



*2018 - 2019*  
*Evaluation and Program Report*



*In 1998, California voters approved a \$.50 tax increase on tobacco products through the passage of Proposition 10, the Children and Families First Act. Each county created a local Commission and received revenue to be used for programs for children prenatal through age five. Governed by a Commission, First 5 Amador is charged with administering the funds to support these efforts.*

*Evaluation efforts reflect an ongoing commitment to ensure local accountability, document program quality and effectiveness, and measure progress towards outcomes. Each funded program is diverse in terms of interventions and outcomes; therefore evaluation plans are unique to each program.*

***First 5 Amador adopted the Strengthening Families Framework – Five Protective Factors and works closely with community partners and grantees to incorporate the objectives of the framework.***

***Research has shown that the Five Protective Factors are linked with lower incidence of child abuse and neglect:\****

- 1) Parental Resilience – the ability to manage and bounce back from all types of challenges that emerge in every family’s life.
- 2) Social Connections – friends, family members, neighbors, and community members provide emotional support, help solve problems, offer parenting advice, and give concrete assistance to parents.
- 3) Concrete Support in Times of Need – meeting basic economic needs like food, shelter, clothing, and health care is essential for families to thrive.
- 4) Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development – accurate information about child development and appropriate expectations for children’s behavioral at every age help parents see their children and youth in a positive light and promote their healthy development.
- 5) Social and Emotional Competence of Children – a child’s ability to interact positively with others, self-regulate their behavior, and effectively communicate their feelings has a positive impact on their relationships with their family, other adults, and peers. Challenging behaviors or delayed development can create extra stress for families, so early identification and assistance for both parents and children can head off negative results and keep development on track.

***\*<http://www.cssp.org/reform/strengthening-families/the-basics/protective-factors>***

# *Results - Highlights 2018-2019*

## *Upcountry and Camanche Lake Community Centers*

### *~Family Resource Centers~*

### *Nexus Youth and Family Services*

Nexus Youth & Family Services utilized First 5 Amador funding to implement Family Resource Center (FRC) programs in the unincorporated areas of Upcountry and Camanche. Through the FRCs, Nexus provided access to needed services, socialization opportunities, and programs to ensure that families are strengthened and supported, children are better protected from child abuse and neglect, and are prepared to enter school healthy and ready to learn. The goal of the FRCs is to reduce disparities in access to services and programs for families residing in the Upcountry and Camanche areas of Amador County and to increase the success of self-sufficiency, stability, and resiliency.

FRC staff have incorporated education for families and caregivers regarding the importance of Ages and Stages Developmental Screenings building on the countywide effort to standardize the use of the early childhood development "check-up" countywide.

**Objective:** Expand high-quality case management services for high-need families with children ages 0-5.

**Activity:** Family Advocates will provide case management services for 50 families.

**Outcome:** Family Advocates continued to be available at the Upcountry Community Center and Camanche Lake Community Center (FRCs) to work with families to help them identify and prioritize goals and create a Family Action Plan. Advocates provided emotional support, referrals to appropriate resources, transportation support for families to access services, and translation assistance when necessary. Families were linked with other 0 - 5 programs that promote children's health and education, and focus on informing parents and caregivers about the important role they play in their children's first and formative years and supporting the familial relationship.

The Family Advocates provided quality comprehensive case management services (long term) and crisis case management services (short term) depending on individual needs. Services were time-limited with a written plan to meet identified goals. During the past year, Family Advocates provided comprehensive case management services to 88 families, 47 families with children ages 0 - 5. Advocates also provided crisis case management services to 138 families, 60 families with children ages 0 - 5.

Examples of activities and services provided during this reporting period:

- Providing referrals and support for clients to access Behavioral Health and Public Health services
- Providing referrals and support for clients to access Operation Care - Domestic Violence services
- Providing referrals to parenting classes
- Providing referrals to WIC, Playgroups, Kindergarten Readiness, and Baby Welcome Wagon services
- Providing referrals to Amador College Connect, Head Start and State Preschool, Hispanic Women's Group, etc.

The table below summarizes the number of home visits/client contacts and referrals provided through the Family Advocate program at the Upcountry Community Center and Camanche Lake Community Center. The data combines both comprehensive case management and crisis case management clients.

<b>7/1/2018 - 6/30/2019</b>	<b>UCC (total)</b>	<b>UCC (0-5)</b>	<b>CLCC/Ione (total)</b>	<b>CLCC/Ione (0-5)</b>
# of clients/comprehensive & crisis	90	46	136	61
# of home visits/client contacts	316	195	475	218
# of referrals to outside agencies/services	726	489	457	177

Family Advocates utilized case management software to track Family Action Plans, case management activity, and family engagement. This data was used to assess individual client progress, family strengths and concerns, and interventions. The charts below document the status of all goals by 0 - 5 case management clients at program year-end as well as the breakdown of goals set by category.

<b>Types of Goals</b>	<b>Client Goal Status</b>
<i>11% - Education</i>	<i>5% - Little or no progress</i>
<i>5% - Employment</i>	<i>7% - Some progress</i>
<i>7% - Health</i>	<i>10% - Significant progress</i>
<i>21% - Parenting</i>	<i>78% - Met goal</i>
<i>54% - Family Management</i>	
<i>2% - Safety</i>	

**Case Anecdote:**

During the program year, the Family Advocate (FA) worked closely with "Diane", a single mother of two children, both under the age of 5. When Diane first met with the FA, she shared that she was really struggling and needed help. She stated that she was concerned about her ability to effectively parent her children had recently asked for support and intervention from CPS, and had voluntarily placed her children in foster care while she worked on increasing her parenting skills so that she and her children would be able to form a more appropriate, constructive, and enhanced parent-child relationship. The FA talked with Diane at length about the family support services provided by Nexus including the Parenting with a Purpose classes, in-home parenting support, as well as supervised coaching during family visits. Diane was eager to participate in all services and immediately completed enrollment paperwork.

