

**FIRST 5  
FIRST STEPS**

Annual Report

**2014**



**First 5  
First Steps**



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# First Steps Advisory Group

**LILY COSICO-BERGE**

Neighborhood House Association Head Start

**LENETTE JAVIER**

Neighborhood House Association Head Start

**PAULINA BOBENRIETH**

County of San Diego, Public Health Nursing, South Region

**LINDA LAKE**

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**MORRIS TOURIEL**

Naval Fleet and Family Support, Military Liaison

**TRACEY JONES**

Naval Fleet and Family Support, Military Liaison

**ROSEANN MYERS**

County of San Diego, Child Welfare Services

**LAURA VLEUGELS**

County of San Diego, Behavioral Health Services

“Through the home visiting program I have learned things I didn’t know how to do with my first child, like teaching my baby how to crawl and being ready to teach her how to be potty trained. With my son. I didn’t have this information.”

~ Program Family

In the future she hopes to learn how she can help to stimulate her baby’s brain so the baby can learn quickly and easily during development.

REPORT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
Alaina Dall, MA, AGD Consulting

## A YEAR OF TREMENDOUS GROWTH

# First 5 First Steps home visitors provided education and support to more than 700 families in 2014.

2014 was an exciting year in the First 5 First Steps (First Steps) program. It included the enrollment of nearly 350 families. Our program enrollment continues to grow. To date, 800 families have participated in our program.

In this annual report, we share our program outcomes, which are more than just numbers. They represent the impact and progress seen in the children and families that we support.

You will read testimonials from families whose lives changed dramatically because of their participation in the program. You will also read about our home visitors and their passion for the work they do.

We have exciting plans in place to accomplish even more

for children and families in San Diego County. In fiscal year 2015, we are developing a Strategic Plan to prioritize future efforts for First Steps. In addition, we will be working toward our goal of becoming accredited as the first county organized, multi-site Healthy Families America system.

None of these extraordinary services and outcomes would be possible without the support of our community partners and our benefactor, First 5 San Diego. We would like to thank First 5 San Diego for their investment in our community. And we thank our partners for their ongoing support.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey as we better our community for the region's children. There is much more to come. Watch the First Steps program for updates on our services for San Diego County families.

**MANY THANKS,**

**Kim Thomas, Project Director**  
First 5 First Steps Program





## FIRST 5 FIRST STEPS PROGRAM

# First Steps helps parents raise healthy, happy children

First Steps provides intensive home visiting services to expectant and new parents so that their newborn gets the best possible start in life. Our voluntary home visiting program matches parents with trained professionals who provide information and support during pregnancy and throughout the child's first three years — a critical early developmental period. Services include parenting and health care education, screenings, assessments, and referrals to community support providers. Services are provided within the context of the relationship that develops between home visitors and families. These relationships foster the development of a nurturing bond between parents/caregivers and children.

Our target populations are families who may face hardships and stressors that place the child at increased risk for poor health and developmental outcomes. Our long-term services prepare children to enter school as active learners, and ensure that all children are healthy, loved, and nurtured.

First Steps is an affiliate of Healthy Families America (HFA), which is a nationally recognized, evidence-based home visiting program model. The model was launched in 1992 as an initiative of the parent organization Prevent Child Abuse America. There are more than 600 affiliated HFA program sites throughout the country. Studies of the model have shown that program sites:

- Improve maternal and newborn health
- Increase school readiness
- Prevent child maltreatment
- Reduce domestic violence
- Improve family economic self-sufficiency
- Increase use of community services

First Steps is seeking HFA accreditation in 2016, a process that demonstrates adherence to a model that defines the most effective approach to intensive home visiting services.

# Project Timeline and Milestones



## SEPTEMBER 2012

First 5 San Diego Commission approves the Targeted At-Risk Home Visiting Initiative

## OCTOBER 2012

AAP-CA3 begins program planning



## JANUARY 2013

Program receives Healthy Families America affiliation



## JULY 2013

Site contracts initiated  
Program adopts the family friendly Program name 'First 5 First Steps'



## OCTOBER 2013

Services begins, families enrolled

## JANUARY 2016

Healthy Families America is scheduled for an accreditation visit to AAP-CA3



## MAY 2016

Healthy Families America is scheduled for accreditation visits to sites

## First Steps Services

- Nurture the development of healthy relationships between parent and child
- Enhance parent knowledge about the growth and development of their child
- Support positive parenting practices
- Encourage sound safety practices
- Customize services based on family strengths and needs
- Promote parent and child well-being through support and education
- Provide community referrals for parents and their children, including connections to medical providers
- Conduct developmental screenings and monitoring; refer children for further assessments and treatment
- Screen for perinatal depression; monitor and refer women who are experiencing symptoms of depression

# Program Structure

## First 5 San Diego

First 5 San Diego programs and services are funded through San Diego County's portion of the state's Proposition 10 tax revenues. Programs and services, such as First Steps, are funded based on local needs and priorities and fit within the Commission's goals.

