



**2010-2011  
Madera County Grand Jury  
Final Report  
First 5 Madera County**

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**Introduction:**

The Grand Jury, in accordance with Penal Code Section 925, selected the First 5 Madera County agency for review. This agency has been in operation since October 2003 and had not been previously visited by the Grand Jury. The Executive Director of First 5 greeted the Grand Jury on their initial visit to the facility and gave them a presentation on the agency. On the second visit by the Grand Jury, the Executive Director greeted them, spoke with them regarding the site and programs, and directed them to tour the facility. At this visit, the Grand Jury spoke with various individuals working there and observed their operation. The Grand Jury reviewed First 5 publications, brochures, training materials, budgets, salaries, and audit reports provided by the agency. The Grand Jury visited two of the preschools partially funded by First 5. The Grand Jury interviewed both the Executive Director and the Operations Manager at a later date.

**Findings:**

The Grand Jury found that First 5 has a large, impressive, modern facility, located at 525 E. Yosemite Avenue, with an activity area that is at times rented out to other organizations.

The Grand Jury found there are nine administrative personnel at First 5, with a salary budget of \$514,961. In addition, there are nine AmeriCorps personnel funded by a government grant.

The Grand Jury found that First 5 has leased office space in the facility to other organizations. These organizations provide services and information to families with children and provide evaluations of their programs to the First 5 commissioners.

The Grand Jury found there are four programs for children aged 0 - 5 held at the site by First 5 employees: Story time, Playtime, Music/Movement, and Fitness, which are all limited to one hour weekly. There is a movie night held each Friday from 5:30 to 8:30 P.M.

The Grand Jury found one of the First 5 published goals is “All three and four year old children have access to high quality, content-rich, developmentally appropriate pre-kindergarten curricula and experiences.”

The Grand Jury found there are 110 eligible children who are on a waiting list for the preschool program, but there is no available space for them.

The Grand Jury found that First 5 partially funds 5 preschool locations with grants totaling \$323,509.

The Grand Jury found upon reviewing the Family Survey that First 5 conducted, that there were 556 children three and four years of age who meet the eligibility criteria for preschool; however there are only 112 registered in First 5 funded preschools.

The Grand Jury found that First 5 allocates grants to seven social service programs in the amount of \$778,525.

The Grand Jury found that in the First 5 June 30, 2010 statement of net assets and fund balances there is an unreserved fund balance of \$2,362,868.

The Grand Jury found the Operations Manager/Deputy Director was unable to answer the majority of questions asked even though she had been the Executive Secretary of the agency for eight years and in her new position for approximately four months. She continuously directed the Grand Jury to speak with the Executive Director as the one who would have the information requested.

### **Conclusions:**

The Grand Jury concludes that there is sufficient space at the First 5 facility to conduct additional preschool programs.

The Grand Jury concludes there is sufficient funding available to place the 110 eligible children in preschool programs.

The Grand Jury concludes there are over 400 eligible children 3 and 4 years of age who are not receiving preschool services.

The Grand Jury concludes that First 5 Madera operates more as a resource center for the various county social services rather than following their vision statement, "All three and four year-old children in Madera County, will have access to a high quality Pre-Kindergarten experience."

The Grand Jury concludes that the Operations Manager/Deputy Director is not knowledgeable of First 5 operations.

### **Recommendations:**

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 provide additional activities and programs for preschool children at the First 5 facility.

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 provide preschool for the 110 children who have applied and are eligible for preschool programs.

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 more closely live up to their vision and statement goals by providing preschool programs for all children three and four years old in Madera County.

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 be more pro-active in locating additional preschools for children that are not being served.

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 keep a reasonable reserve fund which would free resources for additional preschool placements.

The Grand Jury recommends that First 5 provide additional training for staff and particularly for the Operations Manager/Deputy Director of the agency.

**Respondents:** Written Response required pursuant to PC933 (c)

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