

PRESS RELEASE



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First 5 Network Responds to Governor Newsom's Proposed 2025-2026 Budget

SACRAMENTO, CA (January 10, 2025)—The First 5 Network, which includes First 5 California, the First 5 Association of California, and First 5 LA, issued the following statements regarding Governor Gavin Newsom's proposed 2025-2026 budget:

Governor Newsom's proposed 2025 budget presents an important opportunity to strengthen California's investment in its youngest children, ensuring that every child has the foundation to thrive during their critical early years. The First 5 Network appreciates the Governor and administration for maintaining their commitment to investments in early care and education rates and the continued rollout of additional childcare spaces. The Network looks forward to working with the Governor and the Legislature to further prioritize the health and well-being of the state's young children and their families by maintaining funding for key health and mental health initiatives.

First 5 Association – Attributed to Avo Makedessian, Executive Director, First 5 Association of California

"In order to better meet the needs of California's babies, toddlers, and preschoolers, First 5 Commissions from across the state look forward to working with the administration and the legislature to ensure that they have access to the physical and mental health care that they need. Specifically, First 5 Association urges the Governor and Legislature to commit funding to implement continuous Medi-Cal eligibility for children age 0-5, which has been shown to have a measurable impact on reducing the uninsured rate for Californian children. First 5 Association also supports the reauthorization of the ACES Aware program, California's first-in-the-nation initiative that screens children for adverse experiences and provides community-based interventions and support to mitigate the long-term effects of trauma and toxic stress."

First 5 California

"First 5 California deeply appreciates the Governor and Legislature for their prioritization of investments in young children and families in the 2025 budget proposal," said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, First 5 California Executive Director. "As a leading voice advocating for universal Transitional Kindergarten, multilingual learners and supporting the basic needs of children 0 to 5, First 5 California thanks the Governor for investing in California's families and

helping to shape California's future through initiatives like providing free diapers to all families with newborns, strengthening Transitional Kindergarten with lower student-to-adult ratios and expanded learning programs, and supporting young multilingual learners with English proficiency tools. These investments solidify essential resources for California's young children, families, and communities."

First 5 LA

"With the unprecedented wildfires that have devastated communities across Los Angeles County, First 5 LA would like to thank Governor Newsom for his swift response, and we are ready to work with local and state partners in recovery efforts once the immediate threat has been addressed," said Karla Pleitez Howell, First 5 LA President and CEO. "First 5 LA remains steadfast in our commitment to advocating for policies and programs to ensure that children and families have the basic needs essential to creating supportive environments and that are foundational to well-being, lifelong learning, and success. We will continue to prioritize investments in wholistic services such as home visiting, and community health workers, and supporting the state's early care and education rate reform process to increase access to child care and adequately compensates providers for the true cost to care for our children. In the coming months, we look forward to working with state leaders to finalize a budget that is responsive to the needs of families and ensures long-term funding to support not only a resilient but a thriving California."

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About First 5 Association

The First 5 Association of California (F5AC) elevates the voice of the 58 county First 5s, created by voters in 1998 to ensure our youngest children are healthy, safe and ready to thrive in school and life. The First 5 Network impacts the lives of more than 1 million kids, families and caregivers each year. F5AC advocates for the state's youngest kids, uniting partners and leveraging funding to improve and scale up California's early childhood programming piloted by county First 5s. Learn more at www.first5association.org

About First 5 LA

As one of the state's largest funders of early childhood and an independent public agency, First 5 LA advocates for children and their families, amplifies community voice, and partners for collective impact so that every child in Los Angeles County reaches their full developmental potential throughout the critical years of prenatal to age 5. Learn more at www.first5la.org.

About First 5 California

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 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.cafc.ca.gov.