## American Academy of Pediatrics California Chapter 3

The American Academy of Pediatrics – California Chapter 3 (AAP-CA3) receives funding from First 5 San Diego to provide oversight, coordination, and support for First Steps operations. AAP-CA3 works with four regional service networks, composed of four lead agencies and seven subcontractors, all of which provide direct services to families.

## Regional Service Networks

First Steps serves four geographical areas determined by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA). These areas are detailed in the map (right). For the purpose of this program, the North Coastal and North Inland supervisorial districts were combined into one region (referred to as North), and the Central and North Central districts were combined into one region (referred to as Central).



### East County Lead Agency:

*Home Start*

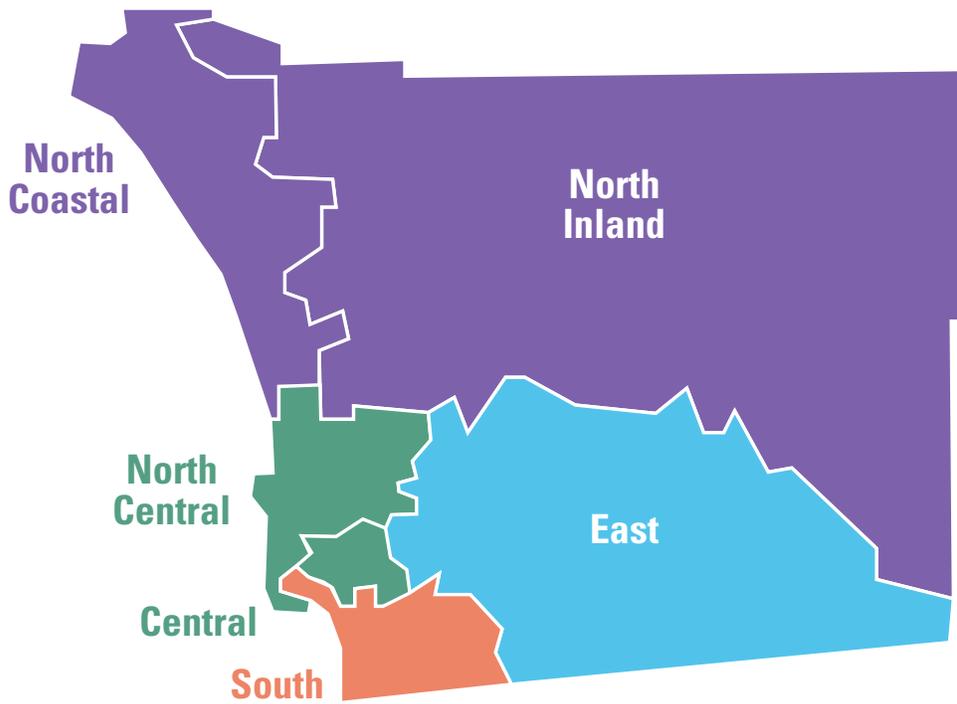
Home Start provides services to children living in poverty and who require immediate, comprehensive solutions to ensure their safety and healthy development. Home Start is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to child abuse prevention and family strengthening services.



### North County Lead Agency:

*Palomar Health*

Palomar Health's mission is to heal, comfort, and promote health in the communities they serve through three hospitals, community health education programs, and other services. The First Steps program subcontracts with Home Start and Vista Community Clinic for additional home visiting staff and services.



Each Regional Service Network has a Lead Agency under contract with First 5 San Diego. Lead agencies may in turn subcontract with additional organizations to reach families.

“The parents have increased the number of books that they read to their son. They look carefully for toys appropriate for his age. They have been doing exercises to encourage their son to crawl. When they speak with him, they use the correct pronunciation of words.”

