

## 2023-24 YOUNG CHILDREN'S POLICY AGENDA

First 5 California's Young Children's Policy Agenda guides and prioritizes the state and federal public policy and regulatory advocacy, aligned to our Mission Statement and Strategic Plan. The four policy pillars ensure that First 5 California can meet its Audacious Goal that "in a generation, all children 0–5 will have the **safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments** necessary to achieve healthy development."

First 5 California's North Star articulates our commitment to trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive systems that promote the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to eliminate inequities and ensure healthy development for all children.





## **BUILD RESILIENT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES**

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- Support efforts to ensure economic security and financial stability for families and children through:
  - Expansion of paid family leave programs
  - Creation and continuation of tax credits and incentives
  - Investments in stable food and housing security

## **OPTIMIZE CHILD HEALTH**

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- Ensure that families and children have access to equitable and just health care coverage and services, that also include:
  - Adverse childhood experience screening
  - Behavioral and mental health
  - Developmental screenings, referrals, and access to appropriate early intervention services
  - Prenatal and postpartum care, such as doula services and home visitation programs
  - Intervention and preventive care
  - Nutritional programs and services

## **STRENGTHEN THE STATE'S QUALITY EARLY LEARNING MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM**

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- Promote access to safe, high-quality early care and education programs for infants, toddlers, and children through age 5 via statewide rate reform efforts based on equitable and professional compensation, foster diversity in the field, and provide continuous professional development.
- Address workforce capacity needs of child care, preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten educators and support staff through recruitment and retention initiatives, such as the development of micro-credentialing and apprenticeship programs, in partnership with community-based organizations, higher education institutions, and credentialing preparation programs.

## **PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS**

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- Advocate for funding prioritization and inclusion of children, prenatal to age 5 and their families, in existing and new revenue policy proposals and tax funding structures.
- Support braiding and leveraging opportunities that provide fiscal resiliency to the First 5 Network, which includes the First 5 California State Commission, the First 5 Association, and the 58 local First 5 county commissions to ensure in each of California's 58 counties every family and child has access to critical prenatal through age 5 services and programs.

## **HOW WILL WE DO THIS?**

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- Leverage and strengthen relationships with state agencies, community-based organizations, and private sector to co-design and support family resiliency policies via a whole-child, whole-family, whole-community framework.
- Improve accessibility and eligibility policies, as well as streamline protocols for family and children support services through local, state, and federal agency coordination.
- Support the implementation and expansion of a high-quality early learning mixed-delivery system through collaborative efforts with federal, local, and state agencies and partners to meet families' needs and ensure every child is school ready.