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First 5: Holistic, Equity-Focused Approach to Supporting Children and Families Evident in Governor's 2021-22 Budget Proposal

ALAMEDA, CA (January 8, 2021) - Governor Newsom's budget plan demonstrates a clear commitment to addressing the holistic and pressing needs of young children and families, by supporting them on multiple fronts during the pandemic, as well as building toward a robust early childhood system in the long term, said First 5 Association of California, First 5 California, and First 5 LA today in response to the release of the governor's proposed 2021-22 budget.

"Children learn best and flourish most when their holistic needs are being met," said Melissa Stafford Jones, executive director of First 5 Association of California. "By prioritizing immediate economic relief to families with low income, housing support, food assistance, child care stability and access, and health care, this budget clearly reflects an awareness of what children need to thrive, in the immediate and long term. We look forward to working on the details with the administration and the legislature, both this year and beyond."

"In the most challenging of times, Governor Newsom continues to put children and families' well-being first," said Camille Maben, First 5 California Executive Director. "This budget proposal provides a framework for economic recovery rooted in the needs of our essential workers and their families. By investing in our families through critical investments in child care, earned income tax credits, expanded preventative services, healthcare, and housing, in conjunction with innovative proposals to improve child development and early literacy through reading and book distribution, California is meeting the moment we are in while continuing to look ahead to the future and our future generations."

The governor's clear priority for shoring up holistic family support systems, with an equity-based approach that focuses on families most in need, is evident in the following proposals:

- \$2.4 billion for the Golden State Stimulus to provide economic relief to 3.9 million taxpayers with low income, as early as this February, with additional payments for those who file taxes with Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), including undocumented workers—which will reach an

- estimated 250,000 children alone. The additional \$600 per family from this stimulus, combined with the existing California Earned Income Tax Credit and Young Child Tax Credit, will provide significant financial relief to working families who need it most.
- \$300 million in additional funding to increase the availability of early intervention services for young children with disabilities and delays
 - \$50 million for professional development to prepare teachers for early childhood programs, and \$200 million to expand kindergarten and transitional kindergarten facilities. In addition, the budget proposes \$250 million in one-time incentive funds for school districts to expand transitional kindergarten for all four-year-olds.
 - A one-year continuation of Proposition 56 supplemental payments (which were set to sunset this year) to improve care for Medi-Cal payments, including for developmental screenings for young children, and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screening and provider training, until July 1, 2022
 - \$55 million to support child care providers and families as a result of the pandemic
 - A total of \$44.3 million to the state's cannabis fund to expand child care access for an estimated 4,500 children
 - Proposals to spend nearly \$300 million of the federal child care funding that California recently received aimed at stabilizing the child care field and meeting immediate needs
 - \$1.1 billion, with a commitment to further investment, to relaunch CalAIM, which aims to enhance and improve Medi-Cal services through an emphasis on Whole Person Care and on care coordination across systems of care—an approach that is also critical for young children and their families
 - \$5 million to provide books to children from families with low income, to improve child development and literacy
 - Multiple investments in emergency food, housing and renter assistance, and workforce development, that act as wraparound services for many families with young children

“California families continue to face many challenges, accessible and affordable child care and health care being two of the most significant. In order to rebuild our economy, we must invest in quality early learning and family strengthening systems and supports so our families can return to work when it is safe to do so. The Governor's proposed budget recognizes these urgent needs and systemic inequities facing families and communities of color that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are grateful for his leadership to meet this moment and strengthen the foundation for building a robust early child development system that ensures all children have a strong start,” said Kim Belshé, First 5 LA executive director.

“Every day in our work, we see that families, especially families of low income, are struggling mightily—from poverty, hunger, unemployment, racism, stress, and more,” said Kim Goll, president of the First 5 Association board and executive director of

First 5 Orange County. “This budget aptly prioritizes children, families, and those who care for them, recognizing that they are central to California’s recovery and healing from the pandemic, recession, and historic injustice.”

Together, the First 5 network looks forward to partnering with the governor and legislature on additional details of the 2021-22 budget, and prioritizing the use of and need for additional federal funds in order to meet the greatest needs of our children and families.

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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.

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.

About First 5 LA

As the state's largest funder of early childhood, First 5 LA works to strengthen systems, parents and communities so that children are ready to succeed in school and life. An independent public agency, First 5 LA's goal is to support the safe and healthy development of young children so that by 2028, all children in L.A. County will enter kindergarten ready to succeed in school and life. Learn more at www.first5la.org.