Throughout the next few months, Diane completed the Parenting with a Purpose series and participated in weekly in-home parenting support services as well as supervised coaching during family visits. During one family visit, she happily shared with the parent educator that she was beginning to feel more confident in her ability to parent and enthusiastic about providing a safe and secure environment for her children to thrive. Today, Diane and her children are reunited. The family is participating in multiple programs and Diane has completed developmental screenings (ASQ/ASQ-SEs) for her children. Diane is much more confident in her ability to parent her young children.

**Objective:** Community resources and programs will be offered at the FRCs.

**Activity:** Implement 0-5 activities at each FRC and assist with programs offered by partner providers.

**Outcome:** Each FRC offered access to quality early childhood programs and supportive services for families. Food distributions and monthly wellness workshops were offered at each center as well as health insurance outreach and information. In addition, below are some of the events, groups, and services offered by the Community Centers:

Girl Scouts	Children's Tutoring	Summertime Fun
Toddler Time Playgroup	Family Advocate services	Woodworkers meetings
Clothes Closet	Resume writing assistance	Information & Referral
Kindergarten Readiness	Children's counseling	Parenting Classes
Alcoholics Anonymous meetings	Toddler Time Playgroup	Promotores de Salud services

In addition, both FRCs implemented the annual Back-Pack 2 School and Angel Tree projects. This year, 350 children received backpacks and necessary school supplies through the Back-Pack 2 School project and 356 children received holiday gifts through Angel Tree.

The FRCs facilitated monthly wellness workshops designed to provide information regarding mental health and existing resources. During the past year, workshop topics included Youth Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health First Aid, Suicide Prevention, Understanding ADHD in Adults & Children, Season Affective Disorder, Nurturing Children During Times of Stress, Anxiety & Depression in Youth, and Educate, Equip & Support. EES is a program which helps parents learn about common childhood mental health issues and symptoms management techniques. A total of 201 community members attended the FRC wellness workshops and 211 community members attended individual presentations.

FRC staff also provided information regarding the Covered California health insurance program and assistance with completing Medi-Cal applications. Throughout the past year, Nexus staff provided information about Covered California to 93 individuals and assisted 28 community members with completing Medi-Cal applications.

During the program year, 193 families, 19 with children ages 0 - 5, utilized the bimonthly food distribution program offered at the FRCs. Thirteen of the total number of families were homeless; up from six during the previous year. An additional 58 families (up from 19 in the previous year), 15 (up from 7 in fiscal year 17/18) with children ages 0 - 5, accessed the centers' emergency food pantry programs. Nine (up from 4 in 17/18) of the total number of families were homeless.

Camanche FRC staff continued to offer Baby Welcomes Wagon services to Spanish-speaking families. During this reporting period, staff completed the program (2 visits) with 2 families.

The following table summarizes the average count of visitors (duplicated count) and the services/programs offered.

7/1/2018 – 6/30/2019	UCC Average per Month	CLCC Average per Month
# of visits	507	216
# of services / programs	22	15
0 - 5 children	31	55
0-5 parents/caregivers	26	47

The total unduplicated count of households who participated at the Upcountry Community Center from July through June was 436. 131 families with children ages 0-5 participated in services at the UCC. All families were signed up as member households.

The total unduplicated count of households who participated at the Camanche Lake Community Center from July through June was 244, 135 families with children ages 0-5. All families were signed up as member households.

The total number of active Community Center member households who utilized FRC services during the past year is represented by the following individuals:

17/18 - 18/19 ( ) = 17/18	0-5 children	6-18 children	0-5 parents	Adults	Seniors	Total
UCC	180(151)	411(474)	183(177)	336(327)	323(269)	1,433 (1,398)
CLCC	211 (171)	365(318)	272(238)	244(211)	157(182)	1,249 (1,120)

During the reporting period, the Upcountry Center offered 29 unduplicated services or programs and the Camanche Center offered 21 unduplicated services or programs as well.

**Objective: Parents with young children will be provided the opportunity to volunteer at the centers.**

Activity: Implement volunteer opportunities at each center to promote parent leadership and societal involvement.

**Outcome:** During the past year, community members provided 1,231 hours of volunteer service at the centers. The following chart summarizes the total number of parent volunteers per project.

FRC Project	# of volunteers	FRC Project	# of volunteers
Information and Referral	7	Clothing Closets	5
Food Distributions	5	Peer Partner Program	5
Back-Pack 2 School	10	Community Garden	8
Angel Tree	5	FRC Operations	10
FRC Yardwork	38	Computer Assistance	3
Senior Social	2		

**Objective:** Families will have the information and support they need to promote and optimize their children's development to help them succeed in school and life.

Activity: Provide education regarding ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE-2 screenings to parents and caregivers to monitor their child's developmental, behavioral and social-emotional growth, celebrate milestones, identify possible delays or concerns, and access needed resources.

**Outcome:** During the year, new FRC staff participated in an ASQ-3 and ASQ-SE-2 training to learn and discuss the benefits of developmental screening, how to educate caregivers regarding the tool, how to interpret screening results in relation to referral considerations, the importance of sensitive communication of screening results, the process for referring children to appropriate agencies, and follow-up activities. Throughout the reporting period, staff provided caregivers with 55 ASQ-3 screenings and 55 ASQ-SE-2 screenings for local families with children ages 0 - 5; 38 ASQ-3 screenings and 55 ASQ-SE-2 screenings were returned for scoring. 4 children were identified to need follow-up and rescreen in 6 months. Staff utilized the screening process and follow-up activities to share important child development information and available resources with parents and caregivers. Staff discussed with parents the importance of play and experiential learning in early childhood to help give their children the opportunity to practice skills, as well as provided focused games and intervention activities to encourage their child's healthy development.

Staff provided information and education about the screening opportunities and disseminated the screening tools during Toddler Time Playgroup events, parenting classes, Kindergarten Readiness classes, Family Advocate home visits and general FRC operating hours.