~Telvy  
SAY San Diego Home Visitor

## CENTRAL

### Central San Diego Lead Agency:

*SAY San Diego*

SAY San Diego (Social Advocates for Youth) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to partner with children, families, and communities to overcome barriers and create opportunities that enable them to realize and sustain their full potential. SAY San Diego subcontracts with Horn of Africa and International Rescue Committee for additional home visiting staff and services.

## SOUTH

### South County Lead Agency:

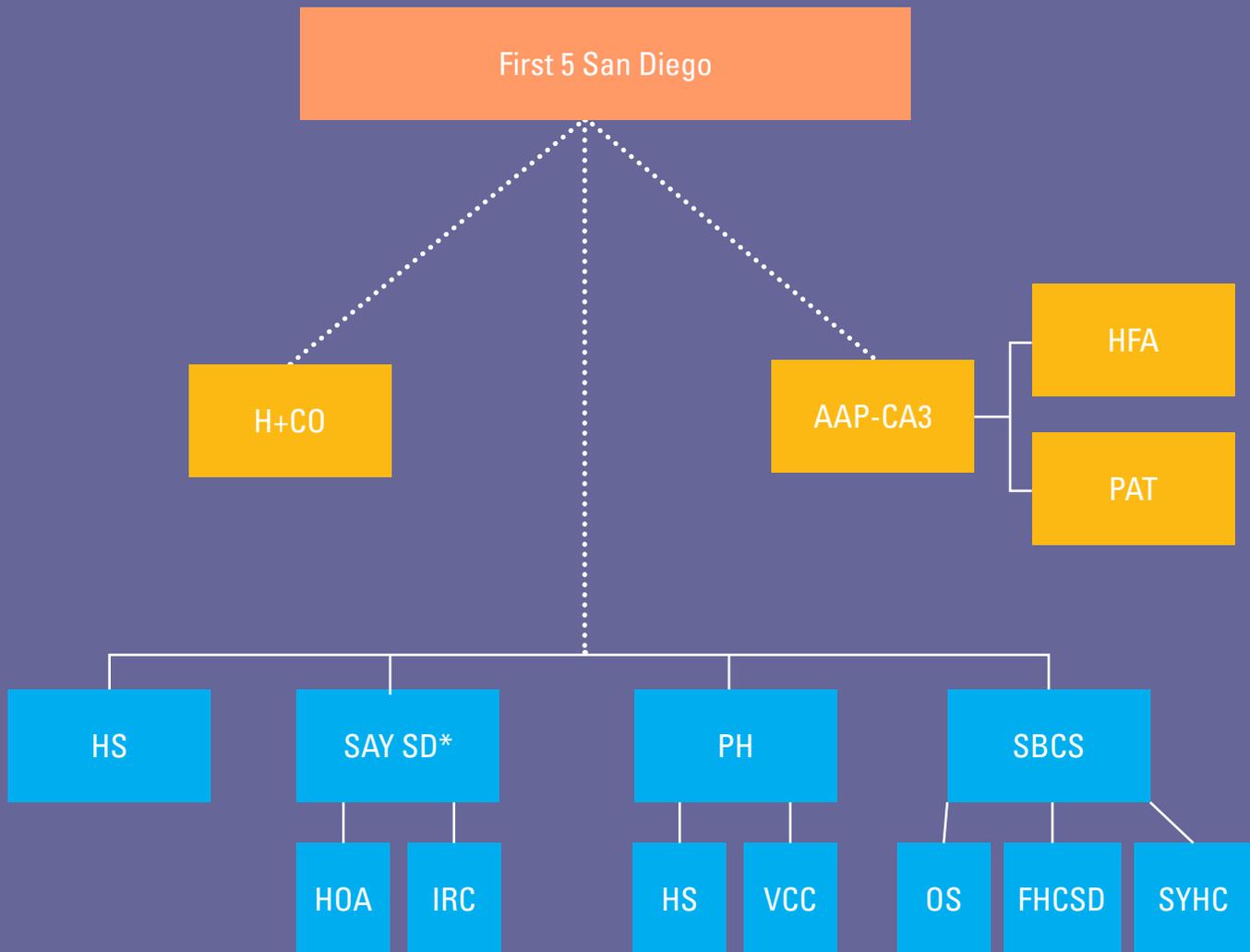
South Bay Community Services

South Bay Community Services’ (SBCS) mission is to restore hope and provide support for people to create the best life they can for themselves. SBCS subcontracts with Operation Samahan, Family Health Centers of San Diego, and San Ysidro Health Center for additional home visiting staff and services.

