

THE PRESS-ENTERPRISE 

RIVERSIDE COUNTY: First 5 Riverside: 15 Years for Riverside County Kids

CONTRIBUTED CONTENT November 27, 2013; 10:22 AM

Edgar and Jannette Santiago were frustrated and exhausted trying to deal with their troubled 2-year-old daughter when they were introduced to a First 5 Riverside-funded behavior program nine years ago.

“We needed some help. What we thought was right wasn’t working and we were losing our tempers,” Edgar Santiago said recently, recounting his family’s experience. “She was a different girl when we finished the program.”

The Santiagos are just one of thousands of families supported through early childhood development services funded by First 5 Riverside, the Riverside County Children & Families Commission since 1998, when voters approved Prop. 10, the California Children and Families Act. November marks the 15th anniversary of the statewide program known as First 5, a reference to the tremendous importance of the first five years of a child’s life, when 90 percent of brain development occurs.

First 5 Riverside has invested more than \$338 million for a wide range of programs and services in Riverside County since inception. The commission funds services to help children be successful in school and throughout their lives. This includes support for health access, physical activity, nutrition, access to quality child care and preschool, dental care, obesity prevention, social emotional health and workforce development.

Fifteen years of helping children, 0 through 5 years of age, develop a strong foundation for success in school and beyond has resulted in:

More than 32,000 children benefiting from access to health insurance

More than 27,000 children benefiting from preschool and child care

About 100,000 children receiving preventative oral health education, dental screenings and treatment

More than 33,000 receiving social emotional screenings with 13,000 children needing and receiving treatment

This month, First 5 Riverside added a 15th anniversary webpage, including details of current investments, results from major initiatives, local testimonials, along with links to resources and research. Click the “15th Anniversary” button at www.rccfc.org.

For more statewide historic information, visit www.first5association.org/15years.



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Jannelys Santiago, 2, of Lake Elsinore, is one of thousands of children helped through First 5 Riverside-funded services since 1998 when voters approved Proposition 10, the California Children and Families Act.