## Baby Welcome Wagon Universal - Home Visiting

The goal of the program is to strengthen family functioning and improve children’s readiness for school by ensuring all new parents have access to the tools needed to optimize their children’s home environment, whatever the socioeconomic status. The Tool Kit for New Parents, developed by First 5 California, is used as the basis for the delivery of parenting information and customized with Amador community services and resources. The program provides paraprofessional face to face home visiting services. The first visit will preferably be actualized in the prenatal period. With the distribution of the Parent Tool Kit this home visit serves as the arena in which the family can express difficulties, or, family challenges are detected by the home visitor and services arranged to limit the negative effects on the caregiver-infant relationship. Education regarding Ages and Stages (ASQ/ASQ-SE-2) developmental screenings is incorporated in all visits and the tool is made available for siblings (0 - 5) already in the home.

The Baby Welcome Wagon is unique compared to other home visiting programs in the county. In this program, all Amador County residents with a newborn child are eligible for health education and referral services. The program will build on each family’s individual strengths ultimately improving the health of their infant as well as overall family strength.

The Baby Welcome Wagon visit provides an opportunity to enroll families in the Imagination Library – home literacy program. Children enrolled in the Imagination Library at birth will receive 60 books in the mail by their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. Introducing families to the importance of early literacy immediately after the birth of their child reinforces the impact talking, reading, and singing has on the development of their child and bonding with the adults in their life.

### Objective I:

Parents of children from zero to three years will be given the opportunity to participate in the Baby Welcome Wagon (BWW) program.

#### Number of Referrals: 62 (down from 92 in 17/18)

Jackson	19	Sutter Creek	11
Ione	11	Pine Grove	12
Pioneer	05	River Pines	01
Plymouth	03		

#### 1st Home Visits Completed: 41 (down from 69 in 17/18)

Jackson	14	Sutter Creek	07
Ione	11	Plymouth	02
Pine Grove	06		
Pioneer	01		

2nd Contacts Completed: 29

Jackson	08	Sutter Creek	05
Ione	09	Plymouth	02
Pine Grove	02		

66% of referrals received at least one home visit.

Head of household status:

Married	19
Single	10
Two-Parent	12



Number of children within the home after the 1<sup>st</sup> home visit:

0-2years	57
3-5years	02

Primary Language in the home after 1<sup>st</sup> home visit:

English	41
Spanish	0

\*Two Spanish-speaking families referred to Nexus Youth and Family Services (Camanche Lake Community Center) for the Promotores Program.

Ethnicity of BWW families (mother's ethnicity):

White	29
Latina	05
Native American	02
Multi-Racial	01
Asian	01
African American	01

85% of 2<sup>nd</sup> home visit (contact) families will report having insurance:

100% of the families reported having insurance after second contact.

Number of families receiving car seat assistance:

Total Pubic Health car seats provided for FY 18/19: 39

40% of Baby Welcome visits during 18/19 included the father -- up from 36% in 17/18.



Number of families assisted / referred for follow-up services: 40 families contacted BWW representative for follow-up assistance.

Developmental Screenings (*Ages & Stages* - ASQ-ASQ-SE-2) – All parents were educated regarding the importance of developmental screenings and recommended ages for screening. 8 families completed screenings. Re-screening was recommended for 3 children. One child was referred to First 5's behavioral specialist services and 2 referred to Valley Mountain Regional Center for further assessment.

Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder screenings (Edinburgh) were completed during BWW visits. 35 women were screened; 8 women were referred for further assessment. Of these, 4 women initiated services with a clinician, 4 women were lost to follow-up. 12 women were already in counseling. 15 women scored within normal limits.

Additional resources such as job search assistance, medical billing and legal assistance, financial aid, substance abuse, breastfeeding, etc. were provided throughout the year.

In an attempt to increase the reach of the Baby Welcome Wagon Program (BWW) to young families in the Ione area, First 5 Amador funded the placement of a BWW registration form in the water bill for Ione residents. The 1,900 fliers were printed and folded by Amador Ledger Print and the Ione Water District stuffed the statements which were mailed out in March.

As of 6/30/19, the program has received 2 completed BWW registration forms from the campaign. The BWW representative attempted 3 times (usual and customary practice) to contact both families. There was no response from any of the attempted contacts.

Vignette: No Wrong Door

The Baby Welcome Wagon home visitor has the unique opportunity of spending more time with children than the medical provider. However, it is imperative that the two work together with the families to recognize signs that their children may need some type of intervention. At the home visit, families are educated about the importance of developmental screenings and are encouraged to complete an ASQ/ASQ-SE-2 to determine if the child's development is on-track. Parents learn about gross motor, communication, fine motor, problem-solving, personal-social skills, and the social emotional well-being of their child. Although the BWW focuses on the recommended ages of 9 months, 16 months, and 30 months at the home visits, *Ages and Stages* screening tools are available for children 2 - 60 months of age.

At one home visit, a mother was very concerned about her 33 months old child. She also had a 12 months old baby and she noticed that the behavior of the 33 month old had changed, especially towards the 12 month old sibling. The 33 month old's father was recently reintroduced back in to the child's life after being released from incarceration. The father was receiving supervised visits and the mother recognized that the child's behavior had become more aggressive toward her and the 12 month old.

It was suggested by the BWW home visitor to complete the ASQ screening for the 33 month old. It was also suggested that the grandmother who the child was frequently with and the father also complete the screening with the child. The mother who was desperate for some kind of direction agreed and was very anxious to complete the screenings. A return visit was scheduled to follow up with the mother and score the screenings.

The mother came back with the ASQ screening questionnaires from both herself and the grandmother. She was unable to get the father of the child to complete the screening by the date of the return visit. The screenings were scored and the child was well out of the normal ranges. The child was referred to the Behavioral Consultant through First 5 Amador and through the school district's special education department. The mother was also instructed to share the results with the child's medical provider.

The mother was extremely grateful for the opportunity that was presented to her. The visit started out as a home visit for the 12 month old. The mother was new to the area, going to college, out on her own with the two children, and had no idea where to turn for help. The goal of the home visitor is to give the families as much information, resources, and support as possible within the boundaries of a home visit.

