

First 5 San Mateo County Annual Report Evaluation Summary FY 07-08

A. Description of Evaluation Activities:

In FY 2007-08, First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC) continued to analyze prior countywide evaluation efforts while supporting high quality evaluations and client data collection for individual grantees. Major ongoing activities included the following:

- **Grantee Outcome Evaluation.** All grantees funded by First 5 San Mateo County are required to develop and implement individualized outcomes-based evaluations and report on results at the end of each fiscal year. F5SMC monitored these activities and provided technical assistance in the design and delivery of these evaluations. F5SMC's support has greatly improved the quality of grantees' evaluations and promoted the use of common outcomes and common evaluation instruments across grantees.
- **Client Level Data Collection.** All grantees are required to collect individual level demographic data on participants served. In FY06-07, grantees were required for the first time to submit unique identifiers with all data sets to enable F5SMC to develop an unduplicated profile of families and providers served across all grantees (previously, grantees stripped data sets of unique identifiers). This requirement was maintained during FY07-08. Identified data is used to better assess the reach of services countywide as well as possible areas of duplication across grantee efforts.
- **Family Survey Data Analysis.** In 2006, F5SMC implemented a major redesign of the population-based Family Survey. The 2006 Family Survey represented the third administration of the survey, and collected data on a representative sample of 850 families with children ages 0-5 countywide. Data collection focused on a wide range of the most current, sensitive, and reliable indicators of health and well-being for children and families and included an over-sample of the 10 lowest income zip codes in the County. FY 2007-08 continued analyses of these data, including a cluster analysis that identified four distinct risk profiles of families living within San Mateo County, GIS mapping that located these risk profiles geographically, and structural equation modeling to examine which factors determine well-being for our families.
- **Preschool for All Evaluation.** FY 2007-08 represented Year 3 of the joint Preschool for All (PFA) evaluation in San Mateo and San Francisco Counties, one of the earliest rigorous evaluations of Preschool for All/Power of Preschool services statewide. In addition, San Mateo's PFA program was one of the programs included in the recent RAND evaluation of early care and education for preschool aged children in California.

New evaluation activities for F5SMC in FY 2007-08 included the following:

- **Special Needs Project Evaluation.** The overall design of the evaluation of F5SMC's Special Needs Project (Watch Me Grow—WMG) was developed based on input from partners countywide. Phase 1 of the evaluation was conducted during the 2007-08 fiscal year. Activities included a substantial qualitative examination of the WMG implementation process and systems change efforts, as well as quantitative analyses exploring demographic, screening, and referral information for children and families seen at the South San Francisco Demonstration Site.
- **Countywide School Readiness Assessment.** First 5 San Mateo has funded repeated population-based surveys of our kindergarten entry cohort, most recently in 2006. The next School Readiness Assessment is scheduled for the 2008-09 school year. The study will involve 41 kindergarten classrooms (including an over-sample of our Preschool for All classrooms) and over 700 children,

along with teacher and parent surveys. Although the study itself will be conducted in FY08-09, much of the planning, research design, and community engagement took place in FY07-08.

