



**For Immediate Release**  
April 27, 2022

**Contact:** Jamiann Collins-Lopez  
(916) 319-1924

## **Giannina Pérez Named Chairperson of California Children and Families Commission**

**Sacramento, Calif.** — Yesterday, Giannina Pérez, former Senior Policy Advisor for Early Childhood in the Office of the Governor, was appointed by California Governor Gavin Newsom to the California Children and Families Commission, commonly known as First 5 California.

Pérez, an early childhood policy expert with over 18 years of experience in advocacy and government, was selected for the appointment after working closely with the Governor for the last three years on developing children-first policy platforms. During her time in the Governor's office, Pérez helped spearhead progressive policies in the areas of childcare, preschool, kindergarten readiness, home-visiting, developmental screenings and intervention, and other family supports.

"Giannina Pérez has been a fierce advocate for young children and families for nearly two decades," said Jackie Thu-Huong Wong, Executive Director of First 5 California. "Ms. Pérez's experience both inside and outside government will be an incredible asset to the First 5 California Commission. We look forward to tapping into her expertise to improve the lives of our littlest learners."

As Chairperson of the First 5 California Commission, Pérez will lead the agency in making progress towards its newly adopted Audacious Goal - that in a generation, all children 0-5 will have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments necessary to achieve healthy development.

Pérez succeeds former California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris who is stepping down from her state roles to spend more time with her family. "As California begins to recover from a multi-year pandemic that has had profound and devastating effects on children and families throughout the state, the work of First 5 California is more important than ever," said Dr. Burke Harris. "As I pass the torch, I am confident that Ms. Perez is the right leader at the right time to see families through these difficult times."

"As Chair of First 5 California, I am humbled and thrilled to follow the incredible footsteps of Dr. Burke Harris, serving California's families and furthering the Commission's work to ensure all children have a healthy start to life during the first five years," Pérez stated. "All Californians thrive when young children and families have access to supportive services and programs. I am excited and ready to get to work with the Administration, Legislature, and advocates to ensure California's promise becomes reality for all our state's children."

Pérez has previously worked with Early Edge California and Children Now, leading policy initiatives centered on children and families. Ms. Pérez holds a Master of Public Policy degree from University of California, Los Angeles.

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

###

#### **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).*