

# First 5 Yolo's director tapped to lead Sacramento agency

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Julie Gallelo. Courtesy photo

The First 5 Yolo Children and Families Commission has announced that longtime Executive Director Julie Gallelo has accepted the position of executive director for First 5 Sacramento.

Gallelo, who holds a master of public health degree from San Diego State University, has been at the helm of First 5 Yolo since 2004.

“First 5 Yolo has been very fortunate to have Julie Gallelo as its executive director,” said Yolo County Supervisor Jim Provenza, who chairs the First 5 Yolo board. “During her 11-year tenure, nearly \$30 million was invested in improving the health, early learning and family functioning for thousands of children.

“Although we will miss Julie’s visionary and collaborative leadership, we are glad she will lead a neighboring First 5 and we will have the opportunity to work with her on issues affecting children 0 to 5 years of age from a regional perspective.”

Gallelo, a passionate advocate for programs that provide a positive impact in the lives of children, was philosophical about her departure.

“It has been my honor to be part of the commission’s evolution during the past 11 years, from hiring our outstanding staff, to building partnerships with our grantees, to leveraging millions of dollars for Yolo’s children and families,” she said in a news release.

“We’ve moved from funding ‘an inch deep and a mile wide’ to more narrow and deep funding of evidence-based programs. It has been a true privilege to work with such a dedicated, passionate and talented group of people and I will always remain a champion for kids in Yolo County.”

Key outcomes achieved by First 5 Yolo during Gallelo’s tenure include the formation of the Up4WestSac preschool program, which provided high-quality preschool for more than 3,000 youngsters; a 65-percent increase in early learning activities at the Yolo County Library; and a doubling of the number of licensed foster parents in Yolo County.

Ten years ago, First 5 Yolo launched its Children’s Health Initiative, and now, 97 percent of the children in Yolo County have health insurance.

Seven years ago, the Integrated Family Support Initiative was born out of the commission’s strategic planning process that pinpointed areas of the greatest need in Yolo County. The initiative ensured that high-risk mothers are getting intensive education and support through home visits in the Step-by-Step program, and thousands of children are visiting a dentist who otherwise might not received dental care.

Other investments in the community included training and technical assistance to raise quality at child care centers and homes; emergency child care placements for foster children at the Yolo Crisis Nursery; support for early literacy activities at the Yolo County Library; fresh food distribution; and parenting classes.

“Julie’s commitment to children and experience cannot be bought nor easily replaced,” said Commissioner Donita Stromgren, a Davis resident. “I thank Julie for all her work in support of the commission. I suspect that we don’t even know yet how much she will be missed.”

Added Commissioner Sue Heitman from the Capay Valley, “I can tell you that Yolo County has received numerous accolades and recognition and funds only because of Julie’s efforts. Julie has brought positive light on all of us serving First 5 Yolo as well as lifelong benefits to a generation of children in Yolo County.

“It is not surprising she was selected by our larger sister county for its executive director position, as they realize what an excellent person and executive Julie has been for us. Truly our loss and their gain.”

First 5 Yolo plans to appoint an interim executive director and then conduct a broad search for a new executive leader. The transition in leadership is occurring as First 5 Yolo embarks on its new 2015-18 strategic plan emphasizing improved child health, improved child development and improved family functioning services.

For more information, visit [www.First5Yolo.org](http://www.First5Yolo.org).