



**Agenda Item No. 9
May 1, 2013 Meeting**

DATE: April 19, 2013

TO: Children and Families Commission of Orange County

FROM: Christina Altmayer, Executive Director

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Altmayer".

SUBJECT: First 5 California Child Signature Program – New Grant Opportunity

SUMMARY:

The Child Signature Program (CSP) was created by First 5 California and provides funding for local commissions to increase quality in early learning programs for young children. The CSP incorporates three research-based program elements:

1. Instructional Strategies and Teacher-Child Interactions
2. Social-emotional Development
3. Parent Involvement and Support

The Orange County Commission was awarded a project to participate in the second round of the CSP project. Today's agenda item requests authorization to submit an application to participate in the Child Signature Program (Request for Application) RFA3.

BACKGROUND:

RFA2 - Child Signature Program - Readiness Assessment and Quality Improvement

The term of the current CSP program is three-years from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015, and the total funding available to Orange County is \$315,000. The program provides technical assistance to increase the quality of early learning programs for young children in early care and education centers in high need communities. High need communities are defined as communities with schools that have Academic Performance Index (API) scores in deciles 1-3.

Currently, Orange County supports 60 classrooms and Family Child Care Home programs participation in the project. Participation for half of the classrooms is funded through the First 5 California project and 30 classrooms are funded through the Orange County Department of Education, in conjunction with the Quality Improvement System and Race to the Top state and federal funding. Raising the standard of quality in local preschool programs has had a double benefit of improving the quality of early education for children participating in the programs, and increasing the programs competitiveness in future state and federal funding opportunities.

RFA3 – Child Signature Program – Quality Enhancement of Eligible CSP2 Classrooms

The RFA3 would provide for essential staff and \$50,000 per year per classroom to support achieving key program components in up to 34 classrooms. An additional \$1,000 per toddler

Commissioners

Executive Director

and \$2,000 per infant will also be available to offset the high cost of caring for infants and toddlers.

The Commission currently participates in the First 5 California *Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards (CARES) Plus* Program to increase the use of quality curricula, instruction tools and other evidence supported approaches to prepare children for school with priority in the high need school districts including Anaheim, Garden Grove and Santa Ana. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) is implementing the federal *Race to the Top* program to promote K-12 education reform, innovation, and teacher quality. Participation in the enhanced CSP program will further complement and enhance the current efforts in both Pre-K and K-12 for the benefit of Orange County students.

Staff has reviewed the recently released CSP RFA3 (Attachment 1) and requests authorization to develop a responsive application that builds on the CARES Plus, CSP2 and Race to the Top projects. The program requires a one-to-one local match. No additional program funding would be required to meet the match. The match funding requirement would be met by current investments in Early Learning Specialists, School Readiness Nurses, other related program funding and/or resources from Orange County Department of Education and other community providers. If awarded, staff would return to the Commission to request authorization of contracts to implement program requirements.

STRATEGIC PLAN & FISCAL SUMMARY:

The recommended actions presented in this staff report have been reviewed in relation to the Commission's Strategic Plan and are consistent with applicable goals. If approved for participation, funding for this item would be provided by First 5 California and included in the FY 2013/14 Amended Budget within the Early Learning category.

PRIOR COMMISSION ACTIONS:

- May 2, 2012 – Authorized participation in the First 5 California Child Signature Program RFA2 and approved agreements to implement program

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

1. Authorize submitting application for participation in the First 5 California Child Signature Program RFA3 consistent with the terms outlined in this staff report.
2. Direct staff to return to the Commission with proposed implementing actions.

ATTACHMENT:

1. First 5 California Child Signature Program, RFA3

Contact: Alyce Mastrianni

First 5 California Child Signature Program RFA3

Program Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children at greatest risk for school failure will enter school with the skills to be successful. • Targeted children and families will have access to quality early learning programs. • Teacher effectiveness in working with culturally and linguistically diverse children ages 0 – 5 will be optimized. • Teacher effectiveness in working with special needs children ages 0 – 5 will be optimized. • Parents will have the knowledge and skills to successfully advocate for their child’s education. • Parents will be knowledgeable and involved in their children’s age-appropriate cognitive and behavioral development.
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites and classrooms selected must serve children 0 – 5 who live in elementary school catchment areas with current Academic Performance Index score in deciles 1 – 3. • CSP2 classrooms may participate if they meet eligibility and commit to maintain level of quality. • Classrooms must include at least 10% special needs children in the total of all children served. <p>Additional categories include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant/toddler ages 0 – 3 who meet income eligibility based on the California Department of Education Schedule of Income Ceilings. • Reside in a home where a language other than English is used as the primary means of communication.
Technical Assistance and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WestEd will provide Early Education Effectiveness Exchange training and technical assistance. • Support will include targeted local, regional, and statewide training and technical assistance.
Design Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based practices • Data collection systems to support improvement and reporting • Cultural and Linguistically Appropriate Strategies • Program elements aligned with California department of Education curriculum documents • Essential staff t carry out program elements: Program Coordinator, Early Education Expert, Family Support Specialist, Mental Health Specialist, Local Evaluator <p>In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional strategies must include age appropriate integration of nutrition education, movement, and physical activities. • Each child must have screenings and assessment with a focus on children’s social-emotional and behavioral outcomes. • Parent involvement approaches must be implemented to foster strong relationships among children, families and staff.
Submission Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2013 – Received First 5 Ca Program RFA2 • May 20, 2013 – Application submission deadline • July 1, 2013 – Program start
Fund Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years of quality enhancement funding is available. • A one-to-one match is required • Approximately \$440,000/ year for required essential staff positions • \$50,000 annually (\$100,000 for 2 year term) for each qualifying classroom
Research-Based Program Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional strategies and teacher-child interactions • Social-emotional development • Parent involvement and support