

First 5 Commission of San Diego Strategic Plan Progress Report June 3, 2009

I. SETTING THE CONTEXT

Introduction

The First 5 Commission of San Diego County (Commission) promotes the health and well-being of children during their most critical years of development -- from the prenatal stage through age 5. The Commission is currently in the process of developing the First 5 San Diego Strategic Plan, which will guide future investment in programs for young children and their families for the next five years. Adoption of the final plan is anticipated to occur in Summer 2009. This progress report provides a summary overview of: the purpose and use of the Strategic Plan; the planning process; the plan framework; and draft elements of the plan.

Purpose and Use of the Strategic Plan

The Commission's current five-year strategic plan covers the period July 2004 – June 2009. The new Strategic Plan will guide Commission investments and decisions from fiscal year July 2009 – June 2015. It will serve as a roadmap to assist the Commission in identifying and focusing on key results that will best promote early childhood health and development in San Diego County for the next 5 years. The plan is an important element intended to guide investment decisions at a strategic level and help measure the Commission's progress towards achieving its goals. The Strategic Plan is complemented by the 10-year Investment Plan and the Funding Allocation Plan, which specify a more detailed long-term investment strategy and annual allocations consistent with the Strategic Plan.

Planning Process

History: Developing the Strategic Plan Framework

The formal process to develop the Strategic Plan began in October 2008. This effort has been led by a consultant team, MIG, Inc. and Altmayer Consulting, with assistance by the Commission's evaluator, Harder+Company Community Research. The strategic planning process involved the collaborative participation of: parents and service providers, Commission members, Commission staff, the First 5 San Diego Technical and Professional Advisory Committee (TPAC), and the First 5 Strategic Planning Team. The Planning Team, comprised of parents, private and county service providers, Commissioners and senior level Commission staff, has met regularly over the past eight months to develop the plan framework and the key elements of the plan. Its role is to provide recommendations to staff, who will submit a draft plan to the Commission for their consideration and adoption. As an on-going stakeholder advisory group, the TPAC will provide their comments and recommendations to the Commission.

The planning process included community engagement in the form of key informant interviews, a web-based parent survey and provider survey, and parent focus groups in each of the six HHS Regions in two languages. The consultant team, in collaboration with staff, produced a Needs Assessment based on these findings and the best available research data related to young children's health, early care and education, parent and family development, and community capacity building in San Diego County. The Planning Team also reviewed the outcome data from current Commission projects.

The planning process graphic is included as Attachment 1 and provides a visual representation of the planning phases, products, milestones, meetings and schedule.

Update: Strategy Development and Selection Process

Due to projections of declining revenues and changing external conditions, the Commission directed that the new strategic plan provide more concrete direction and definition of priorities than in prior plans, to focus the Commission's investments to maximize impact and to demonstrate accountability and results. This will mean decreasing the scope of current efforts to invest in a way that is "narrow and deep."

The Planning Team discussions resulted in draft criteria to develop and evaluate potential strategies (see Attachment 2 for the criteria). The Team considered a list of potential strategies based on existing programs and initiatives, best practices across the state, and local needs. Members initially prioritized strategies based upon funding scenarios, then applied the weighted criteria to the results, to surface the highest priorities. These appear as the draft strategies recommended for inclusion in the Strategic Plan in the following section.

