



First 5 Marin

2021 Annual Report

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND CHILDREN IN CHALLENGING TIMES

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GREETINGS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Pegah Faed, DrPH, MPH
Executive Director

Dear Colleagues and Community Partners — it's been another challenging yet hopeful year!

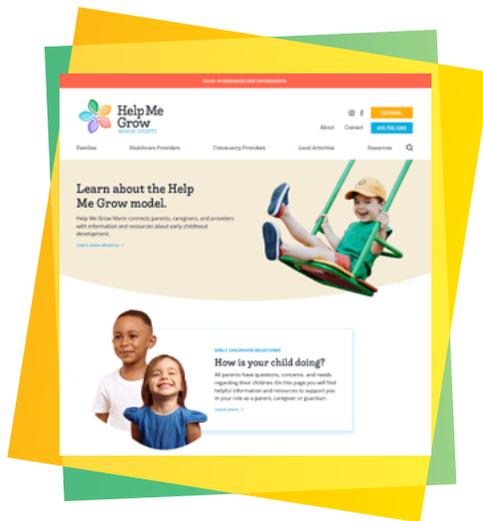
While many of us have known someone diagnosed with COVID and the risk of exposure remains, we continue to see the strength across our communities, partners, and providers who continue to care for children, support families and show up to work under very trying conditions. We especially want to thank the child care providers throughout Marin County, large centers to family providers, who have continued to offer safe play and learning environments for young children under their care-- with loss of staff and some clients, new requirements for cleaning, masking and spacing, and many additional costs. On behalf of First 5 Marin Children and Families Commission, I want to share our immense appreciation for all that you've done and continue to do. You are all heroes!

During this last year, First 5 Marin continued supporting our funded partners so they could focus on serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their families. I have worked to connect with these partners and with many other community leaders so we can reinforce the community that cares for kids across Marin County. And I look forward to meeting you all in person... as soon as it's safe.

While we regret not seeing our colleagues in person, we are pleased to have transitioned our "Marin Communications Forums" from in-person to online meetings. And we are proud to continue bringing timely public policy topics to you in our free monthly convenings. To keep up-to-date, follow the Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MarinCommunicationsForum/.



The Marin Communications Forum



Help Me Grow Marin

First 5 Marin has also had many changes. I came on board as executive director in August of 2020. We have welcomed several new commissioners and we have new Commission leadership for the 2022 calendar year: Maria Niggle (Commission Chair) and Dr. Itoco Garcia (Vice Chair). You can learn more on our website at: www.first5marin.org.

We have also launched an important new program called “Help Me Grow Marin.” This program is part of a statewide and national effort that connects parents, caregivers and providers with information and resources related to early childhood development. We have staff to help you in English or Spanish, and to assist those with concerns about their child’s health, behavior and special needs.

Our staff can also help with the “Ages and Stages Questionnaire” (ASQ) and with referrals for follow up support. Learn more at www.helpmegrowmarin.org.

As we forge ahead into 2022, our commission has undergone a robust strategic planning process and the final plan will help guide our funding and partnerships through 2030. This plan has been informed by key stakeholders, providers, system leaders, and parents. We look forward to sharing our new strategic vision in the coming months and working with you in the future!

Pegah Faed, DrPH, MPH
Executive Director
Pegah@First5Marin.org

MEET THE COMMISSIONERS: 2020-21



Many thanks to our commissioners who served during the last fiscal year, 2020-2021. As we enter 2022, we have many changes. Commissioners Kari Beuerman and Lucia Martel-Dow have completed their terms as chair and vice-chair; and Commissioners Maria Niggle and Ito Garcia will now serve as leaders of our commission. Two commissioners have concluded their service— we said farewell to Gabby Auguste, and long-time commissioner David Bonfilio has agreed to become an

“Commissioner Emeritus” to help us maintain some institutional memory as we forge into the future. We are pleased to welcome Dr. Jessica Hollman from Marin Community Clinics, Lisa Raffel from Bridge the Gap College Prep, and returning commissioner Aideen Gaidmore from Marin Child Care Council. We are also fortunate to have the continuing participation from Commissioner Kristen Seatavakin and Supervisor Dennis Rodoni.

