

I. Executive Summary

The First 5 San Joaquin Children and Families Commission and San Joaquin County community embarked on an extensive period of planning and dialogue about the areas of need, services and systems that serve children prenatal to five and their families. The planning began in August of 2004 and extended to April of 2005. It included Commission meetings in four areas of the county and focus groups from seven professional groups and 14 parent groups with a total of 371 participants. This strategic planning process resulted in many decisions regarding ideas about service provision and funding mechanisms. These philosophies are as follows:

Service Delivery

- Integration
Direct services should be delivered in a framework that plans for, implements and sustains positive systems change for children and families.
- Capacity Building
Assessment, developing plans and implementing actions to address the strengths and weaknesses of organizations serving children will result not only in an increase of quality services, but a higher probability of organization and program sustainability.
- Strategy Focused
In the past, funded First 5 services have been largely determined by the funded organization. While outcomes were consistent with the strategic plan objectives, it was difficult to evaluate across programs to see what strategies were the most effective as different ways of delivering and measuring service impact were in place. A 'strategy focused' approach utilizes prescribed research-based practices and curriculum. This ensures consistency across programs, thus supporting similar data to review, less staff time (both funded project and First 5) and consistent, high quality services.
- Civic Engagement/Community Involvement
Civic engagement and community involvement will be two pronged, first at the level of involvement in planning for services and second in the process of Commission deliberations.

- School Readiness Model for Service Delivery

Each priority area of need chosen by the community and the First 5 San Joaquin were wrapped under the five essential elements of the School Readiness Initiative from the State Commission as follows:

SCHOOL READINESS MODEL

Essential Element of School Readiness	Priority Area of Need
Early Care and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to child care • quality child care • literacy
Health and Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • access to prenatal care • chronic childhood disease • substance abuse • access to a medical home
Parenting and Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • child abuse/domestic violence
Program Infrastructure & Administration	
School Capacity	

- Specific Delivery Areas

The bulk of service delivery will be defined by elementary school boundaries and therefore decrease the chance of service duplication within First 5 funded programs. There will also be specific guidelines established to target underserved, high need school communities throughout the county.

Funding

- Funding Allocation

The allocation of funding was determined as follows:

Funding Category	Percent of Allocated Program Resources
School Readiness Model	50 %
County wide/Commission Driven /Systems Initiatives	19.5 %
Preschool for All	18 %
Match/leverage	5 %
Administration	5 %
Mini Grants	2 %
Planning Grants	.5 %

Other

- Partnership with State Commission Initiatives

Potential initiatives with the State Commission will be individually brought to First 5 San Joaquin Commissioners to determine if entering a partnership is a match with the strategic plan and if funds are available.

