



Commission Meeting Minutes

Date: April 27, 2026

Start Time: 1:00 pm

Stop Time: 2:49 pm

Location(s): Laytonville Community Room, Mendocino County Public Health, Zoom

Commissioners Present:

Anderson☑ Applegate☐ Bailey☑ D'Anis☐ Haschak☑ Hills☑ May☑ Miller☑ White ☑

Staff Present:

Aldrich☑ Alvarado☑ Boek☑ Carson☑ Flesch☑ Fuentes☑ Troxler☑ Kohler☑

Rounds☐ Yoast☑ Saye☑ Avalos☑ Anderson☑ DeBiase☐ McGill☑

Public Present:

Jayma Shields Spence (Laytonville Healthy Start)

1. Welcome & Introductions

- The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm.
- Attendees were welcomed by the chair.
- Roll call was conducted; introductions were made.

2. Mindful Minute

- ED Saye led attendees in a Mindful Minute.

3. Public Comment on Non-agendized Items

- Public comment was opened.
- Commissioner Hills expressed gratitude for First 5 Mendocino staff attending Día del Niño. Commissioner Anderson announced that he will be resigning to attend to other responsibilities, and he is recommending that Grace Ivey apply for his seat. Attendees expressed gratitude for Commissioner Anderson and his time dedicated to First 5 Mendocino.
- Public comment was closed.

4. Consent Calendar

- **Action**
- Discussion: None
- **Motion: Move to approve the Consent Calendar.**



- **Move:** Haschak
- **Second:** Anderson
- **Yes:** Anderson☑ Bailey☑ Haschak☑ Hills☑ May☑ Miller☑
- **No:** None
- **Abstain:** None
- **Absent:** Applegate☑ D'Anis☑
- **Passed**☑

5. Oath of Office for New Commissioner

- **Action**
- Discussion: Commissioner White swore his Oath of Office to Commissioner Haschak.
- **Motion: Move to approve Stephen White as a First 5 Mendocino Commissioner.**
- **Move:** Haschak
- **Second:** Anderson
- **Yes:** Anderson☑ Bailey☑ Haschak☑ Hills☑ May☑ Miller☑
- **No:** None
- **Abstain:** White ☑
- **Absent:** Applegate☑ D'Anis☑
- **Passed**☑

Commissioner Bailey left at 1:09 pm.

6. FRC Network and Laytonville Healthy Start Update

- **No Action**
- Discussion: Jayma Shields Spence, introduced herself and presented on the history, philosophy, and services of Hardwood Memorial Park, Laytonville Healthy Start Community & Family Resource Center, and the Family Resource Center Network.
- Shields Spence serves as the Steward of Harwood Memorial Park 501(c)(3), Executive Director of Laytonville Healthy Start Community & Family Resource Center, and Coordinator of the Mendocino County Family Resource Center Network.

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- Organization Philosophy
 - Shields Spence shared her philosophy that whoever comes through the door, the center will find a way to help them, even if the budget does not explicitly allow it. This openness and willingness to support people has grown their services and built deep trust in the community over 16 years.
- Organization History & Programs
 - Healthy Start began as a school-based service in the old high school. In the mid-1990s, California Healthy Start startup grants helped fund many family resource centers across the county, including Potter Valley, Laytonville, and Action Network on the south coast. The community saw the value of the center and insisted it be moved from the school into the community so that everyone could access services, not just families of enrolled students. The current center is built onto Harwood Hall.
 - Programs under the nonprofit umbrella include the Family Resource Center, Friends of the Library, Long Valley Dancing Fitness Center, a toy drive, gym rentals, a local food bank program, and a skate park. The center also leads a disaster preparedness group called Laytonville County Communities Active in Disaster, which stockpiles supplies to act independently during emergencies.
- Direct Services Offered by the Community & Family Resource Center
 - The Community Center helps people with CalFresh and medical insurance signups and renewals and has recently expanded into Medicare and Social Security assistance, as many community members are aging. Most people simply need someone to sit down with them to help with paperwork or online account setup, including creating an email address and learning how to log in. The center also operates a diaper depot, offers parenting support referrals, hosts a weekly play group every Thursday, and runs a clothing closet with hygiene supplies available. Staff organizes fun community events such as a large Halloween carnival and roller-skating activities. Since COVID, the center has focused on connecting people with behavioral health services and crisis counseling, and people often call Healthy Start before calling 911, even in their darkest times. When the center cannot directly provide a service,



staff kindly refer individuals to local agencies such as the local health center, County Behavioral Health, or Tapestry Family Services.