II. FRAMING THE FUTURE

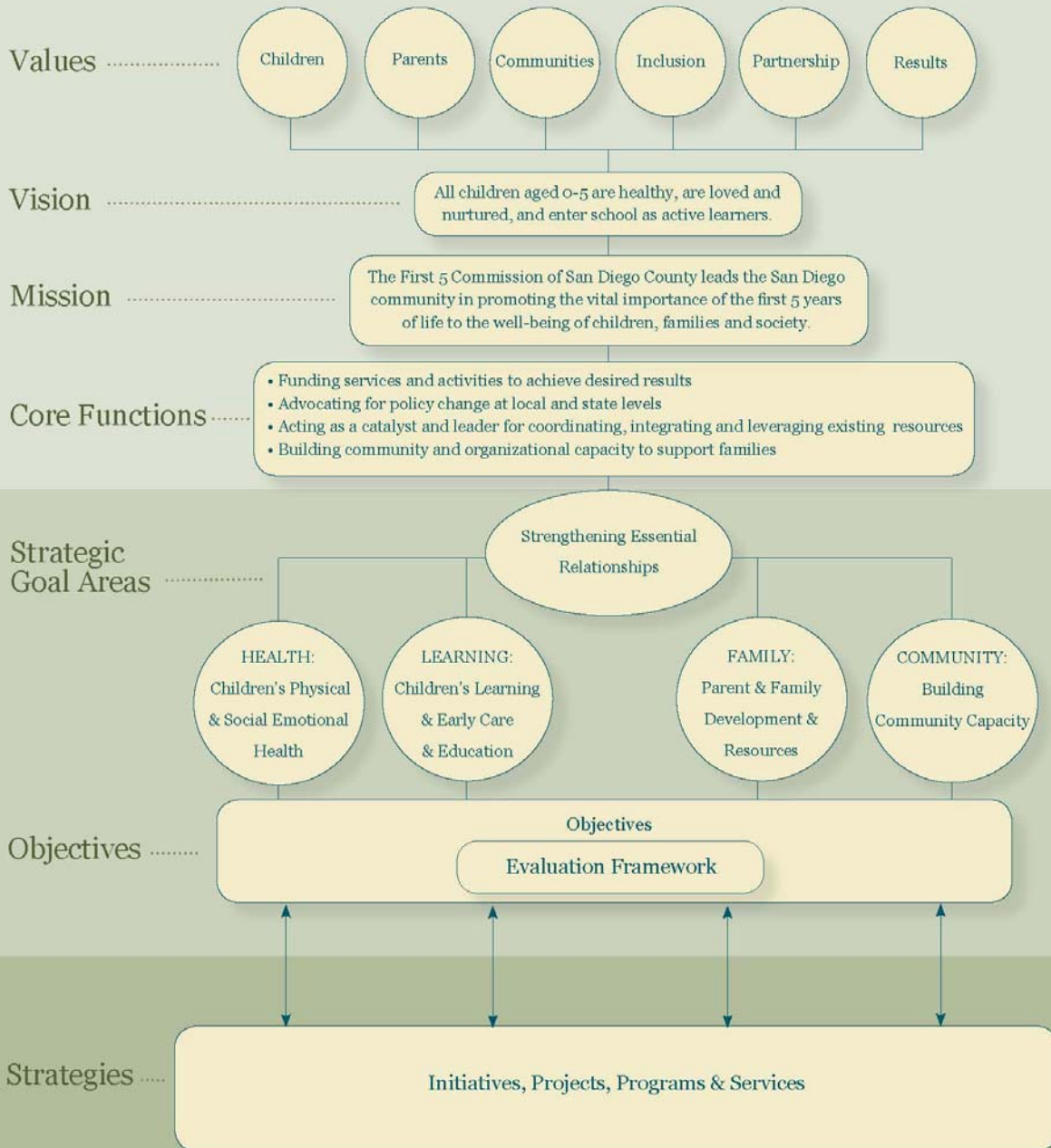
This section outlines the content and organization of the strategic plan, and the overarching draft elements developed by the Planning Team, staff and the consultant team. The graphic on the following page provides a summary depiction of the plan framework and its key elements in relation to one another. This is followed by the draft values, vision, mission and core functions statements in narrative form.



FIRST 5 COMMISSION OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY

strategic plan framework

DRAFT April 2009



Values, Vision, Mission and Core Functions

The Planning Team crafted updated values, vision and mission statements, as well as core functions (formerly referred to as “operating guidelines”), as shown below.

Values

In all that it does, the Commission holds to these values:

- **Children:** We honor and celebrate children and every child.
- **Parents:** We support the role of parents as the 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 experience of care and support for children and families.
- **Results:** We are committed to achieving real and sustainable results and prioritizing accountability as we strive to attain measurable outcomes.

Vision

The ultimate goal of the Commission’s work is that all children aged 0 to 5 are healthy, are loved and nurtured, and enter school as active learners.

Mission

The First 5 Commission of San Diego County leads the San Diego community in promoting the vital importance of the first 5 years of life to the well-being of children, families and society.

Core Functions

The Commission conducts its mission through these key functions:

- Funding services and activities to achieve desired results
- Advocating for policy change at local and state levels
- Acting as a catalyst and leader for coordinating, integrating and leveraging existing resources
- Building community and organizational capacity to support families

Strategic Goals

The Strategic Planning Team confirmed four strategic goal areas (formerly “Issue Areas”), developed corresponding goal statements, and added a new overarching goal that emphasizes the importance of social-emotional health and relationships.

Overarching Goal

Strengthen the relationships essential for the healthy development of young children.

These relationships are embedded in health, learning, family and community settings and environments:

Health

Promote each child’s healthy physical, social and emotional development.

Learning

Support each child's development of communication, problem-solving, physical, social emotional and behavioral abilities, building on their natural readiness to learn.

