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Contact: Courtney Armstrong

[courtney@first5association.org](mailto:courtney@first5association.org)

## **First 5 Association Responds to the Governor's Proposed 2026-27 Budget**

SACRAMENTO— The First 5 Association of California, representing First 5 commissions across the state that serve more than 1 million children and families each year, issued the following statement regarding Governor Gavin Newsom's January budget proposal.

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

"While we appreciate the Governor's effort to protect vulnerable populations, particularly in light of the increased costs as a result of the Federal Budget (H.R.1), we are cautious about the direction of the state and federal economy and mounting federal threats to vital safety net programs. If economic conditions worsen, we urge the Administration to uphold its commitment to preserving access to care for California's most vulnerable young children and their families.

"We look forward to working with the Legislature and the Administration to ensure that funding for infant and early childhood mental health, and child care, are prioritized, particularly as the need for these services continues to grow. California families are facing compounding and intensifying stressors. Our youngest children cannot wait for care.

"Despite fiscal uncertainty and intensifying federal threats, First 5s remain on the ground every day as trusted, community-rooted partners, coordinating services for young children and their families and improving systemwide collaboration. Our statewide First 5 Network will continue fighting for positive impact in local communities. We call on state leaders to match that commitment with sustained investment in our youngest children."

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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 county First 5 Commissions and local communities 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](http://www.first5association.org).