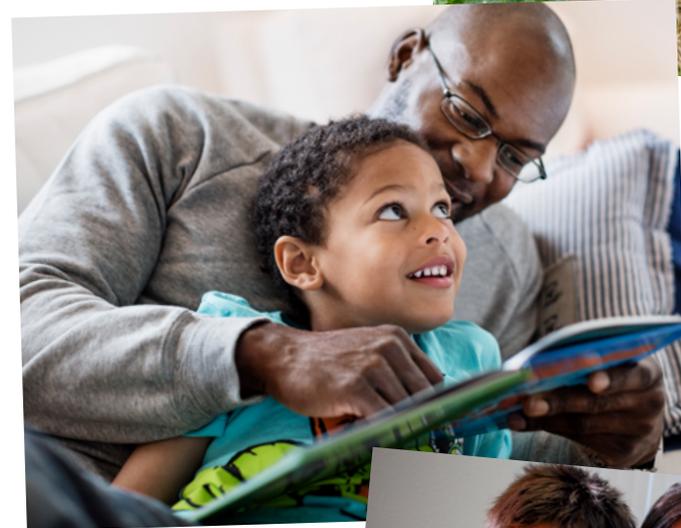
Commissioners 2020-21:
Click on the names below to get more info.

1. [Kari Beuerman / Chair](#)
2. [Ito Garcia, Ed.D.](#)
3. [Dr. Jessica Hollman, M.D.](#)
4. [Kristen Seatavakin](#)
5. [Dennis Rodoni](#)
6. [Lucia Martel-Dow / Vice Chair](#)
7. [Gabby Auguste](#)
8. [Maria Niggle](#)
9. [David Bonfilio](#)

STAYING CONNECTED: ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

During COVID isolation, First 5 Marin began sending daily emails with activities for young children. We continued until most preschools and child care seemed to be opening up. These are great resources for any time — here are some of our favorites:

- ▶ [Busy Toddler](#)
- ▶ [Hands On As We Grow](#)
- ▶ [Music in English and Spanish with Jose Luis Orozco](#)
- ▶ [Music with Laurie Berkner](#)
- ▶ [PBS Kids](#)
- ▶ [Pre-K Pages](#)
- ▶ [Spanish Playground](#)
- ▶ [Teaching 2 and 3 Year Olds](#)



CONVENING AND INFORMING: THE MARIN COMMUNICATIONS FORUM

As soon as COVID restrictions required the cancellation of in-person convenings, First 5 Marin used “Zoom” to offer online events. As a result, the forums are more convenient for many of our guests, allowing them to participate from home or office. During FY2020-21, after a brief hiatus while we were hoping and waiting for a reprieve from COVID restrictions, the Forum hosted discussions on a wide range of topics.

If you would like to view the video from any forum, please email Michelle@First5Marin.org.

Social-Emotional Learning & the Architecture of Resilience (August 2020)

**Online Learning: A Family Guide for Digital Well-Being
– with Common Sense Media**
(September 2020)

Surviving Stress at Work and at Home (October 2020)

Restorative Justice (November 2020)

**Learning at Home with the Learning Bus – the Marin County
Free Library’s mobile preschool** (December 2020)

Guaranteed Basic Income (January 2021)

Launch of the “Help Me Grow Marin” program (February 2021)

Marin County Scorecard of Children’s Well-Being (March 2021)

Child Abuse Prevention (April 2021)

COVID Stress, Mental Health & Resilience (May 2021)

Immigrant Rights and Justice (June 2021)

“To ensure our children and families stayed safe, healthy and connected throughout the pandemic, First 5 Marin prioritized supporting our nonprofits, child care providers, and other community partners.”

Pegah Faed

Executive Director

ADVOCATING: THE MARIN VOICE

During the past year, First 5 Marin made a concerted effort to submit opinion editorials to The Marin Independent Journal in support of our monthly forums, and to contribute to the public discussion on key issues affecting

children and families in Marin. We encourage commissioners to write and we also work with forum speakers and other community partners to make submissions to the “Marin Voice.”

In FY 2020-21, those op-eds included:

- ▶ **It’s Time for Discussion About Guaranteed Income, Benefits of Economic Stability**
by First 5 Executive Director Pegah Faed (1-13-21)
- ▶ **Pandemic Puts Spotlight on Essential Steps for Children’s Dental Health**
by Dr. Gila Dorostkar (2-4-21)
- ▶ **Everyone Needs Help Finding the Right Resources**
by Susanne Kreuzer (2-16-21)
- ▶ **If We Want to Help Every Child Reach Their Full Potential, We Have Work to Do**
by First 5 Commissioner Maria Niggle (3-13-21)
- ▶ **To Prevent Child Abuse, We Need to Invest in Families**
by Bree Marchman (4-14-21)
- ▶ **COVID Isolation Has Been an Acute, Collective Trauma**
by First 5 Commissioner Itoco Garcia (5-24-21)
- ▶ **Immigrants will Continue to be Vital to Our County After the Pandemic**
by Commissioner Lucia Martel-Dow (6-19-21)
- ▶ **Digging in on Race, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**
by First 5 Marin Executive Director Pegah Faed (11-5-21)
- ▶ **Now is a Great Time to Get Prepared in Case of an Emergency**
by Supervisor Dennis Rodoni (9-13-21)

“20 years ago, the first commission embarked on a listening tour in the community. This helped us meet parents and caregivers, build strong partnerships and advocate for our youngest population. All the children of Marin are better for the work of First 5 Marin.”

