



# FIRST 5 MARIN

Learn. Grow. Thrive.

## A G E N D A

### Marin Children and Families Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 8, 2025

4:00-6:00 pm

***New Location:*** Health & Wellness Center, 3240 Kerner Blvd. Room 109, San Rafael

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82975989306?pwd=h0m8kcehcaMN9jc724ez91SYbUb9CN.1>

Meeting ID: 829 7598 9306

Passcode: 177284

- I. Call to Order (4:00 pm)**
- II. Roll Call (4:01)**
- III. Approval of Minutes for the Meeting of November 13, 2024 (4:03) - Action**
- IV. Public Comment (4:05) - Information**  
This is an opportunity for members of the public to provide comments on issues that are not on the Agenda. Three (3) minutes per speaker maximum.
- V. Executive Director/Staff Report (4:15)**
  1. Help Me Grow Presentation (VIVA) - Information
  2. Request to Approve COS & Company Contract for Executive Coaching Services - Action
- VI. Committee Reports (5:00) - Information**
  1. Retreat Committee: Update on Retreat - January 24, 2025
- VII. Commissioner Items (5:15)**
  1. Request to Approve the Annual Report FY 23-24 to First 5 California (web-based submission) - Action
- VIII. Commission Announcements & Final Comments (5:40) - Information**
- IX. Adjournment (6:00pm) - Action**

### NEXT MEETING - February 12, 2025

Copies of documents used in this meeting are available in accessible formats upon written request. The agenda is available online at [www.first5marin.org](http://www.first5marin.org). In accordance with the American Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance (i.e. auxiliary aids or services) in order to participate in this public meeting, please contact First 5 Marin by calling (415) 257-8555 or email [Michelle@first5marin.org](mailto:Michelle@first5marin.org) at least five (5) business days prior to the meeting.



**Marin Children and Families Commission**  
**MINUTES**  
**January 8, 2025**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The January 8, 2025, meeting of the Marin Children and Families Commission (First 5 Marin) was called to order at 4:08 p.m. by Dr. Jessica Hollman, Commission Chair.

**II. ROLL CALL**

**PRESENT:**

Kari Beuerman  
Angie Evans  
Itoco Garcia  
Dr. Jessica Hollman  
Supervisor Eric Lucan  
Kelly McKinley  
Lisa Raffel  
Sandra Rosenblum

**EXCUSED:**

Aideen Gaidmore

**ALSO PRESENT:**

Staff: Michelle Fadelli, Susanne Kreuzer, Maria Niggle  
Guests: Dave Bonfilio (Commissioner Emeritus), Amarantha Silva  
Online Participants: Yenin Calderon-Perez, Iris Elent (VIVA Consulting), Carla Fernandez, Sadika Sulaiman

**III. MINUTES**

The minutes for the commission meeting held on November 13, 2024 were presented.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Raffel** moved to approve the minutes of November 13, 2024;  
**Commissioner Evans** seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** The motion to approve was unanimous.

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No comments were made.

**V. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/STAFF REPORT**

1. **Executive Director** – Maria Niggle reported on the proposal from COS & Company for executive coaching with founder Claudia Sandoval. Coaching was suggested by the

Commission (as part of her original offer letter); the proposal was included in the commission packet of materials.

- **Commissioner Hollman** suggested that the work should include management of the performance review.
- **Commissioner McKinley** asked who will be negotiating the contract and serving as the contact for the consultant. (*The contact will be commission chair Jessica Hollman.*)
- **Commissioner Beuerman** asked if updates will be provided to the commission during the process. (*Yes.*)
- **Commissioner Garcia** said that best practices are for quarterly or biennial check-ins before that annual review—a mid-term. He also asked about an update at the retreat, a progress report, and discussion in closed session with the commission.
- **Commissioner Raffel** if there are goals. (*Maria replied that some goals were delineated in her offer letter; she has been documenting since her hire.*)
- **Commissioner Hollman** suggested that Stacey Nelson from Stacey Nelson and Associates (hiring firm) be included in the performance review.
- **Commissioner Hollman** confirmed that we will have a report at the March commission meeting.

After the presentation about Help Me Grow (below), this item was called for a vote.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Garcia moved to approve the proposal for executive coaching with COS & Company Commissioner McKinley seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** The motion to approve was unanimous.

## 2. **Marin Communications Forum –**

- **January 31: Child Care** - Michelle Fadelli reminded commissioners that the next event, Child Care Means Business in Marin, will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel. The forum is being co-sponsored by the North Bay Leadership Council and will include a panel discussion with employers. The agenda will include perspectives from providers, parents and the business community. Executive Director Maria Niggle noted that the keynote speaker will be Elliot Haspel, the author of, “Crawling Behind: American’s Child Care Crisis and How to Fix It.” This event will include a presentation of “**Child Care Champion**” awards; commissioners are invited to nominate a child care provider, an advocate or a childcare-friendly employer.
- **February XX: Child Development and Environment** – The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard will be presenting on, “Healthy Environments, Child Development and Equity.” This will be an online presentation.
- **March 12: Planning for Play** – This event will feature keynote speaker Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a Professor of Psychology at Temple University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. Kathy will inspire our discussion and activities related to incorporating children and play (and child development) in public spaces where children and families live, gather, learn and recreate.

