



## Communications Plan

### Our Vision

All Yuba County children age prenatal through five (5) years old will thrive in strong, supportive, nurturing, and loving family environments; enter school healthy; and ready to learn and become productive, well-adjusted members of society

### Our Mission

Early childhood development is especially critical to the overall growth, development, and well-being of our children. Our mission is to enhance the early childhood development of Yuba County children. Increases in parenting skills, nurturing, and health care will assist in providing the means for Yuba County's children to enter school in good health, ready and able to learn, and emotionally well developed.

First Five Yuba will create and implement an integrated, comprehensive, and collaborative system of services and information to enhance optimal early child development. This system will function as a network that promotes accessibility to all services and information from any entry point into the system. The Commission uses local decision-making based on a diverse community, to provide for greater local flexibility and sensitivity in designing delivery systems.

First 5 Yuba joins Children and Families Commissions across the state of California in an unprecedented investment in early childhood. In shifting spending to the early years, we have an opportunity to support optimal brain development, strong families, and children who will be ready to learn and succeed in our community. Our Communications Plan extends our reach to audiences that play a critical role in the health and well-being of young children and our community, allowing our Vision and Mission to reach across time and generations.

How are the children? It will be a powerful reply when we can answer, without hesitation, "The children are well. All of the children are well."

## Overview

First Five Yuba, the Yuba County Children and Families Commission, is dedicated to making a lasting difference in the lives of Yuba County's youngest children. Our strategic management and investment of Proposition 10 revenues in Yuba County benefits children, from the prenatal stage to age five, and their families. Through leadership and accountability, we affirm our deep belief in the positive impact of early childhood investment on the entire community.

Recognition of the interdependence of healthy, successful children and thriving communities is the driving force behind First Five Yuba's commitment to change in our county. We are presented with a multi-layered challenge in pursuing high-caliber communications that help influence attitudinal, behavioral, and systems change cognizant of the value of young children. First Five Yuba must appeal to multiple target audiences regarding the importance and value of the early years of life. We must raise awareness, educate, and have a long-term impact on prudent decision making and healthy practices. We must make the well-being of our children the optimal measure of success for our community.

### **PURPOSE**

A Communications Plan is a guide to the strategic interactions of an organization with its target audience. Implementing a well-conceived Communications Plan ensures that 1) methods used for communication are effective, 2) information disseminated is consistent, accurate and relevant, and 3) day-to-day efforts are focused.

To support the vision, mission, goals and objectives of First Five Yuba set forth in the Strategic Plan, creative and effective communications that reach internal and external audiences must be initiated

and maintained by First Five Yuba. The following Communications Plan has been developed as a long-term guide to First Five Yuba communications.

The purpose of First Five Yuba's Communications Plan is to:

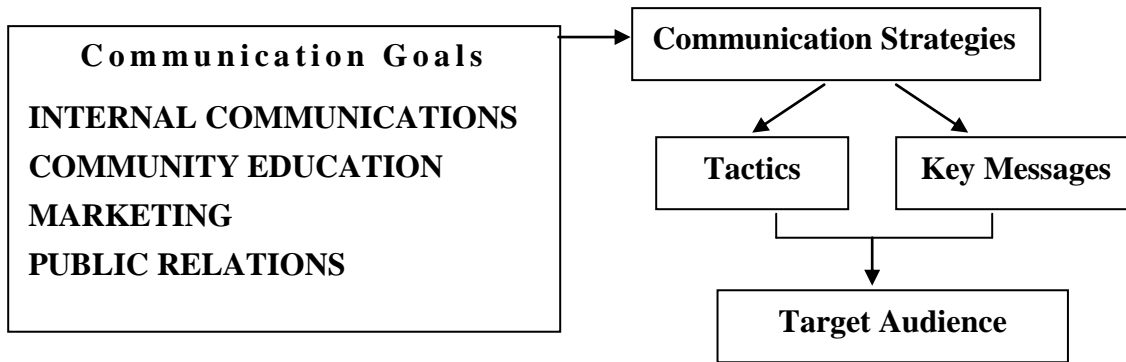
- communicate key messages to target audiences,
- educate multiple target audiences at varying levels of early childhood knowledge and expertise,
- position early childhood investment as fundamental to business and decision-making practices in Yuba County, and
- position First Five Yuba as a local early childhood leader.

