

# GROWING HEALTHY MINDS

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 **FIRST 5**  
RIVERSIDE

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## **First 5 Riverside Provides Parents of Children 0 to 5 Free, Confidential Support as Part of *Growing Healthy Minds* Campaign**

*In time to beat holiday stress, First 5 Riverside provides parents with resources to cope with the season*

(Riverside, CA – Dec. 13, 2011) First 5 Riverside has launched a public education and outreach campaign to support its multimillion-dollar investment in addressing the mental health needs of the county's youngest children. Hundreds of informational and promotional materials were distributed to families and caregivers at events in Cabazon and Lake Elsinore. The new *Growing Healthy Minds* campaign materials provide parents of 0 to 5 year olds with information and resources to help develop their children's social well-being.

"Prevention is possible," said Susan Loew, chairman of the First 5 Riverside Commission and director of the Department of Public Social Services. "Just as we've learned how improving a child's diet can improve her overall health, we can teach parents simple steps they can take to improve their child's social and emotional development."

First 5 Riverside chose to launch the campaign and provide access to resources in time to help parents during what can be a stressful time of year. Even very young children can feel the strains of the season.

The *Growing Healthy Minds* initiative is a dynamic partnership between Family Service Association, Riverside Department of Mental Health and First 5 Riverside and now includes a public education component. Relying on the positive message that early intervention can be a life changing experience for parents and children, the campaign connects parents with resources through a website, [www.growinghealthyminds.org](http://www.growinghealthyminds.org), a 24/7 confidential, free hotline, 2-1-1, and access to free screenings and direct services through Family Service Association and the Department of Mental Health.

"We know the value of early intervention at FSA," offered Veronica Dover, chief operating officer of the Family Service Association. "We've seen it first hand. And, what I love about this Growing Health Minds campaign is that it builds on family strength. All of the interventions are based on evidence-based research and positive skills. Every part of this campaign is positive and it's helping families grow. Parents love having this type of information at their fingertips and we are so happy to be a part of it."

As part of this initiative, more than 3,500 children have received services since March 2010 and the impact on local families is palpable. Kyle Sugimura, a recent graduate of parenting classes held by the Department of Mental Health at Lake Elsinore Unified District's Heald Academy, sought help when his sons were having significant trouble in preschool.

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Sugimura said, "Using these tools, I learned how to be a better parent. It's made a huge difference." His now 8-year-old son is excelling in a Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program and his kindergartner is thriving.

In Riverside County alone, there are more than 165,000 children between the ages 0 to 5. Without preventive measures some 20 percent, or 33,000, will go on to develop mental health issues based on national statistics. While the public education campaign is funded through June 2012, the Mental Health Initiative is funded through June 2013.

"Through the public education component," said Harry Freedman, First 5 Riverside executive director, "we want to help parents understand the importance of social emotional development, prevent issues before they ever appear and get them help as early as possible to keep small disruptions from becoming larger problems."

*First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, is a division of the Department of Public Social Services funded by Proposition 10 tobacco tax revenues and established by the County Board of Supervisors in 1999. First 5 Riverside provides funding for early education, health and child care services that help children through age 5 develop a strong foundation for success in school and throughout their lives. For more information about First 5 Riverside programs and other funded services, call 951-248-0014 or Toll Free 800-266-3880 or visit [www.rccfc.org](http://www.rccfc.org).*

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## **Chris Home, L.C.S.W., Preschool Services, Mental Health Services Supervisor, Riverside County Department of Mental Health**

Chris has a master's degree in social work, is a licensed clinical social worker and has worked for Riverside County, Department of Mental Health for 23 years. He has had experience in a vast array of areas, including crisis services, program supervision and contract monitoring, and has also served as a child therapist. In addition, he supervised the county adult and children services clinic in Temecula, California, from 1992 through September 2000. In late September 2000, he began work with the department's Children's Services Unit to develop and then expand programs for preschool-aged children and their families. Chris provides the daily clinical and administrative supervision for the screening and clinical projects of the Preschool 0-5 Program, the department's first mental health prevention and early intervention clinic dedicated to serving children 0-5 years of age and their families.

