



**Program Officer, Early Learning
FIRST 5 Early Learning Department**

Summary of Position

Under the direction of the Director of Early Learning, the Program Officer is a key member of the FIRST 5 Early Learning Team that manages initiatives supporting children, families, workforce, and the community. This position requires a deep knowledge of the early learning environment at the local, regional, state and federal levels. Building and maintaining relationships with grantees, partners, and stakeholders is key to this position's success, as is the ability to implement strategic planning and project management processes. The ability to work in a collaborative team environment with leadership, peers, and employees is required. In alignment with the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) QUALITY MATTERS...a STRONG START for kids, IMPACT High-Quality Action Plan and other Early Learning Initiatives, the Program Officer develops, coordinates, and manages continuous quality improvement of early learning programs across Santa Clara County.

Background on FIRST 5 Santa Clara County

FIRST 5 Santa Clara County (FIRST 5) was formed when California voters approved Proposition 10 in November 1998. FIRST 5 is a public entity governed by a nine-member commission. FIRST 5 allocates funds to promote and support early childhood development for children prenatal through age 5 and to enrich the lives of their families.

Through an extensive planning process, the community identified four domains in which FIRST 5 focuses its resources: (1) Health Care; (2) Family Strengthening & Support; (3) Early Care and Education; and (4) Neighborhood and Community Engagement. The Commission then adopted five primary goals that address each of these domains: (1) Children are born healthy and experience optimal health and development; (2) Families provide safe, stable, loving and stimulating homes; (3) Children enter school fully prepared to succeed academically, emotionally and socially; (4) Neighborhoods and communities are places where children are safe, neighbors are connected, and all cultures are respected; and (5) Systems are responsive to the needs of children and families.

Potential applicants are encouraged to visit FIRST 5's website at www.first5kids.org in order to better understand FIRST 5's programs and services.

Essential Functions and Responsibilities

- Collaborate with the CEO, Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Directors and department staff to establish an organizational structure and systems that foster a culture of leadership, innovation, accountability, excellent service, and continuous improvement within FIRST 5;
- Assist with leading the program/ unit's participation in implementing the agency's strategic plan in collaboration with the Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Directors and department staff;
- Work in collaboration with Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, Directors, and other Program Officers to initiate and/or participate in integrated planning, implementation and continuous improvement efforts within and across departments;
- Communicate about FIRST 5's strategic direction, investments and impacts to all internal team members and external partners;
- Gather and share information to/from the CEO, Chiefs, Deputy Chiefs, other Directors, internal team and external partners to inform FIRST 5's work;
- Provide leadership in implementing short- and long-term operational plans and developing departmental systems and processes;
- Manage projects and supervise team members as assigned;
- Establish collaborative, effective working relationships with all internal team members and external partners;
- Represent FIRST 5 in external meetings (in addition to or in place of CEO and/or Chiefs/Deputy Chiefs) as assigned;
- Provide excellent service to internal and external customers;

- Provide guidance to early learning coaches, program administrators, site staff and assigned technical assistance support staff to ensure responsive, intentional, and developmentally appropriate implementation of early learning initiative;
- Coordinate with evaluation staff to ensure successful submission of state reports, participation in regional data collaboration effort, completion of local annual report, and other data related requests;
- Utilize expertise in child development ensure the integration of quality efforts and approaches amongst early learning programs;
- Coordinate monthly meetings with the QUALITY MATTERS a STRONG START for kids team to review quality improvement progress, Community of Practice progress and other quality improvement efforts for implementing Santa Clara County's QRIS;
- Participate in QRIS Regional and State meetings to ensure local alignment;
- Manage contracts and relationships with grantee, vendor, and grantor partners; and
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Required Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Ability to work as a cooperative and supportive member of an interdisciplinary early childhood team;
- Ability to be flexible and meet program deadlines;
- Knowledge of and ability to assess, analyze, and interpret, state and local licensing requirements, Head Start Standards and state and federal funding streams;
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel, as well as the ability to learn and master computer technology/software programs as needed; and
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.

Educational and Work Experience Requirements

- Bachelor's degree in Child Development or in a related field required with two years of experience or a Master's degree in Child Development or in a related field, preferred;
- Minimum of two years' experience in staff supervision, preferred;
- Experience working with ethnically and linguistically diverse children, families, and professionals in low-income, urban neighborhoods;
- Knowledge of current research related to early care and education and with developmental screening and assessments, classroom quality assessments (including the use of ERS scales and the CLASS instrument); familiarity with local and state early education programs, program performance measures reporting, and contract and grant oversight and monitoring; and
- Bilingual English/Spanish speaker preferred but not required.

Work Environment

- Clearance of background checks as required by local, state and federal regulations;
- Must be able to travel within and between early education sites and to conferences, trainings, and meeting sites within and outside the county, and possess a valid driver's license;
- Ability and willingness to work at sites located in high-risk, low-income communities;
- Setting-up for meetings may require lifting or carrying cumbersome materials such as easels, flip charts, refreshments, etc.;
- Ability to work evenings and weekends as required;
- Must be able to speak, read, and write English fluently; and
- Possession of a valid California driver's license and a reliable means of transportation.

Term

This is a full-time, exempt position. This is a grant funded position for three years.