To implement the Communications Plan, a work plan will be developed annually. The work plan will identify accountability components and specific numeric measures including numbers, dates, and/or percentage of expected increases. The work plan will answer the following questions; what types of increases are we looking for, how have baselines been established, how often are the different strategies and measure of strategies going to be implemented, who are the responsible parties, and how often will evaluations be made on the progress toward meeting the goals.

## **STRUCTURE**

The Communications Plan is structured around four communications goals supported by strategies and tactics well-suited for reaching designated target audiences. Strategies and tactics present a suite of solutions aimed at attaining communication goals, yet leave room for unforeseen opportunities that may present in the course of carrying out this plan. Strategies implemented individually or in combination form viable communication options, each reinforcing the other in a cost-effective plan that meets the needs of First Five Yuba.

The following is a visual for the Communications Plan structure:



## **AUDIENCE**

Audience identification allows an organization to reach out to specific groups of people, or target audiences, using time, staff resources, and funding in a responsible manner. First Five Yuba has established specific internal and external target audiences to which communication efforts will be directed.

### **Internal Primary Audiences**

Commissioners

Advisory Committee

Staff

Grantees

### **Internal Secondary Audiences**

Established community partners including:

- organizations ● agencies ● groups
- committees

### **External Primary Audiences**

Policymakers

Elected officials

Business leaders

Community leaders

### **External Secondary Audiences**

Early childhood professionals

0-to-5 advocates

Parents

## **COMMUNICATION PLAN GOALS**

### **Goal One: Internal Communications**

High levels of communication among staff, Commissioners, advisors, and partners are essential to the success of First Five Yuba in every aspect of its work. The Internal Communications goal included in the Communications Plan recognizes the need to effectively convey and receive information.

Strategies selected to support this goal enhance First Five Yuba's outreach to an internal audience and encourage audience feedback and sharing of information valuable to local 0-to-5 efforts.

### **Goal Two: Community Education**

Community Education is a critical Communications Plan goal as it is a vehicle for increasing 0-to-5 knowledge, serves as a trajectory for social change, and supports community-building. Educational efforts will be aimed at multiple target audiences and focus on early childhood development and the value of 0-to-5 investment.

### **Goal Three: Marketing**

The traditional purpose of marketing is to create demand. When applied to the strategies of First Five Yuba, marketing is necessary to creating and/or bolstering a demand for an ideology that places young children first in our community. Marketing efforts are essential to generating a measurable response from target audiences that have the highest potential for perpetuating systems change in Yuba County.

## **Goal Four: Public Relations**

Public Relations is a Communications Plan goal that guides the way First Five Yuba interacts with the public. Building positive relationships through public relations will bring favorable recognition and attention to First Five Yuba, while promoting an appreciation for early childhood and the value of 0-to-5 investment. Public relations strategies are essential to maintaining goodwill in the community, positioning First Five Yuba as a local 0-to-5 leader, and reinforcing credibility of First Five Yuba, Proposition 10, and the authority of information disseminated by First Five Yuba.

### **EVALUATION**

First Five Yuba investments are directed at positive results for young children, families, and the community. Evaluation of our efforts is a critical part of how we do business. It measures our success in achieving desired results. It allows us to track our progress, gauge impact, and continuously learn how we can improve.

First Five Yuba's Communications Plan represents but one component of our primary efforts to impact resource allocation, policies, and the community's capacity to provide supports and access to services needed to ensure the health and well-being of children, ages 0-to-5, and their families. The Plan guides public interactions that influence the awareness, knowledge, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors of designated target audiences. It aligns with the clear direction of First Five Yuba efforts defined in the Strategic Plan.

Evaluating the impact of public communications poses significant challenges of time, resources, and materials. To evaluate our communications endeavors, First Five Yuba must balance the scope and nature of its evaluation with available resources.

## **Measurable Objectives**

Evaluation of First Five Yuba communication efforts must focus on specific, measurable objectives.

