



First 5 Santa Barbara County
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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First 5 Santa Barbara County to Hold Community Input Sessions for New Strategic Plan

Santa Barbara County community members are being asked to provide critical information about the need for services for children ages 0-5 as part of First 5 Santa Barbara County's Strategic Planning process. Parents, social service providers, educators and others interested in the wellbeing of our county's youngest children, are invited to participate in a series of Community Input Sessions which will help the First 5 Santa Barbara County Commission guide its investments in services that prepare children age 0-5 for kindergarten over the next three years.

Input Session participants will hear about First 5's work since its inception in 1998, current collaborative partnerships and effective strategies throughout the community, research into best practices, opportunities for the future, as well as the fiscal realities that must be addressed in the years ahead. Participants will be asked to contribute ideas about needs in their community affecting kindergarten readiness and priorities for the future.

All Community Sessions are from 6:00-7:15 pm. No RSVP required. No Childcare Available

Solvang: Old Mission Santa Ines: 1760 Mission Drive: July 23
Guadalupe: Mary Buren Elementary School/multipurpose room: 1050 Peralta Street: July 24
New Cuyama: Family Resource Center: 4803 Cebrian Street: July 25
Carpinteria: Main School Auditorium: 5400 8th Street: July 30
Lompoc: LUSD Education Center Board Room: 1301 N. "A" Street: August 6
Santa Barbara: Franklin Center: 1136 E. Montecito Street: August 7
Santa Maria: Minami Center: 600 W. Enos Drive: August 8

First 5 was established in 1998 with the passage of Proposition 10 which imposed a sales tax on tobacco products and established independent commissions at the state and in each county to oversee the expenditure of those funds in support of children age 0-5 and their families.

Since then, in partnership with many individuals, community organization, government agencies, nonprofits and partners in philanthropy, First 5 has helped create a system serving 0-5 year olds and their families, and has increased community awareness about the importance of the first five years in the life of a child.

First 5 Santa Barbara County receives just under \$4 million to support its work each year, most of which is distributed to local agencies that provide services for children ages 0-5 and their families. As the number of smokers decline, First 5 revenues decline, resulting in a need to reduce expenditures by at least \$600,000 annually beginning in July, 2014. The new 2014-2017 strategic plan will help inform how First 5 Santa Barbara County funds are spent in the future. ###