

# PRESS RELEASE



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## **First 5 Network Responds to May Revise Proposals that Impact California's Youngest Children**

The First 5 Network, which includes First 5 California, the First 5 Association of California, and First 5 LA, issued the following regarding Governor Gavin Newsom's revised May 2025-2026 budget proposal:

Governor Newsom's revised 2025 budget presents significant challenges for California's youngest children and their families. While the First 5 Network appreciates the Governor and administration for maintaining their commitment to additional child care slots and increasing rates, we are concerned that these investments in early care and education are undermined by the proposal to suspend cost-of-living adjustments for providers. The Network is further concerned by the proposal to cut funding for the Emergency Child Care Bridge program in half. This program is critical to ensure that children in foster care who have access to trauma-informed and appropriate child care and provides essential support for foster families.

The First 5 Network was encouraged by the administration's decision to increase investments in Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Aware by \$2.9M for next year, preventing the complete sunset of the ACEs Aware initiative, which would have had devastating consequences for the long-term health and well-being of California's families. We are hopeful that the Governor and Legislature can work toward fully restoring \$50 million in funding for ACEs Aware moving forward to ensure it is able to fully meet the needs of California children and families who have experienced trauma.

The proposed roll-back of Medi-Cal coverage for undocumented adults undermines the health and wellness of California's immigrant families at a time when they are facing significant threats from the federal administration. When Medi-Cal coverage is scaled back for adults without legal status, children in those families also suffer. Decades of research are clear: Healthy parents lead to healthy kids.

First 5 Association Executive Director, Avo Makdessian:

First 5s are working tirelessly in every county, transforming state policy into on-the-ground support for families in need.

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.

First 5 California Executive Director, Jackie Thu-Huong Wong:

"First 5 California is encouraged to see that the Governor's May Revise includes vital resources for children and families, including Universal TK, childcare, nutrition, education, and healthcare. 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 and ACEs, and ensuring all children – regardless of immigration status – are cared for."

First 5 LA President and CEO, Karla Pleitéz Howell

At First 5 LA, we remain steadfast in our commitment to immigrant and mixed-status families who are integral members of our communities, our workforce, and the cultural richness of Los Angeles County and California," said First 5 LA President and CEO, Karla Pleitéz Howell. "While we appreciate that the May Revise maintains funding for the full implementation of universal transitional kindergarten for all four-year-olds and investments in literacy programs with a focus on supporting multilingual learners, there are still threats to critical safety net programs and vital supports like health care, early care and education, and family services which remain out of reach for far too many."

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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](http://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](http://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](http://www.cafc.ca.gov).