They are:

- To disseminate and share information relevant to First Five Yuba and early childhood issues, trends, and advocacy among Commissioners, Advisory Committee, Grantees, Staff, and other partners, groups, and committees
- To provide education to target audiences including parents, community leaders, elected officials, early childhood professionals, and 0-to-5 advocates on early childhood development and the merit of 0-to-5 investment
- To increase awareness and active support of the goals, objectives, and early childhood investment aims of First Five Yuba
- To position early childhood investment as fundamental to business and decision-making practices
- To increase recognition and enhance the image of First Five Yuba
- To position First Five Yuba as a local 0-to-5 leader

## **Indicators**

Indicators that our communication efforts are having the desired impact and are addressing desired results are:

1. Increase in the percentage of community leaders surveyed who indicate:

- Awareness of First Five Yuba
- Exposure to and recall of First Five Yuba media messages
- Knowledge of key 0-to-5 issues
- Support for services for children 0-to-5

- Involvement in early childhood issues
2. Increase in activity on [www.first5yuba.org](http://www.first5yuba.org)
  3. Increase numbers of requests for, and strategic distribution of, collateral materials
  4. Increase the numbers of presentations to target audiences

## **Approaches**

The following approaches will be included in evaluating our communications efforts:

1. Periodic Community Surveys of community leaders, policy makers, officials and parents with children 0-to-5
2. Research into the reach, ratings and circulation of media outlets which serve both to determine placement and to inform on anticipated breadth of exposure
3. Tracking of delivery, demand for, and response to specific Communications Plan tactics (e.g. collateral placement, involvement in community events, web site traffic, etc.)
4. Evaluation of impact on audiences participating in educational and professional training events

The First Five Yuba Communications Plan is directed toward impacting the community with messages to the benefit of young children and their families. Evaluation will contribute to the ability to build and measure this impact over time.

## Communications Plan

July 1, 2010

The purpose of this Communications Plan is to further leadership positioning of First Five Yuba and leverage accomplishments locally to influence systems and behavior change regarding 0-to-5 practices and investments. The Communications Plan is aligned with the goals and objectives of First Five Yuba's Strategic Plan.

The elements of the Communication Plan are defined as follows:

- Communication Goals – What the communication plan strives to achieve
- Objectives – Measurable efforts adopted to support communication goals
- Strategies – Approaches selected to reach communication goals and objectives
- Tactics – Methods used and actions taken to implement communication strategies

### GOAL: INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

**Objective** Disseminate and share information relevant to First Five Yuba and early childhood issues, trends, and advocacy among Commissioners, Advisory Committee, Grantees, Staff, and other partners, groups, and committees.

**Strategies & Tactics**

**1. Information Delivery**

Develop and provide regularly scheduled communications strategies which support information flow to target audience(s).

- A. Electronic newsletter
- B. Web site: [first5yuba.org](http://first5yuba.org)
- C. Monthly communications activity report
- D. Mailings
- E. Social Networking

**2. Training**

Coordinate and support trainings for target audience(s).

- A. Presentations
- B. Trainings

## GOAL: COMMUNITY EDUCATION

**Objective** Provide education to target audiences including parents, community leaders, elected officials, early childhood professionals and 0-to-5 advocates on early childhood development and the merit of 0-to-5 investment.

**Strategies & Tactics**

**1. Parenting Education**

Obtain, develop, and distribute parent education materials and resources.

- A. Kit for New Parents customization and distribution to expectant and new parents through a network of distribution partners.
- B. Annual Yuba County Customized Calendar.
- C. Distribution of First Five Materials through partner agencies.
- D. Articles or Press Release
- E. First Five Yuba presence at community events coordinated and supported.

**2. Leader and Professional Education**

Explore, develop and support presentations and conference opportunities that reach target audiences.

- A. Address groups such as service clubs, governing bodies, and other leadership entities.
- B. Provide and/or sponsor events such as trainings and educational meetings.

**3. Internet-based Resources**

Explore, develop, and maintain Internet-based education opportunities that reach target audiences.

