degree   | <b>Community</b>     | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                                 |  | Number of high-quality ECE programs in San Diego County  | <b>Community</b>     | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                                 |  | Percentage of children participating in inclusive F5SD supported early childhood education programs identified with special needs.                         | <b>Program</b>       | <b>11%</b>         |
|                                 |  | Percentage of F5SD supported early childhood programs with high ratings or participating in ongoing quality improvement efforts.                           | <b>Program</b>       | <b>98%</b>         |
| <b>Health, Learning, Family</b> | Obj. 6: Increase parents' and primary caregivers' knowledge and capacity to promote the healthy development of children ages 0 through 5.                    | Percentage of parents/primary caregivers, participating in F5SD programs, who feel more confident in their knowledge of age-appropriate child development. | <b>Program</b>       | <b>77%</b>         |
|                                 |  | Percentage of parents/primary caregivers participating in F5SD programs, who increased the frequency of talking, reading, or singing to their children.    | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                                 |  | Percentage of parents/primary caregivers participating in F5SD programs with the knowledge and capacity to advocate for their child's needs.               | <b>Program</b>       | <b>91%</b>         |

# EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

| GOAL AREA        | OBJECTIVES  | INDICATORS   | LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT | BASELINE           |
|------------------|---|--|----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Family</b>    | Obj. 7: Increase parents' and caregivers' access to needed services for their children.                                       | Percentage of families participating in F5SD programs who know how to access community services. | <b>Program</b>       | <b>94%</b>         |
|                  |   | Percentage of families with multiple needs who are connected to a system of care.                | <b>Program</b>       | <b>No Baseline</b> |
| <b>Community</b> | Obj. 8: Increase the community's capacity to identify, treat, and support the needs of pregnant women, children and families. | Resources leveraged by F5SD and its contractors.   | <b>Community</b>     | <b>No Baseline</b> |
|                  |   | Number of community organizations supporting the core functions of F5SD.                         | <b>Community</b>     | <b>No Baseline</b> |

# APPENDIX

## STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

### Preparing for Change

The previous two strategic plans (2010-2015 and 2015-2020) for First 5 San Diego were built from an extensive and collaborative process in 2009 with parents, service providers, Commissioners, advisory committees, and a Strategic Planning Team. The strategic framework sharpened the focus on critical needs and outcomes linked to evaluation and provided the plan with a clear and comprehensive roadmap for decision-making in the face of declining revenues.

While the framework endures in the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, change will be evident in First 5 San Diego's implementation efforts. As tobacco revenues decline, direct investments from First 5 San Diego in service and program delivery will also decline. However, as described in the Core Functions of the strategic framework, First 5 San Diego will elevate its leadership in changing the systems of care to generate better outcomes through stronger collaboration, coordination and integration of the services and programs that support our youngest children and their families.

### Overview of the Planning Process

First 5 San Diego hired MIG, Inc. to reprise its role as strategic planning and community outreach consultant, and to work closely with the Project Team to conduct the plan development process.

The Project Team conducted an iterative process with a range of inputs including: a high-level analysis of the state of the County's youngest children and their families; experiences from parents and caregivers of young children about raising children in the County; and recommendations from key stakeholders and subject-matter experts about future opportunities for innovation and leadership.

The planning process had two phases, beginning in March 2018:

- Phase 1: Project Initiation and Data Analysis (March 2018)
- Phase II: Strategic Plan Development and Adoption (October 2018)

During Phase 1, MIG analyzed and reported to the Project Team relevant documents and data analysis regarding the current context of young children in the County, and opportunities for further focusing the plan and promoting systems change. During Phase II, the Project Team evaluated opportunities for honing the strategies, objectives and indicators to better reflect the projected revenue declines and promoting systems change through 2025. This resulted in a draft 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.







[first5sandiego.org](http://first5sandiego.org)



[migmje.com](http://migmje.com)