

# FIRST 5 S H A S T A

## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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Contact: Joy Garcia  
(530) 229-8300

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### FIRST 5 SHASTA AWARDS NEARLY \$100,000 IN KINDERGARTEN TRANSITION GRANTS

REDDING-----Every year, about 500,000 young Californians make the exciting transition from preschool and the family nest to the big world of kindergarten. Getting ready for this step into the classroom takes preparation – by families and by schools. First 5 Shasta is supporting able and eager learners by awarding \$95,000 to new Special Opportunity Kindergarten Transition grants. The First 5 Shasta Commission approved funding for five projects at five different school districts in Shasta County.

Special Opportunity Kindergarten Transition funding may be used toward two specific goals. Some award recipients are focusing on just one of these goals. Other recipients are focused on both goals. The goals are:

- 1) To improve the overall experience of young children and their families starting kindergarten.
- 2) To help schools plan and implement new Transitional Kindergarten classroom programs as required by California's *Kindergarten Readiness Act 2010 (SB1381)*.

The recipients of 2011 Special Opportunity Kindergarten Transition awards are as follows:

#### **Focus: Kindergarten Transition Experience of Children and Families**

##### **Cascade Union Elementary School District**

**\$30,000**

- Project: **Jump Start to Kindergarten**
- Description: Support is provided for intensive transition to kindergarten classes scheduled for summer 2012. Classes include both child and parent components. Children's activities will be focused around language, literacy, and social-emotional development. Parents will attend Triple P Positive Parenting sessions and join library sessions to learn strategies for reading with children. Funds will be applied to instructional materials, children's books, and staff including preschool and kindergarten teachers, a speech therapist, a parent trainer, and a teacher for English language learners.

##### **Redding School District**

**\$30,000**

- Project: **Smart Start Kindergarten Readiness Program**
- Description: Support is provided for parent education nights and "Smart Start" classes for transitional kindergarten students. Parent nights will address kindergarten readiness activities and new school regulations; each parent will be provided a take-home backpack with materials to assist in their child's readiness for school. "Smart Start" classes for children will be available two weeks before school starts and focus on language development, social skills, and motor development. Funds will support staff time for preparation and presentation of parent nights and "Smart Start" classes, educational and training materials, and advertising for "Smart Start" activities.

**Focus: Schools Transitional Kindergarten Program**

**Indian Spring Elementary School District**

**\$16,000**

- Project: **Indian Springs Transitional Kindergarten**
- Description: Support is provided for teacher training (the school's solitary TK-8 teacher) in Transitional Kindergarten practices and curriculum, the addition of a classroom assistant/community liaison focused on the Transitional Kindergarten students and their parents, and purchase of educational and training materials. Funds will be used for training opportunities, hiring new staff, advertising for Transitional Kindergarten enrollment, and materials.

**Junction Elementary School District**

**\$13,000**

- Project: **Transitional Kindergarten Program**
- Description: Support is provided to enhance Transitional Kindergarten classroom activities, parent education sessions, and raising public awareness of kindergarten readiness opportunities at the school. Funds will be used to purchase Transitional Kindergarten curricula, books, manipulatives, furniture for young children, advertising for Transitional Kindergarten enrollment, and staff time for curriculum development and community outreach.

**North Cow Creek Elementary School District**

**\$ 6,000**

- Project: **North Cow Creek Eager Beavers**
- Description: Support is provided for research and planning of a preschool on campus and a Transitional Kindergarten program, both to launch in fall 2012. Funds will be applied to additional staff time and substitute teachers during the planning phase, travel to observe other exemplary Transitional Kindergarten sites in California, and purchase of supplemental curriculum and manipulatives to enhance early learning.

First 5 Shasta, the Shasta Children and Families First Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cent-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs promoting early childhood development for expectant parents and children through age five. To date, First 5 Shasta has invested over \$15 million in local programs and activities that benefit young children and families.

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