



**For Immediate Release**  
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**California Surgeon General Burke Harris Partners with  
First 5 California to Raise Awareness of Talk. Read. Sing.®**

*California Surgeon General to promote steps parents and caregivers can take to help children get the best start in life.*

**Sacramento, Calif.** — California’s first Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, is partnering with First 5 California to help promote its landmark Talk. Read. Sing.® campaign in a new television and radio campaign.

Talk. Read. Sing.® is a scientifically based, nationally recognized campaign that has reached millions of families across California with information on the importance of talking, reading, and singing to babies and young children, and the positive impact these activities have on brain development. These activities will not only help them succeed in life, but also help prepare them for moments of stress and upheaval.

“We are honored to have Dr. Burke Harris support the work of First 5 California. Her dedication to children and work on childhood trauma makes her an ideal spokesperson for First 5 California and our mission to make sure every child in California gets the best start in life,” said Camille Maben, Executive Director of First 5 California. “There is perhaps no better time to emphasize the importance of connecting with children through Talk. Read. Sing.® It enriches the lives of children and parents alike.”

Appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom in January 2019, Dr. Burke Harris has made the health and welfare of children a priority of her work, especially by focusing attention and resources on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). ACEs are stressful or traumatic events experienced during childhood, including abuse, neglect, and other familial disruptions, such as the loss of household income, mental illness, substance abuse, and parental separation or divorce. Studies have shown ACEs can impact brain development and cause other health-related issues.

"As many individuals and families are experiencing heightened levels of stress due to coronavirus, talking, reading, and singing to little ones can help buffer the negative impacts of stress, which are important for keeping children healthy," said Dr. Burke Harris. "Talk. Read. Sing. is a powerful tool for families to help develop kids' brains and bodies, and create strong emotional bonds with babies and young children. I am excited to work with First 5 California and help amplify and support their critical work for the families of California."

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Dr. Burke Harris will appear in a quarterly series of thirty-second television and radio spots that will begin airing throughout the state at the end of March. She also will help raise awareness through public statements and appearances about the campaign and other resources First 5 California and the 58 county commissions have available for families with young children.

For more information about First 5 California, visit [www.cafc.ca.gov](http://www.cafc.ca.gov). For parental information and resources, visit [www.first5california.com](http://www.first5california.com).

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#### **ABOUT 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).*

#### **ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA SURGEON GENERAL:**

*The role of the California Surgeon General was created in 2019 by Governor Gavin Newsom with the understanding that some of the most pernicious, but least addressed health challenges are the upstream factors that eventually become chronic and acute conditions that are far more difficult and expensive to treat. The role of the California Surgeon General is to advise the Governor, serve as a leading spokesperson on matters of public health, and marshal the insights and energy of medical professionals, scientists, public health experts, public servants, and everyday Californians to drive solutions to our most pressing public health challenges. As California's first Surgeon General, Dr. Nadine Burke Harris has established early childhood, health equity, and ACEs and toxic stress as key priorities.*