B. Evaluation Findings Reported

- The **Prenatal-to-Three** home visiting program serves approximately 1300 MediCal eligible families each year. Findings from FY07-08:
 - 687 families were screened to identify risk for child health and developmental problems and parenting concerns; an additional 606 families received case management.
 - 92% of mothers began breastfeeding.
 - Home visiting parents demonstrated significant improvements in positive interactions with their infants between birth and 10 weeks.
 - 170 parents enrolled in parenting classes; parents attending these classes demonstrated statistically significant increases in parental competence
- **Healthy Homes** provides mental health services to children and parents exposed to domestic violence.
 - From July04-June08, 40% percent of children served presented with social-emotional/behavioral concerns as measured by the ASQ-SE. After the program, the percentage at-risk decreased to 16% ($p < .01$).
 - Among children served in FY07-08, average social-emotional/behavioral functioning showed significant improvement over the course of the program ($p < .05$).
 - From July04-June08, 78% of parents served by the program demonstrated improved functioning as measured by the Parent Level of Functioning Questionnaire.
 - Among parents served in FY07-08, average level of function showed significant improvement over the course of the program ($p < .01$).
- Since its inception in 2003, **SmartKids** has resulted in over 1,200 new licensed child care spaces, providing much needed child care capacity in San Mateo County (August 2008).
 - 18% of these spaces serve infants and toddlers.
 - 26% of these spaces serve low-income families.
 - 60% of funded family child care homes received a FDCERS assessment by their second year in the program. On average, these programs received a score of 4 on the FDCERS.
- **SaMCARES** provides financial incentives for ECE providers to take courses and remain within their agency, enhancing the quality and stability of the care children receive. In FY07-08:
 - 396 providers enrolled, and 328 (83%) completed the program.
 - 23% stated they would not have taken ECE or GE classes if not for SaMCARES. 13% may or may not have taken classes. Thus, SaMCARES increases participants' educational attainment.
 - 35% stated that they would have left the ECE field if not for SaMCARES. 19% indicated that they would have left their current agency. Thus, SaMCARES improves stability of care.
- The **School Readiness Initiative** home visiting program reported outcomes from pre and post administrations of the HOME Interview tool for FY07-08:

- Significant improvement ($p < .05$) on 5 out of 8 items from the Learning Materials/Academic Stimulation subscale such as the parent encouraging the child to learn shapes, colors, and sizes using available materials.
- Significantly more frequent ($p < .05$) positive parent-child activities such as reading, telling stories, singing songs, playing games, sports, and bedtime routines.
- The **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH)** program places consultants in early care and education settings to train teachers to identify and manage children with social-emotional or behavioral issues. The consultants also perform therapeutic work with identified children and their families. In FY07-08:
 - The program served 56 classrooms in 23 childcare/preschool settings, representing 164 teachers and over 1,400 children. Expulsion for behavioral reasons has been virtually eliminated in these classrooms.
 - 94% of teachers served report that consultation was “very effective” or “effective” in supporting their willingness to continue providing care for a particular child, and 91% felt the consultant was “very effective” or “effective” in helping them apply what they learned about a particular child to the entire classroom.
 - 100% of parents served reported that consultation was “very effective” or “effective” in supporting their relationship with their children and improving their understanding of their children’s behaviors and needs.

C. Policy Impact of Evaluation Results

FY 2007-08 marked the beginning of the First 5 San Mateo Commission’s most recent revision to our Strategic Plan. The Commission made use of evaluation data in several ways throughout the Strategic Planning process. Client data provided information about the characteristics of the families and children served with First 5 funds, and identified specific populations for increased attention during Strategic Planning discussions (for example: children under age 3; children with or at risk for developing special needs; immigrant children). Data from program evaluations and the population-based Family and Early Screening Surveys were used to write a comprehensive needs assessment detailing the circumstances of San Mateo’s families with children 0-5, service gaps, and the impact of First 5 funded programs. This comprehensive report was presented to the Commission to inform the Strategic Plan.

Grantee evaluation results are also used to identify areas where programs can improve and to refine service delivery strategies. For example, our CARES evaluation has indicated that the program should improve outreach to younger providers, who have lower levels of educational attainment and have spent less time in the ECE field. Our School Readiness Initiative evaluation revealed that the home-visiting program is effective in improving parents’ interactions with their infants and children, but that these gains typically happen within the first 6 to 12 months of program participation. This can be used to inform decisions about treatment duration.

The major ‘lessons learned’ from F5SMC’s evaluation efforts are two fold. First, grantees need significant technical assistance in the design and implementation of grantee evaluations. This support must be individualized to meet the needs of each grantee. Some grantees have developed tremendous internal evaluation capacity over time, while others have struggled continuously to develop high quality evaluation efforts. Second, a clear, overarching evaluation framework is essential to interpret and act upon evaluation results. Our revised Strategic Plan calls for the creation of an integrated

evaluation plan based on common outcomes across grantee efforts. Such an evaluation will allow F5SMC to better understand the impact of our investments at the County level, and thus improve our ability to focus our resources where they are most needed.