

Profile

Frances

First Name

Contreras

Last Name

[Empty text box for Email Address]

Email Address

[Empty text box for Street Address]

Street Address

[Empty text box for City]

City

CA
State

93427
Postal Code

Indicate Supervisor Who Will Receive a Copy of your Application *

Third District - Joan Hartmann

[Empty text box for Primary Phone]

Primary Phone

[Empty text box for Alternate Phone]

Alternate Phone

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

FIRST 5, CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMISSION: Submitted

Reference 1 Name

Reference 1 Address

[Empty text box for Reference 1 Address]

Reference 1 Telephone

[Empty text box for Reference 1 Telephone]

Reference 1 Occupation

Reference 2 Name

Reference 2 Address

[Empty text box for Reference 2 Address]

Reference 2 Telephone

Reference 2 Occupation

Reference 3 Name

Reference 3 Address

Reference 3 Telephone

Reference 3 Occupation

If you are now, or have ever been employed by the County of Santa Barbara, please list the department in which you worked, your title, and the dates you were employed.

N/A

Interests & Experiences

Please explain why you are interested in serving, and what experience you bring to the Committee. Attach additional documentation as necessary.

I am interested in serving on the First 5 Santa Barbara County Commission because I am an invested community member who has dedicated her vocation to serving children and families. I believe it is a social responsibility to support children and families in thriving, and that the strength of our county depends on it. My commitment to this work is both personal and professional. I am a Chicana, Latina woman of Indigenous American and Mexican heritage, a daughter of an immigrant, a mother, and bilingual. My career has been shaped by lived experiences that affirmed the transformative power of high-quality early childhood and out-of-school-time programs and by witnessing firsthand the barriers that too many children and families face in accessing them. I am driven by a deep belief that education is the pathway to empowerment, and that early childhood programs provide critical access and opportunity, especially for children facing the greatest systemic barriers. I believe representation matters on commissions like this one, particularly representation that reflects the communities most in need of advocacy. County demographics make clear that the children least likely to enter school ready are disproportionately low-income Latino children in our northern communities: Santa Maria, Guadalupe, Orcutt, and Nipomo. Cultural competency and lived proximity to these communities plus the ability to apply this lens in a transformational leadership capacity, thinking critically about how systems can better uplift and engage families are not supplemental. They are essential. I also bring a clear understanding of what moves the needle for young children and their families. School readiness is not built in isolation. It is built through stable basic needs, strong parent-child attunement, families honored and supported as their child's first teacher, culturally responsive and trauma-informed care, and a coordinated continuum from birth through the Kindergarten entry point. I am committed to supporting a county ecosystem where all of these elements are in place and where every child, regardless of zip code or circumstance, has access to the early experiences that set the foundation for a thriving life. This opportunity would allow me to contribute my perspective, my relationships, and my commitment to a broader system of support for the children and families of Santa Barbara County.

Give any information explaining qualifications, experience, training, education, volunteer activities, community organization memberships, or personal interests that bear on your application for the above Board, Commission or Committee. Attach additional documentation as necessary.

I have dedicated 16 years of my professional career to serving children and families across the early childhood, expanded learning, and youth development landscape. I currently serve as Director of Programs and Partnerships at United Way of Santa Barbara County, where I provide strategic leadership for a countywide portfolio of academic achievement programs serving approximately 2,500 children annually in partnership with multiple school districts. In this role, I have the privilege of working with school districts and community partners throughout the county, from Guadalupe through Carpinteria. This work has given me firsthand insight into community needs, regional demographics, and the specific barriers facing children and families across diverse geographies. I bring direct experience in program strategy, cross-sector partnership development, and advancing student outcomes through high-quality out-of-school-time and early learning programs. My academic credentials and professional background reflect and support this work: • Master of Arts in Literacy and Language Arts, Loyola Marymount University • Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, California State University Northridge • Multiple Subject Teaching Credential • Child Development Program Director Permit I am currently a member of the inaugural cohort of First 5 Santa Barbara County's Aligned Leadership for Results Program a cross-sector leadership development initiative that is a direct component of First 5's Strategic Plan, designed to strengthen collaboration and accelerate Kindergarten readiness. I am midway through the program and am part of a cohort focused on high-quality early childhood care and development experiences, including the value of nature-based and environmentally equitable learning environments that support children's wellness and learning holistically. This experience has deepened my understanding of the early childhood ecosystem in Santa Barbara County, strengthened my cross-sector relationships, and reinforced my commitment to contributing to this work at the systems level.

Demographics

Ethnicity

Hispanic

Gender

Female

Date of Birth

Education Completed:

Master of Arts - Literacy and Language Arts, Loyola Marymount University Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, California State University, Northridge Teaching Credential - Multiple Subject Child Development Program Director Permit

Please Agree with the Following Statement

I agree that upon submission of this application all information provided is a matter of public record, and is subject to disclosure.

I Agree *

Frances Contreras

REFERENCES

Katya Armistead

Co-Executive Director, Leading from Within
Board Member, Santa Barbara County Education Office

Sierra Loughridge

Superintendent
Solvang School District

Hilda Maldonado

Superintendent
Santa Barbara Unified School District