3. **Help Me Grow** – Iris Elent from VIVA consulting presenting an overview of the Help Me Grow Marin program; slides were included in the commission packet.
- **Background:** not enough children receive early developmental screening; families need to know what services are available and how to access them; families need to meet certain criteria to qualify; and they need to know how to navigate systems of care.
  - **Challenges in Marin:** extreme wait times for critical services (1-2 years); insufficient services located in Marin County; difficulty finding qualified support professionals.
  - **Services Needed to Build for the Future:** data collection and aggregated county data; “eligibility cliffs” (children who don’t qualify for services but still need services); and cohesion between services before and after age three.
  - **Four Components of Help Me Grow:** centralized access point; family and community outreach; child healthcare provider outreach; and systems change.
  - **Help Me Grow Marin:** part of a national initiative supporting parents and caregivers to better understand and promote their child’s development, well-being and educational success. HMG Marin connects the family with healthcare, early education, and community resources to ensure children prenatal through adolescence achieve their optimal, health development. (Specifically, HMG Marin promotes universal screening for early detection and intervention by medical experts; connects families to community-based programs; encourages providers to connect and work together to benefit the child; and identifies system gaps and advocates for quality improvements.
- Help Me Grow Marin** is personal and relationship-based. There is always a “warm hand-off” to services to ensure that families connect and get served, with meaningful flexibility and convenience for the family.
- In 2023: 42% of referrals to HMG Marin were for development screening; 21% for behavior; 18% for speech or language; and 6% for learning disabilities. 173 children were screened; 162 families received support; 73 referrals were made for follow-up services.
  - In 2024: 127 families were served; 64% were Spanish-speaking.

Help Me Grow Marin has a strong linkage to the purpose of First 5, as described in Proposition 10 and our founding legislation: providing services to enhance “early childhood development” and to ensure that “children are ready to enter school.”

In March 2024, Help Me Grow Marin hosted a community forum to explain the program and the benefits.

**Growth of Funding for Help Me Grow:** the initial funding for Help Me Grow Marin came solely from First 5 Marin; in the next year, our funding was augmented by support from the Marin Community Foundation. During the COVID years, new funding was made available through ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). Since then, Help Me Grow has been successful in securing grants from multiple sources. MAA reimbursements (Medi-Cal Administrative Activities) remain “pending” and difficult to pursue.

- **Commissioner Beuerman** asked for something in writing outlining the situation so she can try to help.
- **Commissioner Garcia** mentioned that some organizations support MAA billing for K-12—the West Contra Costa Unified School District for an example.
- **Commissioner Lucan** noted that three commissioners are county-affiliated and Help Me Grow/First 5 should leverage those resources.

**Financial Overview:** In FY 2024-25, Help Me Grow Marin had an operating budget of \$460,000; 67.4% staff and 32.6% operating costs. Estimated revenues are \$906, 222, but much is multi-year funding. (First 5 Marin accounts for 52.5% of that total.)

**Where Are We Headed:** the goal is for universal screening, so that every child has access to developmental, behavioral and physical resources and services.

**Questions We Have:** how is HMG Marin a part of First 5 Marin/Prop. 10? What is the Commission's role in the future of HMG? What other organizations might house HMG Marin in the future? What are the benefits and opportunities available by HMG being connected with First 5? What are the challenges?

- **Commissioner Raffel** offered thanks for the presentation and said everything is fabulous.
- **Commissioner Hollman** said she learned so much and still has questions. She was surprised to learn that Marin only has a screening rate of 50%, because Marin Community Clinics (MCC) is adamant about screening through age five. All results are routed to a "Developmental Coordinator" at the Clinic. (*Suzanne Kreuzer said the statistic true. While MCC does extremely well, other organizations and many private pediatricians do not do developmental screenings.*) She concluded that Help Me Grow should remain at First 5 Marin.
- **Commissioner Garcia** said screenings should be connected to our grant requirements; recipients should be conducting or referring to screening. (*Suzanne said that Help Me Grow has a strong relationship with First 5's funded partners. She added that data and statistics are needed for advocacy.*)
- **Commissioner Hollman** noted that there is often a language problem related to service referrals. Many providers only speak English while the children and families are Spanish-speaking.
- **Maria Niggle** added that geography can also be a problem. West Marin is remote and has few local providers; most "services" end up being online.
- **Suzanne Kreuzer** said staff is always asking what can be done to better coordinate services and improve systems of care. (She added that Help Me Grow now has two Spanish-speaking staff members.)
- **Commissioner Garcia** added that there may also be a gap at the Regional Center; assignments are to the school district where the student lives (even if that's not where they go to school). Until TK (transitional kindergarten), there was a big age gap in services. Some schools/districts felt that "these kids aren't ours until age five and we'll deal with them then. Hopefully TK will narrow that gap.

