MINUTES
FIRST 5 RIVERSIDE COUNTY
Advisory Committee Regular Meeting
Wednesday, May 13, 2026
11:00 AM
First 5 Riverside County — Conference Room A
585 Technology Court
Riverside, California 92507

Advisory Committee Present: Antonia Eli Mast, Angel Anton, Audrie Echnoz, Helena Lopez, Jackie Steed, and Saovaros Diehl-Hope

Advisory Committee Absent: Agam Patel, Jennifer Briseño, Kari Middleton-Hendrix, and Neftalí Galarza-Toledo

Administrative Staff Present: Charna Widby, Executive Director; Ben Slagter, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director; Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV; Carol Abella, Regional Manager; Larissa Wills, Regional Manager; Charity Webb, Regional Manager; Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist; Michelle Rodriguez, Public Information Specialist; Martina Guevara, Commission Coordinator; Amy Campos, Administrative Services Supervisor; Hui Seraphina Wang, Principal Accountant; Steven Hernandez, Administrative Services Analyst II

Legal Counsel: Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel

A. **Call to Order – Antonia Eli Mast, Advisory Chair**

1. Pledge of Allegiance — Led by Advisory Member Diehl-Hope
2. Roll Call — Conducted by Ms. Guevara, Commission Coordinator

   Advisory Members Agam Patel, Jennifer Briseño, Kari Middleton-Hendrix, and Neftalí Galarza-Toledo were absent. A quorum was established.

B. **Public Comments (for items not listed on the agenda) – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair**
None

C. **Commission and Advisory Committee Business – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair**

1. Oath of Office for Advisory Members Jackie Steed and Audrie Echnoz by Breanna Smith, Clerk of the Board Executive Assistant

   Ms. Widby welcomed and introduced Ms. Steed and Ms. Echnoz, and provided a brief overview of their professional backgrounds.

   Breanna Smith, Clerk of the Board Executive Assistant, administered the Oath of Office to Advisory Members Jackie Steed and Audrie Echnoz.

2. Director Updates — Charna Widby, Executive Director; Ben Slagter, Assistant Director; Patricia Perez, Deputy Director

   Ms. Widby introduced Ben Slagter as the new Assistant Director.

   Mr. Slagter briefly introduced himself to the Advisory Committee.

Ms. Widby reported on the Pinwheels of Hope child abuse prevention campaign and noted that First 5 Riverside County had been recognized by the Board of Supervisors for its prevention efforts. She also provided a status update on three child care centers supported with ARPA and Proposition 10 funds. Ribbon cuttings for Jan Peterson Child Development Center and Lakeland Village Child Care Center were planned for June; the French Valley Discovery Hangar and Early Learning Center were expected to open later in the summer. An operator solicitation and family waitlist were in place for the French Valley site.

Mr. Slagter reported on the Department of Public Social Services Office of Child Abuse Prevention's first summit, held April 30, and the release of the county-partner State of the Child Report. He summarized themes related to family stress, early health, school attendance, and the need for earlier prevention services.

3. Public Information Updates — Sean Pravica, Senior Public Information Specialist, and Michelle Rodriguez, Public Information Specialist

   Ms. Rodriguez announced the Mecca Splash Water Safety Event planned for June 12, 2026, at the Mecca Swimming Pool. The event was being organized with the Desert Recreation District and other partners to promote water safety and swim program enrollment.

   Mr. Pravica reported on the countywide summer water safety billboard campaign and First 5 California's "Stronger Starts" Day of Action. The billboard campaign was intended to promote drowning prevention, water safety, and swim lessons; website updates were also underway to support program enrollment. The Day of Action focused on toxic stress and healthy child development and provided families with engagement and wellness materials.

4. Advisory Committee Comments
   None.

D. **Consent Items – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair** (A copy of all Consent Items and attachments can be viewed at www.First5Riverside.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Approve First 5 Riverside County Draft Advisory Committee March 11, 2026 Meeting Minutes

   Advisory Member Lopez moved to approve consent item 1 as presented. Advisory Member Anton seconded the motion.
   - ***Ayes**: (6) Mast, Anton, Echnoz, Diehl-Hope, Lopez, and Steed*
   - ***Nays**: (0)*
   - ***Abstentions**: (0)*
   - ***Absent:** (4) Agam Patel, Jennifer Briseño, Kari Middleton-Hendrix, and Neftalí Galarza-Toledo*

   Quorum maintained. Motion carried.

E. **Presentation/Information Items – Antonia Eli Mast, Chair** (A copy of all Presentation/Information Items and attachments can be viewed at www.First5Riverside.org and at the Commission Business Office)

1. Brown Act Training and Presentation on 2026 Updates — Kristine Bell-Valdez, Supervising Deputy County Counsel
   Ms. Bell-Valdez provided Brown Act training, including guidance on meeting procedures, public participation, conflicts of interest, and avoiding serial meetings.

2. Quality Early Learning Provider and Family Survey Key Findings — Poder Consulting, Jenny Perla, and First 5 Riverside County Regional Manager, Carol Abella

Ms. Abella provided a brief overview of the Quality Early Learning Provider and Family Survey Key Findings presentation and introduced Jenny Perla.

Ms. Perla presented key findings from the provider and family surveys and listening sessions on how families define quality child care, barriers to access, family support needs, and provider sustainability.

Advisory Member Lopez noted that families may not know how to find available resources. She asked how First 5 and its partners could make existing services, pilot programs, and 211 easier for families to access and navigate.

3. 2027–2030 First 5 Riverside County Strategic Plan Updates - Charna Widby, Executive Director
   Ms. Widby summarized the ongoing refinement of the 2027–2030 Strategic Plan. She reviewed the draft's four system-change outcomes, four goals, prevention strategy, and approach to measuring impact.

F. **Future Agenda Items:**

1. First 5 Riverside County Updates
2. 2027 Champion for Children Process
3. First 5 Riverside County 2026 Communications Plan Presentation

G. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m. to the next Regular Meeting of the Advisory Committee to be held on October 28, 2026, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at:
First 5 Riverside County Children and Families Commission Office
585 Technology Court — Conference Room A
Riverside, CA 92507

Meeting Minutes Recorded by Martina Guevara, Commission Coordinator, and Lynn Stephens, Executive Assistant IV.

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