This mother was able to seek services for her child prior to the child entering school. Early detection and intervention are key to the child receiving the care they need for a healthy start in school and life.



## Mobile Outreach - Toddler Playgroups

The Mobile Outreach –Toddler Playgroup program has been in operation since 2003 and consists of weekly playgroups in four locations (2 playgroups are provided at the Family Resource / Community Centers). The program was designed to provide services in multiple areas of the county thereby allowing easier access for families. Playgroups are open to all stay at home children 0 – 5 and their caregiver, grandparent, parent and licensed providers. Each playgroup coordinator is provided learning material and resources to provide a developmentally appropriate program. The coordinators are brought together each year to share ideas, attend learning opportunities, and network.

Protective Factors: By offering weekly toddler playgroups, playgroup coordinators are able to build and sustain trusting relationships with parents/caregivers, provide a safe environment for parents/caregivers to network with each other, and provide participants an opportunity to access additional services as needed, thereby impacting the “Parental Resilience”, “Social Connections” and “Concrete Support in Times of Need” *Protective Factors*. Toddler playgroups were also opportunities where parents/caregivers could access information about child development and parenting support, and where children could safely and comfortably interact with others. Appropriate referrals for challenging behaviors or developmental concerns were addressed to secure early intervention for children. These services impacted the “Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development” and “Social and Emotional Competence of Children” *Protective Factors*.

### **Nexus Youth and Family Services Upcountry and Camanche Lake Community Centers**

Objective: Expand opportunities for families with young children to participate in intentional, interactive learning and socialization opportunities.

Activity: Provide toddler playgroups once per week at the Upcountry and Camanche Community Center sites.

Outcome: The Upcountry and Camanche Lake Community Center (FRC) sites each implemented a weekly toddler playgroup event for children and parents/caregivers to participate in together. Staff utilized the evidence-based Creative Curriculum for Infants, Toddlers and Twos which is a comprehensive program designed to help educators implement a developmentally appropriate, content-rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels. The FRC playgroup activities gave children opportunities to develop personal relationships with peers and engage in positive interactions with adults. Together, parents and children learned the importance of demonstrating receptive and expressive language skills and communication strategies. Parents/caregivers and children had the opportunity to learn and demonstrate healthy and safe habits. During playgroups, information regarding child development, local resources, and upcoming community events were available for parents / caregivers. A significant increase in participation was seen with Spanish-speaking families due to the additional resources at the Camanche Lake Center.

The demographic data provided in the following chart represents the children who participated in Toddler Time Playgroup events at the FRCs during the 2017-2018 program year. Throughout the reporting period, 38 children and 35 adults participated in the Toddler Time Playgroup offered at the Upcountry Community Center, and 26 children and 24 adults participated at the Camanche Center.

Toddler Time Playgroup participant satisfaction surveys were conducted by the FRC Director through telephone interviews to assess and monitor program effectiveness. The table below summarizes the parents' year-end responses to the verbal questionnaire.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
1. I feel that the program has helped me enhance my child's school readiness and strengthened my parenting skills.				18%	82%
2. I feel that I have learned more about my child's growth, development, and learning.				18%	82%
3. I feel connected to the playgroup staff and other families.				18%	82%
4. I feel that the playgroup staff encourages me to be actively involved in my child's learning.					100%
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the program for my child and me.					100%

Parents also provided the following comments regarding the Toddler Time Playgroup program:

*This has been a great opportunity for my kids to socialize and make friends.*

*We love playgroup! We have been coming for 3 years.*

*We really like \*\*\*\*\* She is such a great teacher.*

*Thank you!*

*I saw the colorful flags in the UCC parking lot and stopped in to see what was going on. I am so glad I did because I just got custody of my granddaughter and was able to enroll her in services right then and there.*

In addition, FRC playgroup staff utilized a condensed version of the 40 Developmental Assets for Early Childhood as a pre and post survey for parents to measure the growth and development of external and internal assets their child and family acquire while participating in the program.

The pre and post surveys indicated that families who participated in the Toddler Time Playgroup events at the FRCs self-reported an overall increase in both external and internal assets in the following areas: Support; Empowerment; Boundaries & Expectations; Constructive Use of Time; Commitment to Learning; Positive Values; Social Competencies; and Positive Identify.

Toddler Time Playgroup participant satisfaction surveys were conducted by the Family Services Program Manager to assess and monitor program effectiveness. The following table summarizes the parents' year-end responses to the verbal questionnaire.

82% agreed strongly that the program helped them enhance their children's school readiness and strengthened parenting skills.

82% felt they learned more about their child's growth, development, and learning.

82% felt connected to the playgroup staff and other families.

100% felt playgroup staff encouraged them to be actively involved in their child's learning.

100% were satisfied with the quality of the program for their family.

**Toddler Playgroups – Jackson, Ione**  
**J. Finarelli**

The program allows parents / caregivers to introduce their children to a range of activities that enhance their learning. It also encourages children to develop social skills at their own pace and supports emotional growth by building confidence and encouraging them to be independent. In addition, it provides an opportunity for language development and communication. It also is a support to parents / caregivers by giving information of other services provided in the community and screenings that help them to understand how their child is developing. It allows parents / caregivers for social interaction, community networking, and an opportunity to play/interact with their child.

**Ages** 0 - 3 years old = 41 / 3 - 5 years old = 44

**Residence:** Jackson (23), Ione (26), Sutter Creek (15), Plymouth (2), Pine Grove (3), Fiddletown (1), Pioneer (4), Calaveras Co. (8), Not given (3)

**Total visits for 18/19** = Ione (179), Jackson (299)    **Total visits for 17/18** = Ione (222), Jackson (142)

The structure of the Jackson and Ione playgroups consists of a welcome and greeting; exploratory play; lesson - activity; story / circle time; a healthy snack / water (often infused with fruit / vegetables); and clean up.

