

Senior Policy Research Associate

Position Overview

The First 5 Center for Children's Policy (First 5 Center) is California's leading research and policy think tank dedicated to improving early childhood systems. Grounded in the experiences of California's First 5 county commissions, the First 5 Center develops state-level, sustainable policy solutions to support California's infants and toddlers and their families. The First 5 Center is housed within the [First 5 Association of California](#) and our teams work together as one.

We are seeking a **Policy Research Associate or Senior Policy Research Associate** to contribute to the development of our policy research portfolio. This member of our team will lead aspects of our research portfolio, with emphasis on home visiting, early childhood mental health, early care and education, and economic security interventions and policies. The Senior level requires a graduate degree and 5 years of relevant experience, with an expectation of greater independence in leading complex projects.

Reporting to the Director of Policy Research and Development, our new teammate is smart and self-motivated with a passion for social justice and a track record of using research to understand complex issues. This is a great position for a professional looking to deepen their policy acumen and contribute to a dynamic, committed, and passionate team.

Key Responsibilities

- Research and Analysis:
 - Lead research and policy analysis projects grounded in our Strategic Framework.
 - Conduct a range of research activities including: literature reviews, design and execution of surveys, interviews and focus groups, and quantitative analysis.
 - Monitor and analyze important federal and state policy updates and opportunities related to our core policy research goals both independently and in collaboration with the team.
 - Develop and shape salient, accessible, actionable research products that advance the prenatal to 5 field, including reports, briefs, memos, blogs, and presentations.
- Communication and Representation
 - Create well-crafted data visualizations, charts, tables, spreadsheets, and other communication tools for internal and external use.
 - Represent the organization and present First 5 Center research in a variety of external spaces including with First 5 county commissions, consultants, media, coalitions, funders, state leaders, conferences, and other stakeholders.

- Support partnerships with state departments, peer association organizations, and other early childhood advocacy organizations.
- Organizational Collaboration
 - Support the Director of Policy Research and Development in identifying and planning for research priorities and projects.
 - Work collaboratively with colleagues, bridging work across our government affairs and network relations portfolios.
 - Contribute to the development of new funding proposals, document progress, and contribute to regular reporting.
 - Embody our core values and ensure work is guided by organizational commitments.

Qualifications

- Mission-driven with a demonstrated passion for improving outcomes for California families and a commitment to equity.
- Policy thinker, with an interest in systems and root causes.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build relationships with a wide range of partners.
- Ability to communicate complex information in an understandable and compelling manner to a variety of audiences, both in writing and verbally.
- Talented time manager, able to manage multiple projects and meet deadlines.
- Self-starter and problem solver, guided by curiosity, pragmatism and critical thinking.
- A nimble adapter to new technology.
- Prior experience working with or researching early childhood programs and systems (home visiting, early childhood mental health, early care and education) or economic security interventions and policies preferred.
- Demonstrated ability to bridge California families' day-to-day experiences with the implementation of state and local policies, ensuring that programs and services are responsive, equitable, and informed by lived realities.
- Senior Policy Research Associate level requires 5 years of relevant experience and a related graduate degree.

This position offers an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to our mission while working in alignment with the core values that define who we are. Candidates who resonate with these principles may find a sense of purpose and belonging on our team.

Steadfast: We reliably move toward our goals while navigating changing contexts.

(Com)passion: We are intensely passionate about our work and we show up with empathy, thoughtfulness, and curiosity.

Rooted in Diversity: Everything we do is human-centered, deeply and firmly guided by multiple perspectives, especially perspectives that are currently and historically marginalized

Visionary Action: We are proactive trailblazers who see the big picture and innovate solutions for the future.

Location and Travel

- Position location: Remote and must reside in California.
- In person meetings in Sacramento, CA at least monthly. Frequent travel within California to connect with First 5 counties. A valid California Class C Driver license with valid automobile insurance or the ability to utilize an alternative method of transportation is required to carry out job-related essential functions.

Compensation and Benefits

Annual salary starts at \$75,000 for Policy Research Associate or \$87,500 for a Senior Policy Research Associate.

First 5 Association is proud to offer a robust benefits package to promote a healthy work life balance. Employee benefits include remote work structure with support to set up a home office; 100% employer paid coverage of medical, dental and vision for employee plus family; retirement with generous employer match; 19 paid holidays (including a 7 day winter break); generous vacation and sick time bank and accrual; flex spending account for medical and dependent care costs; Employee Assistance Program (EAP); and, paid group life insurance, short and long term disability insurance.

It is the policy of First 5 Association to afford equal opportunity in all aspects of employment to all persons without discrimination on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, physical or mental disabilities, color, marital status, sexual orientation or medical condition, or any other basis protected by law. This policy shall apply to all employees and applicants for employment, and extends to all phases of employment, including hiring, training, promotion, discharge or layoff, rehiring, compensation and benefits.

Please send a cover letter, resume, and writing sample, combined into one PDF document, to applications@first5association.org. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis until the position is filled.

About First 5 Association of California

First 5 Association of California is a member organization that supports the 58 county commissions and works with our members, First 5 California, and many external partners and experts to advance programs, systems and policies to improve early childhood outcomes in California. Grounded in a whole child/whole family framework that advances equity, prevention and systems coordination, First 5 seeks to build comprehensive and integrated early childhood systems of care, with an intentional focus on Prenatal-3 during this critical stage of child development. First 5's policy framework aims to build state and federal systems of care that proactively support the wellbeing of children and families and focus on those farthest from opportunity, recognizing the disproportionate impacts that poverty, systemic racism, COVID-19, and natural disasters have had on low-income people and communities of color.