# Program Structure

## Harder+Company Community Research

Harder+Company Community Research (H+Co) contracts with First 5 San Diego to evaluate all of the commission's programs. H+Co also provided technical assistance for the Contract Management and Evaluation Data System (CMEDS), the database used by First 5 San Diego's programs.



AAP-CA3 – American Academy of Pediatrics CA Chapter 3

FHCSO – Family Health Centers of San Diego

H+Co – Harder+Company

HFA – Healthy Families America

HOA – Horn of Africa

HS – Home Start, Inc.

IRC – International Rescue Committee

OS – Operation Samahan

PAT – Parents As Teachers

PH – Palomar Health

SAY SD – Social Advocates for Youth San Diego

\* Crawford Community Connection

\* Healthy Start Military Family Resource Center

\* O'Farrell Family Support Services

SBCS – South Bay Community Services

SYHC – San Ysidro Health Center

VCC – Vista Community Clinic

# AAP-CA3 serves in a centralized planning and coordination role

As the central administration office, AAP-CA3 is responsible for ensuring the First Steps program is implemented with the highest degree of professionalism and quality. AAP-CA3 provides training, technical assistance, and quality assurance to support the direct service sites.

*AAP-CA3 in partnership with other home visiting programs, trained 2-1-1 San Diego referral and information client service representatives on referral pathways and how to determine the "best first referral" for families. 2-1-1 client service representatives now use a customized referral form to connect eligible families with the appropriate First Steps regional service network.*

## **Central Administration Five Functional Areas**

### **Administration**

Manage program resources and infrastructure

### **Quality Assurance/Technical Assistance**

Assess and support the delivery of high quality services

### **Evaluation**

Evaluate the effectiveness towards meeting program goals

### **Training**

Support initial and ongoing training to ensure high quality services

### **Policy**

Provide direction and clarity on program functions and operations

### **During the first year, AAP-CA3:**

- Provided leadership and technical expertise to regional service networks
- Conducted training to prepare home visitors and other staff to deliver high quality services to families
- Worked with the program evaluators to incorporate the HFA Best Practice Standards into the evaluation process
- Trained staff on standardized screening and assessment tools and assisted with implementation
- Encouraged and facilitated collaboration between regions
- Worked extensively with community partners on how to refer qualified families for services
- Facilitated reflective supervision with 12 supervisors

### **State and national events:**

AAP-CA3 represented the First Steps program at the following statewide and national conferences:

- California Home Visiting Program Summit and State Interagency Team (October 2013)
- Healthy Families America State Leadership Conference (October 2013)
- Healthy Families America National Conference for America's Children (May 2014)



Baby is encouraged to take a few steps by her mother and the home visitor.

## ABOUT OUR FAMILIES

# Home visitors give parents information on everything from breastfeeding to child care options

First Steps partners with families experiencing stressors, such as poverty, to enhance family well being and promote young children’s development. Home visitors provide expectant parents with information about pregnancy and guidelines to new parents on how to care for an infant and create an environment in which the child thrives. The program includes mothers, fathers, and other caregivers who are involved in caring for the child.

Home visitors work with four target populations:

- Low income families (below 200% Federal Poverty Level)
- Pregnant and parenting teens (between ages 13-21)
- Immigrant/refugee families (at least one parent is foreign born)
- Military families (active, guard, reserve, veterans)

.....

## JASMINE’S STORY

Jasmine initially reached out to a community agency because she wanted to learn more about what to expect with her pregnancy and how to be a good mom. The agency referred her to the First Steps program at Palomar Health. An assessment confirmed that she was eligible for services.

Jasmine’s home visitor started meeting with her weekly to answer questions and offer support. She had questions about breastfeeding, for example. Her home visitor gave her information about breastfeeding positions, what to expect, common challenges, how to overcome them, and how the baby’s dad could provide support.

When asked what has been most helpful about having a home visitor, Jasmine said, “When I have questions or concerns, I can just ask my home visitor and she gives me the information. If I need resources, like looking for day care centers or information about going back to school, my home visitor is always there to help me find what I need.”

## THE NUMBERS FOR FY 2013-14:

**85%** Program Acceptance Rate For Eligible Families

**336** Families Served

**3,514** Home Visits

**80%** Retention Rate After 6 Months

## STAFFING AS OF DECEMBER 2014:

**43** Home Visitors

**12** Supervisors, Managers And Directors

**7** Support Staff

# Home visitors ensure that pregnant women receive prenatal care as early in their pregnancy as possible

## LIGAYA'S STORY

Ligaya's pregnancy with her third son was considered to be high risk and she was unable to access prenatal care. A community agency referred her to the First Steps program at Palomar Health.