When parents arrive, they often share with the coordinator comments their children have shared prior to, or following playgroup. Children anticipate the weekly playgroup and it takes only a few weeks for the routine to be set and children to feel comfortable. Three or four stations of activities such as painting, drawing, puppet play, and dress-up / pretend are provided each week. A large group activity for physical development and play is incorporated into the structure of the playgroup. Zoophonics is utilized to introduce the children to letters and literacy. The majority of parents in attendance are mothers or child care providers with several fathers attending periodically. Time for parent to parent interaction occurs during free play. The conversations are rich with parents sharing information such as local medical care options, favorite outdoor areas that are safe for small children, and support for each other regarding family stressors.

Programs funded by First 5 Amador such as the Imagination Library, safety net resources, and community events and services are discussed and material made available for parents and child care providers. Nutrition education and physical activity are focus areas of these playgroups. A “Healthy Tip” is provided to families on a weekly basis. The Healthy Tip is also shared by the playgroup coordinator with elementary schools in the community to reinforce the message in the community.



## Amador Cooperative Preschool

Amador Cooperative Preschool (ACP) officially opened its doors in August of 2006 and is Amador County's only state licensed parent cooperative preschool. ACP differs from other preschools in the county in that it is run by, and for, the preschool families. At the preschool, children learn through play -- a critical strategy for healthy social, emotional and cognitive development. Parents are recognized as their child's first teacher and considered to be valuable cooperative partners with the preschool staff in supporting their child's development.

Throughout this reporting period the preschool was on hiatus conducting playgroups for parents interested in enrolling their child once the preschool was re-licensed under a new non-profit structure.

First 5 Amador staff provided technical assistance to parents and eventually the newly hired teacher. The program is now under the non-profit umbrella of Sierra Non-Profit and is licensed for 20 children.

The program has a new name: Mother Lode Preschool and continues to be co-located with First 5 Amador.

## Nexus Youth and Family Services Camanche Kindergarten Readiness

This Kindergarten Readiness Program was designed to help participating children build the school readiness skills which have been outlined by local teachers, administrators, parents and professionals in the following categories: Social Readiness, Number Readiness, Colors & Shapes, Life Skills, Motor Skills (Large & Fine), Reading Readiness, Writing Readiness, Music & Art, and Health & Safety. The goal of the Kindergarten Readiness Program is to reduce disparities in access to school readiness programming for families living in the Camanche area, and through this increase the number of children who are ready to enter Kindergarten with skills for success in life.

Objective: Children will enter school with the skills for success in life.

Activity: Provide a Kindergarten Readiness Program once per week at the Camanche Lake Community Center.

Outcome: Nexus has implemented a weekly Kindergarten Readiness Program for children ages 3-5 at the Camanche Lake Community Center for multiple years. The program proved to be very successful and a decision was made to replicate the program for families living near the Upcountry Community Center. Staff utilized the *Zoo-phonics* curriculum which is a program designed to help teachers implement developmentally appropriate early education services for children to learn the alphabet, phonemic awareness, rhyming, pre-sound blending, and pre-writing skills. Kindergarten Readiness activities gave children opportunities to develop personal relationships with peers and engage in positive interactions with adults. Children had the opportunity to develop early literacy skills, as well as control of large muscles for movement, navigation and balance, and small muscles for manipulation and exploration. Parents/caregivers and children had the opportunity to learn and demonstrate healthy and safe habits. During Kindergarten Readiness sessions, children were provided with age-appropriate choices for activities that strengthened their school readiness skills. Throughout the reporting period, 24 children participated in the Kindergarten Readiness Program offered at the Camanche Lake Community Center and 6 at the 6-week pilot at the Upcountry Center.



In addition to facilitating Kindergarten Readiness classroom sessions, program staff also utilized the *Zoo-phonics* curriculum to create weekly at-home activity packets for enrolled families. At-home activity packets aligned with classroom topics so children and parents could practice and promote early literacy fundamentals.

The demographic data provided in the following chart represents the children who participated in the Camanche Kindergarten Readiness Program during the 2016 - 2017 school year.

Age	#	Gender	#	Ethnicity	#	Residence	#	Special Needs	#
3	10	Male	12	White	15	Plymouth	1	Yes	1
4	12	Female	12	Black	0	Ione / Camanche	17	No	23
5	2			Hispanic	7	Pioneer	1		
				Asian	1	Fiddletown	1		
				Multi	1	Valley Springs	3		

After each Kindergarten Readiness session, information regarding child development, local resources, and upcoming community events was available for parents and caregivers. Program staff also hosted quarterly parent meetings and parent/teacher conferences to provide parents with important information regarding their child’s progress, and support in their role as their child’s first, most important teacher. This strategy was particularly critical because parental involvement in children’s education from an early age has a significant effect on educational achievement, and continues to do so into adolescence and adulthood.

Kindergarten Readiness Program participant satisfaction surveys were completed by parents to assess and monitor program effectiveness. The table below summarizes the parents’ year-end responses to the written questionnaire. Seven parents completed the survey.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I feel that the program has helped me enhance my child’s school readiness and strengthened my parenting skills.				62%	38%
2. I feel that I have learned more about my child’s growth, development, and learning.			25%	37%	38%
3. I feel connected to the Kindergarten Readiness staff and other families.				62%	38%
4. I feel that the Kindergarten Readiness staff encourage me to be actively involved in my child’s learning.				38%	62%
5. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the program for my child and me.				38%	62%

Parents also provided the following comments regarding the Kindergarten Readiness Program on mid and year-end surveys:

*"Working at Ione Elementary for 20 years, I knew this program would help my grandson. I am very happy with how \*\*\*\*\* talks to the children and my grandson enjoys his time in class."*

*"As a teacher of first graders, I appreciate all you do to prepare these littles for school."*

*"My child has really enjoyed this program."*

*"Thank you for everything you have done to prepare my child for Kindergarten."*

In addition, Kindergarten Readiness Program staff utilized the Kindergarten Readiness Profile (KRP) as a pre and post assessment to measure the growth and development of school readiness skills children acquired while participating in the program. Domains included in the assessment are essential school readiness indicators in Social/Emotional, Physical, and Cognitive competencies. Staff also utilized the KRP as a screening tool to ensure that appropriate prevention and intervention strategies were provided in a timely manner, and for students who needed them. Throughout the year, staff completed the pre and post KRP assessments with 24 children. The following charts summarize participating children's pre and post KRP screening results and demonstrate an overall increase in the acquisition of skills, abilities and knowledge related to early learning and school readiness standards.

