



For Immediate Release
June 14, 2018

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First 5 California Commends State Leaders for Strategic Investments in Early Childhood

Still significant work to be done to address the unmet need for high-quality child care

SACRAMENTO – Today First 5 California Executive Director Camille Maben thanked Governor Brown and the California Legislature, including the Legislative Women’s Caucus and legislative leadership, for prioritizing California’s youngest children and families in this year’s budget through strategic and significant one-time investments in the state’s child care and early learning system.

“The final state budget deal, as passed by the Legislature earlier today, reflects an unprecedented investment of over one billion dollars in early childhood program funding increases. This increased investment in the most consequential years of a child’s life, and in their families’ resiliency will yield stronger outcomes for California’s children and our shared state future,” said Ms. Maben.

The budget deal includes \$158.5 million in one-time funding for California’s first state-level investment in home visiting, which will bring key supportive services to CalWORKs families throughout the state. Evidence-based home visiting is proven to boost positive outcomes for both parents and children by supporting child development, promoting healthy family relationships, increasing the confidence and competence of parents, promoting family economic self-sufficiency, and maximizing utilization of safety-net supports.

Significant new investments were also made in early care and education, which total almost a billion dollars when one-time funds and new federal monies are considered. Included in the single-year deal between Governor Brown and the Legislature, is a modest expansion in child care access, an increase to the infant and toddler funding rates, expansion grants to address facilities shortages, and funds to recruit and retain a new generation of child care providers.

“We commend the Governor, Pro Tem Atkins, and Speaker Rendon for their leadership and strategic use of one-time and federal funding to increase our child care investments. We want to thank the Legislative Women’s Caucus for their incredible leadership on these issues year after year, and for ensuring each budget yields as much money as possible for quality child care and early learning,” added Ms. Maben.

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While First 5 California commends the budget deal's child care increases, the Commission also recognizes that significant ongoing state investments are necessary in order to make a dent in California's child care access crisis. Prior to this budget deal, there were 1.4 million eligible children who lacked access to the subsidized care their parents need to work. The final budget package has added over 16,000 new child care spaces, of which over 11,000 are short-term. It is critical that we find stable and significant funding sources to provide California's children and families with access to affordable and high-quality care.

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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.