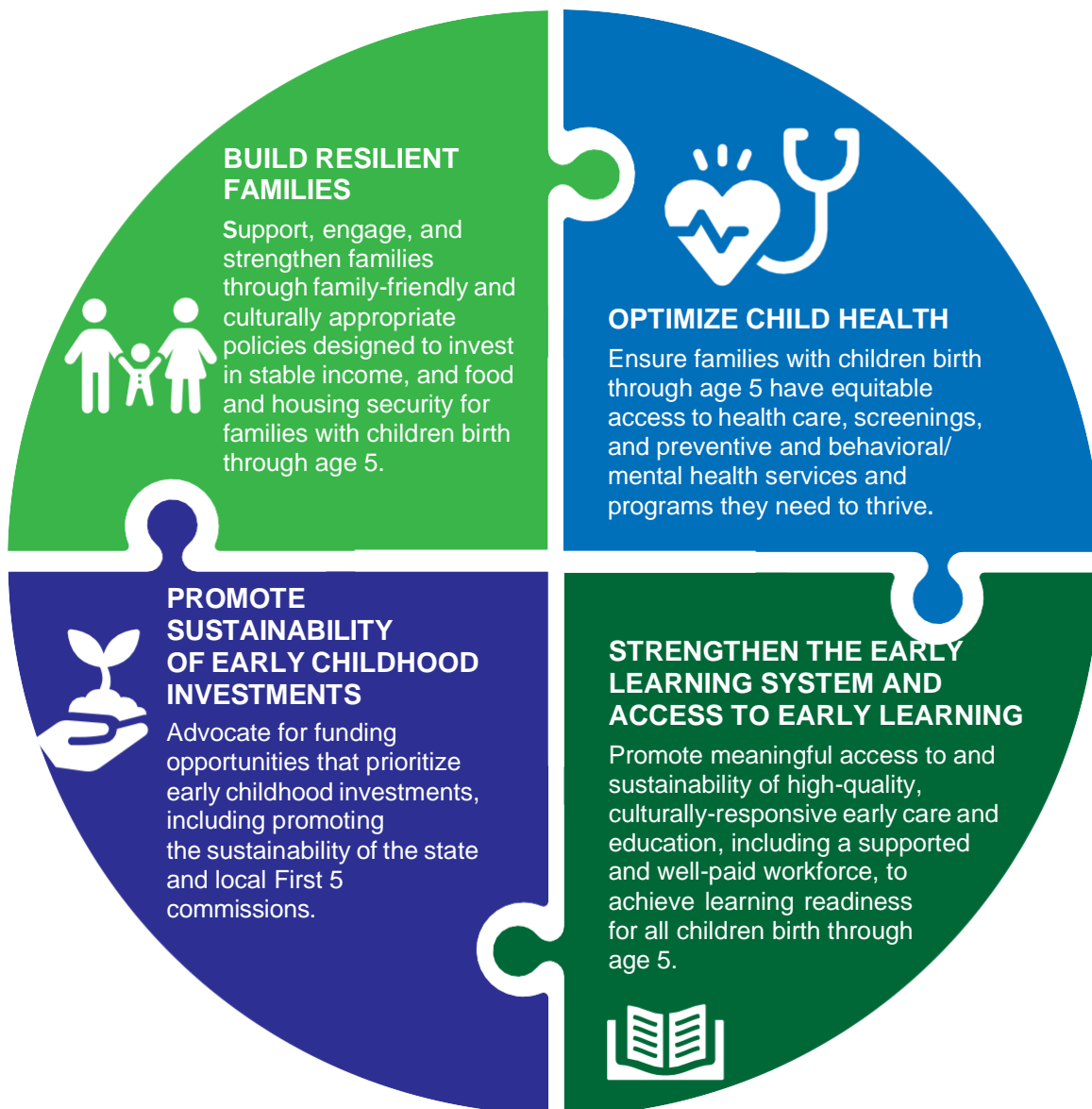


NORTH STAR POLICY AGENDA: 2025 FRAMEWORK FOR CHILDREN PRENATAL TO AGE 5

First 5 California's North Star Policy Agenda is rooted in the principles of First 5 California's North Star, which articulates our commitment to creating trauma-informed, healing-centered, and culturally responsive systems that promote equitable outcomes, eliminate inequities, and ensure all children have the safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments they need to thrive. It prioritizes and guides state public policy and regulatory advocacy, as well as federal advocacy when it directly impacts children in California, all in alignment with our Mission Statement and Strategic Plan.

At the heart of this agenda is a commitment to supporting and advancing policies aligned with First 5 California's North Star and Audacious Goal, ensuring young children have the best possible start in life. Additionally, the agenda prioritizes the protection and enhancement of existing programs, assistance, and policies that support children aged 0-5 and may be at risk, reinforcing First 5 California's dedication to building a future where all children and their families can thrive.

The agenda's four policy pillars are critical to achieving First 5 California's Audacious Goal: "In a generation, all children 0–5 will have the **safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments** necessary to achieve healthy development."





BUILD RESILIENT FAMILIES

- Support efforts to ensure economic security and financial stability for families and children through:
 - Investments in stable income and food and housing security for families with children age 0-5.
 - Strengthening and acknowledging the role of fathers by shifting the narrative and language in legislation and regulations going forward.

OPTIMIZE CHILD HEALTH

- Ensure that children 0-5 and their families have access to equitable and just health care coverage and services, that also include:
 - Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) screening.
 - Behavioral and mental health supports.
 - Developmental screenings, referrals, and access to appropriate early intervention services.
 - Prenatal and postpartum care, such as doula services and home visitation programs.
 - Intervention and preventive care, including accentuating the need for oral health in under-served families.
 - Nutritional programs and services.

STRENGTHEN THE EARLY LEARNING SYSTEM AND ACCESS TO EARLY LEARNING

- Promote access to safe, high-quality early care and education programs for infants, toddlers, and children through age 5 via statewide rate reform efforts based on equitable and professional compensation, fostering diversity in the field, and providing professional development opportunities.
- Address workforce capacity needs of child care, preschool, transitional kindergarten, and kindergarten educators and support staff through recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Educate lawmakers, business owners and families about the impact on our economy and on families of the critical shortage of child care in California and how we can successfully advance equity in early childhood education.
- Promote meaningful access to and sustainability of high-quality, culturally-responsive early care and education programs, including a supported and well-paid workforce, to achieve learning readiness for all children birth through age 5.

PROMOTE SUSTAINABILITY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS

- Advocate for funding prioritization and inclusion of children prenatal to age 5 and their families in existing and new revenue policy proposals and tax funding structures.
- Support braiding and leveraging opportunities that provide fiscal resiliency to the First 5 Network, which includes the First 5 California State Commission, the First 5 Association, and the 58 local First 5 county commissions to ensure every family and child has access to critical prenatal through age 5 services and programs.

HOW WILL WE DO THIS?

- Leverage and strengthen relationships with other state agencies, community-based organizations, and the private sector to co-design and support family resiliency policies via a whole-child, whole-family framework.
- Support legislation:
 - Providing guaranteed income for under-resourced families.
 - Expanding screenings for Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs).
 - Addressing maternity ward closures in hospitals.
 - Supporting birthing centers.
 - Advocating for the 200,000 child care slots authorized by Assembly Bill 131 (2021).
 - Achieving statewide rate reform based on equitable compensation, fostering diversity in the field, and supplying professional development opportunities.
 - Advocating for ALL children in California, including migrant children.
- At the federal level, support the Child Care for Working Families Act and vigorously defend against federal legislation negatively impacting children 0-5.