Ligaya's home visitor helped her enroll in a prenatal care class at a nearby community clinic. In addition, she registered her with the hospital where she would deliver her baby. Both Ligaya and her home visitor celebrated after Ligaya's first ultrasound, confirming she was getting proper prenatal care.

After the baby was born, intensive home visiting services continued with weekly meetings with the family for the first six months of baby's life, followed with biweekly meetings.

"My home visitor helped me to calm down when I started getting stressed out," said Ligaya. "She helped me find a doctor and figure out how to get some of our bills paid. She was a great support."



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

# Our local and statewide partners have been essential to our program's effectiveness

It is important that families in our community receive high quality services that best match their needs. Several home visiting programs in the community partnered to develop a "Referral Pathway Tool" — a document that details comprehensive information on available programs that can serve families in the home environment. This information is used to provide the "best first referral" for families. First Steps remains committed to working with other home visiting programs to serve as many families as possible.

## HOME VISITING SUMMIT

In 2014, AAP-CA3 organized and hosted the first ever Home Visiting Summit in San Diego to bring together home visiting programs in our community. The conference, *Strengthening Families, Supporting One Another*, was attended by more than 200 home visitors, public health nurses, and other family support staff. National and local experts delivered well-received presentations and facilitated activities designed to further the providers' knowledge and skills.

We would like to thank our partners for their ongoing commitment to children and families and for participating in the summit.

- Black Infant Health
- Early Head Start agencies
- New Parent Support Program
- Project Concern International
- Public Health Nursing (Nurse Family Partnership and Maternal and Child Health)
- San Diego Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting Program



## OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MILITARY

# This year we developed a remarkable partnership with Naval Fleet and Family Services

One of this year's greatest accomplishments was developing partnerships with the military. Because military families were identified as a target population, we began working closely with our military partners who already offer a wide array of programs for service members and their families. To successfully dovetail our services with theirs, First Steps held in-depth conversations regarding eligibility criteria and types of services to be provided. Through close collaboration, Naval Fleet and Family Services' New Parent Support Program entered into a formal referral agreement with First Steps. Our partnership ensures the best services for military families while maximizing resources.

First Steps and our military partners also collaborated to:

- Share information about the First Steps home visiting program with Camp Pendleton's New Parent Support Program, which primarily serves families in the North Coastal and North Inland regions.
- Participate in the Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton's Maternal Infant Services Team (MIST) meeting, a collaboration of military and civilian OB/GYN, medical, and social service providers that support children and families.
- Participate in the Central San Diego Military Families Collaborative and the North Military Families Collaborative.



*The home visitor summarizes each visit to track progress and document a family's follow-up needs*

In 2014, First Steps enrolled 17 families referred by Naval Fleet and Family Services



## ABOUT OUR STAFF

# Our home visitors have extensive educational and professional experience, and come from diverse backgrounds

Home visitors and their supervisors are the backbone of the First Steps program. Program staff have a wide range of skills, education, and life experience. Home visitors' personal backgrounds contribute to their ability to work successfully with families. They are from diverse cultures. Many grew up in bilingual households, enabling them to speak the language of the families they serve. First Steps takes great care in matching families with the right home visitor, taking into consideration factors such as language, shared background, and temperament.

All home visitors and supervisors receive the same comprehensive training. AAP-CA3 staff created a robust training plan that is aligned with HFA requirements. AAP-CA3 developed a cohort model so that all new regional service network staff could be trained in a timely and sequential manner.

All First Steps staff complete approximately 170 hours of training in their first year of employment. Course work includes child development, parent education, supportive intervention strategies, and mental health (see sidebar). They continue to enhance their knowledge and skills through ongoing in-service training.

First Steps is committed to offering support to home visitors, supervisors, and program managers. Our model incorporates administrative, clinical, and reflective supervision. Home visitors are given time and space to reflect on the complexities and successes of their work, reducing staff burnout and turnover. First Steps understands that this proactive practice helps to achieve stronger outcomes for both families and those who serve them. Given this, AAP-CA3 employs infant-preschooler mental health specialists to train and support supervisors and program managers in reflective supervision, who then offer this important form of supervision to their teams.

