



NEW TALK. READ. SING.[®] ADS DEBUT



The newest iteration of the *Talk. Read. Sing.* It changes everything[®] campaign includes a vibrant mix of live action and animation. These new ads show parents engaging verbally with their young children, combined with an original song and some fun animation. Our three new animated ambassadors (a talking parrot, a reading owl, and a songbird) continue to reinforce the three important engaging activities parents and caregivers need to do with their children every day to ensure strong brain development—starting from birth.

The new ads took flight Monday, February 27 across a variety of multi-lingual media, and will continue throughout the year. You also will see last year's ads included in the mix. Look for them on TV, radio, online (including digital ads, social media, and the First 5 California Parent Website), and on resource materials distributed on the First 5 Express. ✨

Camille's Corner

Camille Maben, Executive Director, First 5 California



It is Sunday afternoon at the beginning of March, and within the last 24 hours we have seen a combination of wind, rain, clouds, and sunny weather. It has been a constant state of transition, much like what we are experiencing at the federal level. Transitions generally make people feel anxious, uncertain, and nervous. Our work as advocates, funders, and service providers has never been more important. We can provide hope, create optimism, and serve families to build a positive foundation for their children to thrive in the future.

First 5 California looks forward to the opportunity to share California's policies and programs with our federal counterparts and find common ground that will benefit children and families across the nation. Even as we continue to educate the public on the power of early brain development through our *Talk. Read. Sing.*[®] campaign, enhance and build early childhood systems through First 5 IMPACT, support dual language learners (DLL) through our DLL Pilot, and advocate for paid family leave and stronger early learning and family strengthening supports, there is still much work to do.

I have had the opportunity to see optimism and hope in action. I visited the Fresno Language Project that works diligently to improve DLL services to families and children. Supports include strengthening family engagement, environment design, and oral language development—all based on best practices. This collaboration between First 5 Fresno, Fresno Unified School District, Early Head Start, Head Start, and the Central Valley Children Services Network is powerful and making an incredible difference.

Other good First 5 California news includes the reappointment of our Chair George Halvorson and Commissioner Muntu Davis to another term on the Commission. Their expertise and commitment to young children bring a wealth of knowledge to our Commission.

Biggest news of all, I am going to be a "Noni" again. Our sixth grandchild is due in October. If that does not make you hopeful, I do not know what does. Happy Spring to all! ✨

In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10—the California Children and Families Act—and declared the importance of investing in a better future for California's youngest children. For the past 17 years, the California Children and Families Commission (First 5 California) has established quality standards and invested in the development of programs and services emphasizing improvement in early education, child care, social services, health care, research, and community awareness. The vision of First 5 California is for all of the state's children to receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA RECEIVES "SARA"



First 5 California (F5CA) was recognized by the California Department of General Services in January 2017 with a SARA (State Agency Recognition Award) for Most Improved Small Business Participation. Almost 80 percent of F5CA's contract dollars went to small businesses in Fiscal Year 2015–16, a 33 percent increase from the previous year.

Congratulation to the First 5 California Contracts and Procurement Office, which includes Kellie Westley, Director; Christina Kashuba; Debora Remington; Erik Miyao; and Joan Dutra (pictured here) for their work on all contracts—big and small. *



January Meeting of the State Commission

The First 5 California Children and Families Commission held its most recent quarterly meeting on January 26, 2017, in Sacramento. Below is a brief summary of the actions taken by the Commission during the meeting.

- The Commission approved rescheduling the date of the October 2017 Commission meeting from Thursday, October 26 to Thursday, October 19.
- The Commission voted to reappoint Joyce Iseri to Commission Vice Chair.
- The Commission approved the First 5 California Fiscal Year 2015–16 Annual Report, which now will be disseminated to the Governor, the Legislature, and First 5 county commissions.
- The Commission authorized \$3 million for a contract extension with ALOM Technologies through June 30, 2018, to continue the production and distribution of the current Kit for New Parents. Additionally, \$1.5 million was approved for the purchase of UC Berkeley's Parent Guide in printed and digital formats as a replacement for the Advice for New Parents book, which has been discontinued in the Kit.

The Commission approved an annual investment of up to \$8.625 million over four years, from Fiscal Years 2017–18 to 2020–21, for the Small Population County Funding Augmentation (SPCFA). The new SPCFA funding formula will not reduce current baseline funding. However, the formula includes "trigger" language to allow First 5 California to reduce budget-year funding if revenues decrease by 7 percent or more than anticipated in the first five months of each fiscal year. For more specific information and details on the SPCFA, please go to [Item 11](#) of the January Commission meeting.

An additional meeting of the State Commission occurred on February 24, 2017. The meeting provided commissioners, First 5 California staff, and members of the public the opportunity to review and discuss the Strategic Plan and make any necessary amendments for the remaining two years of the Plan. The agenda is available [here](#).