David Bonfilio

Commissioner Emeritus

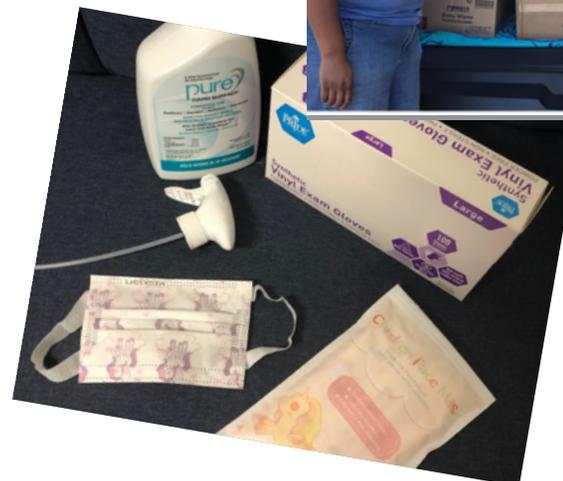
(served 2001-2021)

JUST SURVIVING COVID

During the past year, First 5 Marin has been supporting children, families and our community partners in several ways. Not only were we sending daily emails with music, art and fun activities for children, we also posted informational materials and supportive articles for parents on social media.

When child care facilities were in financial crisis, the First 5 Commission distributed \$50,000 in grants to family child care providers and child care centers throughout Marin County. We have also been able to distribute tons of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)—including adult and child-sized face masks, hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes and more—in four drive-thru events.

Our community partners were thrilled to receive all the free materials! In addition, First 5 Marin purchased \$20,000 of school and art supplies—and partnered with the Marin County Free Library which provided backpacks and bilingual books—and distributed to young children all over Marin County.

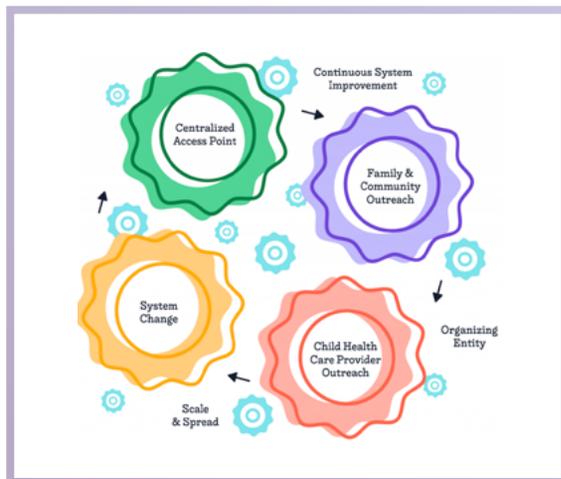


LAUNCH OF HELP ME GROW MARIN



First 5 Marin is thrilled to be launching “Help Me Grow Marin”—a program that connects parents, caregivers and providers with information and resources about early childhood development. Help Me Grow supports the use of the “Ages and Stages Questionnaire” (ASQ) to help parent learn if their child is on track to meet developmental milestones. In FY 2020-21, Help Me Grow staff developed a robust website and began outreach to programs and partners. Susanne Kreuzer is the manager and Maritza Barahona is the bilingual care coordinator.

Learn more at www.HelpMeGrowMarin.org. Call 415-720-1283 for free and confidential information and referrals in English or Spanish.



“Having an active and engaged local First 5 organization was more important this past year than ever. The accomplishments this year were many, despite immense challenges. First 5 continues to be a group that I am very proud to be a part of.”

Kari Beuerman

2021 Chair of First 5 Marin Commission

FINANCIALS AND REPORTS

Click below to access these reports:



FUNDED PARTNERS, COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Our partners have been working hard to serve the children and families in Marin—under very difficult and demanding conditions. We are so inspired by the efforts to support young children, care for their emotional health during COVID and try to prepare them for kindergarten that may be like nothing we've never imagined.

This year, **The Learning Bus** had to park and start teaching online. They also distributed 1500 Little Learner Kits and 4000 books to engage toddlers and preschoolers. **Developmental Playgroups** in Novato, San Geronimo and The Canal also transitioned from in-person to virtual meetings. Pickleweed Child Care Center provided developmentally-

appropriate preschool experiences for 20 children, in-person and online as necessary. The **Early Childhood Education Manager** (at the Marin County Office of Education), funded by First 5 Marin, supported 42 ECE classrooms with virtual coaching and an evidence-based professional learning community.

