



Vision: California's children receive the best possible start in life and thrive.

2021–22 CHILDREN'S POLICY AGENDA PROGRESS REPORT

First 5 California will advocate for the strong start all children deserve by prioritizing children prenatal through age 5 and families from historically marginalized communities, to optimize early childhood development, reduce childhood poverty, and increase learning readiness. First 5 California's efforts will focus on addressing the needs of struggling children and families, recognizing the disproportionate impact the COVID-19 pandemic and systemic racism have had on low-income communities and communities of color.

RESILIENT FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Support effective parent education and engagement, including parent engagement on child brain development, early literacy, and *Talk. Read. Sing.*®

Progress Made: *State Superintendent of Public Instruction Thurmond has established a prenatal to 3rd grade literacy task force to ensure every California student learns to read by 3rd grade by 2026, which First 5 California is co-chairing.*

Support sustainability of Family Resource Centers and other comprehensive community hubs for integrated services for children and families.

Progress Made: *Statewide expansion of and infrastructure to support the implementation and use of the community school model to all schools in communities with high levels of poverty (2021–22 Budget).*

Support multi-generational family strengthening policies including economic security, breastfeeding resources, paid family leave, and a fair work week, for California's highest need families.

Progress Made:

An extension of the current 60 percent to 70 percent wage replacement rate for paid family leave until the end of 2022 (2021–22 Budget).

Extend Medi-Cal eligibility for post-partum individuals from 60 days to 12 months (2021–22 Budget).

Creation of a statewide Universal Basic Income pilot, with language emphasizing the need to specifically support foster youth and pregnant women as part of the pilot (2021–22 Budget).

An increase in the maximum level of CalWORKs cash grants by 5.3 percent and monthly CalWORKs pregnancy supplement aid from \$47 to \$100 (2021–22 Budget).

A second round of direct financial supports through the Golden State Stimulus program, with additional funds for families with young children and ITIN filers (2021–22 Budget).

Funding to support legal aid services that will help renters and homeowners avoid eviction and foreclosure (2021–22 Budget).

Expand access to voluntary home visit programs.

Progress Made: *\$69.1 million for CalWORKs Home Visiting (2021–22 Budget).*

Ensure digital equity across family serving systems, including access to broadband and the necessary devices that are important in bridging the gap in telehealth and early learning services.

Progress Made:

\$6 billion to construct broadband infrastructure and improve access to broadband services throughout the state, including \$3.75 billion for "middle-mile" infrastructure in unserved communities (2021–22 Budget).

Require Caltrans, as part of projects that are located in priority areas, to install broadband conduit capable of supporting fiber optic communication cables (AB 41, Wood).

Align California law with current federal law regarding the approval of wireless telecommunications applications and provide additional clarity that will allow applicants to deploy communications technology (AB 537, Quirk).

CHILD HEALTH

Protect children and families' access to health care, and support coordination across health systems to ensure affordable and comprehensive health insurance coverage and services for every child and mother, prenatal through age 5.

Progress Made:

Extend pandemic related telehealth flexibilities through December 31, 2022 (2021–22 Budget).

Creation of a Children & Youth Behavioral Health Initiative to reimagine mental and behavioral health supports for individuals ages 0-25 (2021–22 Budget).

\$800 million to support the addition of dyadic care services as a Medi-Cal benefit (2021–22 Budget).

Annual funding to add Doula services as a covered benefit in the Medi-Cal program, and to add Community Health Workers to the class of health workers who are able to provide benefits and services to Medi-Cal beneficiaries (2021–22 Budget).

Improve data collection and research on socioeconomic factors that contribute to negative birth outcomes in order to close racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity and improve perinatal outcomes (SB 65, Skinner).

Support and promote universal developmental, behavioral, and ACEs screenings, linkages to appropriate services, and seamless coordination across systems to improve outcomes for children and families.

Progress Made:

\$25 million to support All Children Thrive, a statewide program to mitigate the effects of ACEs on children (2021–22 Budget).

\$25.5 million for public education on ACEs and trauma (2021–22 Budget).

Eliminate the suspension of Proposition 56 supplemental payments, which will continue to support incentive payments to providers for conducting development screens and screenings (2021–22 Budget).

Require health care service plans and health insurance policies that provide coverage for pediatric services and preventive care to include coverage for ACEs screenings (SB 428, Hurtado).

EARLY LEARNING

Expand access to safe, quality early care and education programs for children ages 0 to 3.

Progress Made: *200,000 new child care spaces in Alternative Payment, General Child Care, Migrant Child Care, and bridge program for foster children program (2021–22 Budget).*

Support implementation of safe, high-quality universal preschool access for all low-income three- and four-year-old children, and safe, high-quality transitional kindergarten and kindergarten state-wide.

Progress Made: *Adopt Universal Transitional Kindergarten as part of a mixed delivery system, phasing in expanded age eligibility to full implementation by 2025–26 (2021–22 Budget).*

Define, measure, and achieve school readiness for all California children.

Progress Made: *While there was not a lot done in this space in 2021, the adoption of Universal Transitional Kindergarten will undoubtedly impact the school readiness conversation. Additionally, \$4.8 million was allocated for the planning and initial implementation of a child care data system, and requirements were made for a unique*

child identifier compatible with the Cradle to Career data system (2021–22 Budget). First 5 CA also continues Quality Counts California implementation to raise the quality of early learning and care and improve school readiness.

Support a healthy, safe, and high-quality early learning workforce through adequate compensation, stability, diversity, health and safety policies and supports, and robust professional development systems.

Progress Made:

- *An increase in provider reimbursement rates to 75 percent of the 2018 regional market rate survey, and funding to bring all providers to 85 percent of the 2018 regional market rate survey for the next two years (2021–22 Budget).*
- *Ratify the Child Care Providers United contracts which include rate increases, provider stipends and supplemental payments, pandemic flexibilities, and mental health supports (2021–22 Budget).*
- *Provide a framework for rate reform policy for all child care programs, which will seek to create set rate targets for a single rate system beginning in 2023 (2021–22 Budget).*

Promote statewide access to and participation in quality improvement systems.

Progress Made: *\$20 million to improve equity in our quality systems (2021–22 Budget).*

REVENUE

Promote inclusion of funding for children ages 0 to 5 and their families in existing and new revenue policy proposals.

Progress Made: *Young children and families were included in numerous programs funded with federal CARES Act and American Rescue Plan Act dollars, as well as state stimulus funding and new 0 to 5 investments via the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, Community Schools, etc. However, there were no significant state revenue proposals during the 2021 legislative year.*

Promote regulation of tobacco-related products, including electronic cigarettes, and sustainability of licensing and enforcement programs.

Progress Made: *Address the disparity in taxation rates between vape products and traditional tobacco products by levying an additional 12.5 percent tax on vaping products (SB 395, Caballero).*

Promote inclusion of funding for prenatal and 0 to 3 two-generation prevention strategies in new tax funding structures.

Progress Made: *Create parity between the sale of vape products and traditional tobacco products to promote smoking cessation and fund prevention programs across early childhood, public health, and health care (SB 395, Caballero).*