Family

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

Community

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

Draft Objectives

The draft objectives are a new element of the First 5 Strategic Plan that reflect the Commission's desire to articulate results-oriented targets to direct and measure the Commission's progress towards achievement of its strategic goals. (The next step will be to establish quantitative targets wherever feasible.)

Overarching Objective: Increase the percentage of children succeeding in school from kindergarten through third grade.

Draft Objectives

- Decrease the percentage of children entering kindergarten with undetected and/or untreated developmental, social-emotional, or behavioral delays or problems.
- Decrease the percentage of pregnant women and children ages 0-5 with untreated dental disease
- Decrease the percentage of women who smoke during pregnancy.
- Increase the percentage of children enrolled in quality early care and education programs.
- Increase the number of households with children ages 0 -5 that regularly engage in age-appropriate parent-child activities that promote early learning.
- Increase the use of positive parenting practices to promote the healthy social emotional development of children 0 -5.
- Increase parents' and caregivers' access to needed services for their children.
- Increase the public's commitment to investing in services that support the healthy development of children ages 0 to 5.
- Increase the community's capacity to identify, treat, and support the needs of children and pregnant women.

III. FOCUSING FOR RESULTS

Recommended Strategies

The recommended *core strategies* comprise the major proportion of the Commission's fund allocations and reflect a primarily direct service approach. The recommended *support strategies* are necessary for the successful implementation of the core strategies, and are important for developing a sustained focus on early childhood development beyond the Commission's current and future investments. In addition, support strategies reduce need for more costly services in the future through prevention and early intervention.

Recommended Core Strategies

- Prenatal services focused on smoking cessation and information on child development and local service resources (the Kit for New Parents)
- Comprehensive dental services for children and pregnant women
- Quality preschool (including quality enhancement of early childhood education services, effective transition to Kindergarten, screening to identify delays and inclusion support for children with special needs and English language learners)
- Early identification of developmental delays and social emotional issues through screening, assessment, referral and treatment supported through care coordination

Recommended Support Strategies

- Public education about the importance of the first five years of life
- Parent and caregiver education to promote positive practices for child development
- Public and parent education about the availability of services

Additional Strategies Considered but Not Recommended

There were additional strategies that the Strategic Planning Team prioritized initially, but elected not to recommend in the interest of focusing First 5 investments in the years to come. These additional strategies appear below, with a brief rationale for why they were not recommended by the Strategic Planning Team at this time:

- Health Care Access (community outreach, enrollment, retention of insurance, and effective utilization of health care)

This strategy, as currently implemented by the Commission, has resulted in several key positive outcomes, particularly related to retention of insurance, appropriate health care utilization and reduced emergency room visits for non-emergency care. However, the strategy is costly relative to the numbers served, and there are other entities and funding sources that support health insurance outreach and enrollment for families at a lower cost.

- Newborn Home Visiting

As part of the Healthy Development Services Initiative, the Commission currently funds universal newborn home visiting for all first time parents. As currently implemented, the

newborn home visiting program does not identify a large proportion of mothers at risk for post partum depression, as the one-time visit occurs within the first two weeks after birth, and is limited to first-time parents. This program could be more effective if it were modified to more closely follow evidence based models of home visiting over multiple years that target at-risk families, rather than rely on a single visit universally applied to all first-time parents across the county. Funding for this activity may be provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Federal Stimulus package), which could potentially be leveraged by the Commission.

Promotion of early literacy

The Planning Team sees that this important area is embedded in other strategies recommended for investment in the coming five years, and acknowledges that other providers are involved in early literacy.

Parent and caregiver education promoting positive practices to reduce the need for direct services in children's health

The Planning Team thought this educational element could be built into one or more of the recommended strategies.

Increase the availability of quality infant/toddler care

The Planning Team recognizes the urgent need for additional quality child care spaces, but believes this strategy would be too costly at this time, and would represent a new area for First 5 investment.

III. NEXT STEPS

The work of the Strategic Planning Team is incorporated into this document. After Commission review in June, the next steps will result in a final draft product for Commission review and adoption, and include:

- Building an evaluation framework from the model, connecting the objectives and strategies to measurable indicators.
- Establishing targets for the indicators wherever feasible.
- Identifying recommendations for the First 5 San Diego business model.
- Connecting the plan to the 10-Year Financial Plan.
- Incorporating all elements into the Strategic Plan document.
- Providing the groundwork for the development of the Commission's new 5-Year Allocation Plan.

This draft product will be reviewed by TPAC, the Evaluation Leadership Team and the Finance Committee prior to its submittal to the Commission at its July meeting.