

# First 5 San Benito Frequently Asked Questions

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### **What is First 5 San Benito?**

First 5 San Benito was created in December 1998 in order to realize the benefits of the California Children and Families First Act. The act created a program for the purpose of promoting, supporting, and improving the early development of children from the prenatal stage to five years of age and their families.

### **What is Proposition 10?**

In November 1998 voters passed a statewide ballot initiative to add a 50 cent tax per pack of cigarettes to fund education, health and childcare programs that promote early childhood development from prenatal to five years of age.

### **How is the tax Allocation determined?**

The State allocates the fund based upon the number of live births in each county. In San Benito, our annual birth rate is approximately 900.

### **Who benefits from this program?**

Children from prenatal through five years of age and their families receive comprehensive support with health and child care, social services, and parent education. Countless children, their parents, caregivers and childcare providers have received services through First 5 programs.

### **Why the 0 to 5 population?**

Current research in brain development indicates that the emotional, physical and intellectual environments that a child is exposed to have a profound impact on how his or her brain develops. The experiences of children in their earliest years significantly affect the way they grow and develop. Positive experiences establish a foundation for future success.

**What types of programs does the Commission fund?**

The Commission currently contracts with several agencies to provide direct services to young children and their families throughout the county. These programs include childcare and development, parent education and family support as well as health services.

**How does the Commission decide to spend its funds?**

The Commission develops its strategic directions and investment priorities utilizing local state and national data and local community assessments of strengths, needs and resources. In addition, the Commission's planning process emphasizes public input and feedback from the county's diverse communities through public meetings, forums, and expert panels focused on needs and issues affecting their target population.

**How do your programs impact the Community?**

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**How do you involve the Community in the Commission's work?**

Our Commission strongly believes that community involvement is crucial for our programs to succeed. The Commission is utilizing various methods for engaging the community such as:

- Public meetings, community forums, focus groups and key informant interviews
- Up-to-date information through postings on our web site
- Access for comments and suggestions through telephone (831-634-2046) and fax (831-634-2049)
- Agency participation in regional collaborative meetings of service providers

**What is the role of the First 5 San Benito Commission?**

County Commissions must develop strategic plans consistent with the State Commission guidelines. They are also mandated to hold public hearings, and submit plans and audits to the State Commission..