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California Continues To Prioritize Young Children *2025-2026 Budget Highlights Initiatives For All California Kids*

Sacramento, CA — First 5 California thanks the Governor and administration for their ongoing dedication to early childhood education, infant and early childhood health, and the protection of early childhood care systems outlined in the 2025-2026 budget proposal.

“As a champion for children aged 0 to 5, First 5 California commends the Governor and Legislature for advancing a budget rooted in values that prioritize young children and families,” said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director of First 5 California. “We are grateful for the Governor’s commitment to initiatives that provide meaningful support to families, such as free diapers for newborns, smaller class sizes and expanded learning opportunities in Transitional Kindergarten, and English proficiency tools for multilingual learners. These investments, along with First 5 California’s statewide programs like [Raise CA Strong](#) to address the childcare crisis, the [Fatherhood Initiative](#) and [This Is How Dads Do It podcast](#) to support fathers, and the [Dragon Song campaign](#) to promote young children’s mental health, create a lasting foundation for California’s families and communities.”

First 5 California remains steadfast in its mission to support the well-being of children during their critical early years. The organization drives impactful statewide initiatives such as the [Stronger Starts campaign](#), which raises awareness of toxic stress response in young children. Additionally, [programs supporting maternal health, educator professional development, and parenting resources](#) are further strengthening California’s early childhood landscape. Wong added, “While the decline in tobacco tax revenue challenges the sustainability of our programs, this budget represents a vital step in protecting and expanding essential services that reflect a deep commitment to equity and opportunity for all.”

The budget proposal underscores significant long-term investments aligning with First 5 California’s mission to deliver healing-centered, equity-focused programs. Recognizing that 90 percent of brain development occurs during the first five years of life, First 5 California provides essential services to children ages 0 to 5, including family strengthening programs, infant and early childhood mental health services, and high-quality early learning and literacy initiatives.

To maintain this momentum, First 5 California will continue advocating for robust state investments that help ensure the future of these essential programs so that all of California's youngest children thrive for generations to come.

To learn more, visit www.ccfc.ca.gov.

ABOUT FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA:

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 their critical role 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.ccfc.ca.gov.

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