SPOTLIGHT ON FUNDED PARTNERS

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, provided by Jewish Family and Children's Service, provides referrals and case management to childcare providers and families to support children with social, emotional or behavioral concerns. In FY 2020-21, services were provided to 472 children from low-income or at-risk families in Marin and 17 consultations were provided to preschools, child care providers and playgroups. Personalized consultations were provided to 114 children exhibiting challenging behaviors, developmental delays or mental health issues. Consultation was also provided to 134 childcare professionals, reaching 472 children.

North Marin Community Services

North Marin Community Services, funded by First 5 Marin since 2005, offers weekly developmental playgroups to engage children and connect with families. In FY 2020-21, playgroups offered social connection online, provided access to materials and resources at home, bilingual case management services and learning opportunities to promote learning and development. Staff worked with struggling families to access the food pantry, rental assistance, subsidized child care, counseling and Promotores support



SPOTLIGHT ON FUNDED PARTNERS / CONTINUED

Aprendiendo Juntos (Learning Together)

Aprendiendo Juntos is developmental playgroup managed by Parent Services Project, designed especially for children without preschool experience. The AJ playgroup provides activities in English and Spanish to promote kindergarten readiness as well as parent support and connections to family support. In FY 2020-21, AJ offered "virtual playgroups" and Baby Gym classes throughout the entire year, with 65 participating families. 100% of the children have health insurance; 100% of the parents report new knowledge and parenting skills, and 100% saw improvement in their child's school readiness. 97% of parents gained new information about community services.

Parent Voices

Parent Voices has been funded by First 5 Marin since 2012. During FY 2020-21, Parent Voices continued their advocacy work to make quality child care accessible and affordable for all families. They held three virtual legislative visits—with Assemblyman Marc Levine, State Senator Mike McGuire and Congressman Jared Huffman. After numerous letters and calls, sharing stories in public hearings and online advocacy, Parent Voices was successful in getting family fees for subsidized child care waived until June of 2022; these savings will be critical for struggling families. They also supported parents during COVID isolation with online presentations about stay-at-home orders, testing, vaccine information and community resources. Parent leaders created a text support group to provide emotional support. They also provided assistance with unemployment applications, scheduling COVID testing, making vaccination appointments and navigating distance learning.

San Geronimo Valley School Readiness

First 5 Marin has been supporting the playgroup at the San Geronimo Valley Community Center (SGVCC) since 2004. Biweekly playgroups provide invaluable learning environments for children who live in remote locations and important connections for families who are isolated from other communities. During FY 2020-21, virtual programming was overwhelmingly successful. SVGCC offered five weeks of free "Summer Bridge" classes and Lagunitas teachers affirm that students who attended these programs were better prepared for kindergarten. This program is critical for families who can't afford preschool.

Marin Quality Counts: Early Childhood Project Coordinator

First 5 Marin has been funding the Early Childhood Project Coordinator since 2015. Working with the Marin Child Care Council, the coordinator has provided high-quality professional development, coaching, technical assistance and training to more than 360 early child care and education providers in Marin County. With that, teachers, family child care providers, and center-based program directors are improving their practices, engaging with each other in learning cohorts and partnerships and meeting higher standards. In FYI 2020-21, support sessions were offered by Zoom and Google Classroom. Working with College of Marin, four (4-hour) workshops were offered with Early Childhood Education units. This partnership also supported the academic growth of 40 early childhood educators, including one master's degree.



LOOKING AHEAD: STRATEGIC PLANNING / 2022-2030

After a challenging year, First 5 Marin is looking ahead with hopefulness and optimism! We are so thankful for all our community partners who are serving and supporting the children and families in Marin.

New Commissioners

We are so happy to welcome Dr. Jessica Hollman and Lisa Raffel to the Commission, as well as returning commissioner Aideen Gaidmore.

Forums

Upcoming forums will tackle critical topics like Transitional Kindergarten, Climate Solutions and Immigrant Children and Families. We are looking forward to meeting in person... as soon as it is safe!

Policy Breakfast 2022

After a two year hiatus, First 5 Marin's Policy Breakfast returns with an important focus: "Child Care Keeps Marin Working!" Our event is planned for Friday, May 6th at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Rafael. (Email Michelle@First5Marin.org to register.)

Strategic Planning

We are working with EvalCorps on an in-depth strategic planning process; our consultant has engaged commissioners, staff, community partners and other interested parties to analyze our impact and to help guide our direction for the future. The report will be final in mid-2022.





FIRST 5 MARIN

Learn. Grow. Thrive.

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