



Key Impact: QUALITY EARLY LEARNING



90% of brain development occurs in the first five years of a child's life.

WHAT WE KNOW

Affordable, high-quality early care and learning opportunities are essential to California's youngest children and their families.

Children's earliest experiences have long-lasting effects on their potential to succeed in life. Research shows that students who start off behind tend to stay behind. Meanwhile, those who enter school properly prepared are 10 times more likely to meet state standards on 3rd grade standardized tests.

Unfortunately, California is failing to meet the needs of all its children. Too many young children and families do not have access to quality early care and learning opportunities.

Investments in high-quality early care and learning are essential to ensure kindergarten readiness. First 5s have worked in partnership to develop a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) — a framework to guide the state's early learning improvement efforts. The QRIS developed is a critical first step; however, current investments in quality and workforce development are insufficient to take this effort to scale.

WE CAN DO BETTER: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

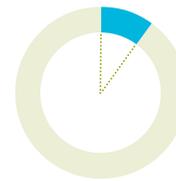
California can improve the overall well-being and social-emotional and cognitive outcomes for all children from birth in order to achieve kindergarten readiness.

The First 5 Association of California recommends that policymakers take action to:

Increase the quality and number of state-funded early learning slots for infants, toddlers and four-year-old children.

Embed high quality standards in all state-funded early learning programs and support state and local efforts to meet them.

Strengthen the qualifications, compensation and stability of the early learning workforce.



State subsidized child care reaches **only 10%** of California's infants.



Only 19% of all three-year olds and **32%** of all four-year-olds are enrolled in a public preschool program.

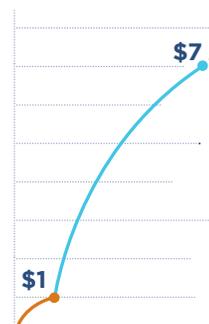
In contrast, 90% of all five-year-olds are enrolled in public kindergarten



Only 45% of California third graders read at grade level.



THE NUMBER IS LOWER FOR...



Every dollar invested in high-quality early learning can **save \$7** later on, through reductions in students held back or involved in crime, increased rates of high school and college graduation, and higher salaries when students enter the work force.

First 5 leads the effort to build strong, effective and sustainable systems to serve young children in California. The First 5 Association of California is the membership organization for the 58 First 5 county commissions. In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10 — The California Children and Families Act — creating First 5 commissions in every county. First 5 supports the healthy development of children from birth through five years of age.