- **Family Resource Center Network**
 - There are currently nine active family resource centers in Mendocino County. Shields Spence reported that Action Network on the south coast has closed its doors due to a mix of leadership challenges, executive director turnover, and ongoing funding challenges at the federal, state, and local levels, with no immediate reopening planned. She has been working with organizations in the Fort Bragg area to promote services for the isolated south coast, sees the closure as an opportunity for future planning, and has offered network support to former Action Network staff. The network functions like a support group with monthly meetings that typically include a guest speaker from a state or county agency, allowing one speaker to reach all nine centers, after which each center spreads that information locally to link families and children to services. Shields Spence noted that County Social Services, County Public Health, and First 5 Mendocino were at the table when the network was formed, and she thanked them on behalf of the network for their many years of support before opening the floor for any questions.

7. Strategic Plan Update

- **No Action**
- Discussion: ED Saye presented updates to the data dashboard, including streamlining to reduce duplication, moving macro program systems into Priority Four, and updating several targets based on feedback from Commissioner Hills to make them more realistic. The dashboard continues to include deep-impact indicators and horizontal indicators, with visual data points in development. Based on feedback from Commissioner D'Anis, a master service list organized by priority area was created to track families receiving two or more services; this list will be emailed to members. A four-page mockup of the strategic plan layout was shared, with each page showing the priority level, role in the system, a narrative, key activities, milestones, and data indicators. Feedback on the layout was positive, with Commissioner Hills, noting that separating deep and horizontal indicators was helpful, and Commissioner Haschak expressed his approval of the draft. ED Saye will email the service list and the color mockup



and is working with Jules Featherston on visualizations of the deep and horizontal work. ED Saye thanked Staff Carson for the work on the look and feel and all staff for their collective feedback.

8. Technology and Service Disruption Procedure

- **No Action**
- Discussion: ED Saye reported that a new Brown Act policy on teleconference meetings and technology failure is included for discussion only. The policy will be brought back for additional edits in May and for a formal vote and approval at the June planning meeting, with a required implementation date of July 1, 2026. Commissioner Haschak noted that language about a timed window to restore services during a technology failure was missing and should be added under restoration of service or cessation of further action. ED Saye confirmed this addition will be made. The policy will be posted on the First 5 Mendocino website once approved.

9. State of the Child Survey Results

- **No Action**
- Discussion (if any): Commissioner Hills presented the results of the State of the Child survey, a joint project with First 5 Mendocino and the Mendocino County Office of Education (MCOE). The survey received responses from 130 families and 35 educators across the county.
- Families reported very high satisfaction with early care settings, with 100% agreeing that care supported their infant or toddler's development. Transition to kindergarten activities increased from 2023, including 70% meeting their child's teacher before school started. Top supports identified by families were healthcare and insurance, healthy food access, early learning activities, childcare, and diapers or hygiene. Educators identified improved staffing ratios and living wages as policy priorities.
- The presentation concluded with the following key findings:
 - Children are entering early learning with strong developmental strengths.
 - Family routines and relationships are powerful drivers of development.
 - Community environments matter.
 - Educators are deeply engaged in professional growth.
 - Stronger transitions reflect stronger connections.
 - Local resources make a measurable difference



- One-page summaries for educators, legislators, and parents will be shared.
- Discussion noted the potential impact of COVID and screen time on social expression, as well as the increased need for behavioral support for young children.

Commissioner Anderson left at 2:10 pm.

10. Executive Director & Staff Reports

- **No Action**
- **First 5 Association Updates**
 - ED Saye attended Advocacy Day at the Capitol with the First 5 Association to discuss declining Prop 10 funds.
 - The Association reminds legislators that First 5s were created by voters in 1998 and serve as connective tissue between the community and state.
 - Meetings were held with staff for Assemblymember Rogers and Senator McGuire.
 - First 5 Mendocino is uniquely positioned to apply for RFPs due to the Raise and Shine nonprofit structure.
 - The Choose Children campaign is engaging the nine California Governor candidates, with universal childcare and provider wages raised unprompted by at least two candidates at recent forums.
 - The President's initial budget proposed level funding for childcare block grants and Head Start, but would eliminate some preschool development block grants.
 - On March 31, a second federal judge temporarily blocked a proposed \$10 billion federal funding freeze on childcare and family assistance programs across five states, including California. The funds covering programs such as the Child Care and Development Fund, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Social Services Block Grants had been halted over alleged concerns about fraud and misuse.
- **Local Grants and Trainings**
 - The Northwest region of First 5s (11 counties) has nominated First 5 Mendocino to be the lead applicant for a \$5 million behavioral health grant to strengthen the Community Resiliency Model (CRM) countywide.