# SAMPLE TRAINING TOPICS:

- Parents as Teachers educational curriculum
- Parent Survey assessment
- Child Development
- “Ages and Stages” screening tools
- Patient Health Questionnaire-9 Depression screening tool
- Mental Health First Aid
- Reflective Supervision



## Home Visitor Profile

Nancy Saavedra, a Palomar Health home visitor, says that sharing information about prenatal care and baby’s first years are not the only part of her job. “I tend to give a lot of reassurance,” she said. “Whether it’s supporting how moms feel or sharing with them that others are going through the same thing. You see the relief on their faces and they often say, ‘OK, it’s not just my baby’ or ‘it’s not just me.’”

Nancy has been a home visitor since August 2013. She received a bachelor of arts in public health from UC Berkeley, and in fall 2014 she enrolled in the Masters of Public Health program at the San Diego State University Graduate School of Public Health where she will continue to focus on health education and maternal/child health.

Nancy Saavedra, home visitor, partnered with Jasmine’s and Ligaya’s families featured on pages 12 and 13.

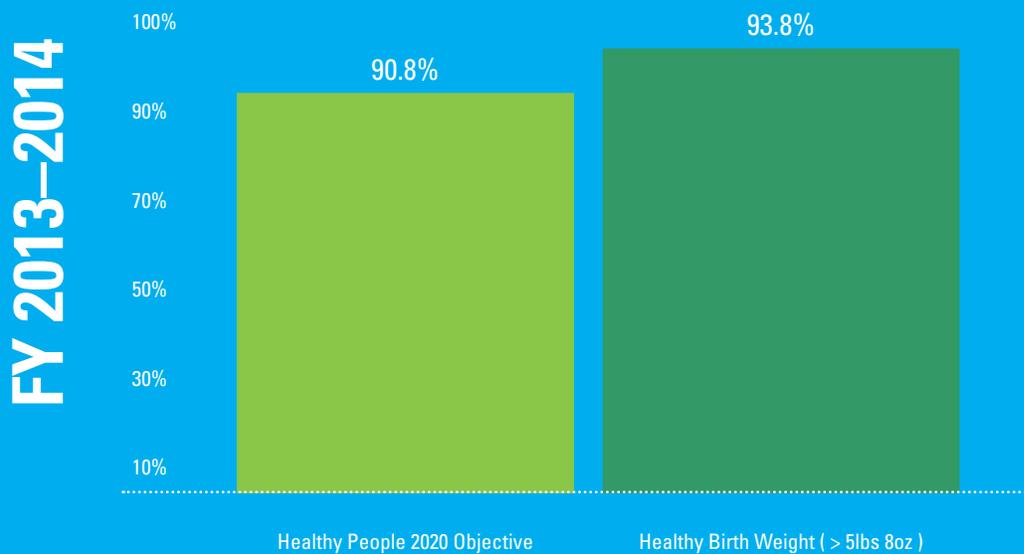
Nancy is shown here arriving for a home visit.

## SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES

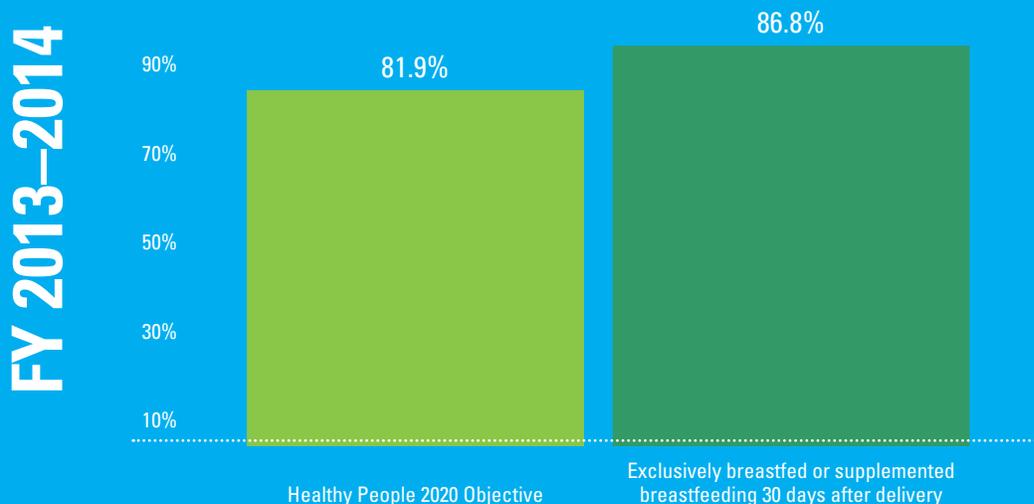
# First Steps outcomes exceed national goals

First Steps is proud and honored to support client families in raising happy and healthy children. Many of the program outcomes exceed several Healthy People 2020 goals.

