

Board Inquiry Form

Inquiry Number: 13

Board Member	
Carbajal	
Wolf	
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Adam	
Lavagnino	X

Department: First 5
Date: June 10, 2013
Page(s) of Budget Book: D-144

Request/Question:

Why isn't the number of kids now ready for preschool a measured outcome?

Response Prepared by: Ben Romo, Director, First 5

Response:

First 5 does track kindergarten readiness among many of the children served by First 5 programs. However, measuring the number of children countywide who are ready for kindergarten is not logistically possible at this time and relating K readiness to all First 5 funded programs such as health care and family support would be tangential. Until recently there was not a proven assessment to measure kindergarten readiness that local schools had adopted. In recent years, in a partnership with First 5, the Santa Maria Bonita School District and UCSB, the Kindergarten Student Entrance Profile (KSEP) has been developed which has now been proven through third party research to be a reliable measurement for kindergarten readiness. The KSEP is now being implemented in many schools and school districts throughout the County, but this adoption is very much still in process and many school districts are not using the KSEP at all. First 5 depends on school districts to agree to use the KSEP and to share the data on the results in order for that data to be reported and has worked to link data systems to allow for measurement across agencies and programs. As the KSEP continues to be adopted more universally, our goal is to significantly increase the degree to which we measure and report on kindergarten readiness, hopefully one day reaching a point where such results may be measured on a countywide basis. A key program area where First 5 does collect and monitor KSEP scores in relation to funded programs is in the THRIVE Community Collaboratives in Carpinteria, Isla Vista, Guadalupe, and Santa Maria. First 5 grants in those communities require the use of the KSEP to assess the effectiveness of programs. In these communities, with First 5 support, since 2010, the number of kindergarteners who are either "Ready to Go" or "Almost Ready to Go" on the KSEP has increased from 29.6% to 44.3% (14% growth). First 5 is currently engaged in the development of a new Strategic Plan. Through that process we hope to further enhance the incentives provided to school districts to use the KSEP and align their data systems with First 5 so as to improve our ability as a community to fully understand the degree to which children throughout the county are ready for kindergarten.