<b>Pre Social/Emotional</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
A. Seeks adult help when appropriate	16%	55%	16%	13%
B. Engages in cooperative play activities with peers	8%	60%	16%	16%
C. Exhibits impulse control and self-regulation	21%	45%	21%	13%
D. Stays with or repeats a task	13%	50%	21%	16%
E. Separates appropriately from caregiver most days	29%	13%	45%	13%
F. Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	4%	55%	25%	16%
G. Follows rules when participating in routine activities	25%	50%	13%	12%

<b>Post Social/Emotional</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
A. Seeks adult help when appropriate	0%	0%	16%	84%
B. Engages in cooperative play activities with peers	0%	0%	16%	84%
C. Exhibits impulse control and self-regulation	0%	4%	21%	75%
D. Stays with or repeats a task	0%	4%	16%	80%
E. Separates appropriately from caregiver most days	0%	8%	4%	88%
F. Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	0%	0%	21%	79%
G. Follows rules when participating in routine activities	0%	0%	29%	71%

<b>Pre Physical</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
H. Uses tools with increasing precision	13%	62%	4%	21%
I. Demonstrates general coordination.	0%	62%	25%	13%
J. Demonstrates sense of his/her own body in relation to others	6%	63%	8%	13%

<b>Post Physical</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
H. Uses tools with increasing precision	0%	0%	16%	84%
I. Demonstrates general coordination.	0%	0%	4%	96%
J. Demonstrates sense of his/her own body in relation to others	0%	0%	4%	96%

<b>Pre Cognitive</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
K. Recognizes own name	46%	29%	4%	21%
L. Writes own name	75%	4%	8%	13%
M. Demonstrates expressive abilities	13%	54%	25%	8%
N. Understands that numbers represent quantity	29%	50%	8%	13%

<b>Post Cognitive</b>	<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>Emerging</b>	<b>Almost Mastered</b>	<b>Mastered</b>
K. Recognizes own name	0%	4%	8%	88%
L. Writes own name	0%	13%	25%	62%
M. Demonstrates expressive abilities	0%	0%	13%	87%
N. Understands that numbers represent quantity	0%	0%	4%	96%

<b>Pre Recognizes Colors</b>											
	75%	54%	79%	83%	25%	38%	16%	33%	54%	29%	16%

<b>Post Recognizes Colors</b>											
	96%	100%	96%	100%	88%	96%	83%	88%	96%	88%	83%

<b>Pre Recognizes Primary Shapes</b>	<b>Circle</b>	<b>Triangle</b>	<b>Square</b>	<b>Rectangle</b>
	79%	38%	25%	13%

<b>Post Recognizes Primary Shapes</b>	<b>Circle</b>	<b>Triangle</b>	<b>Square</b>	<b>Rectangle</b>
	100%	100%	92%	96%

**Conclusion:** The Kindergarten Readiness program was well-received by participating families. Families were referred to the program by multiple sources, including current and former enrolled families. This year 29% of enrolled children were from returning families that had older children who had previously participated in services. According to one parent, "My older child was very prepared for Kindergarten because he attended your classes. We wanted to make sure our youngest was also able to come to your program so she could have the same advantages when she starts school too."

By implementing quality and intentional school readiness programming, Nexus Kindergarten Readiness Program staff helped ensure that children living in the rural area of Camanche had access to services designed to support the developmental building blocks that are most important for a child's school and long-term success.

Based on the success of the 6-week pilot at the Upcountry Community Center in Pine Grove, the First 5 Amador Commission agreed to continue a Kindergarten Readiness Program at that location for the 19/20 fiscal year.

## **In-House Programs: Transition to Kindergarten**

### ***Background***

The Bridge Program in Amador County began in 2003 and initially served 16 children. This program was designed for children who would be entering kindergarten in the fall and had spent little or no time in a preschool setting. The program was designed to introduce the children to the structure and rhythm of the classroom. It was called a Bridge Program because it was aimed to help children cross from the pre-Kindergarten environment to Kindergarten.

This year the program served approximately 30% of incoming kindergarteners with at least one classroom at each elementary school except Pioneer that joined the class in Pine Grove due to low enrollment. We have augmented the program and continued to improve it including student Kindergarten School Entrance Profiles, referrals, and parent education.

### ***Parent Education***

Parent education this year did not occur at the customary Kick-off to Kindergarten Nights due to the change in kindergarten enrollment through the school district. Information regarding how to help your child prepare for kindergarten was provided by First 5 staff during enrollment at each of the school sites. First 5 Amador is working with the school district to establish a new schedule to accommodate Kick-off to Kindergarten events at each site due to the popularity in previous years.

### ***Three-week Summer Bridge Program***

This year's Kindergarten Bridge program served 91 children throughout Amador. Classes were held at each elementary school (Pine Grove and Pioneer combined) providing children a gentle transition to kindergarten.

"Tuesday Envelopes" were provided to parents each week containing information regarding community programs, health topics (i.e. oral health), and kindergarten readiness activities. Envelopes are returned to the classroom which mimics the school district's "Tuesday Envelope" program families will experience when they enter kindergarten.

This year First 5 offered dental screenings and education during the Bridge program. Services were funded through the Dental Transformation Grant which is a collaborative effort with Sacramento.

Two Music and Movement Classes were offered to each classroom by Laurie's Stories. Music included messages about good food choices, brushing teeth, colors, energy, and social-emotional well-being.

Parents, caregivers and school district staff continue to give this program a high rating.