Riverside County Department of Mental Health has a substantial history of developing innovative approaches to service provision for families with young children. The Preschool 0-5 Program has received funding from First 5 Riverside since 2001 to serve young children and their parents or caregivers. This includes screening services that, in cooperation with the Riverside County Department of Public Health, provide primary care physician offices with the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) which identifies behavioral as well as other developmental issues related to age appropriate milestones. The department has worked actively with local child care planning councils, participated in a 2002 state wide initiative called the Infant Family Mental Health Initiative as one of 8 pilot counties, as well becoming one of the early agencies funded by First 5 Riverside for social-emotional development outreach, identification and services to children 0-5 years of age and their families. Since First 5 Riverside funded the Mental Health Initiative in 2010, Chris has overseen the development and implementation of SET-4-School (Screening, Evaluation & Treatment For School). SET-4-School focuses on providing a continuum of evidence-based community support and services primarily located on school sites, so that families can receive the help they request often within the familiar environment of their child's school setting.

In 2012, a departmental screening project that has been continuously funded by First 5 Riverside will mark a 10 year anniversary of collaboration with the Department of Public Health, and will have screened more than 19,000 children for indicators of social and emotional development in young children. During this period, Chris Home and the Preschool 0-5 Program staff have implemented four evidence-based practices that have proven effective approaches to helping families with their children's development, including Parent-Child Interaction Therapy; Incredible Years Parenting and Dinosaur School; Positive Parenting Program—Triple P Stepping Stones; and Trauma-Focused, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

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## **Maria Murillo, M.A., L.M.F.T., Clinic Director, Family Service Association**

Maria holds a master's degree in clinical psychology with an emphasis in marriage and family therapy, as well as Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees in sociology and Spanish. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist.

Maria has served as the clinic director at Family Service Association (FSA) in Moreno Valley, California, for more than five years. Her responsibilities include: the complete oversight and supervision of FSA's Clinical Mental Health Department; overseeing a budget of \$3 million; the interviewing, selection, hiring and ongoing supervision of a staff of 50+; oversight of all clinical program sites; supervision of all clinic program managers; oversight of all clinic contracts, ensuring that all contract requirements are met; preparation for and responses to all clinical program audits and oversight; program development and grant writing in collaboration with agency grant writing staff; implementation of and compliance assurance with all policies and procedures; and quality assurance. In addition, Maria functions as a member of the agency's senior management team with duties related to agency-wide functions and events.

Using her clinical/therapy skills, Maria continues to provide treatment to clients and families. She possesses a wide range of clinical experience and background, including individual, family and child therapy, group treatment (including specialized certification in Adolescent Anger Management), foster care social work, in-home intensive treatment, kinship/caregiver support services, case management and adoptions support.

Family Service Association (FSA), a private, nonprofit organization was founded in 1953 to meet the needs of families, including children. FSA's primary mission is to strengthen healthy family life development by providing a diversity of quality services that addresses the multi-cultural needs of the young and old among cross socio-economic lines. FSA provides a continuum of services that focus on children and families, including Mental Health, which is the founding service of the agency. FSA's Clinical Services Program has provided early prevention, intervention and Mental Health treatment services to the 0-5 year population for over 15 years both within our own child development centers and through Head Start and preschool settings to provide growth, development recovery and hope to thousands of children and families each year.

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## The *Growing Healthy Minds* Campaign

First 5 Riverside has implemented the countywide Mental Health Initiative geared towards children 0-5 and their caregivers. Recognizing the critical importance of social emotional development, this initiative provides community and parent education as well as screening, intervention and treatment services. These services are provided by Riverside County Department of Mental Health and Family Service Association.

### The Facts...

- First 5 Riverside has invested a total of **\$11 million** in the Mental Health Initiative.
- **\$10.3 million** has been invested towards programs and services provided by Riverside County Department of Mental Health and Family Service Association.
- **\$748,826** is allocated for the public education campaign focused on prevention and provided by Hershey Cause, a communication agency.
- Since March 2010, more than 3,500 children have received services from the Department of Mental Health and Family Service Association due to First 5 Riverside's Mental Health Initiative.
- Caregivers are encouraged to participate in the early identification screening by their children's physicians and/or teachers, as they are aware of the developmental and behavioral signs of early mental health issues.
- Intervention and treatment programs include the use of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT), Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT), Incredible Years and Positive Parenting Program (Triple P) ideologies.
- The parent education campaign is supported by 211Riverside County's Information and Referral Helpline: A free, confidential, multi-lingual 24/7 parent helpline where parents/caregivers can call to receive information on available direct services related to their children's behavioral and social development.
- The parent support website, [www.GrowingHealthyMinds.org](http://www.GrowingHealthyMinds.org), provides parents with easy to navigate tips on several behavioral topics to help manage their children's behavior.
- The website also provides various materials in downloadable formats such as flyers, posters and tip sheets, so the information can be easily disseminated through local community based organizations.