### 93.8% of First Steps babies are born at a healthy weight



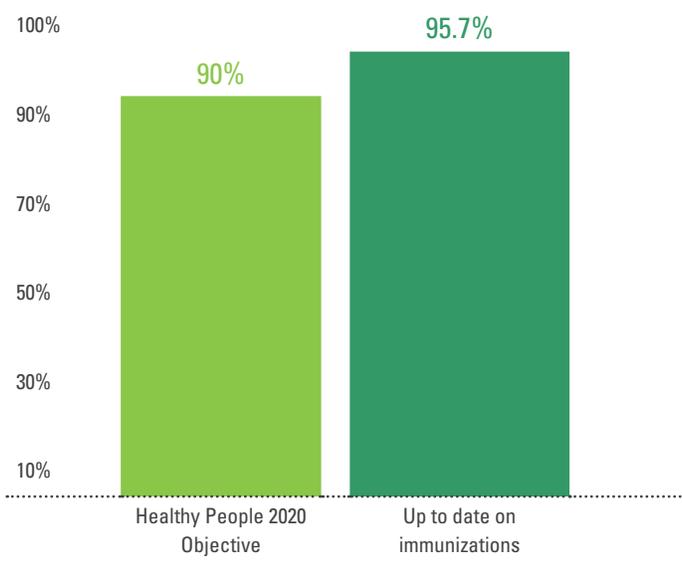
### 86.8% of First Steps mothers breastfed





**95.7% of First Steps children were up-to-date on immunizations**

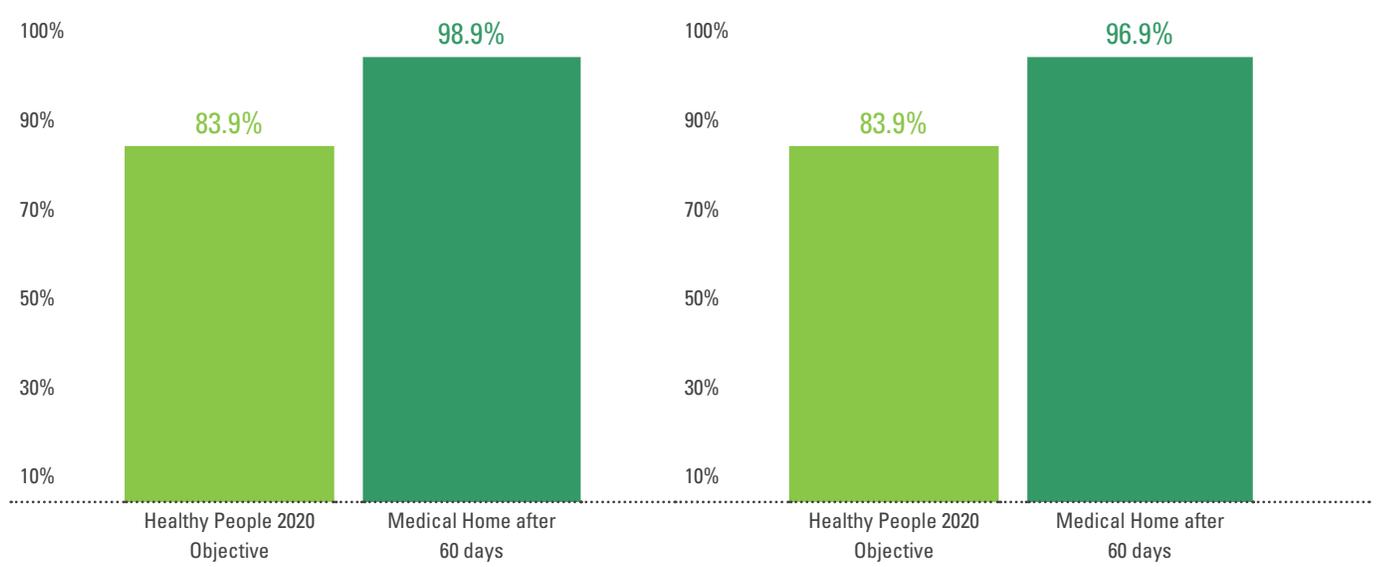
**FY 2013-2014**



“I’m better prepared than if I was just talking to my friends. It’s helpful to talk to someone and listen to some of the experiences other moms are having.”

