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First 5 California Responds to Governor Newsom's May Revision to 2025-26 Budget Proposal

SACRAMENTO, CA – First 5 California acknowledges the Governor's 2025-26 May Revision, which preserves support for several key programs supporting young children and their families. While the May Revision reflects meaningful progress, the organization urges state leaders to go further in securing critical health and wellness investments for all California children, especially those facing systemic barriers.

"First 5 California is encouraged to see that the Governor's May Revision includes vital resources for children and families, including Universal TK, childcare, nutrition, education, and healthcare," said First 5 California Executive Director Jackie Thu-Huong Wong. "These investments lay an important foundation for California's families and communities. However, there is still more work to be done. We remain committed to working with the Governor's administration to further increase investments in areas like childcare, ACEs, and ensuring all children – regardless of immigration status – are cared for."

While there are bright spots for young children and the First 5 California policy agenda in the revised budget proposal, there also are challenges. Overall, the revised budget underscores California's commitment to supporting and strengthening learning development and opportunities for young children. With significant investments in Universal Transitional Kindergarten (TK) and expanded learning opportunities, the budget aligns with First 5 California's key priorities. However, additional investments are needed to bolster the childcare sector, providing critical and urgent economic security to both providers and working families, and to strengthen the early care and learning foundation for our 2- and 3-year-old children.

The May Revision includes additional support for the ACEs Aware initiative, supplying \$2.9 million aimed at additional ACEs provider trainings. First 5 California applauds this commitment as a critical step toward maintaining trauma-informed care across the state. The ACEs Aware program equips Medi-Cal providers with training and tools to screen for adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and deliver culturally responsive care. However, this modest investment falls short of the \$50 million needed to fully



sustain and grow the program. First 5 California joins a coalition of partners in urging the Legislature to fully fund the program.

“We are grateful the Governor’s May Revision continues to prioritize programs children and their families need to thrive,” Wong added. “However, we remain concerned that key areas like behavioral health, immigrant family access to care, and trauma-informed services are facing serious setbacks at a time when California families need more, not less, support.”

First 5 California also strongly opposes the proposed \$20 million cut to the Mental Health Wellness Act. This funding was set to support five-year grants for maternal mental health and early childhood behavioral health services—resources that are urgently needed and, in some communities, irreplaceable.

“These are not just budget line items. Behind every proposed cut is a child, a parent, a provider—someone whose future is impacted by what we choose to invest in,” said Wong. “We must not shortchange behavioral health care for children 0-5 or maternal mental health when families are navigating an increasingly complex landscape of challenges.”

The \$20 million currently funds essential services to serve pregnant and postpartum individuals, children from birth to age 5, and their families. These investments help reduce out-of-home placements, improve educational outcomes, and identify developmental delays and behavioral health risks early on. The funding also supports partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) that deliver behavioral health care, developmental assessments, educational resources, and connections to vital support services.

The proposed Medi-Cal reductions in the May Revision for healthcare access for undocumented adults ages 19–64 also raise significant concerns. Many California children live in mixed-status households, and when caregivers are denied access to medical care, their children suffer as well, whether through direct exposure to illness, financial hardship, or emotional stress. Public health does not discriminate, and viruses and chronic illnesses don’t ask for immigration documents. Protecting the health of California’s children means protecting the health of the entire family.



As California faces challenging fiscal decisions, First 5 California urges state leaders to preserve and expand support for early childhood systems. Now is the time to double down on investments that ensure all families, regardless of background, income, or immigration status, can thrive.