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First 5 California Commends State Leaders for Addressing Outdated Child Care Funding Model

Many children and families still left without access to affordable child care

SACRAMENTO – Today First 5 California Executive Director Camille Maben thanked Governor Brown and the California Legislature, including the Legislative Women’s Caucus and legislative leadership, for keeping their promise to prioritize the most pressing needs of California’s early learning system. This included updating the child care eligibility threshold and providing a modest increase to per-child funding rates.

“For over a decade, the eligibility levels for subsidized child care and preschool have been frozen. Updating family eligibility to address a more realistic and modern State Median Income preserves the ability for many minimum wage families to receive the child care parents need to work and their children need to thrive,” said Ms. Maben.

The final state budget deal, as approved by the Conference Committee last night, reflects a compromise between the Executive and Legislative branches on how to find room for modest child care funding increases this year. The deal provides almost a quarter of a billion dollars in increased funds for per-child funding rates for all child care programs, including a cost-of-living adjustment, and an over-due overhaul on how the state determines family eligibility for subsidized child care.

“We commend the Governor, Pro Tem de León, and Speaker Rendon for their leadership, and the restoration of nearly \$240 million in child care rate increases and child access. Quality care provides lifelong building blocks to greater outcomes for children. Preservation of the multi-year deal on per-child funding will help uphold the quality child care that research shows can provide up to a 13 percent return on investment,” added Ms. Maben.

There still are 70,000 fewer children being served today than in 2007. According to the California Policy and Budget Center, more than 1.2 million eligible children lack access to the subsidized child care their parents need to work. While First 5 California commends the Budget deal’s child care increases, it also recognizes these crucial, modest investments are making only a small dent in California’s child care access crisis.

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First 5 California was established in 1998 when voters passed Proposition 10, which taxes tobacco products to fund services for children ages 0 to 5 and their families. First 5 California programs and resources are designed to educate and support teachers, parents, and caregivers in the critical role they play during a child's first five years – to help California kids receive the best possible start in life and thrive. For more information, please visit www.cfc.ca.gov.