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**SANTA CRUZ CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION HOSTS  
BABY SHOWER TO DISTRIBUTE FREE PARENTING  
INFORMATION**

*Free Kit for New Parents Promotes Early Childhood Development;  
Goal is to Distribute 3,700 Kits Throughout the County*

**(Capitola)** – All new parents in Santa Cruz County will receive a free gift from the Santa Cruz County Children and Families Commission (SCCCFC) containing important tips and resource information to help them raise children who are healthy, learning and ready to reach their greatest potential. The *Kit for New Parents*, a comprehensive package with parenting information and local resources, was unveiled today at a community-wide baby shower hosted by the Commission at the Live Oak Family Resource Center. The event is part of an unprecedented statewide education effort to promote early childhood development. With the help of 26 partner organizations, the SCCCFC's goal is to distribute 3,700 *Kits* throughout Santa Cruz County.

“Babies do not come home with an instruction manual, but this *Kit* is the next best thing,” said Santa Cruz County Supervisor Jeff Almquist, chair of the SCCCFC. “The *Kit for New Parents* is a powerful tool for parents, family members and caregivers committed to giving young children the best start in life.”

The *Kit for New Parents*, initially available in English and Spanish, contains six videos featuring prominent child development experts and celebrities such as Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, Rob Reiner, Jamie Lee Curtis, Gloria Estefan, Andy Garcia, Edward James Olmos and Phylicia Rashad. Topics include the importance of the early years, child care, safety, health and nutrition, discipline and early literacy.

“I’m looking forward to using the information in this *Kit* because it gives me the most updated tips to care for my new baby,” said Marilou Ruiz, a mother who attended the Live Oak Family Resource Center baby shower. “It really is something that all parents should have and I’ll share it with my parents often help me care for my children.”

*(more)*

**Santa Cruz County Children and Families Commission distributes *Kit for New Parents***  
*Page 2*

The *Kit for New Parents* is available through 26 local partner organizations including the family resource centers, hospitals, community centers, parenting classes, clinics, Head Start programs, libraries and other community groups. Parents can call First 5 Santa Cruz at (831) 465-2217 or the statewide toll-free information lines, (800) KIDS-025 (English) or (800) 5-0-NIÑOS (Spanish), to obtain a free *Kit*.

In addition, the SCCCFC has officially adopted a new statewide identity and changed its name to “First 5 Santa Cruz,” signifying the importance of the first five years of life when a child’s brain develops most dramatically. First 5 Santa Cruz will serve as an easily identifiable name for all the programs and services implemented by the Commission under Proposition 10. The First 5 identity was initially adopted in July by the California Children and Families Commission, now First 5 California, the statewide body allocating more than \$700 million annually in tobacco tax revenues to statewide programs and county commissioners dedicated to promoting early childhood development.

“We’ve adopted the new statewide ‘First 5’ name to help the public identify local Santa Cruz County programs funded by Prop. 10 that integrate health care, quality child care and parenting education for families with young children,” said Almquist. “The name, First 5 Santa Cruz, will also help parents remember that they are their child’s first teacher and what they do to help their children learn during these early years will have a profound effect on their child’s ability to reach his or her greatest potential in school and in life.”

The Santa Cruz County Children and Families Commission, now First 5 Santa Cruz, 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 for children up to age 5. Since its inception, the local Commission has invested more than \$3.3 million in local programs.

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