



Re: Presentation to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors

Date: August 18, 2009

Presenter: Ellen Vieira, Director First 5 Plumas

About First 5 Plumas

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Plumas receives approximately \$400,000 per year in funding opportunities.

Strategic Plan Results

The First 5 Plumas Strategic Plan results are: 1) Children are Healthy, 2) Families are Strong, 3) Children are Ready for School, and 4) Integrated Quality Service Systems.

Approach to Funding

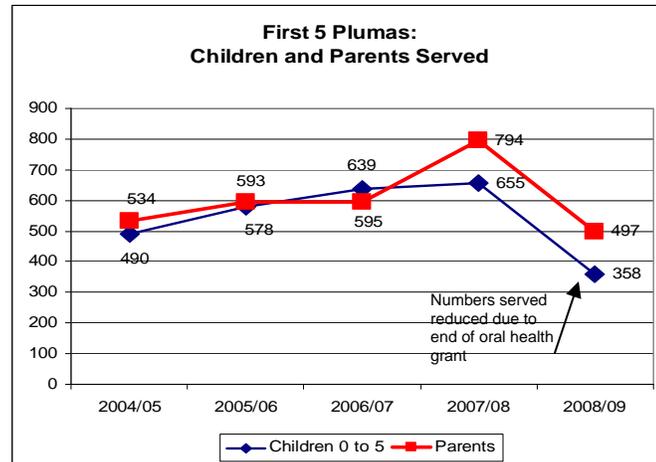
First 5 Plumas takes a strategic approach to funding programs for children 0 to 5 and their families by: avoiding duplication, strengthening existing institutions, supporting practices that are proven to be effective, and partnering with public and private agencies to promote wiser use of resources. The First 5 Commission seeks to avoid duplication and fill missing gaps in services in the community. Grants are funded with existing organizations such as Roundhouse Council and the Health Department to target resources to children 0 to 5 and their families.

First 5 has brought nationally effective programs and approaches into Plumas County. Parents as Teachers parenting curriculum is used by all First 5 home visiting programs in the county, Raising A Reader, an effective program that puts books in the hands of children and helps parents learn how to support their children's literacy is in use in all Plumas County state preschools, and introduction of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire into agencies work with young children in order to identify and serve children with special needs.

First 5 works intentionally with other organizations to leverage funding to sustain critical programs and services. First 5 targets two economically disadvantaged communities in the county for family literacy and parenting education: Portola and Indian Valley. All of the work of the Commission is designed to leave a legacy of systems change rather than a new bureaucracy.

Children and Families Served

Programs funded by First 5 Plumas have served annually, on average, 544 children 0 to 5 and 603 parents over the past five years. The chart shows the totals served by year between 2004/05 and 2008/09. During that time, programs have provided: 3,742 home visits, 1,168 Classes for parents, 506 oral health and developmental screenings, distributed 723 Kits for New Parents and distributed 474 Early Learning Bags.



First 5 Programs Launched and Sustained

First 5 has launched and sustained three major initiatives in Plumas County: Healthy Smiles Children's Oral Health project, Raising A Reader family literacy, and Early Intervention services.

The *Healthy Smiles* project was a product of the Oral Health Coalition and cooperation between Plumas and Sierra Counties. The project was funded by the California Endowment, First 5 Sierra and First 5 Plumas. Healthy Smiles included comprehensive oral health education, screening and treatment initiative for children 0 to 12. *In 2007/08, 123 children 0 to 5 were screened, 9% had serious tooth decay, 11% had moderate decay, 23% had early decay and 57% had no tooth decay.* The project provided intensive case management for dental care to 25 children. Oral health screenings and fluoride varnish for preschool age children has now been sustained with the Plumas County Public Health Agency's Bright Smiles grant through the Sierra Health Foundation.

The *Early Intervention Project* is a partnership with Plumas Unified School District, serving children with special needs ages 0 to 3. In 2008-09 the program became vendorized with Far Northern Regional Center and First 5 investment has been reduced by half in 2009-10. This project involves highly skilled professional assessment of children with special needs, home visits, and referrals to speech services, occupational and physical therapy. Project outcomes are impressive. *More Plumas County infants who are at risk for developmental delays were identified and served at an earlier age:* The number of infants intensively served by PUSD in the first four years of the program increased from 4 low incidence infants to 32 infants with qualifying risk factors. *Infants served by the program required a shortened time of intervention through special education.* Twenty-two percent of infants served exited the program after meeting developmental goals. They exited after receiving services for a shorter period of time (23 months) than children who began services later (40 months). Their average age at exit was 2 ½. *Infants had improved educational outcomes when served earlier.* One third of infants served showed improvement in cognitive development within an 11 month testing period.

Raising a Reader is a nationally recognized effective family literacy program, implemented in Plumas County in preschools and with families receiving home visitation from First 5 funded programs. This program introduces children and parents to the Plumas County Library, encourages a reading routine in the home, and provides books to children over a period of months. This program was initiated by First 5 Plumas School Readiness program and with reduced support from First 5 Plumas has been assumed by the Plumas County Library. Outcomes showed the program to be successful. At the start of the program half of parents had a reading routine with their children at home. After six months in the program, two thirds had established a reading routine at home. *Parents who reported they never used the public library dropped from 66% of parents to 35% of parents. Parents visiting the library three or more times a month increased from 6% to 31%.*

Better Systems for Quality Services

First 5 Plumas has promoted systems change in schools being ready for children and children being ready for school. There is a new relationship between Kindergarten teachers and early care providers. Outcomes include: *Kindergarten Transition Plan, Kindergarten Skills List, ECE/Teacher Workgroup agreement for sharing confidential information and Kindergarten Roundups have become community outreach events.*