



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **First 5 California's Executive Director Comments on President Obama's Universal Preschool Proposal**

**SACRAMENTO, Calif.** — First 5 California's Executive Director Camille Maben released the following statement in response to President Barack Obama's proposal for universal preschool mentioned in his State of the Union address.

"A quality preschool experience is good for our children and for our economy, and I'm excited that President Obama recognizes the economic value in early education. We've long known that investments in high quality preschool generate substantial social and economic payoffs by reducing persistent crime, unemployment, and drug or alcohol abuse.

This is especially important for California, which serves a large and diverse population. Approximately 50 percent of California's at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds do not attend preschool, and fewer attend a high quality preschool. Studies show that children from low-income families -- those lacking in cognitive, social and emotional support -- typically enter school 12-14 months behind their peers. We at First 5 California are working to bridge those gaps.

By providing every child with the opportunity to attend high quality preschool, we effectively level the playing field and ensure that all children enter Kindergarten ready to learn alongside their peers."

### **About First 5 California**

*First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50-cent tax on tobacco products to fund education, health, childcare and other programs for children ages 0-5 and their families. We are the only state affiliated Commission working to improve the quality of California's preschool programs. We fund programs that educate parents, grandparents, caregivers and teachers about the critical role they play during a child's first five years. Since our creation, we've supported millions of families with programs and services designed to help more California kids grow up healthy and ready to succeed in school – and in life. For more information, please visit [www.first5california.com/parents](http://www.first5california.com/parents).*

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