- **Commissioner Garcia** also noted that vision and hearing screenings are required of schools, and now reading/literacy screenings; why can't developmental screenings be required?
- **Suzanne Kreuzer** said that without sufficient diagnoses and services, some parents have to take their kids out of school (due to behavioral issues) or attend with the child all day.
- **Commissioner Lucan** asked about Kaiser. *(Suzanne said there is no universal screening at Kaiser; it's occasional. Parents often aren't aware of screening availability or the benefits.)*
- **Commissioner Beuerman** said it's ok for Help Me Grow to stay with First 5 Marin, but asked whether it should be affiliated with something like the Regional Center. *(Suzanne said HMG Marin works with schools, healthcare and service providers. We get money and access and connections specifically because we are affiliated with First 5 Marin.)*
- **Commissioner McKinley** asked about VIVA. *(Maria said that VIVA is a consultant supporting Help Me Grow Marin. Susanne added that with their help, HMG Marin accomplishes a lot more than other counties. Michelle Fadelli added that, because VIVA works with several other counties on Help Me Grow, we get the benefit of everything they know and learn statewide.)*
- **Commissioner Raffel** said that Susanne and Maria are the experts!
- **Commissioner McKinley** said that each of the questions posed could each be an entire day's discussion.
- **Maria Niggle** stated that Help Me Grow is actually a clear shift from previous Commission and ED commitments to move away from Direct Services. But times are changing, and needs and available services are changing. It's time to have the conversation.
- **Commissioner Hollman** concluded that a lot of us might not know the basics. We need to learn more about our funded partners.

## VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. **Retreat Committee** – First 5 Marin's retreat is scheduled for Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at the Bay Area Discovery Museum from 9 am to 5 pm. (Breakfast at 9; program begins at 9:30.) The next planning committee meeting will be on January 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - **Commissioner Garcia said we want to hear from everyone.**
  - **Commissioner Rosenblum** asked about what to wear. (Casual wear is fine; some activities may be outside, weather permitting.)

## VII. COMMISSIONER ITEMS

1. **Request to Approve First 5 Marin's Annual Report for FY 2023-24 to First 5 California**  
 Maria Niggle reported that the old Persimmony reporting system was no longer working as it should. Only four funded partners were reporting and we weren't capturing

numbers or data from the Forums or Help Me Grow. Beatriz Duran added two questions to the report that have helped significantly.

- **Commissioner Garcia** asked about ethnicity reporting and data.
- **Commissioner Garcia** said that if reporting on ethnicity is a requirement, “there shouldn’t be a tussle.” It should be a hard requirement. (*Michelle Fadelli asked whether we want an action item on the February agenda; the response was yes.*)
- **Commissioner Evans** said that her program only has two White children out of 49; that’s important. Where do those numbers go?
- **Commissioner Beuerman** said that as we see “changes on the federal level,” we don’t want to restrict services in any way (or by any requirement). She added that people may be reluctant to report their status out of fear.
- **Commissioner McKinley** asked if we can anticipate improved numbers. (*Yes!*) She added that accountability is important; are dollars going where we need them to go? (...especially with declining revenues.) We’re not just requiring accounting, but First 5 Marin is providing support. We have to measure the impact and tell the story: First 5 Marin’s and the funded partners.
- **Maria** shared that she just held the second quarter meeting with our funded partners. They are excited to be part of First 5 Marin.
- **Commissioner Raffel** added that there is alignment with our Strategic Plan. (... and First 5 California, Maria added.)
- **Commissioner Evans** said that during systems change, we have to say difficult things.
- **Maria** added that we just haven’t had good numbers or data about young children in Marin... but we will!
- **Commissioner Garcia** said there is no annual demographics report. If we want good data, we have to create the system-- and support it.
- **Suzanne Kreuzer** noted that there is a changing climate among people who receive the data. How will it be accepted and used?

MOTION: **Commissioner Garcia** moved to approve First 5 Marin’s Annual Report to First 5 California for FY 2023-24. **Commissioner Lucan** seconded the motion.

VOTE: The motion to approve was unanimous.

## VIII. FINAL COMMENTS

**Commissioner McKinley** asked if we could electronically mark the pages in the commission packet to the agenda. (Maria said yes.)

**Commissioner Evans** announced that Horizon Community School is moving to a new home at Saint Andrew’s Church. She invited commissioners to a celebration on February 1<sup>st</sup> and will be emailing the details.

Commissioner Beuerman announced that a lease was signed for a new HHS Hub (Marin County Health and Human Services) at 630 Drake in Marin City. Move-in is expected in the Fall.

## **IX. Adjournment**

The commission meeting was adjourned at 6 pm. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup> (at our new location, 3240 Kerner Boulevard in San Rafael).