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## First 5 Riverside Facts

First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission, is a division of the Riverside County Department of Public Social Services. It is funded by tobacco taxes generated by proposition 10, which passed in November 1998. First 5 Riverside's goal is to make sure young Californians, prenatal to 5 years of age, get the best start in order to succeed in school and throughout life. The statewide initiative added a 50-cent tax per pack of cigarettes and a comparable tax on other tobacco products.

First 5 Riverside's vision is that all children in Riverside County are healthy and thrive in supportive, nurturing and loving environments, and enter school ready to learn and embrace lifelong learning.

### The Facts...

- In 1998 voters passed a statewide initiative that added a tax of 50 cents per pack of cigarettes and a comparable tax on other tobacco products. Proposition 10 established the California Children and Families Program and the State Commission, and authorized the establishment of county commissions. Monies collected fund education, health care, and child-care programs that promote early childhood development, from the prenatal stage through age five.
- First 5 Riverside invests in preparing our youngest children and their families now for success in the future. The three leading areas of funding are early care and education, health and systems change and capacity. Services are provided in all geographic regions of Riverside County.
- Funds are distributed through both local initiatives and a competitive granting process. Typically, a public announcement is made inviting interested parties to submit proposals to accomplish a particular goal within the Commission's strategic plan. A panel evaluates the proposals and staff recommends those most promising to the First 5 Riverside Commission for a vote. First 5 Riverside works with its funded partners and provides support as needed through the funding period.

For more information about First 5 Riverside programs and other funded services, call 951-248-0014 or Toll Free 800-266-3880 or visit [www.rccfc.org](http://www.rccfc.org).

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## Children's Mental Health Facts

Social emotional development is a key component in a child's healthy development. Children need to be healthy in order to learn, grow and lead successful lives. The fact is that most children and youth in need of mental health services do not receive them—this is why First 5 Riverside's Mental Health Initiative is so crucial to the well-being of Riverside County's children. We are here to help them grow healthy minds.

### The National Facts...

- Identifying and addressing social emotional issues early can help diminish more serious problems in the future.
- Four million children and adolescents in this country suffer from a serious mental disorder that causes significant functional impairments at home, at school and with peers.
- One in five children have a diagnosable mental disorder.
- One in 10 youth have serious mental health problems that are severe enough to impair how they function at home, school, or in the community.
- Factors that predict mental health problems can be identified in the early years.
- 21% of low-income children and youth ages 6 through 17 have mental health problems.
- 50% of children and youth in the child welfare system have mental health problems.
- 67% to 70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
- 75% to 80% of children and youth in need of mental health services do not receive them.
- 13% of children from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds receive mental health services.
- 88% of Latino children have unmet mental health needs.
- Children and youth with mental health problems have lower educational achievement, greater involvement with the criminal justice system, and fewer stable and longer-term placements in the child welfare system than children with other disabilities. When treated, children and youth with mental health problems fare better at home, school, and in their communities.
- African-American preschoolers are three to five times more likely to be expelled than their Caucasian, Latino, or Asian-American peers.
- Elementary school children with mental health problems are three times more likely than their peers to be suspended or expelled.
- Young children, especially those who are abused or who have unhealthy relationships with their parents or caregivers, are susceptible to serious mental health disorders, according to research by the American Psychological Association.

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- Infants and toddlers are very unlikely to receive mental health treatment, which can lead to life-long developmental problems.
- Research shows that early identification and intervention can minimize the long-term disability of mental disorders.
- Early and effective mental health treatment can prevent a significant proportion of delinquent and violent youth from future violence and crime. It also enables children and adolescents to succeed in school, to develop socially and to fully experience the developmental opportunities of childhood.

## Riverside County Facts...

- 33,855 (28.4%) children age 3 to 17 were reported to have difficulties with emotions, concentration, behavior, or being able to get along with others.
- Approximately one in eight parents/guardians indicate that their child's difficulties are severe.
- Approximately one in 20 parents/guardians report that their child has been diagnosed with ADD, ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or a developmental delay.
- More than eight out of 10 children age 3 to 17 with difficulties or a mental health condition has not visited a mental health professional in the past 12 months.
- In the past year, one in eight children age 3 to 17 have received counseling or therapy to deal with their difficulties or mental health condition/diagnosis.

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