

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **First 5 Network Responds to May Budget Revision**

SACRAMENTO, CA (May 16, 2023) - On Friday, May 12, 2023, Governor Newsom released the May Revision that maintains his consistency and promise from January to minimize the effects of a declining economy away from our state's most vulnerable constituents. In the face of a growing budget deficit, Governor Newsom demonstrates his commitment to children and families by extending the family fee waivers for child care and state preschool programs from July 1, 2023 through September 30, 2023. The First 5 Network commends the Administration for protecting previous years' investments in key areas that support whole child, whole family, whole community efforts, such as healthcare access and expansion, behavioral health and mental health, and social safety net programs.

However, the proposed budget is missing necessary investments in child care provider rates at a time of high turnover in staffing and closures, and further impacts access to high-quality care for families with young children by continuing to propose a delay in funding for 20,000 slots for subsidized child care, originally proposed in his January budget.

Conditions created and exacerbated by the pandemic, such as poor and declining health, inequitable health care access, isolation, economic instability, and community and racial/ethnic trauma, negatively impact a child's ability to thrive. As the governor and Legislature finalize this year's state budget, we encourage the prioritization of limited resources to our most vulnerable communities.

"It is imperative that the state continue to invest in our youngest children, even in budget deficit years," said Avo Makdessian, First 5 Association of California Executive Director. "California's measure of success is directly tied to the well-being of our children. One way to ensure their well-being is through investments that promote social-emotional health for our infants and toddlers. Part of this solution includes modifying the Mental Health Services Act modernization proposal to include a 10% set-aside for infant and early childhood mental health programs, along with increasing support for infant and early childhood mental health with a \$100 million investment. This would signify a continued commitment to investing in our children's and state's futures."

"Given the state's economic uncertainties, we recognize Governor Newsom's commitment to protecting multi-year efforts to implement a whole child framework, by maintaining funding levels for health care, behavioral health, CalWORKs and safety net programs and supporting early literacy strategies to ensure every child is school ready," said Jackie Thu-Houng Wong, First 5 California Executive Director. "As California leaders negotiate this year's budget, it will be imperative that they develop ongoing solutions that improve the economic security of families with young children by stabilizing a child care system in crisis, improving workforce needs in education and the healthcare industry, and addressing the demands for affordable housing."

“California’s fiscal reality requires tough decisions, and despite increasing challenges, First 5 LA appreciates Governor Newsom’s commitment to our state’s youngest children and their families,” said Karla Pleitéz Howell, Executive Director of First 5 LA. “The governor’s proposal to support the state’s universal transitional kindergarten and extend the waiving of child care family fees are vital to family stability and healthy child development. First 5 LA looks forward to ongoing partnership with the governor and Legislature to realize meaningful rate reform that both ensures child care providers can cover the full cost of care for our youngest learners and permanently eliminates the burden on families to pay fees.”

First 5 will continue to advocate for increased investments for California’s youngest children, with support for child care providers and workers and looks forward to continued conversations with legislators and exploring new, ongoing, and long-term funding opportunities.

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### **About First 5 Association**

First 5 Association of California is the voice of the 58 First 5 county commissions, which were created by voters in 1998 to ensure our young children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. Together, First 5 touches the lives of more than one million kids, families, and caregivers each year, and strengthens our state by giving kids the best start in life. Learn more at [www.first5association.org](http://www.first5association.org).

### **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 First 5 LA**

As the state’s largest funder of early childhood and an independent public agency, First 5 LA works to strengthen systems, parents and communities to support the safe and healthy development of young children guided by our North Star that every child in Los Angeles County will reach their full developmental potential throughout the critical years of prenatal to age 5. Learn more at [www.first5la.org](http://www.first5la.org). For latest news and information, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).