The next quarterly meeting of the State Commission will take place in Sacramento on Thursday, April 27, 2017. *

DEPARTURE OF COMMISSIONER ERIN PAK

On February 1, 2017, First 5 California received notice from State Commissioner Erin Pak of her resignation from the Commission, effective immediately. Commissioner Pak expressed how much she has enjoyed her tenure on the Commission, and she wished us well in the work we are doing. Once her replacement is determined by the Senate Rules Committee, we will send an announcement of the appointment. *

Parent Voices, the Child Care Law Center, and First 5 California Lead the Charge on Child Care Eligibility

First 5 California is proud to announce co-sponsorship of AB 60 (Santiago/Gonzalez Fletcher), with our partners at Parent Voices and the Child Care Law Center, in order to modernize how working parents become eligible for necessary child care subsidies. Currently, the State Budget has frozen the eligibility threshold for state-subsidized child care, including the state preschool program, at 70 percent of the State Median Income (SMI) from 2005. This means that despite over a decade of cost of living increases, cost of child care increases, and mandatory increases in the state minimum wage, families have been stuck in time at an outdated eligibility level. This artificially low eligibility level guides how families are able to receive, and are forced to lose, their child care subsidy.

The current eligibility threshold means that a single mom with two children is both ineligible for a child care subsidy or gets kicked out of her existing subsidy if she makes even \$1 dollar more than 70 percent of the State Median Income from 2005, or \$42,216 per year. With full-

time child care costs easily exceeding \$1,000 or more per child, per month, California still chooses to define need at a gross income of only \$3,518 per month. By comparison, 70 percent of the 2015 SMI is 42 percent higher at \$5,010 per month, and \$60,122 per year for a family of three.

AB 60 will modernize the SMI year for all child care programs, create a graduated exit threshold of up to 85 percent of the modern SMI, and allow families to receive a minimum of 12 months of care if they are experiencing minor pay changes. Updating of the eligibility level to 70 percent of the modern SMI will help the modern definition of working poor access these crucial, though limited, subsidies. AB 60 also will create moderate stability with a graduated exit level up to 85 percent of the modern SMI and a 12-month subsidy guarantee—making major strides to place quality, stable child care in reach for more working families.

For a sample letter of support for AB 60, please visit the First 5 California [website](#). ✨

California State Assembly Speaker's Blue Ribbon Commission Meets for First Time

Legislators, Community, and Early Learning Leaders Talk About Child Care

On March 6, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon convened the Speaker's Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education (BRC) for an inaugural meeting. In opening remarks, Speaker Rendon said he began his career in public service because of his commitment to early learning and felt compelled to establish this BRC in order to find ways to overcome the Great Recession-era budget cuts to early learning programs.

The BRC is an appointed commission consisting of Assemblymembers Cristina Garcia (Co-Chair), Kevin McCarty (Co-Chair), Phil Ting, Blanca Rubio, Marie Waldron, and Brian Maienschein. The BRC also includes nine appointed public members who are firmly rooted in many topics affecting early learning systems. They are experts in the fields of early learning and care systems and service delivery, public education/early education investments, parent engagement, and children and family service systems.



The BRC heard testimony from Erin Gabel, Deputy Director of External and Governmental Affairs Office, First 5 California; Donna Sneeringer, Child Care Alliance of Los Angeles; and Rowena Kamo, CA Child Care Resource & Referral Network. They provided insight and background

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COUNTY HIGHLIGHTS

First 5 Town Halls Engage Across California

Town hall forums provide a traditional and effective stage for local public engagement on policy issues, and drive home to elected officials and the general public the importance of a town hall's specific topics. Policy education for individual elected officials and policy makers in each county is a linchpin in furthering the goals of Proposition 10. In order to support a deeper role for First 5 county leaders in this policy education goal, First 5 California (F5CA) released the [First 5 Town Hall Toolkit](#) in 2016. This ambitious project was developed with assistance from the First 5 Association and First 5 Sacramento.

The very first First 5 Town Hall supported by the Toolkit was hosted by First 5 Placer on September 9, 2016, at Sierra College in Rocklin. The town hall brought together many local stakeholders, including Placer County Health and Human Services Agency, Placer Community Foundation, Placer County Office of Education, and Sierra College, who helped co-fund and co-host the event.

"This town hall created a tremendous opportunity for the community to bring together a diverse group of stakeholders to coalesce on issues that matter to us all," said First 5 Placer Executive Director, Janice LeRoux.

First 5 California's Executive Director Camille Maben and Whitney Staniford attended the first First 5 Toolkit-planned town hall. There, they enjoyed viewing "[Children and The Economic Outlook of Placer County](#)," a short video by First 5 Placer and its partners made for the event. They also enjoyed featured speaker Dr. Dowell Myers, a noted demographer and urban planner with the Sol Price School of Public Policy at the University of Southern California. His presentation graphically illustrated California's diminishing resource, its children. Dr. Myers' research links demographic data (census, surveys, and projections) with future trends in housing, workforce, education, taxpaying, voting, and immigration.

