



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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First 5 Association Calls on Governor Newsom to Protect The Health and Wellness of Young Children and their Families

SACRAMENTO—The First 5 Association of California, representing First 5 Commissions across the state's 58 counties, issued the following statement regarding Governor Gavin Newsom's revised May budget proposal.

The following can be attributed to Avo Makdessian, Executive Director of First 5 Association of California:

In this budget climate, we are encouraged to see the Governor's revised May budget proposal maintains the commitment to more child care slots and rate increases, and a modest investment in the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Aware program. At the same time, we are disheartened that the state may walk back its commitment to continuous Medi-Cal enrollment for children 0-5, freeze Medi-Cal enrollment for undocumented adults, and cut the Emergency Child Care Bridge Program. On top of the cuts being decided at the federal level, this budget threatens to undermine the community-based support system First 5s have built across California.

First 5s are working tirelessly in every county, transforming state policy into on-the-ground support for families in need. When Medi-Cal coverage is scaled back for adults without legal status, children in those families suffer. Decades of research are clear: Healthy parents lead to healthy kids.

While we recognize the need to close a \$12 billion deficit, reductions in state resources are compounded by ongoing federal cuts to community-driven programs like AmeriCorps, which partners with First 5s to reach families in California's rural areas where social services are sparse. As the Governor and Legislature work to complete the 2025-26 budget, we urge them to prioritize California's youngest children as the state's most valuable investment.

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About First 5 Association of California

First 5 Association of California represents the state's 58 county First 5 Commissions. Together, First 5 supports over one million children and families each year, advancing policies and investments that ensure young children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The Association works to advance state and federal public policies and funding that support California's young children and families. Our policy work is informed by local communities and local First 5 Commissions and is grounded in a whole child / whole family lens. We do this while centering the fact that low-income communities, communities of color, and historically marginalized Californians face disproportionate impacts due to systemic racism, wealth inequality, and environmental hazards. Learn more at www.first5association.org.