- A recent training with Laura van Dernoot Lipsky (Trauma Stewardship) was well attended by emergency responders, educators, and community members.
- Upcoming trainings include "Making Space for Dads" and a webinar on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) led by a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and mother of an FASD child.
- The First 5 Mendocino staff development retreat at the Hopland Research Center was led by MaryCatherine McDonald and introduced frameworks from Gretchen Lindsey (The Four Tendencies) and Brené Brown (BRAVING: boundaries, reliability, accountability, vault, integrity, non-judgment, generosity).

- **Staff Changes**

- Staff Aldrich will take over the BreastStart Line previously designated to Staff Rounds.
- Staff Avalos-Garcia, currently on the Welcome Baby Team, is training to cover Staff Troxler's maternity leave on the Raise & Shine team. After Troxler returns, Avalos-Garcia will transition fully into the Raise & Shine team as a bilingual family consultant alongside Staff Fuentes and Alvarado to meet growing needs for developmental and Early Start services.

- **Playgroups and Outreach**

- Playgroups continue to be well attended with many new families.
- The First 5 Mendocino Community Hour is happening monthly, with the most recent episode presented by ED Saye, Staff Rounds, and Anderson discussing Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
- The Community Navigator program is strong. Staff Fuentes served 30 families independently this year.
- April is Child Abuse Awareness Month, and staff are participating in many outreach activities.
- The team is now visiting juvenile hall weekly to work with teen parents, a request from Family and Children Services and Probation.

- **Triple P Data Presentation (2023-2025)**

- Triple P addresses preventable social and behavioral-emotional problems in children.



- 15% of children are in the clinical range for behavioral problems; 85% remain in the non-clinical range, showing a broad need for prevention services.
- Data from 2 years and 400 participants (approx. 200 per year) showed:
 - 1. 53 & 56% improvement in parental consistency.
 - 2. Nearly 50% drop in coercive discipline.
 - 3. Significant improvement in parent-child relationship and parental enjoyment of parenting.
 - 4. Large reductions in parental stress, depression, and anxiety.
 - 5. Decreased acrimony between separated parents.
- Mendocino County was the first county in California to bring Triple P founder Matt Sanders to the state and to promote January as Positive Parenting Awareness Month.
- Conclusion: Continue funding Triple P; it improves parent-child relationships, co-regulation, and nervous system regulation.
- Attendees noted real-life stories of improved family relationships across the county, and alignment with the Teaching Pyramid framework (positive descriptive acknowledgements).

11. Commissioner Reports. Staff Comments, Announcements, Quorum Check & Additional Materials

- **No Action**
- Discussion (if any):
 - Commissioner Updates:
 - Commissioner Hills shared that MCOE open enrollment for part-day state preschools is currently underway for the upcoming year. Full-day programs cannot begin enrollment until 30 days before services start, which will be mid-July. MCOE is communicating this timeline to families as clearly as possible. In other communities, such as Laytonville, full-day coverage is achieved by partnering part-day state preschool with district programs, NCO, or local tribes, reflecting the common rural practice of braiding multiple funding streams together.
 - Commissioner White reported that Family Children Services is transitioning from the CMS platform to a new software called CARES, which will strengthen eligibility for



Family First funding by helping agencies document, track, and report prevention services using standardized, evidence-based, and trauma-informed models. CARES improves data quality and program fidelity, reduces compliance risk, and makes it easier to claim allowable costs, allowing the agency to draw down more Family First prevention funding than in the past. Additionally, the minimum qualifications for social worker classifications are being updated to align with state mandates, placing greater emphasis on recruiting candidates with bachelor's or master's degrees in social work while still valuing diverse experience. The definition of relevant case management experience has also been broadened to include healthcare, educational settings, nonprofits, and judicial or correctional environments to expand recruitment and increase staffing in the Child Welfare department.

- Commissioner Haschak reported his appreciation for Jayme Shield Spence sharing her presentation on the services in Laytonville and helping with the Commission meeting space. Haschak expressed his appreciation for Commissioner Anderson and his years of knowledgeable service to the First 5 Mendocino Executive Committee and Commission. In closing he shared his appreciation for the staff's hard work and seeing them out in the community at events.
- Commissioner Miller has no report.
- Commissioner May reported she will be having surgery next month and her attendance at the next meeting can't be confirmed.
- Quorum Check for Upcoming Meeting: Haschak☑ Miller☑ White ☑
- Commissioner Hills will not be available for the May meeting.
- Absent Commissioners will be polled.
- The meeting ended at 2:49 pm.