**96.9% of children and mothers had medical home at 60 days after enrollment**

**FY 2013-2014**





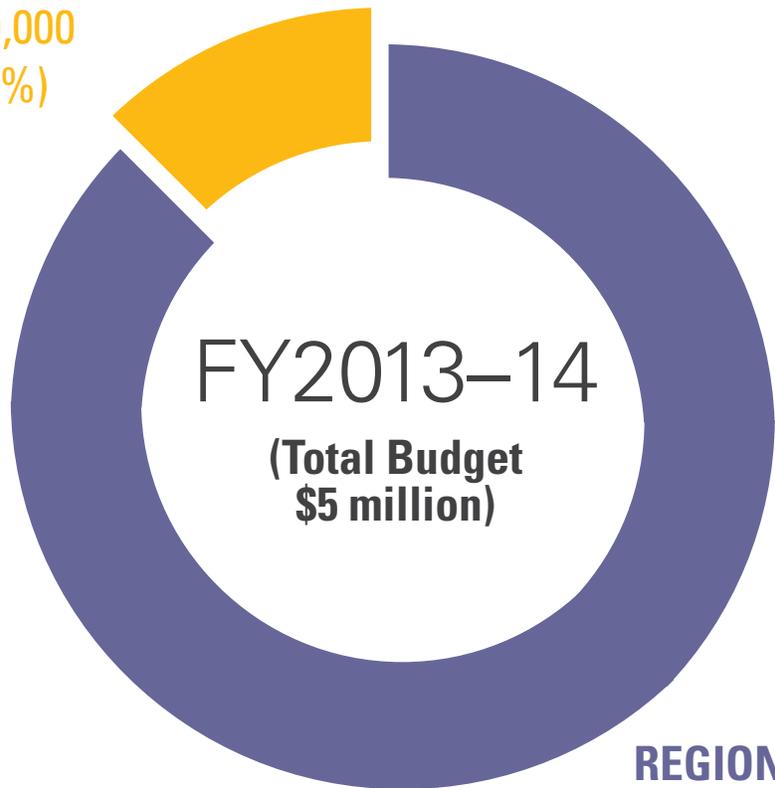
## FIRST STEPS BUDGET

# We invest in our children's future

The First Steps program budget in FY13-14 was \$5 million, with 84% of that total (\$4,200,000) allocated to direct services. The balance of the funding went to AAP-CA3 to support the First Steps system and adherence to the evidence-based model. Regional Service Networks were funded at different levels according to a formula. The First 5 Commission of San Diego County approved the same budget allocation annually through FY17-18, contingent on annual budget approval.

### AAP-CA3

\$800,000  
(16%)



### REGIONAL LEAD AGENCIES

\$4,200,000  
(84%)

# Our staff's passion for their work

Knowing my work will have an impact on the lives of children and parents. Seeing my staff grow also brings me joy.

**Sheri Easterly, Program Manager,  
SAY San Diego**

I believe that parents are the primary stepping stone for a child's success. I am happy to work for a program that encourages that parental responsibility through education and support.

**Brenda Ansell, Supervisor,  
Palomar Health**

Helping parents learn to nurture their child as they learn to be parents. The family grows together.

**Donna Hilt, Home Visitor,  
SAY San Diego**

Being able to support families in breaking unhealthy cycles and creating new ones that revolve around love and respect.

**Izabel Solis, Supervisor,  
Vista Community Clinic**

Seeing the loving interactions between parents and their babies. I enjoy when they share laughter and smiles during my home visits.

**Brenda Durazo, Home Visitor,  
South Bay Community Services**

Being able to help parents succeed and build a stronger relationship with their children.

**Hecliana Del Rio, Home Visitor,  
Operation Samahan**

Helping people reach their highest potential, and being part of and watching babies as they grow happy and healthy and ready to learn.

**Rula Raja, Home Visitor,  
Home Start**

Helping families strengthen their relationships and grow as a family unit.

**Sherry Scott, Home Visitor,  
Home Start**

Making the community grow stronger and healthier.

**Sawsein Kyoekooh, Home Visitor,  
International Rescue Committee**

American Academy of Pediatrics  
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™  
California Chapter 3 - San Diego and Imperial Counties



First 5  
First Steps



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**AMERICAN ACADEMY  
OF PEDIATRICS –  
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER 3**

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