



First 5 San Mateo County Evaluation Summary FY 08-09

A. Description of Evaluation Activities:

In FY 08-09, First 5 San Mateo County (F5SMC) continued to utilize data from prior countywide evaluation efforts while supporting high quality evaluations and client data collection for individual grantees. Ongoing activities included:

- **Grantee Outcome Evaluation.** Grantees are required to implement 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..
- **Client Level Data Collection.** Grantees are required to collect individual level demographic data on participants served. Since FY06-07, grantees have been required to submit unique identifiers with all client data. This enables F5SMC to develop an unduplicated profile of families and providers served across all grantees (previously, grantees stripped data sets of unique identifiers). 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.** The 2006 Family Survey 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. F5SMC continues to use these data to support local research efforts, such as the 2009 San Mateo County Child Care Needs Assessment.
- **Preschool for All Evaluation.** FY08-09 represented the fourth and final year 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. The final report on this project is in preparation, and will be available in Nov09.
- **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 2 of the evaluation was initiated during the FY08-09. Activities included the baseline administration of a Systems Change survey of providers countywide, as well as continued analyses exploring demographic, screening, and referral information for children and families seen at the South San Francisco Demonstration Site.

New evaluation activities in FY08-09 included:

- **F5SMC Comprehensive Evaluation.** The 2009-15 Strategic Plan established a new evaluation approach. Rather than fund individual organizations to conduct program-level evaluations, this approach uses a single evaluator who works with all grantees. The new design uses common data collection tools and gathers information on the common indicators and outcomes established in the Strategic Plan. This ambitious project will allow F5SMC to examine the impact of its funding and activities on the children, families, and service providers served across all grantees.
- **Countywide School Readiness Assessment.** F5SMC has funded repeated population-based surveys of our kindergarten entry cohort, most recently in 2008. The study collected a representative sample of entering kindergartners in our County, as well as a representative sample of kindergarten classrooms in our Preschool for All communities. Findings highlight the important role that quality preschool plays in preparing children for school, especially for English learners.

B. Evaluation Findings Reported

- The **Prenatal-to-Three** home visiting program serves approximately 1300 MediCal eligible families each year. In FY08-09:
 - 734 families were screened to identify child health and developmental problems and parenting concerns; an additional 573 families received case management.
 - 89% of new mothers began breastfeeding.
 - African-American mothers who received home visiting demonstrated statistically significant improvements in sensitive, nurturing interactions with their infants between birth and 10 weeks.
 - Parents attending mental health groups demonstrated statistically significant decreases in depression scores; on average, they moved from being moderately depressed to mildly depressed.
- **Healthy Homes** provides mental health services to children and parents exposed to domestic violence:
 - At intake, 28% of children showed definite affective concerns compared with 16% after the program. At intake, 13% of children showed definite problems related to anxiety, compared with only 3% upon completion.
 - At intake, 7% of parents fell into the “High Concern” category on the PRQ regarding their disciplinary practices. At completion, none of the parents were in this category.
- Since its inception in 2003, **SmartKids** has resulted in 1,538 new licensed child care spaces, including 330 in FY08-09.
 - 95% of the spaces created are in the local Child Care Planning Council’s priority zip codes.
 - 28% of new spaces can serve infants and toddlers.
 - 53% of family child care homes improved by at least one point on the FCCERS Space and Furnishings scale; 59% improved at least one point on the FCCERS Activities scale.
- **SaMCARES** provides financial incentives for ECE providers to take courses and remain within their agency. In FY08-09:
 - 406 providers enrolled, and 335 (83%) completed the program.
 - From pre-test to post-test, participants reported significant improvements in their knowledge and skills in areas such as designing ECE curricula and settings, managing the workplace, and ERS tools.
 - 52% of participants reported that SaMCARES had a large overall impact on their professional lives; 41% reported a moderate impact.
 - Participants were significantly more likely to believe that use of an ERS tool improved the quality of care they provided after completing the program.
- The **San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD)** offers a variety of services to support the academic success and career development of ECE students, especially those who primarily speak Spanish. These include:
 - A textbook loan program. 29% of Spanish-speaking ECE students reported that they would be unable to take classes without the loan program; an additional 42% were not sure they could continue without the book loans.
 - ECE-focused academic advising. Approximately one third of the ECE students receive individual advising on topics such as career options in ECE, ECE/CD permit levels, and required coursework. Spanish-speaking students are twice as likely to receive academic advising as English speakers (56% vs. 27%). Respondents report that ECE-focused advising helps them to remain in and succeed in the ECE program by providing critical

information about which classes they need to take to achieve their ECE certificates, Child Development permits, and A.S. degrees.