First 5 California IMPACT (Improve and Maximize Programs so All Children Thrive) is an innovative approach that forges partnerships between First 5 California and counties to achieve the goal of helping children ages 0 to 5 and their families thrive by increasing the number of high-quality early learning settings, including supporting and engaging families in the early learning process.

First 5 Amador's initiative, Amador Quality for Kids (AQ4K), has successfully enrolled 51 individuals to date. The enrollees represent 12 center-based programs, 12 family child care and 6 alternate sites (toddler playgroups, school readiness programs, etc.). Families and caregivers are invited to attend all educational opportunities.

Incentives for participation in quality improvement activities are awarded to individuals (i.e. for early childhood education classes) and sites for the adoption of systems changes such as the incorporation of Ages and Stages Developmental Screenings and environmental rating scales (ECERS). To assist child care providers and preschool teachers in developing a robust literacy program at their sites, AQ4K developed "*Literacy on the Move*" which delivers education and resources to providers at their sites. Many providers are unable to access literacy resources due to the limited hours and locations of public libraries. *Literacy on the Move* provides resources and the coordinator models best practices leaving each provider with the tools needed to continue practicing until the next visit. 75 visits were conducted during this reporting period. Some of the topics included dental health, healthy food / seed planting, and social-emotional well-being.

Amador's Quality for Kids consortia includes members from the Child Care Council, State Preschool, Nexus Youth and Family Services, ATCAA - Head Start, private preschools, The Resource Connection (Resource and Referral Agency) and First 5.





Originally created by Dolly Parton in 1996, the program mails a new, age-appropriate book every month to registered children from birth until their fifth birthday. More than 60% (800+) of age-eligible children in the county are enrolled in the program. First 5 funds the majority of the program, however, community service groups and individuals have contributed toward sustainability.

Anecdotal feedback from families continues to be extremely positive with comments regarding the frequency of requests by their children for the same book, excitement in anticipating the arrival of the books -- even to the point of conversing with postal carriers regarding their expected deliveries. Early childhood and school district personnel continue to share their appreciation of the program and the opportunities it provides children in Amador to establish early literacy skills. Beyond literacy, the consistency of this program supports parent / caregiver and child bonding by encouraging daily reading.



## Dad and Me

First 5 Amador understands the importance of father-involvement and sponsors monthly Dad & Me events. Research shows that children who grow up with warm, nurturing, and actively involved fathers reap tremendous benefits, including better school performance, increased self-esteem, healthier relationships with peers and caregivers, and future access to greater financial resources, according to a recent review of the research. When fathers read to their young children on a regular basis, they tend to raise children who are superior readers, who perform better in school, and who have better relationship skills (Green, S. 2002) Each of these events:

- Provides fun and educational opportunities to help children get ready for school.
- Provides opportunities for fathers, grandfathers, uncles, etc. to foster relationships.
- Provides families with ideas for future family field trips and activities.
- Encourages literacy with each family taking home a book related to the activity.

Some of the monthly field trips and activities included a local plant nursery, fire station, Sutter Creek Park, Boston Alley Gymnastics, and the Amador Model Train Museum.

- 48 Fathers / grandfathers and 60 children participated throughout the year.



## **Mental / Behavioral Health Services and Outreach**

### **Behavioral Specialist Services**

First 5 Amador offers consultation services by experienced behavioral specialists to assist preschool and child care, and stay-at-home families in caring for children with behavior concerns. A consultant is available to assist family child care providers and early education teachers with a wide range of resources and services. The consultant offers phone and on-site assistance to programs serving children ages 0-5.

# of children served 0-5:

6 child specific

1 comprehensive (preschool site)

Some of the referrals recommended for the children and families included Nexus Youth and Family Services for ongoing counseling, perinatal wellness services for a pregnant mom experiencing anxiety and postpartum depression, and Valley Mountain Regional Center.

No child was removed from their current setting due to behavioral concerns.

First 5 continued to provide support for families and early care providers by offering ongoing training opportunities and resources regarding challenging behavior, stress reduction and self-care.

First 5's monthly e-newsletter and Facebook posts provide information and resources that support children's mental health. First 5 staff continues to be an active participant and member of ongoing Behavioral Health / Mental Health Services Act Steering / Cultural Competency meetings and the Student Assistance Program to reinforce the importance of early identification and services for children and families.





Research tell us that as many as 1 in 7 moms (1 in 10 dads) experience symptoms of depression and anxiety during the postpartum period. People in every age, income level, and culture can develop Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (PMADs) during pregnancy and within the first year after delivery. To address these concerns, First 5 and Amador County's Public Health Department pulled together local agencies and organizations to create the Amador - Calaveras Perinatal Wellness Coalition. Due to the high number of Calaveras babies born at the Sutter Amador Hospital, it made sense to include Calaveras agencies and organizations in the Coalition.

Successes of this robust Coalition include training for professionals and paraprofessionals; an algorithm that provides details regarding screening, a universal screening tool, follow-up, and treatment for medical offices, multiple agency/organizations embedding the topic in their strategic plans, the development and distribution of educational / outreach material, and an awareness campaign that included a transit bus ad. One-on-one support is offered to those needing clinical services.

The Coalition continued to identify areas for improvement in the comprehensive system. An example of such is a newly developed policy for the emergency room at Sutter Amador Hospital.

Amador's Baby Welcome Wagon (BWW) program continues to provide support during home visits to families experiencing perinatal mood and anxiety disorders. The home visitor offers an Edinburgh screening at all visits and follows-up with referrals to clinical services and support. 35 women were screened by the BWW home visitor with all Sutter Amador Women's Center patients offered the same screening throughout their pregnancy.

## **Outreach and Education**

### **Mental Health**

To assist in the reduction of stigma associated with mental health, First 5 Amador continued to create, distribute, and post information regarding early childhood mental health as well as perinatal wellness. Educational ads were placed in community newspapers, run on local radio and displayed on local park signs. First 5's e-newsletter and Facebook page are read by hundreds each month. First 5 monitors the open-rate to determine the effectiveness of the messaging.