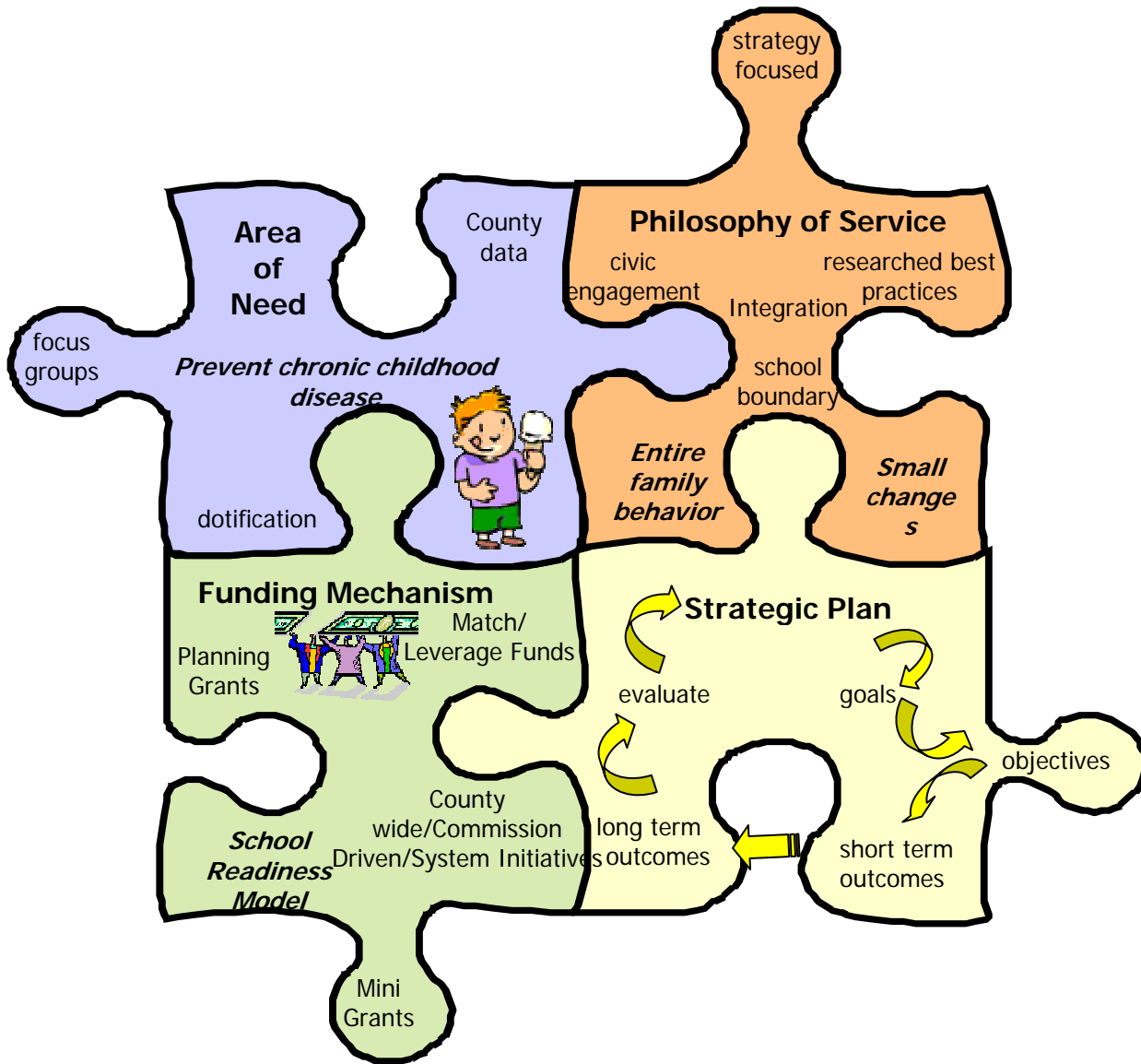
- Informational Forums

Quarterly informational forums will be convened. These forums will be attended by persons with subject area expert in the eight areas of identified need. It is anticipated that the First 5 Program Coordinator will attend these forums, gather information from each of the eight areas that includes 1) updated national, state and local data, 2) impending legislation, 3) trends, 4) research, 5) best practices and 6) funding opportunities. The information from the forum will be summarized and distributed to other contractors and the Commission.

The resulting philosophy of service provision and decisions on funding allocations were combined with the most current data on the needs identified by the community, professionals, Commission members and researched best practices to establish the goals, strategies and outcomes to be reached by First 5 San Joaquin. In the past, funded projects chose the strategies, curriculum and assessment tools they would use. The ability to evaluate and compare programs to decide which strategies were the most effective became close to impossible. The figure on the following page illustrates a move from this scattered approach to a strategic approach where:

1. The community, Commission and data identified needs
2. Research best practices and specific strategies were chosen to meet those needs
3. Funding mechanisms were established to meet the needs in a researched, strategic manner
4. An evaluation system with consistent measurement tools was established to measure the effectiveness of the identified strategies to meet the need

Figure 1. Results of Strategic Planning Process Utilizing the Priority Need of 'Prevent and/or Decrease Chronic Childhood Disease' *Example**



* Note: the *italics* in each puzzle piece serves as an example, utilizing the priority need – prevent childhood disease