- The **School Readiness Initiative** Learning Together home visiting program reported outcomes from pre and post administrations of the HOME tool for FY08-09:
 - Significant improvement ($p < .05$) on 5 out of 8 items from the Learning Materials/Academic Stimulation subscales such as the parent encouraging the child to learn the alphabet, shapes, and sizes with available materials.
 - Significantly more frequent ($p < .05$) positive parent-child activities such as reading, telling stories, singing songs, playing games, sports, and bedtime routines.
 - At intake, 49% of parents read to their child twice a week or less. At follow-up, 89% of parents read to their child at least 3 times per week, with 38% reading to their child daily.
 - At intake, 60% of parents had a bedtime routine for their child, compared with 89% at follow-up.
- The **Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH)** program places consultants in ECE settings to train teachers to identify and manage children with social-emotional or behavioral issues. The consultants also do therapeutic work with the teachers and families of identified children. In FY08-09:
 - The program served 55 classrooms in 24 childcare/preschool settings, representing 176 teachers and over 1,400 children.
 - 90% of teachers report that consultation was “very effective” or “effective” in supporting their willingness to continue working with a particular child, and 90% felt the consultant was “very effective” or “effective” in helping them apply what they learned to other children in the classroom.
 - Teachers receiving consultation services around a particular child demonstrated statistically significant improvements in their relationship with the identified child, as well as with that child’s parents.
 - Children identified for case consultation showed statistically significant improvements in behavior as measured by the Devereux Early childhood Assessment Clinical Form (DECA-C).
 - 62% of the children scoring in the “Concern” range on the Behavioral Concerns subscale at intake had moved into the “Not a Concern” category at case closure.
 - 83% of the children scoring in the “Concern” range on the Protective Factors subscale at intake had moved into the “Not a Concern” category at case closure.

C. Policy Impact of Evaluation Results

FY 08-09 marked the culmination of F5SMC’s most recent revision to its Strategic Plan. Approved in September 2009, the revised plan calls for the creation of an integrated evaluation based on common outcomes and indicators across grantee efforts. This will allow F5SMC to better understand the impact of our investments at the county level, and thus improve our ability to focus resources where they are most needed.

The shift in emphasis from program-level to comprehensive evaluation led to an extensive process to construct an evaluation that will address issues of importance to both F5SMC and our grantees. F5SMC staff worked closely with our evaluators and grantees to create logic models and evaluation plans for each funded program, identify valid and reliable tools and indicators, and ensure a robust analysis across different populations and types of services. The evaluation will collect common data across funded programs, allowing F5SMC to characterize clients touched by our investments and examine how particular investment strategies impact the outcomes in our Strategic Plan. Programs will implement data collection tools based on the populations they serve

(families or providers) and the intensity of the intervention (i.e. programs providing intensive, longer-term services such as home visiting will collect more detailed information than those providing parenting classes or provider trainings). Data collection will start in October 2009.

Several grantees have identified care coordination as a critical missing piece in the mission to help families struggling with poverty, linguistic isolation, mental health issues, substance abuse, or children with special needs. For example, the Prenatal-to-3 program developed an internal case coordination team to help families being served by multiple branches of the Family Health and Behavioral Health systems, as well as signing an MOU focused on service coordination with 8 community agencies. These agencies serve populations dealing with domestic violence, developmental disability, child maltreatment, and other social and economic issues.

Research and evaluation results have also been used to identify and address program and policy areas for improvement. For example, this past year F5SMC and its community partners in the ECE arena undertook the transition of our renowned Preschool for All program into a more sustainable initiative focused on improving the quality of infant /toddler care and preschool countywide. Based on local assessments, we focused our investments on supporting infant and toddler caregivers, increasing resources for children with social-emotional and behavioral issues, increasing the rate of families that read to their children daily, training teachers and parents to support the language development of English learners, and supporting professional development for ECE providers.