First 5 continues to educate parents, caregivers, early care and the community at-large regarding the importance of early identification and treatment through developmental screening for children and perinatal wellness screening for parents. Information for new parents and their families is disseminated through the Breastfeeding Coalition's Grandmother Teas, social media, etc.



## Improved Systems

### Organizational Support, Public Education and Community Engagement

### Oral Health Services and Systems Change

In partnership with the Amador County Oral Health Task Force, First 5 Amador spearheaded an effort to establish a systems change that would provide ongoing fluoride varnish treatments and education where the majority of children in the county receive their primary care. Currently, 80% of children receiving care at this medical office are covered by Managed MediCal. There is one DentiCal provider in the county that provides services primarily to Native American families. Few dentists in the county will see children less than 5 years of age making it more challenging for families to access services.

In partnership with Sacramento County, Amador is a grant recipient in the Dental Transformation Initiative which has provided education, screening, and fluoride varnish to children throughout the county. To date, services have been provided at the Kindergarten Bridge program, Head Start, Amador County Recreation Agency's after-school program, community events, and First 5 toddler playgroups and school readiness programs.

Outreach and education during the fiscal year included a bus ad, e-newsletter articles, education through library storytimes, and Facebook.



## [Read Across Amador - Coalition](#)

In an effort to increase literacy opportunities for children and adults in Amador County, First 5 Amador launched Read Across Amador (RAA) – a coalition that includes community-based organizations, Friends of the Amador Library, the Amador Community Foundation, and First 5. Barriers to literacy opportunities such as limited hours and days of operation for satellite public libraries led RAA to expand a successful program launched by the Amador County Library system. Amador County’s Library was awarded a grant to establish four Little Free Libraries (LFL) in outlying areas of the county. The establishment of the first four LFLs was successful which led Read Across Amador to embark on a project that would significantly increase the number of LFLs throughout the county. To date, 23 LFLs are located throughout Amador making books available in hard-to-reach areas of the county. The mission of the official Little Free Library program is *to promote literacy and the love of reading by building free book exchanges worldwide and to build a sense of community as we share skills, creativity, and wisdom across generations.*



The Coalition continues to communicate when opportunities arise, however, did not launch additional projects during this fiscal year. Members continue to promote the Imagination Library, monitor inventory at LFLs and provide technical assistance to anyone interested in establishing an LFL at their location. Amador's Probation Department is interested in installing a LFL in 19/20.

### **Outreach / Social Media**

-First 5 continued to supply community partners and parents with copies of the **Plays Well with Others – A Guide to Social and Emotional Development**. The guide includes an overview of social and emotional development, local resources, and parenting tips. The guide provides age-by-age breakdowns of typical child development, behaviors that warrant concern, and ideas of steps families can take to help foster healthy social and emotional development in their infants and young children.

-First 5 provides administrative oversight and community education for the **Amador Child Abuse Prevention Council (CAPC)**. Activities and outreach topics include Mandated Reporter Trainings, Shaken Baby Prevention, and the Period of Purple Crying presentations. The Council participates in the Amador /Calaveras Perinatal Wellness Coalition to support the county’s Child Protective Services System Improvement Plan. Child Abuse Prevention Council members have incorporated Perinatal Wellness goals / activities in their scopes of work and system improvement plans. CAPC is expanding to include a "Resilient Amador" coalition to address Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Trauma Informed Care.

### **-Children’s International Holiday Festival – Winter Festivals Around the World**

First 5 Amador’s Children’s International Holiday Festival was another success this year with more than 300 individuals attending the event. Agencies and organizations that participate in the event adopt a country and provide an activity / healthy snack representing that portion of the world and share local resources and services available to families.

Partner agencies that provided activities for children and outreach to their families included: the Amador County Recreation Agency, Amador Cooperative Preschool, Amador County Library, A-TCAA Family Learning Center of Ione, A-TCAA Family Resource Centers (Camanche Lake & Upcountry), A-TCAA Family Resource Services, Head Start, the Resource Connection, Mothers' Club of Amador, Operation Care, Amador County Public Health (Baby Welcome Wagon and Tobacco Reduction of Amador County), Amador Child Abuse Prevention Council, and Central Sierra Child Support.

**First 5 Amador's staff provide ongoing technical assistance and material design** to our grantees and partners. Our project and program coordinators' creativity and expertise have given a professional look to First 5's outreach material as well as that of our partners.

**First 5's facility** (Margaret Dalton Children's Center) allows for more community involvement and awareness of the opportunities available for local families. Fitness classes, business and board meetings, parenting classes, large fund raising events, and support groups utilize the facility making it possible to educate more community members about First 5's mission. The venue provides space for on-site child care which allows more parents to participate in ongoing activities. Head Start, State Preschool, Kene Me Wu, Operation Care, Nexus Youth and Family Services, Amador-Tuolumne Community Actin Agency, and the Child Care Council utilized First 5's location to host events and educational forums.

**First 5's website, monthly e-newsletter, and Facebook page** provided up-to-date information for parents and providers. First 5 monitors participation rates through data management. Staff has noticed an increase in the number of fathers, policy makers, and community members accessing information provided through our social media efforts.

First 5 provides information regarding social media activity on Facebook, the First 5 e-newsletter, etc. to community partners to assist them in gauging interest in their activities and programs promoted by First 5 staff.

First 5 staff continued to take an active role on the Domestic Violence Council, Behavioral Health Advisory Board, Mental Health Services Act Cultural Competency / Steering Committee, Social Service Transportation Advisory Council, Special Education Community Advisory Committee, and the Children and Families Program Committee (coordinator).

First 5 staff continue to provide support for Child Protective Services by providing developmental screening assistance for foster parents caring for children as well as coordinating semi-annual developmental screening events in partnership with the Amador County Unified School District.

### ***Our Mission***

The mission of First 5 Amador is to promote, support, and enhance the optimal development of Amador County's children from zero to five years of age.

Our Commission believes that broad community involvement is critical to the success of this mission. With Proposition 10 funds we support initiatives that make sense locally based on identified needs and opportunities for children and families in Amador County.