

The San Francisco Chronicle
April 24, 2008

First 5 Response
By Kara Dukakis

Editor - I am disappointed that your April 19 story ("Not all First 5 grants are helping poor kids") painted a skewed picture of the commission's work.

The vast majority of First 5 San Francisco's \$9 million annual budget is spent on critical health and education programs for children ages 5 and under raised in low- or poverty-level households. We are investing in these children's future by expanding medical coverage to the uninsured and supporting essential programs and services, such as routine baby checkups, early literacy programs, special needs screenings, preschool, and quality child care, among other Proposition 10 initiatives.

The Parent Action Grant program - 2 percent of our annual expenditures - is a unique effort aimed at filling gaps in the system that impact the healthy development of all young children, regardless of income. This is in keeping with the spirit of Proposition 10.

With the economy headed in a downward spiral and the cost of living in our city remaining exorbitantly high, First 5 San Francisco will continue to prioritize families in greatest need to ensure our city's children are given every opportunity to reach their fullest potential in life.

KARA DUKAKIS

Commission Chair
First 5 San Francisco

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