- A. Web site: [first5yuba.org](http://first5yuba.org) serving as a resource for select early childhood topics, links to quality online resources, and First Five Yuba activities.
- B. Electronic newsletter Featuring highlights of First Five Yuba efforts and related 0-to-5 topics.
- C. Maintain a distribution list for dissemination of information and use for mass distribution of

electronic messages, promotions, and newsletters.

D. First Five Yuba linked on select web sites.

## GOAL: MARKETING

**Objective** Increase awareness and active support of the goals, objectives, and early childhood investment aims of First Five Yuba.

**Strategies & Tactics**

**1. Advertising**  
Explore and develop advertising strategies to send controlled messages to target audience(s).

A. Print  
Paid newspaper, newsletter, and magazine ads.

B. Radio  
Public service announcements and paid spots delivering key messages and supporting select events and issues.

C. Internet  
Online ads/banners on select web sites and or links.

**2. Advertising Campaign**  
Coordinate and supply creative input to develop a branding Campaign. (Children are Important)

Primary campaign focus: community members.

Secondary campaign focus: at-risk parents.

**Contract Services**

A. Print  
Paid newspaper and newsletter ads.

B. Radio  
Paid/earned spots and billboards (intro to news).

C. Internet

**Local Services**

A. Localized Print

1. Ads in newsletters, select event materials, and other opportunities to be determined.
2. Note cards featuring ad artwork.
3. Poster print and placement (Parent campaign only).

### **3. Collateral and Purchased Materials**

Purchase materials, design, write, produce and distribute collateral to satisfy diverse marketing and education needs.

- B. Localized Radio  
Earned spots developed and produced locally (Parent campaign only).
- C. Localized Internet  
Paid tower/banner ads on select web sites.
- A. Kit for New Parents custom packet.
- B. Banners
- C. Books
- D. Brochures
- E. Calendars
- F. Fact Sheet
- G. Incentives such as magnets and decals.
- H. Other literature and materials

### **4. Committee Meetings and Special Event Participation**

Participate on select committees to instill and maintain 0-to-5 perspective while supporting local issues and efforts. Build relationships with target audience(s) and increase early childhood investment positioning through face-to-face contact and visual presence.

- A. Participate in and help with the facilitation of the Month of the Child activities.
- B. Other strategically relevant committees and groups.
- C. Exhibit booth (staffed at key local events).
- D. Display at key local events
- E. Interpersonal and small group communications.

## GOAL: PUBLIC RELATIONS

**Objectives** Increase recognition and enhance the image of First Five Yuba.

Position early childhood investment as fundamental to business and decision-making practices.

Position First Five Yuba as a local 0-to-5 leader.

**Strategies  
& Tactics**

**1. Media Relations**

Establish and maintain relationships with targeted media to successfully reach target audiences and manage local 0-to-5 issues.

- A. Write and distribute information to the press using press releases, calendar advisories, media alerts, and prewritten articles.
- B. Negotiate coverage and placement of feature and/or trend articles/stories.
- C. Develop Public Service Announcements to support select strategic efforts.
- D. Write and distribute Op-Ed articles and Letters to the Editor.
- E. Identify and place guests/topics on local radio and television programs.

**2. Community Relations**

Explore and execute outreach strategies to establish and/or maintain relationships with grassroots and direct service organizations, 0-to-5 advocates, and at-large community members.

- A. Promote E-newsletter subscription to groups and individuals.
- B. Participate in and help with the facilitation of the Month of the Child activities.
- C. Provide collateral and other 0-to-5 resource material for broad distribution.
- D. Schedule timely and effective presentations to select groups, committees and organizations.
- E. Sponsor community events and

activities.

F. Provide technical assistance pertaining for event planning, promotion, and media coverage to select events and activities with a 0-to-5 focus.

**3. Leader Relations**

Explore and execute outreach strategies to establish, grow, and maintain relationships with policymakers, elected officials, business and community leaders.

A. Schedule timely and effective presentations to local governing bodies and businesses.

B. Pursue official partnership and/or endorsement of select events or opportunities such as the annual Week of the Young Child.

C. Apprise key leaders of First Five Yuba priority projects and major commitments.