By all accounts, the town hall was a rousing success with more than 300 community leaders in attendance that included elected officials, advocates, educators,



Placer County Supervisor and First 5 Placer County Commissioner Jim Holmes, First 5 Placer County Executive Director Janice LeRoux, Dr. Dowell Myers, and First 5 California Executive Director Camille Maben.

school board members, youth service providers, law enforcement, and philanthropists.

Since the release of the First 5 Toolkit in June 2016, seven First 5 county commissions have used the Toolkit in planning their events, with several more on the way. All have had high attendance and enthusiastic participants

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Update to 2017–18 Children's Policy Agenda

In anticipation of a robust year of state and federal advocacy, First 5 California has updated its Children's Policy Agenda, including the agenda's mission statement:

"First 5 California will advocate for the strong start all children deserve, with an emphasis on children prenatal through age 5 and their families, to optimize early childhood development and reduce childhood poverty."

The Children's Policy Agenda will guide First 5 California's legislative and budget work for 2017. To view the entire updated document that encompasses all four areas of emphasis, click [here](#). *

Town Halls Engage Across California

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that are willing to engage and collaborate toward the common good of children and families in the local community, a great formula for a state policy success.

The town hall events have been very successful and unique to their local needs. To date, the Town Halls have included:

- First 5 Fresno County: “Early Childhood Matters in Fresno County: A live, televised conversation” on September 28, 2016. This Town Hall was broadcast with KSEE 24, a Fresno TV station, complete with advertising, news stories and interviews leading up to the event. Attendees included various levels of state and local elected officials and policy makers.
- In October 2016, First 5 San Joaquin held “A Town Hall Meeting: Improving the Oral Health of Our Children” at the Children’s Museum of Stockton. This event brought together many local stakeholders, and their event included a complementary tour of the museum.
- First 5 Riverside presented the “Third Supervisorial District Legislative Luncheon” in November 2016. This Town Hall was held at the Temecula Community Center and First 5 Riverside partnered with County Supervisor Chuck Washington (Third District).

- First 5 Humboldt has a co-convenor with State Senator Mike McGuire, hosting “Let’s Come Together for Our Kids: A Town Hall with Senator Mike McGuire and First 5 Humboldt” in December 2016. This event was held at the Humboldt Bay Aquatic Center.
- In January 2017, First 5 San Bernardino hosted “The State of Young Children—A Community Town Hall” at California State University San Bernardino’s Santos Manuel Student Center. Several state leaders, including Assemblymembers Tom Lackey and Eloise Reyes, attended along with representatives from the offices of Assemblymembers Steinorth and Cook.
- Also in January 2017, First 5 Sacramento hosted “Putting Kids First: A First 5 Sacramento Convening” at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria in Sacramento. There were approximately 125 community leaders from all levels of city, county, and state governmental offices, as well as many elected officials.

If you have any questions about the First 5 Town Hall program or if you are interested in receiving technical assistance for a local town hall, please contact [Whitney Staniford](#) for more information. In addition, F5CA hosted and archived a recorded “how to” webinar in support of the Toolkit. It is available [here](#). *



First 5 Advocacy Day at State Capitol

For the second consecutive year, First 5 California, the First 5 Association, and First 5 county commissions and their staff met at the State Capitol in Sacramento to engage the State Legislature, the Administration, and others about pressing policy and budget issues for children ages 0 to 5 in California.

On January 31, 2017, there were more than 100 advocacy meetings staffed by approximately 100 First 5 affiliated representatives on the delivery of early childhood services and our shared interest in building stronger systems to serve children at the state and local levels. Meetings helped highlight our common policy priorities in the areas of early learning, child health, and family strengthening. First 5 “Champion” posters covered the Capitol on the office doors of over 60 legislative members, including a beautiful “First 5 Impact” display by the First 5 Association in front of the Governor’s office.

First 5 Advocacy Day included a legislative reception, where Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian was recognized



as a “Champion for Children” for his enthusiastic support of First 5 the past year. The Assemblymember’s leadership has resulted in a return of millions of dollars annually to the First 5 Fund for children’s services that the Board of Equalization previously spent on tobacco licensing enforcement. ✨

California State Assembly Speaker’s Blue Ribbon Commission Meets for the First Time

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into California’s complex programmatic and funding systems, and issues each organization hopes the BRC will address in their deliberations.

“You uniquely do not have to be reactionary to a budget proposal or bill—you get to be visionary.” Ms. Gabel said, echoing the feeling of many commissioners during the hearing. Ms. Gabel further implored the BRC to act, adding the BRC, “...can set a concrete vision for what comprehensive child care and expanded learning can and should look like for California’s infants, preschoolers, and school-age children.”

The BRC is expected to engage in a series of hearings across California over the next year, with the intention of producing a comprehensive vision for early learning in California for children ages 0 to 5. Co-chair Assemblymember Kevin McCarty told the Commission he hopes the BRC will be able to influence the 2018 Gubernatorial candidate’s platforms on early learning, as well as set a course for the Legislature’s commitment.

For more information, visit the [Speaker’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Early Childhood Education](#) website. ✨